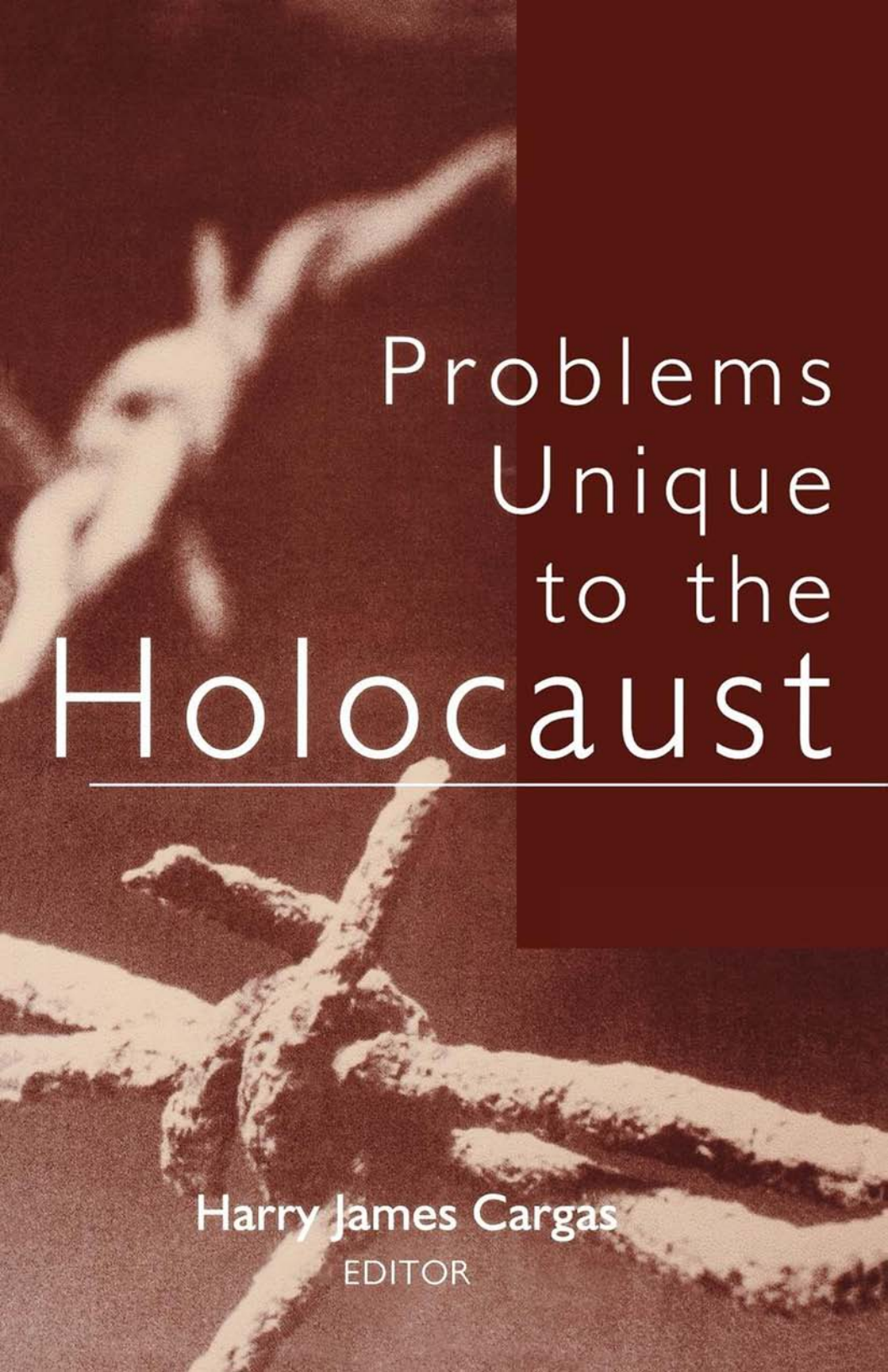

Problems Unique to the Holocaust

Harry James Cargas

EDITOR

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HARRY JAMES CARGAS
Editor

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Preface

Am I a Murderer?, Calel Perechodnik's "confession" of how a Jew agreed to collaborate with the Nazis in exchange for the safety of his daughter and wife, gave me the impetus for this colloquy. In spite of the Nazis' promises, Perechodnik's Polish-Jewish family was murdered by the conquerors. I tried to reflect on the situation. Would I, under extreme circumstances, have done *anything* to save my family? I know of cases of parents, hiding behind fake walls or in fields, who smothered their own babies whose cries otherwise would have revealed their secret positions and those of others concealed with them.

Such decisions had to be made almost instantaneously. What were the moral implications of these actions or inactions? What were some of the other moral problems faced by people who were being rounded up to die? Of the terrible drama faced in *Am I a Murderer?*, translator Frank Fox writes in the foreword: "Perechodnik and other policemen [help] eight thousand Otwock Jews into the town square, where they are loaded into boxcars. The policemen are promised immunity for their own wives and children, but the German enemy deceives them. Perechodnik watches in horror as his wife and daughter are loaded into wagons headed for the Treblinka death camp."

In my review of the book in *Commonweal* I wrote: "Just before his own death during the war, probably by his own hand, Calel Perechodnik gave the document to a friend; it finally came into the hands of Fox, who prepared it for publication. Perechodnik begins by saying that, though he is not a man of faith, this memoir is his deathbed confession. Telling the story, he blames himself completely, never offering any mitigating circumstances. Pain fills every word of the record."

Dare we throw stones at this man? Is there some value in considering questions about moral situations at Auschwitz, Dachau, Treblinka, Sobibor,

and other death camps? My answer to the latter question is yes. So is the answer of other contributors to this anthology.

The problem that each writer of a chapter of this book had to recognize was how to write sensibly about an indelicate subject. For Rabbi Steven Jacobs the answer to his question about the moral legitimacy of betraying someone to save others is steeped in ambiguity. David Patterson expresses a similar difficulty in the very first sentence of his essay on motherhood in the Nazi death camps, and he concludes that the only responses to the murder of babies may be in silence, and the birth of other Jewish babies.

Susan Pentlin deals further with ambiguity, asking why some Holocaust survivors remain silent. Charlotte Guthmann Opfermann herself raises a dilemma of ambiguity by asking whether or not certain suicides of Jews were morally not suicides but murders by the conquerors. "Holocaust suicides" are also discussed by Jack Nusan Porter, who investigates the self-inflicted deaths of Jerzy Kosinski, Bruno Bettelheim, Terrence Des Pres, and others.

Does the behavior of Holocaust victims reveal the true nature of human beings? The philosophical answer by Didier Pollefeyt is found in his concept of the "banality of the good." Issues regarding the value of life are considered by Diane Plotkin in her segment on medicine in the death camps: who shall live and who shall die. Science and its relationship to the human spirit come under scrutiny by Robert S. Frey as he relates his thinking to the Shoah. He also addresses the controversial question of the uniqueness of the Holocaust.

Eric Sterling discusses the guilt of those who stood by and did or said nothing during the tragic Event. How responsible were the onlookers? The problem of the appropriateness of Christian scholars in Holocaust studies is examined by both the Reverend Alastair Hunter and Leon Stein. Is this historical occurence to be analyzed only from within, from a Jewish perspective? Stephen Feinstein talks about art after Auschwitz. Is it "correct" or "necessary" to have creation after distraction? John Roth, in what was intended to be the final chapter of this book, brings us back to the beginning, in a way, back to the death (and life) of Calel Perechodnik. But given the popularity and controversy surrounding Jonathan Goldhagen's book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners,* I thought a brief discussion of that work should be included; hence the Afterword. I have met and talked over his work with Jonathan Goldhagen, and our meeting was a pleasant one. He is a gentleman and a man of strong convictions. I disagree with Goldhagen's thesis, but unlike some of his critics I do not attack him personally. I like him, he is wrong, and that is that.

Can Betrayal Ever Be Legitimate?

STEVEN L. JACOBS

IN THE CRUCIBLE OF THE SHOAH (Holocaust), the act of betrayal, whether seemingly well-intentioned or misguided, becomes synonymous with that of slander of informing. In the Hebrew language one finds three terms: *malshin* (from the root *lashone,* speaking or language), *mosair* (from the root *masar,* transmitter), and *delator* (from the Latin, probably reflecting its origin during the period of Roman oppression). All such words are indicative of a reality with which the Jewish people would rather not deal directly: that of traitors or turncoats who, for self-advancement, would denounce their fellow Jews to the authorities, all too often with baseless calumnies and invented charges of religious lies or seditious fabrications. Such individuals may be further subsumed under the general category of *mishumaddim* or "destroyers." Such "turncoatism" reached its high point during the Middle Ages in both the Germanic or Ashkenazic communities and the Spanish or Sephardic communities. It continued beyond into Eastern and Central Europe in the controversies between the Hasidim and their opponents the *misnagdim,* the most famous example of which was the arrest and imprisonment of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lyadi, the acknowledged leader of Habad Hasidism, in 1800. In the so-called modern period, under the Soviets, informing on both friends and family became a test of "good" citizenship for non-Jews as well as Jews.

During the brutally intense years of the Shoah, specifically 1939-45, Jews were confronted with moral and ethical dilemmas unlike those with which they had previously and historically wrestled. In addition, even those who sought to ally themselves with the Nazi authorities, either to save themselves or their loved ones or to advance their own desire for personal wealth and

power, both in the ghettos and concentration/extermination camps, were, ultimately, on the losing end of that alliance as the machinery of death and destruction consumed them also in its ravenous appetite for more and more Jewish victims.[1]

In recent years, there have been published several important English translations of volumes dealing with the *Responsa Literature* (questions and rabbinic answers, primarily within the Orthodox Jewish community) during the Shoah: Robert Kirschner's *Rabbinic Responsa of the Holocaust Era,* Ephraim Oshry's *Responsa from the Holocaust,* Irving J. Rosenbaum's *The Holocaust and Halakhah,* and H. J. Zimmels's *The Echo of the Nazi Holocaust in Rabbinic Literature.* Before examining these texts as they relate to the above question, however, let us get some understanding of the Talmudic frame of reference in which any such discussions are applicable.

One possible source of insight is the utter revulsion and contempt with which such "apostates" are held. Indeed, there may be sufficient scholarly grounds to conclude that the true origins of the talmudic prayer known as the *Birkat Minim* ("Blessing" against the heretics) was directed against those who would inform against the Jewish people to the Roman authorities rather than a condemnation of those Jews who rejected normative Judaism in favor of the new interpretation which would later become Christianity (Berachot 28b; Megillah 17b). The property of such individuals in planning for future inheritances was not held sacrosanct (Baba Kamma 117a; 119a).[2] Were such not enough, the rabbis went so far as to declare such individuals subject to eternal damnation as well as forfeiture of their share in the world to come (Sanhedrin 91a).[3]

As we will see shortly, an even more significant text is that of Berachot 58a, which grants permission to kill one pursuing you: "If a man comes to kill you, rise early and kill him first."[4] Such a text would be used during the Shoah when, plainly, a Jew who informed against fellow Jews to the Nazis was likened to one preparing to commit the act of murder ("stealing life" from the victims).

All four of the aforementioned collections of Responsa dealing with the Shoah cite examples that bear on the question of betrayal when the saving of life is at stake. The first is that of Rabbi Shimon Efrati of Bendery, Bessarabia; the second is that of Rabbi Zevi Hirsch Meisels of Vac, Hungary; and the third and fourth are those of Rabbi Ephraim Oshry of Kovno, Lithuania.

In the first situation, a group of Jews were hiding in a bunker when an infant began to cry out. To muffle the sound, one among them placed a pillow over the infant, without any discussion, to prevent the Nazis from hearing the cry. After the threat had passed, it was discovered that the infant

had suffocated to death. Two questions were therefore presented: (1) Were they permitted to take the life of the one to save the many? (2) If not, was the man who placed the pillow over the infant, *even though the death was accidental rather than intentional,* required to do some sort of atoning penance?

After citing numerous rabbinic authorities together with various biblical texts, Rabbi Efrati concludes: "When death is certain, there is no prohibition against surrendering him. . . . We come to the conclusion that if it must be decided whether to surrender a specified victim where it is certain he will be killed regardless, it is permitted to surrender him. . . . This leads me to the conclusion that they were permitted to quiet the infant—even if this entailed mortal risk to the infant's life."[5] Concerning the second question, that of the individual who placed the pillow over the infant, he writes: "However, the man who did this [i.e., inadvertently suffocated the child] should not have a bad conscience, for he acted lawfully to save Jewish lives."[6]

Might one not therefore conclude, based on this situation, that we are permitted to betray the one, even at the expense of life itself, to save the many? Before drawing this conclusion, however, let us examine the other situations.

In the next case, Rabbi Meisels of Hungary was presented with two different yet somewhat similar scenarios. In the first, a father wanted to know if it were permissible to ransom his son from certain death knowing full well that another would be required to take his place? In the second, a less than outstanding student of Judaism offered to take the place of a Torah scholar in Auschwitz whose death was imminent. Was he permitted to do so?

Rabbi Meisels, trying desperately to forestall any decision and pleading the lack of proper resources at hand to render such a difficult decision, was, at last, forced to inform the grieving father that he could not render one. The father, in turn, accepted this "nondecision" as a decision and did not ransom his son, who perished.[7]

In the second, the young man repeatedly requested of him permission to trade places with the young scholar, which Rabbi Meisels denied, arguing, essentially, that in the sight of the Divine all are equal and that, from one's own personal standpoint, one's life takes precedence over one's neighbor and one must do everything humanly possible to preserve one's own life.[8]

Might one therefore not conclude that one is not permitted, under any circumstances whatsoever, to betray one's own life to save that of another? While seemingly so, let us also address Rabbi Oshry's concerns.

On September 17, 1941, the Germans surrounded the Kovno Ghetto, where Rabbi Oshry was himself a prisoner. Included among the thirty thousand inmates were ten thousand laborers. The Nazi commandant wanted the Eltestenrat [i.e., Judenrat] to distribute a limited number of *Jordan Schein*

["white cards" named for the commandant] which would save the lives of those who held them as well as their families. In the midst of the scramble for these life-saving cards, Rabbi Oshry was confronted with two questions: (1) Was it permissible for the Eltestenrat to accept and distribute these cards, knowing full well that those who received them would live, at least temporarily, while those who did not would die? (2) Was it permissible to grab such a card to save one's own life knowing that in so doing one would be sending others to their deaths? In answering the first question, Rabbi Oshry writes: "I ruled similarly that it was the duty of the communal leaders to save as many people as possible. And since it was possible to save a number of people by issuing the white cards, the Eltestenrat had to take courage and distribute those cards in any way they saw fit to save as many people as possible."[9] Seeing the second question as something of an extension of the first, he concludes: "According to the principle outlined in answer to the first question, that in a case of danger to a community one must save whoever can be saved, it seemed that each laborer was entitled to do whatever he could save his life and that of his family."[10]

The last example, also presented to Rabbi Oshry, was when the head of the Slobodka yeshivah asked him whether a colleague, Rabbi David Itzkowitz (who would later become a victim himself), known to the Lithuanians from before the war, could put his own life in danger by requesting that they release the arrested students. Rabbi Oshry ruled that, while he was not *required* to place his life "in harm's way," such an act could be construed as an act of piety because of those he was attempting to rescue. According to the report, Rabbi Itzkowitz was successful in this instance.[11]

Thus, again, in the first of these two situations, is one permitted to betray one's fellows to save one's own life and those of one's family members? In the second, is one permitted potentially to betray one's own life to save those of one's fellows?

Easily dismissible were those who betrayed their fellow Jews for transitory wealth or power, both to no ultimate avail. Much, much more difficult to condemn were those who, under normal circumstances, would never have resorted to acts both courageous and less so to save themselves or their families. Too easily dismissible, therefore, would be any blanket condemnation of those whose personally and collectively saving acts resulted in the deaths of others.

The rabbis cited in this discussion, and there were many, many others, realized only too well their own agonies and those to whom they were attempting to bring comfort and solace in the midst of this hell. The surrendering of any human life was for them intensely painful, made infinitely more difficult by the increasingly limiting options at their disposal. Where the

saving of the many was at stake, even at the life-denying expense of the few or even the one, they truly saw little choice but to sanction such behavior, justifying their decisions on the life-affirming traditions of the Jewish religious tradition. When the situation shifted, and the "exchange" was one for one, they nobly continued to affirm the equality of all and denied the exchange.

Thus, in answer to the question, Is it ever legitimate to betray others to save yourself or loved ones?, we must be painfully honest and admit that, in the hells which we continually create for ourselves, there have been, there are, and there may very well be those scenarios which call into question our facile understanding of what is ethically proper and appropriate in all situations. To blithely say, "I would most definitely do this in that situation!" or "I could *never* do this in that situation!" only reveals our ignorance of who we are as human beings and the potential we have for both good and evil. One blatantly apparently lesson of the Shoah, fifty years after its conclusion and unfolding, is that all previous understandings of reality are open to discussion and what was formerly an unaskable question is no longer so.

Notes

1. Two books that depict those who, perhaps under other circumstances, conducted themselves far less than honorably are Calel Perchodnick, *Am I a Murderer? Testament of a Jewish Ghetto Policeman,* ed. and trans. Frank Fox (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), and Peter Wyden, *Stella: One Woman's True Tale of Evil, Betrayal, and Survival in Nazi Germany* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995).

2. Cited in George Horowitz, *The Spirit of the Jewish Law* (New York: Central Book Company, 1973), p. 228.

3. An interesting concretization of this attitude may be found in the prayer Yehi ratzon, said to have been composed by Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, the Maharal of Prague (1520-1609): "May it be Thy will, Father in Heaven, to uproot and extirpate every stock sprouting poison and wormwood in Israel so that there be no transgression in our streets namely—those who denounce and harm Israel with their slander and distort the Jewish laws before the nations and the uncircumcised, both men and women, those who seek to endanger the condition of the community and oppress Israel their brethren by false accusations in order to destroy them. May the Holy One, blessed be He, deliver Israel from their hands and may God wipe from the earth the memory of these sinners and evildoers, them and their evil offspring" (*Encyclopedia Judaica* [Jerusalem: Keter, 1971], Vol. 8: He-Ir, #1368.

4. This rabbinic understanding is based on Shemot (Exodus) 22:1: "If a thief is caught in the act of housebreaking and beaten to death, there is no bloodguilt involved" (NAB translation).

5. Robert Kirschner, *Rabbinic Responsa of the Holocaust Era* (New York: Schocken, 1985), p. 78.

6. Ibid., p. 81.

7. Ibid., pp. 116-19.

8. Ibid., pp. 119-21. New Testament advocates might argue that this latter position stands in direct opposition to that attributed to Jesus: "Greater love hath no man than he lay down his life for his fellow" (John 15:13). While both seek to sanctify and ennoble the human person, they are, in truth, different resolutions.

9. Ephraim Oshry, *Responsa from the Holocaust* (New York: Judaica Press, 1983), p. 16. See also Irving J. Rosenbaum, *The Holocaust and the Halakhah* (New York: Ktav, 1976), pp. 17-34, for an extended discussion of this decision.

10. Oshry, *Responsa from the Holocaust,* p. 16.

11. H. J. Zimmels, *The Echo of the Nazi Holocaust in Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Ktav, 1977), p. 265.

The Moral Dilemma of Motherhood in the Nazi Death Camps

DAVID PATTERSON

ANY MORAL JUDGMENT of the actions undertaken by inmates of the Nazi death camps must begin with an acknowledgment of our tenuous position as judges in such matters. Those of us who have not seen the inside of the sealed trains, who have not been covered with the ashes of our mothers and fathers and children raining down from the sky, who have not known the collapse of human significance and human sanctity—in a word, those of us who comfortably abide in the world without having known the horror of the anti-world—can hardly presume to peer into these souls under assault and make moral pronouncements upon them. Indeed, those people whom we here consider operate in a realm that is empty of the concepts and categories that normally shape our moral judgment. Why, then, undertake such an inquiry? The aim is not so much to vindicate or to condemn those caught in the dilemma as to approach a deeper understanding of their moral turmoil and its implications for a deeper understanding of the Event itself. For the concern with ethics is ultimately a concern with metaphysics. And an exploration of the moral dilemmas peculiar to the Holocaust reveals the singularity of some of its metaphysical dimensions.

The moral dilemmas and the metaphysical dimensions of the Holocaust converge in the Nazis' assault on the mothers of Israel, which is an assault on motherhood itself. In November 1941, for example, Emmanuel Ringelblum noted in his diary that "Jews have been prohibited from marrying and having children. Women pregnant up to three months have to have an abortion."[1] In the concentration camp at Ravensbrück, Germaine Tillion recalls, "the medical services of the Revier were required to perform abortions on all pregnant women. If a child happened to be born alive, it would be smothered or

drowned in a bucket in the presence of the mother."[2] (Yes, in the presence of the mother!) And in the death camps pregnancy was neither a medical condition nor a blessing from God—it was a capital crime. This onslaught against motherhood, this "conjunction of birth and crime," Emil Fackenheim rightly points out, "is a *novum* in history." It bespeaks a unique aspect of the Holocaust in the murder not only of human beings but of the very origin of human life and of human sanctity. "The very concept of holiness," argues Fackenheim, "must be altered in response to the conjunction, unprecedented in the annals of history, of 'birth' and 'crime.'"[3] And with the unprecedented conjunction of these categories there arises within the death camps a singular, unprecedented moral dilemma, a dilemma that is itself part of the assault on motherhood: is there a moral justification for killing an infant to spare the mother the capital punishment for her capital crime?

To grasp the implications of the dilemma and its metaphysical dimensions, we must understand exactly what is targeted in the destruction of motherhood. To fathom what this destruction meant to these Jewish mothers, we should first consider the significance of the mother in the Jewish tradition. And, since there is no mother without a child, we should also say a few words about the significance of the child within the tradition.

In his commentary on the Torah, Rashi (1040-1105) explains that in Exodus 19:3 the phrase "House of Jacob" designates the women, the wives and mothers, among the Israelites, while "House of Israel" refers to the men.[4] And why is the House of Jacob mentioned in that verse before the House of Israel? Because, according to the tradition, it is only through the wives and mothers gathered at Sinai that humanity is able to receive the Torah, the very thing that sustains the world. Thus tied to the Torah, which is called the "Tree of Life." the mother is fundamentally linked to the origin and sanctification of life.

Pursuing this connection further, we note that the first letter in the Torah is *beit,* which is also the word for "house." And the notion of a house is associated with the Patriarch Jacob, as Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh points out: "At the level of Divinity, the house symbolizes the ultimate purpose of all reality: to become a dwelling place below for the manifestation of God's presence. Not as Abraham who called it [the Temple site] 'a mountain,' nor as Isaac who called it 'a field,' but as Jacob who called it 'a house.'"[5] Since the Talmud maintains that blessing comes to a man's house only through the wife and mother of the home (*Bava Metzia* 59a), the sanctity of the home is linked to the wife and mother, who sees to all the affairs of the household. Hence the wives and mothers of Israel are known as the *House* of Jacob. They are as essential to the center of life as the Temple itself, tied directly to "the ultimate purpose of all reality," as Rabbi Ginsburgh says. This being the case,

we see that, through her tie to the *beit* in which the Torah originates, the mother is both the foundation of the Torah and the center of the dwelling place. For there is no dwelling in the world without the Word, without the Torah, that comes from God. That is why we refer to God as *Hamakom,* or "the Place": God is the place of dwelling. Thus linked to the Creator and the dwelling He makes possible, the mother lies at the origin of Creation and the center of the dwelling.

Now the Torah is not only in the world; it precedes the world and serves as the basis for the creation of the world. "As the Sages have said," notes Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, for instance, "before Creation, God looked into the Torah and made the world accordingly. By which it is implied that the Torah is the original pattern, or inner form, of the world: Torah and world are, inseparably, a pair."[6] Through her association with the Torah, the mother is bound to Creation itself. Bearing in mind the identification of Jewish mothers with the House of Jacob, we note that this principle is stated in Leviticus Rabbah: "The Holy One, blessed be He, said to His world: 'O My world, My world! Shall I tell thee who created thee, who formed thee? Jacob has created thee, Jacob has formed thee.'"[7] This ancient truth finds expression in more modern times through the teachings of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, who states, "Compassion is at the root of all Creation," for compassion or mercy is at the root of motherhood.[8] An insight from Emmanuel Levinas comes to mind in this connection. "*Rachamim* (Mercy)," he points out, "goes back to the word *Rechem,* which means 'uterus.' *Rachamim* is the relation of the uterus to the *other,* whose gestation takes place within it. *Rachamim* is maternity itself. God as merciful is God defined by maternity."[9] From the depths of this mercy, human life begins to stir, and with it all of creation unfolds.

In the *Zohar* this metaphysical significance of the mother in the Jewish tradition finds a mystical expression: "First came *Ehyeh* (I shall be), the dark womb of all. Then *Asher Ehyeh* (That I am), indicating the readiness of the Mother to beget all.[10] Begetting all, the Zohar further teaches, the Supernal Mother begets all of humanity: "The [Supernal] Mother said: 'Let us make man in our image.'"[11] This association of the mother with the Creation, moreover, links the mother to the Covenant, since, according to the Torah commentary of the thirteenth-century sage Nachmanides, *brit* or "covenant," is a cognate of *bara,* which means "created."[12] Because the mother is thus tied to the Covenant of Israel, she is connected to the chosenness of Israel, which in turn distinguishes the greatness of Israel. Therefore it is said in the midrash on the Song of Songs that "the greatness of Israel" may be compared "to a woman bearing child."[13] The bearer of Creation and Covenant, the mother bears life into the world, just as she bears life upon the birth of a child. Why? Because, as the bearer of Creation and Covenant, she is the bearer of the

Torah, and the Torah, in turn, signifies God's Presence in the world. From that presence life derives its meaning and its sanctity, its substance and its sense.

In this connection the sixteenth-century mystic Yitzhak Luria once asked, "If Binah or Understanding, which is associated with the Mother, is a mental process, why is it said to be in the heart, and not in the head?" To which Aryeh Kaplan replies, "The heart is actually the Personification of Imma-Mother, which is Binah-Understanding, where She reveals herself."[14] If we may be allowed a moment of our own midrash, we observe that the *lamed* and *beit* that end and begin the Torah form the word *lev,* meaning "heart." Therefore it is upon the heart that the teaching is to be inscribed (Deut. 6:6), for the heart is the receptacle of the Torah. Thus, says the twelfth-century sage Abraham ibn Ezra, "all precepts written in the Torah, transmitted by tradition, or enacted by the Rabbis aim at perfecting the heart."[15] Who is personified by the heart, making possible this perfection at the very core of life? The mother: she whom the *beit* situates at the beginning of the Torah signifies the sum of the Torah in her personification as the *lev* or the heart of all things.

What, then, comes under assault in the Nazis' calculated destruction of mothers and motherhood? The tradition tells us: God and Torah, Creation and Covenant, everything that sanctifies our dwelling in the world and our bringing life into the world. One can see why the women of the camps would strive so desperately to save the life of a mother; one can see exactly what they struggled to preserve. But what do they kill when they kill a child to save that life?

In Deuteronomy Rabbah Rabbi Judah the Nasi, the redactor of the Mishnah, declares, "Come and see how beloved are the children to the Holy One, blessed be He. The Sanhedrin were exiled but the *Shekhinah* did not go into exile with them. When, however the children were exiled, the *Shekhinah* went into exile with them."[16] Recalling that the *Shekhinah,* or the Divine Presence, is a feminine entity—indeed, the Talmud suggests that it is a maternal entity (see *Kiddushin* 31b)—one immediately envisions a loving mother attending to her little ones even as they are sent into exile. Why the extreme urgency of her concern? Because, it is taught in the Talmud, "the world endures only for the sake of the breath of the school children" (*Shabbat* 119b). For on the breath of the children, both in prayer and at play, vibrates the spirit of the *Shekhinah* herself. Thus, says the *Zohar,* "from the 'breath' which issues out of the mouth the voice is formed, and according to a well-known dictum, the world is upheld only by the merit of the 'breath' of little school children who have not yet tasted sin. Breath is itself mixture, being composed of air and moisture, and through it the world is carried on. Esoterically speaking, the breath of the little ones becomes 'voice,' and

spreads throughout the whole universe, so that they become the guardians of the world."[17] Not by might but by spirit the world endures as long as it attends to the "voice" that speaks from within the breath of the children, from the first breath they draw.

Is that breath, then, to be suffocated to save the mother? Is the mother herself not destroyed as a mother with the suffocation of that breath?

One begins to sense the gravity of the moral dilemma that confronted the women in the death camps when they were forced to choose between saving a mother or losing both mother and child. If the mother dies with the child, then perhaps she at least dies as a mother. But if she lives at the expense of the child, does she remain a mother? If not, then the dilemma itself goes into the Nazis' destruction of the mother.

"Mommyyy! Where are you? Mommy!" a voice cries out from the depths of the Event. "They are killing my mother! Everybody, listen! Can't you hear? Oh, Mommy! Oh, God, they are killing my mother!"[18] And another voice, the voice of memory, recalls, "The scent of spring wasn't delicious. The earth didn't smile. It shrieked in pain. The air was filled with the stench of death. Unnatural death. The smoke was thick. The sun couldn't crack through. The scent was the smell of burning flesh. The burning flesh was your mother."[19] These lines require no commentary. In these voices from the death camps reverberate the outcry of a people and a world overwhelmed by the Nazis' assault on the mother.

This assault on the mother, however, was not initiated in the death camps. It began in the ghetto. On February 5, 1942, for example, Vilna Ghetto diarist Herman Kruk wrote "Today the Gestapo summoned two members of the Judenrat and notified them: No more Jewish children are to be born. The order came from Berlin."[20] Six months later, in his diary from the Kovno Ghetto, Avraham Tory noted, "From September on, giving birth is strictly forbidden. Pregnant women will be put to death." Recalling the significance of the mother in the tradition, we realize that when a pregnant woman is put to death, more than a mother and her babe are murdered, physically and metaphysically. This point becomes even clearer when on February 4, 1943, Tory laments, "It was terrible to watch the women getting on the truck; they held in their arms babies of different ages and wrapped in more and more sweaters so that they would not catch cold on the way [to their death] !"[21] Exceeding the horror of slaughtering pregnant women, it seems that the Nazis waited until many of these mothers held their babies in their arms before murdering them and their infants with them.

What are these mothers to say that would declare their love to their little ones as they wrap them in another sweater to keep them from catching cold

on their way to the cold and the darkness of a mass grave? There is no reply to such a question; every attempt to reply is transformed into a crescendo of horror. And the horror that overwhelms Tory oozes from the words of Yitzhak Katznelson when he cries out, "These mothers with babes in their wombs! This murderous German nation! That was their chief joy! To destroy women with child!"[22] It was their chief joy because it was an expression of their primary aim; it was the joy of those who bask in the satisfaction of a job well done.

Since a mother is a mother by virtue of a certain relation to her child, the assault on the mothers of Israel included an assault on that very relationship, an assault not just on the body but on the being of the mother, an ontological assault. We have seen a variation of this onslaught in Tory's account of the women who wrapped their little ones in sweaters as they were being taken to a mass grave. In his diary Josef Katz records a similar incident, one related to him by a woman from the ghetto in Liepaja. "When the SS surrounded the ghetto," she told him, "I thought our last hour had struck. I took my little children and dressed them in their woolen socks and their best little dresses. I thought my children should be nice and warm when they go to their deaths."[23] Nice and warm: one might take this to be an example of the invincibility of a mother's care for her children, but it cannot be understood in such a manner, since a mother's care is a care for life. In the world of humanity a mother dresses her children "nice and warm" for a cold winter's day, not for their last day. Here, then, not just the mother but the loving relation that makes her a mother is twisted out of the world and turned over to the anti-world.

Hence the condition of the orphan becomes the definitive, ontological condition of the Jew. In this condition we see a manifestation of what Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi have independently described as "a war against memory."[24] For here not only are individuals made into orphans, but a whole people is existentially orphaned, their essence redefined as the essence of the orphan. Significantly, in many cases—and, from an ontological standpoint, in every case—the accounts that come to us from Holocaust survivors are the testimonies not just of survivors but of orphans. And what do these orphans remember? The slaughter of the one who would never forget them.

While standing at the window of a Nazi prison cell, Paul Trepman, for example, remembers looking out into a courtyard, where Jews stand naked, waiting to be murdered, and from the silent suffering of that crowd a terrible vision comes to him. "My mother," he writes, "had probably perished in the same way in the Warsaw ghetto, along with my sister, and the rest of my family. Now, for the first time, I felt truly orphaned."[25] Now, for the first time, he belongs to no one's memory. Similarly, Sara Zyskind's memoir

begins with the memory of the last Mother's Day that her mother enjoyed, before the destruction of all days. But soon she loses her mother to the slow death of ghetto life, and the memory of an outcry rises to the surface of her page: "I don't want to be an orphan, Mother!"[26] The cry of "I don't want to be an orphan" is a cry of "I don't want to be forgotten." The orphan's memory is the memory of the loss of the one by whom the human being is always remembered.

The bottomless void, the infinite emptiness, experienced by the orphan is the void and the emptiness of being forgotten—by force, by murder, not by an act of God, who remembers us even when He takes our mothers from us. Losing those hands and that face, the child loses her own hands and face, her own deeds and words, to become "the shadow of another shadow," as Ana Vinocur expresses it. "I felt an infinite emptiness in my mind and heart," she recalls. "I had lost the most precious being in my life. . . . They've taken my mother away. I'm nothing but the shadow of another shadow."[27] Once the mother is turned to ash, creation is returned to the *tohu v'bohu,* the chaos and the void, antecedent to every origin. For the *chesed,* the loving kindness, in which creation originates is obliterated.

Rabbi Ginsburgh reminds us that "loving kindness is the means through which God's presence is ultimately revealed," and it is originally revealed through the mother.[28] In the Tanya Rabbi Schneur Zalman maintains that loving kindness in the form of charity is feminine and, by implication, maternal for "it receives a radiation from the light of the *En Sof* that [like a womb] encompasses all worlds."[29] From a Jewish perspective, therefore, maternal love is not just a feeling or a state of mind but is the manifestation and revelation of the Most High. When that love is targeted for extermination, the light of all there is to hold dear, the light that was in the beginning, is assailed. Hence the Nazis' assault on the mother assumes a metaphysical aspect in the annihilation of maternal love.

Like the light created upon the first utterance of the Creation, the mother's love is the mainstay of life, even and especially during the reign of death; she is the one who reveals to the individual that he is still a human being and that his life matters. Representing love in its holiest aspect, the mother embodies the opposite not only of human indifference but of ontological indifference, the opposite of what Levinas calls the "there is" or "the phenomenon of impersonal being."[30] Maternal love, in short, represents a loving nonindifference that comes from beyond the human being to awaken a nonindifference within the human being. If, as Olga Lengyel declares, "inhumanity was the natural order of things at Birkenau," it is because Birkenau is the phenomenological manifestation of an imposed ontological indifference.[31] For in Birkenau maternal love was carefully eliminated from the order of being; in Birkenau maternal love was a capital crime.

Where maternal love does exist, it signifies not only that someone cares but that two human beings stand in a loving and therefore a meaningful relation to each other, in the original and most fundamental relation of one person to another. And so in her memoir Kitty Hart writes, "One thing I needed very much: regular visits to my mother." For every other being she encountered in the concentrationary universe declared to her that she was a nonbeing, not a child or a person at all but a mere shadow about to be swallowed up by the night. Through her mother's eyes, however, she could retrieve some trace of herself as one who is loved and who is therefore alive. When she fell ill with typhus, in fact, Kitty once again received life from her mother. "Mother talked to me," she writes, "though all she got in return was rambling nonsense. I did not even recognize her. But she persevered, slowly and steadily drawing me back to life."[32] In these lines we see that maternal love is as unconditional as it is deep, an absolute that is a reflection of the Absolute. The mother speaks, which is to say, the mother loves, without the reinforcement of response or recognition. She loves, then, without ground or limitation, infinitely and eternally, as God loves.

And so she summons from the child a love that also transcends the boundaries of time and death, as one may see from a memory recorded by Sara Nomberg-Przytyk: "A young girl whose mother was assigned to the gas did not want to be separated from her. She wanted to die with her mother. They tore her from her mother by force."[33] Here the assault on maternal love takes the form of an assault on the love for the mother, even unto death. Not only are the mother and child consigned to death, but the love between them is also condemned through the elimination of the embrace that arises between them. The space between the two, where this love abides. is obliterated by forcing each to die separately, in isolation from each other: no more visits, no more look, no more being together. Not even in the gas chamber.

When, upon their arrival at Birkenau, mothers are sent to the left and their children to the right, it is not simply the division of a transport into two groups, one condemned and the other yet to be condemned; what transpires is a rending of the Covenant itself, a tearing of a wound into the heart of Creation. "Mama!" Isabella Leitner screams in the midst of this upheaval. "Turn around. I must see you before you go to wherever you are going. Mama, turn around. You've got to. We have to say good-bye. Mama! If you don't turn around I'll run after you. But they won't let me. I must stay on the 'life' side. Mama!"[34] No good-bye. No last look. Such things belong only to the world that comes from the hand of the Creator, only to the world where there are mothers, not to the anti-world where Joseph Mengele orchestrates the annihilation of the mother with a wave of his baton. And we know why "life" is placed in quotation marks: there is no "life" in this place where all that is sacred is turned inside out. The essence of the memory of

Auschwitz is marked by the memory of this essence of Auschwitz, by this obliteration of the mother who signifies the obliteration of self and world.

This point is devastatingly illustrated in the last of Ka-tzetnik's visions in *Shivitti,* where he finally beholds the image of Auschwitz itself: "My mother. I see her naked and marching in line, one among Them, her face turned towards the gas chambers. 'Mama! Mama! Mama!' A voice comes rolling down to me out of the Auschwitz sky. The echo of each separate word is a hammer crashing on my eardrums. It's my mother, naked. She's going to be gassed. I run after her. I cry out, 'Mama! Mama!' I, outside that line, run after her: 'Mama! Listen to me! Mama!' My mother naked. Going to be gassed. I behold my mother's skull and in my mother's skull I see me. And I chase after me inside my mother's skull. And my mother is naked. Going to be gassed. I'm choking!"[35] The mother is the strength of Israel, Jewish tradition maintains. In that mass of Jews consigned to the flames it is she who is on her way to the gas chambers, every Jewish mother in every Jew and every Jew in every Jewish mother. For the mother is the embodiment of the origin from which Israel arises.

That is what the Nazis set out to exterminate in their extermination of the Jews. And that is what the inmates of the death camps struggle to save in their efforts to save the mother in the midst of an overwhelming moral dilemma.

Isabella Leitner offers us a devastating description of what transpired upon the birth of a child in Auschwitz. It is worth quoting at length:

> Most of us are born to live—to die, but to live first. You, dear darling, you are being born only to die. How good of you to come before roll call though, so your mother does not have to stand at attention while you are being born. Dropping out of the womb onto the ground with your mother's thighs shielding you like wings of angels is an infinitely nicer way to die than being fed into the gas chamber. But we are not having *Zeil Appell,* so we can stand around and listen to your mother's muffled cries.
>
> And now that you are born, your mother begs to see you, to hold you. But we know that if we give you to her, there will be a struggle to take you away again, so we cannot let her see you because you don't belong to her. You belong to the gas chamber. Your mother has no rights. She only brought forth fodder for the gas chamber. She is not a mother. She is just a dirty Jew who has soiled the Aryan landscape with another dirty Jew. How dare she think of you in human terms?
>
> And so, dear baby, you are on your way to heaven to meet a recent arrival who is blowing a loving kiss to you through the smoke, a dear friend, your maker—your father.[36]

Of course, the little one born here is born not just to die but to be killed: the angel whose wings surround the infant is the Angel of Death. And yet the Angel of Death might here be mistaken for a maternal angel of mercy: for the task of making the babe into fodder for the gas chamber falls to compassionate women who with loving hands take the infant from the mother and see to its death—women who might themselves be mothers.

It is they who recall, "For a moment, for just a moment, we had a real smell of a real life, and we touched the dear little one before she was wrapped in a piece of paper and quickly handed to the *Blockelteste* so the SS wouldn't discover who the mother was, because then she, too, would have had to accompany the baby to the ovens. That touch was so delicious. Are we ever to know what life-giving feels like? Not here. Perhaps out there, where they have diapers, and formulas, and baby carriages—and life."[37] The babe was hidden from the SS, but who could hide the mother from herself? And where were the others to hide, those women who gave the child over to death?

A world where they have diapers and formulas and baby carriages—even a world in which a mother may die in order to save her child—is a world that retains its ontological order, one upon which God may still pronounce, "It is very good." The reversal of this order is the mark of the anti-world ruled by the SS anti-god, ruled by Mengele, who once explained, "When a Jewish child is born . . . I can't set the child free because there are no longer any Jews who live in freedom. I can't let the child stay in the camp because there are no facilities in the camp that would enable the child to develop normally. It would not be humanitarian to send a child to the ovens without permitting the mother to be there to witness the child's death. That's why I send the mother and the child to the gas ovens together."[38] If the humanitarian belongs to the moral, then Mengele may understand himself to be acting morally in killing mothers with their infants. What, then, is the moral response to that morality? And what becomes of the moral demand to save the life of a mother?

When a woman named Esther announced to Sara Nomberg-Przytyk that she was going to have a baby, Sara's reaction was: "I turned to stone." Not "Oh, how wonderful!" or even "How could you be so foolish?" but the silence of turning to stone. That is the response elicited by these glad tidings in the midst of the anti-world. For Sara was well aware of Mengele's humanitarianism. And she was well aware of the humanitarian measures that must be taken to counter the humanitarianism of Mengele. "Our procedure," an inmate called Mancy had explained to her, "is to kill the baby after birth in such a way that the mother doesn't know about it. . . . We give the baby an injection. After that, the baby dies. The mother is told that the baby was born dead. After dark, the baby is thrown on a pile of corpses, and in that manner we save the mother. I want so much for the babies to be born dead, but out

of spite they are born healthy." When Esther gave birth to her baby, "the attendants tried to convince her not to feed the baby so that it would die of hunger. Esther would not hear of it. She gave the baby her breast and talked with wonder about how beautifully it suckled. The supervisor of the infirmary had a duty to report all births, but somehow she delayed. She had pity on Esther."[39] The result of this pity was that three days later both Esther and her baby were gassed. What sort of pity, then, is one to have?

Here the singular horror, the ethical and metaphysical horror, that belongs to the realm of the Holocaust is that one is led to kill not to destroy but to save, to kill out of love, both for the mother and for the child. "No one will ever know," writes Gisella Perl, a woman who served as a doctor in Auschwitz, "what it meant to me to destroy these babies. After years and years of medical practice, childbirth was still to me the most beautiful, the greatest miracle of nature. I loved those newborn babies not as a doctor but as a mother and it was again and again my own child whom I killed to save the life of a woman."[40] My own child: one might think that to destroy one's own child is to destroy a dimension of one's own being that is revealed only through the child. Levinas describes paternity as the opening up of a "future beyond my own being," as "seeing the possibilities of the other as your own possibilities."[41] The child therefore signifies meaning in the life of the mother, as well as in the life of the one who loves the child like a mother. She who strangles the child wrings her own heart and soul. Here too we glimpse an aspect of the singularity of the Event.

And so we can see why at times it may have been very difficult for Dr. Perl to destroy a child even to save the mother. She relates an incident, for example, that occurred when she was unable to bring herself to kill a baby born to a woman named Yolanda. After two days, however, she says, "I could hide him no longer. I knew that if he were discovered, it would mean death to Yolanda, to myself and to all these pregnant women whom my skill could still save. I took the warm little body in my hands, kissed the smooth face, caressed the long hair—then strangled him and buried his body under a mountain of corpses waiting to be cremated.[42] The incongruity of the caress of love coupled with the touch of death is staggering. The loving embrace of the child consecrates the moral relation to the child; taken together they affirm the meaning signified by the child. But in a realm where the moral relation is expressed by killing the child, both the relation and the meaning it consecrates are turned on end.

A time came when, according to Dr. Perl, Mengele would exploit this overturning even further, declaring that, while babies still had to be destroyed, the women who delivered them would be spared. But no sooner were 192 expectant mothers identified than Mengele "changed his mind" and had all of them "loaded on a single truck and tossed—alive—into the

flames of the crematory."[43] Thus Dr. Perl received a demonstration of why she must do what she must do.

We are taught in the Mishnah that the world is sustained by three things: Torah, worship, and acts of loving kindness (*Avot* 1:2). An act of loving kindness is a *mitzvah,* and a *mitzvah,* in the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel, is "a prayer in the form of a deed."[44] What, then, is the greatest *mitzvah,* the most profound utterance to God in the form of a deed, the *mitzvah* that overrides all other *mitzvot?* It is the saving of a life, which is the saving of a world. For in the Mishnah we are taught that saving a single life is like saving the entire world (*Sanhedrin* 4:5). In the same passage, however, we are taught that to destroy a single life is like destroying the entire world. Where, then, is the *mitzvah* in killing an infant to save the mother? What does this prayer in the form of a deed say to God? And what becomes of Dr. Perl's maternal love in this act of loving kindness?

Her comrade Olga Lengyel has a response, if not an answer, to these questions, for she sees a terrible implication of the situation into which these women were thrown in their effort to save a mother. "The Germans succeeded." she laments, "in making murderers of even us. To this day the picture of those murdered babies haunts me. Our own children had perished in the gas chambers and were cremated in the Birkenau ovens, and we dispatched the lives of others before their first voices had left their tiny lungs."[45] But have the Nazis, who would displace the Creator by removing the mother from creation, indeed succeeded in recreating these women in their own image? Are these women who kill the children they love like a mother indeed made into murderers? Do they have the moral status of a murderer?

To these questions we must answer, no. Let us see why.

The justification for killing babies? Anyone with even a shred of moral sensibility reels at this combination of words. To entertain for even a moment the idea that there might be a moral justification for killing babies is a moral outrage. And yet, as it often happens when dealing with the Holocaust, here there looms an insistent *and yet.*

To demonstrate the justification for killing these infants, we must first distinguish the context for this killing of babies in the camps from other contexts. It happened, for example, that babies were killed by people who were in hiding so that the cries of the little ones would not give them away. Aryeh Klonicki-Klonymus, the author of *The Diary of Adam's Father,* faced such a dilemma. "I had some heated encounters," he relates, "with fellow Jews who were in hiding. They demanded that I allow the strangulation of my child. Among them were mothers whose children had already met this fate. Of course I replied to them that as long as I was alive such a thing would not come to pass."[46] It did not come to pass. Although Klonicki-Klonymus and

his family were indeed murdered by the Nazis, it was not the result of their having been given away by the cries of the babe—cries that in the world announce the dearness of life and not the threat of death.

It must also be emphasized that in such instances the aim in killing a child was to save one's own life; nor was the act of killing babies in hiding undertaken in response to a prohibition against birth. The women who killed babies born in the camps, however, did so to save the life of another and to protect the mother against that prohibition. Not only were they interested in saving the life of another, but they acted at the risk of their own lives; what these women feared was not their own death but the death of the other, of the one bearing the child, in the face of a capital prohibition against birth. And "the fear for the death of the other," Levinas points out, "is certainly at the basis of the responsibility for him."[47] Therefore it is at the basis of our moral relation to the other. Killing babies came to be the only remaining moral response to the moral outrage of the prohibition against birth.

The dilemma, of course, arises, when we note that the mother is not the only other person in this situation: in addition to the mother who is saved, there is the child who is killed. Here it might be argued that these women in fact became accomplices to the Nazis, who themselves were bent on the slaughter of Jewish infants. Indeed, it may be argued, these women could have said, "Take these babies with their mothers, if that is your wish. But it is not our wish, and our hands won't be soiled by having any share in your design. We refuse to play any part in your efforts to murder our people in the murder of our mothers and their infants. They will go to God as mother and child. And, if there is a God, you will go to hell!" They cannot be viewed as accomplices, however, because they did not intend the annihilation that their captors intended. And, while the mother and her child may go to God, there is no going to God for these women if they should refuse to save half of the lives that would otherwise be destroyed. It may be also pointed out that these mothers, like all Jews, were already marked for the gas chambers, so that the attempt to save them was futile. But the survival of some demonstrates another fact: the death for which they were marked as Jews was not the necessary death that awaited them, if they had been found to have borne a Jewish child into the world. In the case of the Jewish mothers, the crime of giving birth was added to the crime of being Jews.

Other objections to this killing can be raised. It may be said, for example, that killing a woman's newborn robs her of her status as mother and thus plays into the Nazis' assault on the mother. To this objection we answer that those who were saved have the potential to become mothers once again, if they should survive the camp. Although it is true that a woman derives her status as mother from the child, the child derives his or her being from the mother: she is the origin, and her preservation is a preservation of the origin.

Saving the mother, therefore, does not amount to destroying motherhood as the Nazis would have it destroyed; on the contrary, it affirms the dearness of the one who gives birth and thereby affirms motherhood. As horrible as it may sound—and it is horrific—the women who made the decision to offer up the lives of these little ones were justified in their decision. Those lives were given up for the sake of many lives, for the lives not only of their mothers but also for their future brothers and sisters. Therefore, the women who were determined to save the mother were determined to save the future, which is the realm not only of hope but of meaning. Preserving the mother—even at the terrible price of killing the little one—women like Gisella Perl and Olga Lengyel preserved a basis for pursuing a path into the future, for engaging a mission, without which there is no meaning, no humanity. Thus preserving a future, they resisted the Nazi murder machine even as they resorted to killing the most innocent of the innocent.

If we should turn to Jewish law to seek further justification for this position, it might seem that we have found it in a Mishnah from tractate *Oholot,* where it is written "If a woman is in hard travail, one cuts up the child in her womb and brings it forth member by member, because her life comes before that of [the child]" (7:6). Yet this flight to Halakhah not only fails to provide us with a justification; it makes that justification even more problematic. For if we read further in the same Mishnah, we discover that Jewish law serves more to complicate than to clarify the dilemma: "But if the greater part [of the infant] has proceeded forth, one may not touch it, for one may not set aside one person's life for that of another" (7:6). Halakhah, however, is Jewish law for life lived in a Jewish community and not for life turned over to the machinery of death aimed at the obliteration of that community. Therefore, we must ask, Does the mother's life come before the child's life, or does she lose that precedence once the child is born? But we must also ask, What if the thing threatening the life of each is not a medical condition but a Nazi murderer? That is, what if it is a question not of which we allow to die but of which we allow to be *murdered?* To this question even the Halakhah has no answer.

Yes, the women in the camps took the lives of infants, but they did not do so in an act of murder. Rather, they did so to prevent two acts of murder. Murder is not only the intended taking of the life of another; it is the appropriation of another's life as one's own, a taking possession of another's life in one's own interests, in such a way that we lay the life of the other upon an altar erected to ourselves, as Cain murdered Abel. But the women in the camps are not Cain. If God should put to anyone the questions He put to Cain—Where is your brother? and What have you done?—He puts them not to the women who killed those babies but to the Nazis who prohibited their birth.

Unlike Cain, who took a life in an effort to undermine the origin of life, the women who killed babies in the camps sought to save the mother, who, again, is situated at the origin, and thereby preserve the origin. The origin of what? The origin of life, certainly. But more than that: the mother is the origin or the sanctity of life and therefore of the very prohibition against murder. For, as Levinas has rightly argued, without woman—without the mother—man knows "nothing which transforms his natural life into ethics, nothing which permits living a life, not even the death that one dies for another."[48] And, we might add, without the mother man knows nothing of the prohibition against taking the life of another. Even as they killed these infants, the women in the camp preserved the prohibition against murder in their preservation of the mother. Why? Because, situated at the origin, the mother represents a transcendent ground beyond being, from which all that appears in being derives its meaning and its value. Thus the moral dilemma that confronted the women in the death camps entailed the salvation of the ground of morality itself. Without the preservation of the mother, this discussion would itself be rendered pointless.

In his version of the categorical imperative known as the formula of the end in itself, Immanuel Kant writes, "The practical imperative will therefore be the following: Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means."[49] In the realm of humanity, where treating a human being in a certain manner becomes an issue, rational beings may invoke such a standard to resolve their moral dilemmas. Even in the Third Reich the standard could be invoked, as Kurt Huber did, when the action, and not the *being*, of the individual was the thing deemed criminal. But, as Fackenheim has shown, under the Third Reich being Jewish was itself defined as criminal, so that the appearance of a "*Jewish* Huber" was made "systematically impossible."[50] It will not do, therefore, to invoke Kant's formula of the end in itself as a guide for measuring the moral dilemma facing the women in the camps.

Indeed, one of the distinguishing contradictions of the anti-human realm of the anti-world was that treating one person as a means became the only way of treating another as an end. Such a realm is neither amoral nor immoral—it is anti-moral. Had these women been caught killing an infant, it would have meant their death—not for killing the infant but for failing to see to it that the mother was murdered along with the infant. The women who killed babies to save other women did so not to sustain the Kingdom of Night into which they had been cast but to sustain the prospect for a return to another kingdom, to a world where moral dilemmas are intelligible. Refusing to allow a mother to join her child in death was their only means of

choosing life. If, as we are taught in the Torah (see Deut. 30:15), choosing life means choosing good, then the choice they made was the only moral choice they could have made—if it still makes sense to speak of a moral choice in such a realm. Hence the singularity of the moral dilemma facing the women who decided to take the lives of the little ones is inextricably connected to the uniqueness of the Holocaust itself. It suggests that the phrase "moral dilemmas of the Holocaust" may be an impossible combination of words. And yet. . . .

Perhaps the only legitimate response to the "moral dilemma of motherhood" is not to indulge in the luxury of moral arguments such as this one but to attend silently to the response made by the likes of Isabella Leitner. "Mother, I will keep you alive," she says of the one whom she had seen led away to death. How does she keep her mother alive—and with her mother, mother*hood*—so that she may find her way back into a world of moral dilemmas? She tells us: "Mama, Mama, I'm pregnant! Isn't that a miracle, Mama? Isn't it incredible, Mama? I stood in front of the crematorium, and now there is another heart beating within that very body that was condemned to ashes. Two lives in one, Mama—I'm pregnant! Mama, we've named him Peter. You know how much I like that name. It translates into stone, or rock. You were the rock, Mama. You laid the foundation. Peter has started the birth of the new six million."[51] There can be no doubt that when she felt that life stir within her, she remembered those mothers who were robbed of their motherhood. Yes, perhaps that is the way to answer the moral dilemma of motherhood: to become mothers and fathers in a sanctification of what was a capital crime in the Nazi murder camps. More convincingly than any argument, that is what Isabella Leitner and women like her may teach us each time they give birth to a Jewish child.

NOTES

1. Emmanuel Ringelblum, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelbaum,* ed. and trans. Jacob Sloan (1958; reprint, New York: Schocken, 1974), p. 230.

2. Germaine Tillion, *Ravensbrück,* trans. Gerald Satterwhite (New York: Anchor, 1975), p. 77.

3. Emil L. Fackenheim, *The Jewish Bible After the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 87.

4. Rashi, *Commentary on the Torah,* Vol. 2, trans. M. Rosenbaum and N. M. Silbermann (Jerusalem: Silbermann Family, 1972), p. 97.

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Holocaust Victims of Privilege

Susan L. Pentlin

In the next century of Holocaust education and research, there will be fewer and fewer survivors to guide and help us understand the sparse written evidence left by victims and the thousands of pages of memoirs, oral testimony, trial transcripts, video productions, literary works, and archival evidence. This rich legacy of words and images from those who experienced the invasion of the Germans across the European continent, the occupation, the ghettos, the *Einsatz* killings, the concentration camps, and the death camps is what will remain. But we will have no one left to tell us what is not recorded or to share the experiences of those who hesitated or refused to tell their story.

Have we asked all the questions we should? Have survivors responded to our preconceptions? Have they kept silent in respect for the victims, or from their own inner conflicts? Josef Korman, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, talked with an interviewer in the 1970s. He began to explain his duties as a kitchen inspector and spoke about how he had to watch out for favoritism when the food was distributed to see that everyone got an equal portion. He spoke openly, explaining that "One saw pinched, starved faces everywhere, and among them, on the streets of the ghetto, one could also see fat, well-fed faces—Jews who had found a way to keep themselves provided with plenty." At this point, his wife objected, insisting, "'That's not necessary' with clear authority whenever her husband and his visitor spoke of things she apparently considered best not discussed—'unnecessary details' as she called them." It was not necessary to speak of those in privileged positions in the ghetto, the interviewer suggested, because, in a hostile world, she did not want her husband to make controversial comments about fellow Jews.[1]

Thus to understand the Holocaust and its moral implications, we need to consider not only what is in the construct of testimony on the experience, but what has been left outside, or perhaps only hinted. We must begin to approach taboo topics which have been suppressed, out of consideration for survivors and their families, as well as other topics which are simply not told or explored because they too are considered "not necessary." This is important for us in understanding the experience on a deeper level. It will help us understand the nuances of personality, social position, political beliefs, and morality of the victims and of the survivors.

We must also ask questions about the often private interrelations of survivors and survivor groups in the displaced persons camps after the war and in the post-Holocaust era. What have been their roles in shaping the postwar image of the Holocaust and its meaning for humanity? We know the rate of survival was increased for those with wealth, position, or privilege in the ghetto society. Their Holocaust experiences were different. Have those survivors been more or less vocal in the aftermath? Have some remained silent, out of remorse, guilt, embarrassment, or because they view themselves as undeserving? Whose judgment do they fear? Is it perhaps their own?

Primo Levi called *The Night of the Girondists*, a fictional account about a cruel man named Cohn, who ruthlessly filled the trains at Westerbork Camp in Holland every Tuesday, and his helpmate Jacques, "a debatable book, maybe a scandalous one, but it is good that scandals should come, for they provoke discussion and make for inner clarity." The figure that Levi wants us to examine, however, is not necessarily Cohn, for that is not the only scandal. He wants us to examine the "sordid, deplorable or pathetic creatures" around Cohn and the Germans who hang on to privilege, position, and wealth to save themselves. We must do this because "it is vital to recognize them if we hope to understand the human race, if we hope to be able to protect our inner selves should a similar trial ever recur."[2]

These are the questions that Korman's wife is referring to. She was not asking her husband to avoid the great issues of evil and depravity. She wants him to be silent about issues that were much more subtle and perhaps of greater importance for us in understanding the experience of the Holocaust, the trauma and the agony of survival that continues for many into today. These are the questions of position and privilege that led to moral dilemmas as victims of Nazi persecution desperately sought ways to survive, sometimes only for a few more days, and the role their choices have played in the lives of survivors in the post-Holocaust era.

Primo Levi describes this area as "the gray zone of *protekcja* and collaboration." He realizes that "Privileged prisoners were a minority within the Lager population, nevertheless they represent a potent majority among survivors. . . . The ascent of the privileged, not only in the Lager but in all

human coexistence, is an anguishing but unfailing phenomena: only in utopias is it absent. . . . Where power is exercised by few or only one against the many, privilege is born and proliferates, even against the will of the power itself. . . . It is a gray zone, poorly defined, where the two camps of masters and servants both diverge and converge." He also reminds us that most memoirs are written by those who "by their prevarications, abilities or good luck did not touch bottom."[3]

In the Warsaw Ghetto, after the deportations in late summer 1942, the Jewish Fighting Organization and other political youth assassinated collaborators in the ghetto. The assassinated collaborators included Jews who had made huge fortunes in deals and business with Germans or with the German military command and known Gestapo agents.[4] In the immediate postwar period, the reaction, especially among displaced survivors in Europe, was equally determined against collaborators. Those whose actions came into question included Gestapo collaborators, members of the ghetto councils, and the ghetto police and Kapos in the camps. Some were tried by Courts of Honors in Occupied Germany and found responsible for their actions. Later, several much-publicized cases against Jewish collaborators were tried in Israeli and German courts. However, guilt in a legal sense was often difficult to prove and to judge. Since the Germans' ultimate goal was to destroy the Jewish population, these collaborators were subordinated to the Germans' will,[5] so the lines between cooperation and collaboration were often indistinct. The courts of public morality have also tended to judge these defendants with leniency, as people wonder what they might have done to save themselves or family members if they had been tested in similar circumstances.[6]

The harshest judges of such guilt have generally been the plaintiffs themselves. Stanislav Adler, a Jewish policeman in the Warsaw Ghetto, gave his memoir to a friend shortly before his suicide in 1946. Although he had left the Order Service before the first deportation, Adler apparently had felt from "a moral point of view" that it was wrong for the ghetto police to have supervised labor roundups and labor camps. With honesty and self-examination, he admitted that the privileges of the position had been compromising: "The moral ferment caused in the Order Service by the round-ups for the labour camps did not manifest itself in any deeds. It stopped at moaning and swearing at the fate that brought one to such detestable service. Evidently, it was preferable to catch than to be caught. I can't recollect an instance of anyone leaving the Order Service in that period, but the rush of candidates from the 'best families' did not stop. . . . Like the others, I did not take immediate measure to quit instantaneously, fearing reprisals from the Security Police."[7]

Calel Perechodnik, a ghetto policeman in Otwock, a suburb of Warsaw, appears to judge himself with searing honesty in his "deathbed confession"

for having brought his wife and daughter to the deportation train "to their death." He asks "Am I a murderer?" and blames his own weakness. Sometimes he curses the Germans for having brought him to such a state. Other times, in his misery, he curses the victims for their fate, concluding that, as Jews, "we voluntarily sealed ourselves not with a sign of unity between us and God but with a seal of death, which led us to Treblinka." Although he stops short of confronting his own collaboration in the police actions, he knows that were he to survive he "will never be a useful member of society." He will be "neither a Jew nor Catholic not a decent man, not even a thief—simply a nobody."[8]

Perhaps his is no different than the self view of survivors who fall in Levi's "gray area." One young woman who survived in Levi's gray area is Mary Berg. Examining her diary and her life in the postwar world can help us to understand the moral dilemmas she faced as she was drawn into the German plan and the price of survival she may have paid. Her *Warsaw Ghetto: A Diary* was one of the first survivor accounts of life in the Warsaw Ghetto to appear in print. It came out in serial form in Yiddish in the *Jewish Morning Journal* and, in English, in a radical New York newspaper in the fall of 1944, and as a book in February 1945.[9]

S.L. Shneiderman, a Polish-born Yiddish journalist, helped Berg prepare a manuscript from the shorthand text of small diary notebooks she had brought with her to the United States. She told about her experiences in Poland after the German invasion. It is widely acknowledged for its authenticity, detail, and poignancy. The diary has been quoted or excerpted frequently since its publication. However, it has not appeared again in English in its entirety since 1945. In part, this is due to Berg's own denial of her past, in part perhaps to her position of privilege.

Berg was fifteen when she began her diary on October 10, 1939.[10] She related her family's experiences as they fled Lodz at the beginning of the German invasion. They survived the siege of Warsaw and returned briefly to Lodz. However, as the atrocities against the Jews intensified in the Wartheland, Mary and her sister returned to Warsaw in December 1939. Her parents joined them later, and the Bergs remained in the ghetto from the time it was closed off in November 1941 until a few days before the first major deportation began on July 22, 1942.

On July 17, 1942, the Bergs were interned as American citizens. From the windows of the Pawiak prison, the family witnessed the deportation of over 300,000 ghetto inhabitants. Later, Berg recalled seeing many friends among "the aged men with gray beards, the blooming young girls and proud young men, driven like cattle to the Umschlagplatz on Stawki Street to their deaths."[11] However, Mary and her family boarded a train that went west.

Shortly after midnight on January 18, 1943, the Bergs were sent with a group of foreign internees to an internment camp at Vittel, France, undoubtedly because the Germans were planning a second *Aktion* in the ghetto for the next day. Over a year later, they were selected for an exchange with German prisoners in the United States. On March 16, 1944, they arrived in the United States aboard a Swedish exchange ship. After Mary published her diary, she attended college, married and moved to a small town where she lives in relative anonymity.

Around 1957, Berg disassociated herself from the Shneidermans and from her published diary, saying she wanted to forget the past. She dropped out of public view. In 1984, she refused the royalties when it was published in Poland.[12] A few years ago, Berg denied being Jewish to a journalist and insisted that she had been adopted. She said that S.L. Shneiderman had "manipulated" her and that he had taken advantage of her youth. She also objected to references to her religion in the diary and offered no direct information about her past.

Today she reproaches Holocaust scholars for exploiting the Jewish Holocaust. Angrily, she asks why we don't organize conferences on the Armenians, Kurds, or Rwandians? She disparages the idea that teaching the Holocaust might stop its being repeated, arguing instead that the Holocaust is being repeated right now.[13] She is sensitive to human rights issues, but she does not speak out.

An American cousin of Berg's traces her reticence and apparent bitterness to anti-Semitism. In an interview, she said: "When they came over to this country, there was a great fear of being Jewish. They were raised in an area where you didn't dare say you were Jewish. They are afraid to admit it even here." Berg's earlier objection to references to her religion may make this seem plausible. However, anti-Semitism does not fully explain her stridency today, nor her refusal to publicly acknowledge her past.[14]

Paul Marcus and Alan Rosenberg offer a broad assessment of the irrational guilt that survivors like Berg may feel. "We suggest that survivor guilt reflects the survivor's difficulty in having lived in one symbolic world which is accepted for the purpose of survival . . . and then moving into another post-Holocaust symbolic world that is experienced as morally discontinuous with the previous one." Thus, survivors may experience guilt when they attempt to integrate their experiences in the Holocaust with the value structures by which they now judge themselves. One method they use to avoid confronting this feeling of guilt is to change their identity in some way. Another is to deny their past identify all together. Thus, internalizing their judgment of their behavior, they become their own harshest judges.[15]

Such an approach may provide a more adequate explanation for Berg's reaction today. In other words, her reaction may come not from guilt of

survival but from how she judges choices she as a young girl made to survive. Gutman explains that, in the ghetto, "it is clear that the Jewish public was subject to conditions of unprecedented stress, conditions that were the antithesis of values, concepts, and mores generally accepted in the past."[16] Joseph Kermish concludes that "In the unprecedented, inhuman conditions imposed on the Jewish population during German occupation, the Jewish child suffered the most."[17]

In the same vein, Natan Koninski, an educator in the Warsaw Ghetto, wrote a poignant "Profile of the Jewish Child," which was preserved in the Oneg Shabbat archive. He concluded that:

> The present war has . . . also left a deep imprint on the Jewish child, causing its character to undergo a radical change. As a child of a persecuted and pained nation, the Jewish child has suffered a series of jolts, the severity of which has probably never been experienced by a child of any other human community. . . . No part of the Polish Jewry has been unseared by the conflagration of war, nor any child saved from its destructive impact. If, indeed, not all children suffered in a uniformly deleterious measure, nonetheless the imprint of war is clearly discernible even in children of the wealthier class who may have suffered relatively less.[18]

Young people in the ghetto like Mary were sometimes disparagingly called "golden youth," but of course they were also traumatized by the events and the suffering around them and by their comparative good fortune. Therefore, we must look at the moral dilemmas Berg faced as a teenager in the Warsaw Ghetto and at the choices she and her family made to survive.

Early in the occupation, Berg learned that the Germans set a price on life and that those with wealth and privilege before the occupation would have a better chance to survive. She relates how, after the ghetto was established in Lodz, a schoolmate of hers came to Warsaw with "bloodcurdling stories." Her family had escaped, she told Mary, by "bribing the Gestapo with good American dollars." Of course, Berg knew that only "the well-to-do Jews" such as her family and friends had easy access to foreign currency (p. 26).

Berg's father owned an art gallery and traveled abroad to purchase works by European masters such as Poussin and Delacroix (p. 19). She attended a Polish language gymnasium, her family could spent six weeks in a health resort in the summer of 1939 (p. 11), and she had relatives living in the United States. Clearly, the Wattenbergs were among those in Lodz considered "well-to-do."

Although young, she realized she was privileged. She had no way to know her fate, but she knew that her chances were better than the "other Jews." She explained that those without privilege "have only a 10 per cent

chance at most [to survive]" (p. 30). Later, she frankly admitted knowing that "only those who have large sums of money are able to save themselves from this terrible life" (p. 32).

Furthermore, Berg had the insight to see that foreign citizens had a much better chance of survival. Jews with passports for neutral countries were exempt from wearing the Jewish star and doing forced labor. After two friends obtained papers as nationals of a South American country, she commented, "No wonder many Jews try to obtain such documents; but not all have the means to buy them or the courage to use them" (p. 30).

Berg's mother, Lena, was born in New York and was a citizen of the United States. At the age of twelve, Lena moved to Poland with her Polish-born parents and an older brother and sister, who were also born in the States. She had two younger brothers, Abie and Percy, who were born after the return to Poland. When her parents and older siblings returned to the States in the 1920s, Lena remained in Lodz and married Shia (Stanley) Wattenberg, a Polish citizen.[19]

Under the Germans, her mother's status as an American citizen gave the whole family protection and privileges, even though Berg and her sister had been born in Poland. They also felt, of course, the pressure of envy from friends and family in the ghetto. Sensitive as adolescents often are, they realized they were different. In December 1939, the mailman brought her mother a letter from the American consulate in Berlin. Berg noticed that he "could not refrain from expressing his envy over the fact that we have American connections" (p. 24).

On April 5, 1940, Berg noted, with mature perception, that "Polish citizens of Jewish origin have no one to protect them, except themselves" (p. 27). Later, she explained that her mother had a visiting card on the apartment door in Warsaw to indicate she was an American. A small American flag was a "wonderful talisman against the German bandits who freely visit all Jewish apartments." Of course, this also put the Bergs in the special position of being able to help others. This was so much the case that neighbors came to their apartment as soon as German uniforms came into view (p. 29).

Berg often seemed uncomfortable with the privileges and protection, but she also wanted, quite naturally, to enjoy life and be able to forget the horrors around her. She wanted to put the man in Lodz whom she saw the Germans murder from her window (p. 20) and the old Jewish woman she saw Polish "hooligans" hack up with knives in Warsaw (p. 27) out of her mind, at least for a little while. To survive day by day she began to adapt to life during the occupation, as young people readily do to new circumstances.

Many of her young friends from Lodz had also come to live in Warsaw. They wanted to spend time together, to share friendship, and to go back to living as they had before the occupation. They wanted to forget what they

had witnessed, their fears of the Germans and the growing poverty around them. One strategy they had was to avoid thinking too much about the future when they could. This was not so much because the future was uncertain, but because they saw no way to escape the horrible fate that their instincts told them lay ahead.

During the summer of 1940, most young Jews in Poland were doing forced labor, working frantically to support their families or living on relief. However, Berg's Lodz gymnasium started illegal classes in the ghetto. The principal, Dr. Michael Brandstetter,[20] and many of the teachers and students had come to Warsaw. The students met twice a week in the relative safety of the Berg home (pp. 32-33), working eagerly to prepare for graduation, as if there was a rosy future ahead. School, of course, was only possible for privileged youth. The students in the study groups usually had to pay their teachers about thirty to forty zlotys a month[21] and they were not able to bring home earnings to their families during this time.

More and more refugees came into the crowded ghetto, and conditions grew more and more distressing. The Jews in the ghetto began to establish a network of relief and self-help organizations. Eager to make a contribution, Berg and friends from Lodz founded a club as a way to raise relief funds. Soon, at the request of a representative of the Joint Distribution Committee, they decided to put on a musical show. They called themselves the "Lodz Artistic Group" (Lodzki Zespol Artystyczny) or, in Polish, the L.Z.A., whose letters appropriately, Berg felt, formed the word "tear" (pp. 34-37).

Although the ghetto policeman Stanislav Adler later recalled the group, writing that "their talents were mediocre, their productions of low quality,"[22] such performances were mainly enjoyed by the ghetto elite. Berg reported that she and her friends "had a lively time" and were quite a hit. She never said how much money they contributed to relief efforts (pp. 36-37). Another ghetto writer was cynical about this kind of relief work, which, he reported, was popular among the well-to-do youth in the ghetto. He commented, acidly: "a convenient cover—'collecting for the poor.'"[23]

On November 16, 1940, the Germans closed the Jewish quarter in Warsaw as a ghetto.[24] Berg and her friends in the L.Z.A. sat in the Berg home. They were "in a stupor and did not know what to undertake" (p. 39). The Bergs had fortunately been able to remain in their apartment at Sienna 41, on the corner of Sosnowa Street. It was included in the area referred to as the "Little Ghetto," at the southern border of the ghetto. The courtyard outside their windows opened onto the "Aryan" side of the ghetto, where they could still see people walking around freely.

The Little Ghetto became the privileged quarter. Gutman points out that "Even though the ghetto adopted the slogan 'all are equal,' some people were 'more equal' than others, and this imbalance could be felt on the streets

as well. Some streets, such as Sienna and Chlodna, were considered well-to-do sections. The apartments there were larger, the congestion lighter, and above all, the people relatively well fed. The streets were the addresses of the assimilated Jews . . . and rich Jews who had managed to hold on to a portion of their wealth."[25] Berg was aware of this inequality and of the importance wealth played in the life of the ghetto.

Berg's knowledge of the corruptibility of the Judenrat is clear from a later entry, after she and her family moved to an apartment at Chlodna 10, located at the western ghetto gate by the foot bridge over Chlodna Street. She explained that "the well-to-do, who could afford to bribe the officials of the housing office, get the best apartments on this street with its many large modern houses. Chlodna Street is generally considered the 'aristocratic' street of the ghetto, just as Sienna Street was at the beginning" (p. 129). Although the Bergs were refugees, they clearly had managed to hold on to some money and valuables. They also had been able to receive mail and packages from relatives in the States and as an American, Mrs. Berg was still permitted, at first, to leave the ghetto (p. 39-40).

A photo of Berg and her sister, showing them fashionably dressed, looking perky and self-aware, as they strolled on one of the less crowded ghetto streets[26] stands in stark contrast to the starvation and despair of most ghetto dwellers. Abraham Lewin, a ghetto diarist who perished, described a similar scene with obvious disapproval:

> The ghetto is most terrible to behold with its crowds of drawn faces with the colour drained out them. Some of them have the look of corpses that have been in the ground a few weeks. They are so horrifying that they cause us to shudder instinctively. Against the background of these literally skeletal figures and against the all-embracing gloom and despair that stares from every pair of eyes, from the packed mass of passers-by, a certain type of girl or young woman, few in number it must be said, shocks with her over-elegant attire. . . . Walking down the streets I observe this sickly elegance and am shamed in my own eyes.[27]

Berg seems to be describing herself in an entry in the spring of 1941 when she wrote about the "fashionable dress" on Sienna and Leszno Streets, where "women are seen in elegant coats and dresses fashioned by the best dressmakers" (p. 60). Here, as in other entries, she does not write critically on this show of wealth.

One of the documents recovered from the Oneg Shabbat archive is about Jewish youth in Warsaw. The unknown author referred to the "privileged" youth who usually came from assimilated families and lived in the style of Berg, her sister, and their friends from Lodz, describing them as the so-called golden youth. He viewed these youth quite critically. He concluded,

with obvious disapproval, commenting "the only meaning is found nowadays in fun and entertainment."[28]

The same archivist also commented that while there were starving youth in the ghetto, youth who worked desperately to support their families, and politically active youth, such youth were actually few in number. Most Warsaw youth, he said, "who indeed could earn, or eke out, a living—in short, the majority of the bright, vigorous intelligent young people have gone away." They had fled to the east, to Soviet-occupied areas, as the Germans invaded Poland in 1939. Ninety percent of the youth in the ghetto were refugees, mainly from Lodz and the neighboring towns.[29]

However, in other diary entries Berg remained sensitive to the growing desperation in the ghetto. In one moving passage she wrote about the "dreamers of bread" in the streets whose "eyes are veiled with a mist that belongs to another world." She explained that "usually they sit across from the windows of food stores, but their eyes no longer see the loaves that lie behind the glass, as in some remote inaccessible heaven" (p. 48).

Here, she expressed remorse for her privileges, concluding: "I have become really selfish. For the time being I am still warm and have food, but all around me there is so much misery and starvation that I am beginning to be very unhappy, " although one can perhaps also detect a note of self-pity in her reaction (p. 47). Another Oneg Shabbat essayist reminded future historians, that while these privileged youth lived comparatively well, "nevertheless they, too, were affected by wartime conditions which changed their lives in a negative way."[30]

Berg was at an age when young people typically develop their moral codes and sense of justice. On one hand, she wanted to keep her values and her faith in a just world of the future. On the other, she wanted to be with her friends and enjoy her youth as much as possible in the circumstances and resented feeling guilty for the privileges she had in the ghetto and for her will to survive. As a result, she had before her two models, the values of her prewar life in Lodz and those of the desperate, stressful world around her, created by life in the ghetto.

She sometimes deliberated before choosing which model to follow. She faced an obvious, moral dilemma in the fall of 1941, when she learned that the Judenrat was offering courses in metallurgy and other technical fields as well as one in applied graphic arts near her home on Sienna Street.[31] When she went to register, she found many of her friends among the nearly six hundred applicants, mainly other golden youth[32] who wanted to escape labor camp (p. 50).

Not surprisingly, there were only a few dozen openings. She admitted to her diary that she knew "pull" would play a large part in the selection of students. At first, she "rebelled" against this, but when she realized she had little

chance of being admitted, she "decided to resort to the same means." There was an additional selfishness in her decision, because she also admitted knowing that girls were not threatened with labor camps at the time as young boys were (pp. 50-52).

She had begun a few months earlier to understand the realities of pull and bribes, commonly referred to in ghetto slang as "if the cupboard plays," that they were the ways to gain advantages.[33] When the Judenrat established the Jewish Police force, she had explained, "more candidates presented themselves than were needed." She had then added, rather flippantly, "A special committee chose them, and 'pull' played an important part in their choice. At the very end, when only a few posts were available, money helped, too. . . . Even in Heaven not everyone is a saint" (p. 41).

Due to their prewar social standing, education, and wealth, many of Berg's relatives and friends had been able to acquire positions of privilege. Since Berg's uncle Abie got a position in the police force, she probably knew the system first hand (p. 147). Such positions enabled them to eat and live much better than the average ghetto dweller and thus survive at least awhile longer. Later, Berg explained that her Uncle Percy also got a job, picking up bricks in ruined buildings, but he had unfortunately lacked the pull with the Judenrat to get a higher paying position as an overseer (p. 63).

She also recognized that her boyfriend in the ghetto, Romek Kowalski, another golden youth from Lodz, had gotten a position as an overseer for constructing the ghetto wall because he had such pull. Kowalski was a relative of engineer Mieczslaw Lichtenbaum, the head of the wall construction commission formed by the Judenrat (pp. 63-64)[34] and of Marek Lichtenbaum, who became the head of the Judenrat after Adam Czerniakow committed suicide at the beginning of the Great Deportation.[35]

After what she describes as a "struggle," very likely meaning bribes changed hands, her father also got a coveted position as janitor in their apartment block. Janitors were appointed by the Judenrat and got a salary, free lodging, relief from community taxes and extra rations, as well as a pass from the Judenrat exempting them from forced labor. In Berg's words, "no wonder the job is hard to obtain" (p. 82). Also, Berg's sister Ann got the chance to attend classes to learn how to sew children's clothing. The classes were run by the Judenrat's Institute for Vocational Guidance and Training (p. 54).[36]

Another acquaintance of Berg's, Heniek Grynberg, was a smuggler in the ghetto. He was apparently involved in the underworld, as he frequented the Café Hirschfeld with Gestapo agents. His main business was bringing anti-typhus serum into the ghetto. Of course, as typhus swept the ghetto, the serum went to those who could pay high sums.[37] In an uncritical tone, Berg brags, "He is one of the most successful people in this new business. This can

be seen from his prosperous appearance and the elegant dresses worn by his wife and daughter" (p. 85).

At times Berg appears uncritical of the lack of morals in the ghetto, and she enjoys going to the cafes of Sienna Street to sing and to performances at the Femina Theater with Romek, and getting caught up in the excitement of someone like Grynberg. Perhaps this was her way to escape the starvation, disease, and constant danger in the ghetto, which she was truly sensitive to but powerless to change.

Just a few weeks earlier, however, she had noted a visit she made to a refugee home where she saw half-naked, unwashed children lying about listlessly. One child looked at her and said she was hungry. In self-judgment, she confessed in her diary: "I am overcome by a feeling of utter shame. I had eaten that day, but I did not have a piece of bread to give to that child. I did not dare look in her eyes, and went away" (p. 69).

She also enhanced her self-image through feelings of pity and contempt for one member of the L.Z.A., Tadek Szajer, who was a friend of Kowalski's as well. Szajer's father, an attorney from Lodz, was a member of the infamous Gestapo agency in the ghetto known as the "Thirteen," which claimed to fight against speculation in the ghetto. Tadek Szajer pursued Berg with youthful fervor, but she rejected his advances, apparently because his father was one of the main collaborators with Abram Gancwajch.[38] She admitted to her diary that he "earns good money and I suspect that on the quiet he does business with the Nazis" (p. 91).

Later she seems willing to believe Tadek when he tells her he joined the Ambulance Service run by the Thirteen "in order to appease his sense of guilt, for he feels partly responsible for his father's unsavory deals" (p. 123), although this actually seems more likely Berg's idea than Szajer's. The photos he gave her of him in his ambulance cap and of him swaggering along the ghetto street with two other young boys in the Red Emergency Service give a different picture.[39]

Adler described the Ambulance Service as only a pretense. The helpers were untrained and, he added, "the functionaries on duty ran away at the sight of a sick person."[40] Later Ringelblum was even more scathing in his description of the Ambulance Service's participation in rounding up Jews for deportation at the *Umschlagplatz:*

> Gancwajch's red-capped Special Ambulance Service was the worst. This organization of swindlers had never given a single Jew the medical aid they promised. They limited their activity to issuing authorization cards and caps, for thousands of zlotys. Possession of these, together with Gancwajch's personal assistance, exempted the owner from forced labor and was a defense against all kinds of trouble and taxes, in general. . . .

> It was this pretty gang that now voluntarily reported for the assignment of sending Jews to the hereafter—and they distinguished themselves with their brutality and inhumanity. Their caps were covered with the bloodstains of the Jewish people.[41]

Mazor refers to the mobile medic corp as "an instrument of terror."[42] Berg concludes later that Tadek probably speaks of his conscience merely to impress her (p. 130-31). Her aversion to Szajer and his father's "unsavory business deals" and her eventual decision not to see him was clearly the correct choice (p. 138).

In early 1942, Berg learned that American citizens had left the ghetto and that one acquaintance's father was interned in Germany. There were rumors of a prisoner exchange (p. 134). A few weeks later, she noted that pull and bribes could also be useful to gain internment. She wrote in her diary: "Naturally, one must have some scrap of paper stating that at least one member of the family is a foreign citizen. My mother is lucky in this respect, for she is a full-fledged American citizen" (p. 144).

Mrs. Berg made contact with a notorious Gestapo agent named Adam Zurawin,[43] who promised to help get the family on the internment list. Naively, her daughter confessed to believing "it seems that despite his position he has remained a decent man" (p. 155). Most likely, bribe money passed into his hands before he registered Mrs. Berg with the Gestapo. A month later, Mary Berg and her family marched through the ghetto, with about seven hundred citizens of neutral European and American countries, twenty-one of whom were Americans, to internment in the Pawiak prison (pp. 161-66).

Berg left not only Kowalski and her many girl friends, but her mother's two younger, Polish-born brothers. Her Uncle Abie accompanied them to the prison gate. In parting, he implored her mother, "How can you leave me?" (p. 164) Later, in the relative safety of the Vittel camp, waiting to be exchanged, Berg wrote in her diary: "we, who have been rescued from the ghetto, are ashamed to look at each other. Had we the right to save ourselves? . . . God, why must there be all of this cruelty? I am ashamed. Here I am, breathing fresh air, and there my people are suffocating in gas and perishing in flames, burned alive. Why?" (p. 227)

Berg and her parents faced moral dilemmas and made difficult choices to survive the ghetto. By denying who she is today, she may be expressing her shame that privilege, position, wealth, and bribes earned her the right to life, not heroism or special cleverness. Her questions to me are not unlike those she wrote in her diary as a seventeen-year girl in the ghetto. Her message today seems to be in the same angry voice one reads in her diary. It is the unhappy voice of the young girl who wrote over fifty years ago: "Where are you,

foreign correspondents? Why don't you come here and describe the sensational scenes of the ghetto? No doubt you don't want to spoil your appetite? . . . Is the whole world poisoned? Is there no justice anywhere? Will no one hear our cries of despair?"(p. 87-88) She judges herself just as harshly, even though we do not, perhaps because she feels she did not live up to her own moral codes.

By trying to escape her past, Mary Berg is sadly living it over and over again, asking herself as she did the last night in the ghetto: "Have I the right to save myself and leave my closest friends to their bitter fate?" (p. 162). Why has she chosen not to speak out about Rwanda and Bosnia herself? Perhaps she still feels the same as she did as a young girl in the ghetto: "I am powerless and cannot help anyone" (p. 92). The images of suffering she sees in headlines and on the television screen today make our world, in fact, too similar to the world of her girlhood experience. She flays out at the world to stop the killing and the suffering.

We are, of course, tempted to judge her for not speaking out, for isolating herself. Many people conclude that Mary Berg was "fortunate" in surviving. They assume that once in the United States she returned, with gratitude, to the happiness of her early teenage years. They do not understand that the survivors of trauma are changed forever by persecution, their future altered by the horror, the losses, and the choices they made.

We have the same expectation of survivors that many victims had of liberation. In the Lodz ghetto, David Sierakowiak with youthful idealism wrote in his diary shortly before his death: "A few friends and I spoke a lot today about the future, and we have come to the conclusion that if we survive the ghetto, we'll certainly experience a richness of life that we wouldn't have appreciated otherwise."[44] We are disappointed to learn this was often not so for survivors. Perhaps we simply need a happy ending and, in doing so, ask too much.

We understand Perechodnik's acute guilt as a result of decisions he made as a ghetto policeman and his realization that "After this that I have lived through, I cannot live a normal life and look at happy people."[45] Although it is somewhat unclear what crimes he is accountable for, we know that as a ghetto policeman he became a part of the German plan of terror and, in doing so, participated in the deportations to Treblinka.[46] We look into his heart and accept his judgment.

But we are saddened that Berg, a young girl in the Warsaw Ghetto, has not been able to leave her past behind. Even during her trip to America, she had reflected: "I had thought that on the ship I would forget the nightmare of the ghetto. but, strangely, in the infinity of ocean I constantly saw the bloody streets of Warsaw" (p. 252). Undoubtedly, she sees them yet today. Berg survived the ghetto "in the gray zone," as one of the "Prominenten."

Though not a collaborator, privilege and protection saved her, something the normal world, finds wrong. And she feels she did not do enough.

Even the heroized Ghetto Fighter, Itzhak Zuckerman, second in command of the Jewish Fighting Organization (ZOB), suffered from feelings of failure and guilt for having left the ghetto and his comrades to get arms six days before the German attack. He told Claude Lanzman, in an interview many years after the Holocaust, "you asked for my impression. If you could lick my heart, it would poison you."[47] A few years earlier, he had confessed, "It doesn't get easier or weaker with the years; on the contrary, it gets sharper. I ask myself: if I were a monk, if I beat my heart in penance, would that help me?!"[48]

So, is it necessary for us to talk about these troubling issues of the Holocaust? Yes. We don't ask to be spared. We must frame the right questions, consider the shame and let the victims tell us their stories in their own way. We must not force a martyrdom or a sanctification, as we are overcome with the anguish and the dead. We must also respect those, like Berg today, who remain silent and not judge too quickly. Why did Korman's wife hesitate? It may, of course, be her shame or his she is protecting, but equally as possible she is protecting us, the listener, from confronting our shame for having not cared enough about humankind. Levi suggests that everyone has felt the shame that he "has usurped his neighbor's place and lived in his stead."[49]

Levi also urges us to listen to the voices from the gray zone because in Levi's world we also confront and consider not just individual behavior and shame but "another vaster shame, the shame of the world." This shame "has been memorably pronounced by John Donne . . . that 'no man is an island,' and that every bell tolls for everyone." If we hesitate to look at the shame and turn our backs," . . . and not to feel touched by it," we are perpetuating the crime, sharing the shame. We are pleading, like Germans did in 1945, "we didn't know," and "we are not responsible."[50]

Only from the voices from the gray zone can we fully understand the Holocaust. He explains: "We, the survivors, are not the true witnesses. This is an uncomfortable notion of which I have become conscious little by little, reading the memoirs of others and reading mine at a distance of years. We survivors . . . are those who by their prevarications or abilities or good luck did not touch bottom. Those who did so, those who saw the Gorgon, have not returned to tell about it or have returned mute, but they are the 'Muslims,' the submerged, the complete witnesses, the ones whose deposition would have a general significance."[51] Berg and Perechodnick saw the Gorgon. Perechodnick did not return, Berg has become mute.

Why is it necessary to explore the issues? Only by learning about and confronting all aspects of the historical event can we fully understand it. It is tempting to spare ourselves, to dismiss, or to quickly judge such witnesses

and their testimony. But we must see the fates of Mary Berg and other golden youth and that of a ghetto policeman who loaded his own wife and daughter into the train as simply another page in the enormous tragedy of persecution and legacy of the Holocaust. Scandal may provide clarity. It can broaden our understanding and the depth of our comprehension and strengthen us when we come face to face with the Gorgon. We must remember: "We know not the future. The past we have felt."[52]

NOTES

1. Dorothy Rabinowitz, New Lives: Survivors of the Holocaust Living in America, New York: Knopf, 1976), pp. 19-20; Dawid Sierakowiak testifies to this "system of connections employed by people doing the weighing to favor clerks and other parasites." See The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak, ed. Alan Adelson (New York: Oxford, 1996), p. 79.

2. Primo Levi, foreword to Jacques Presser, The Night of the Girondists, tr. Barrows Mussey (London: Harvill, 1992), pp. x-xii.

3. Primo Levi, "The Gray Zone," in The Drowned and the Saved, tr. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Summit, 1986), pp. 41-42.

4. Emmanuel Ringelblum, Polish-Jewish Relations during the Second World War, eds. Joseph Kermish and Shmuel Krakowski (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern, 1974), pp. 249-50.

5. Isaiah Trunk, Judenrat: the Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation (New York: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 348-74.

6. See Peter Wyden, Stella (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 307.

7. Stanislav Adler, In the Warsaw Ghetto, 1940-1943: An Account of a Witness (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1982), pp. 212-213.

8. Calel Perechodnik, Am I a Murderer? Testament of a Jewish Ghetto Policeman (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1996), pp. xxi, 54, 172-73.

9. Mary Berg, Warsaw Ghetto: A Diary, ed. S.L. Shneiderman (New York: L.B. Fischer, 1945); all parenthetical page references in this essay refer to Warsaw Ghetto. Interview, S.L. and Eileen Shneiderman, New York, June 1994.

10. Selections appear in many sources, including Laurel Holliday, Children in the Holocaust and World War II: Their Secret Diaries (New York: Pocket Books, 1995), pp. 209-48.

11. Esther Elbaum, "She Lived in the Warsaw Ghetto: An Interview with Mary Berg," Hadassah Newsletter (March-April, 1945): 20-21.

12. Shneiderman interview.

13. Note to Susan L. Pentlin from Mary Berg [Wattenberg], 31 March 1995.

14. Shneiderman Archive. Complete references are not given here to protect Berg's privacy.

15. Paul Marcus and Alan Rosenberg, "The Religious Life of Holocaust Survivors and Its Significance for Psychotherapy," in Alan L. Berger, Bearing Witness to the Holocaust, 1939-1989 (Lewiston, Maine: Mellen, 1991), pp. 165-206.

16. Yisrael Gutman, The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1943 (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1982), p. 115.

17. Joseph Kermish, ed., "The Life and Fate of Children," chapter introduction in To Live with Honor and Die with Honor (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), p. 370.

18. Natan Koninski, "The Profile of the Jewish Child," #ARI/ 47, pp. 371-91, in Kermish, ed., To Live with Honor, pp. 371-72.

19. Record Group 319, U.S. Department of State, National Archives.

20. Brandstetter is identified in "Minutes of the Second Plenary Session of the Jewish Education Council in Warsaw," #PH/ 9-2-7, pp. 464-67, in Kermish, ed., in To Live with Honor, pp. 464, 466.

21. [A Preliminary Study in Teaching People during the War], #PH/ 13-2-4, pp. 468-73, in Kermish, ed., To Live with Honor, pp. 469.

22. Stanislav Adler, In the Warsaw Ghetto, 1940-1943: An Account of a Witness (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1982), p. 265.

23. [Jewish Youth in Warsaw in the War Years], #ARI/ 46, pp. 516-19, in Kermish, ed., To Live with Honor, pp. 519.

24. Gutman, Jews of Warsaw, p. 62.

25. Ibid., p. 108.

26. Photo of Ann and Mary Wattenberg reprinted from the Shneiderman Archive in Mary Berg, Dziennik zu Getta Warszawskieg, tr. Maria Salapska (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1983).

27. Abraham Lewin, A Cup of Tears: A Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto, ed. Antony Ponsky (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 84.

28. [Jewish Youth in Warsaw in the War Years], #ARI/ 46, pp. 516-19, in Kermish, ed., To Live with Honor, pp. 518.

29. [Jewish Youth in Warsaw in the War Years], #ARI/ 46, p. 517.

30. "The Profile of the Jewish Child" (1941), #ARI/ 47, pp. 371-91, in Kermish, ed., To Live with Honor, p. 383.

31. [Special Schools], #ARI/ 341, in Kermish, ed., To Live with Honor, pp. 515-16. Berg gives the address as Sienna 16. It seems likely that this an error. The address of the school is given in this essay as Sienna 34, which would have been closer to Berg's home.

32. The term "golden youth" appears in [Jewish Youth in Warsaw in the War Years], p. 518.

33. Michel Mazor, The Vanished City: Everyday Life in the Warsaw Ghetto (New York: Marsilio, 1992), p. 118.

34. The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow: Prelude to Doom, ed. Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Josef Kermish (New York: Stein and Day, 1972.), p. 295

35. Gutman, Jews in Warsaw, p. 81.

36. Ibid., p. 40.

37. Charles G. Roland, Courage under Siege: Starvation, Disease and Death in the Warsaw Ghetto (New York: Oxford, 1992), pp. 147-49.

38. Berg, Warsaw Ghetto, p. 43. Gamcwajch's full name appears in A. Rutkowski. "O Agenturze Gestapowskiej W. Getcie Warszawskim," 19-20 Biuletyn Zydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego: (Warszawa, 1956), pp. 38-59, 244-45; Szajer appears to be

the same man Ringelblum refers to as Adv. Zajdler, Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum , ed. and tr. Jacob Sloan (New York: Schocken, 1958) , p. 248. Chaim Lazsar Latai, Muranowska 7: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (Tel Aviv: Massada, 1966), p. 26 includes a Lawyer Szaier of Lodz as one of the "Thirteen." It also seems possible that he was Adas Szejn, reported as leader of the Zagew, a Gestapo group assassinated by the organized Jewish resistance shortly before the Ghetto Uprising, see Ber Mark, Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, tr. Gershon Freidlin (New York: Schocken, 1975), p. 11.

39. Photos of Tadek Szajer and Roman Kowalski are reprinted from the Shneiderman Archive in Mary Berg, Dziennik zu Getta Warszawskieg, tr. Maria Salapska (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1983).

40. Adler, In the Warsaw Ghetto, p. 235.

41. Ringelblum, Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto, p. 332.

42. Mazor, The Vanished City, p. 184.

43. Yitzhak Zuckerman, A Surplus of Memory: Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (Berkeley: California, 1993), pp. 438, 441-43. Berg's diary only refers to him as Z. Comparing Zuckerman's information with Berg's, it seems certain that Z was Adam Zurawin.

44. Sierakowiak, Diary of David Sieroakowiak, p. 209.

45. Perechodnik, Am I a Murderer?, p. 173.

46. For a critical view of Perechodnik's actions see Simon Schochet's remarks in Perechodnik, Am I a Murderer?, p. xi.

47. Claude Lanzmann, Shoah: An Oral History of the Holocaust (New York: Pantheon, 1985), p. 196.

48. Zuckerman, A Surplus of Memory, p. 677.

49. Levi, "The Gray Zone," p. 82.

50. Levi, "The Gray Zone," p. 85-86.

51. Levi, "The Gray Zone," p. 83-84.

52. Allen A. Zoll, Ledger of the Nursery of "Zoll and Kelly," Warrensburg, Missouri, 1870, unidentified quote on the cover page. In possession of the Heritage Library of the Johnson County Historical Society, Warrensburg, Missouri.

Suicides or Murders?

CHARLOTTE GUTHMANN OPFERMANN

THE QUESTION CONCERNING THE SUICIDES performed by the targeted victims in a persecuted environment such as the Holocaust in Nazi Germany, 1933-45, transcends the usual outsider's considerations of ethical, moral, or theological justifications of such an act. The period from 1933 (the beginning of the official National Socialist reign in Germany) to 1935 (Nuremberg Laws and other legal bugle calls) should be classified as one of social and economic separation, identification and demonization, before and leading up to the ultimate killing. The 1936 Olympic games represent a hiatus, during which even the *Juden unerwünscht* (Jews not wanted here) signs were downplayed and even withdrawn, creating a false sense of security. In 1938, (deportation of "stateless" and Polish Jews, followed within days by *Reichskristallnacht-Reichspogromtag*), was the time of officially preparing and experimenting with programs, testing the reaction of the free world. After an initial "dry run" with deportations from Württemberg-Baden, Palatia, and Stettin in late 1940, official and organized deportations and killings began in 1941. These events must be considered as distinct landmarks in the Holocaust process. This process followed a progression from identification to separation, initial persecution and random killings, encouraged emigration, encouraged suicide, and finally all-out general killing.

Rather than questioning the motives or the acceptability of the suicide victims' decision, we must ask, Were these "suicides" voluntary, assisted, encouraged, or were they murders?

Looking critically into or analytically examining the circumstances of those times, fifty and sixty years after the fact, we are taking a stance that we probably are not ethically entitled to take. It would be an offense to the large

number of desperate individuals who, within my own personal environment of relatives, friends and acquaintances, explored many if not all of the limited avenues for escape from the mounting terror before finally, in desperation, deciding to meet their Maker on their own terms, at their own time. They employed the means available to them at the moment, be it poison, drowning, hanging, slashed wrists, gas, or whatever rather than submit further to continued torture, threats and ongoing emotional and physical pain, fully knowing the end would be death anyway. Table 1 lists the August 1942 suicides in Wiesbaden, including the method used.

My father, Berthold Guthmann, was appointed to the position of *Konsulent* ("Jew lawyer")[1] in November 1938, while he was still imprisoned with nearly 10,000 other German-born Jews at KZ Buchenwald. All had been placed there in "protective custody" by the thoughtful Nazi authorities in the wake of the "spontaneous" reaction of their German neighbors during the November 9-10 *Kristallnacht* (reign of unlimited terror), which encouraged and sanctioned plunder and destruction, rape as well as murder.

Table 1. Suicides among Jewish Residents in Wiesbaden, August 1942

Name	Faith	Born	Where	Died	How
Mathilde Strauss	Jewish	1867	Grillparzerstrasse 9	8-3-42	poison
Alice Strauss	Jewish	1870	Grillparzerstrasse 9	8-3-42	poison
Margarete Carl	Catholic	1896	Schwalbacher Str 62	8-10-42	poison
Lisette Klenke née Bickel	Protestant	1900	Friedrichstr 25	8-9-42	drowning
Helene Elisab. Otto	Protestant	1899	Hainerweg 9	8-19-42	gas
Helene Strauss née Simon	Jewish	1858	Adelheidstr 94	8-21-42	poison
Ida Nanny Rothschild née Suesser		1875	Adolfsallee 30	8-20-42	poison
Heinrich Sichel	Jewish	1867	Rheingauerstr 5	8-21-42	poison
Anna Weis	Jewish	1869	Adelheidstr 90	8-24-42	veronal
Olga Herzberg née Heimann	Jewish	1864	Pagenstecherstr 4	8-25-42	poison
Henriette Goldstein née Strauss, widow	Jewish	1858	Moritzstr 14	8-25-42	poison
Elise Baer widow née Herz, widow	Jewish	1862	Langgasse 20	8-25-42	cyanide
Albert Liebmann	Jewish	1876	Albrechtstr 13	8-26-42	veronal
Margarete Liebmann née Bragenheim	Jewish	1883		8-23-42	veronal
August Spiegel	Jewish	1860	Sonnenberg-Danziger Str 75	8-25-42	poison
Ida Spiegelborn née Ganz		1864	Sonnenberg-Danziger Str 75	8-25-42	poison
Ludwig Kiefer	Jewish	1873	Geisbergstr 24	8-26-42	sleeping pills
Lina Neu née Weissfeld	Jewish	1867	Adolfsallee 30	8-26-42	poison
Pauline Traub	Jewish	1866	Alexandrastr 6	8-27-42	poison
Siegmund Dreyfuss	Jewish	1859	Mainzerstr 60	8-26-42	poison
Siegfried Weiss	Jewish	1865	Adelheidstr 90	8-26-42	veronal
Regina Beck	Jewish	1868	Herrngartenstr 11	8-26-42	poison

For the next five years he was to be the only *Konsulent* out of an original group of some fifteen Jewish colleagues who was to assist his Jewish brethren in Wiesbaden, Frankfurt, and dozens of smaller area towns with their all too often fruitless emigration effort. If, indeed, they were successful, he assisted with the complex details of the *Reichsfluchtsteuer* (the flight tax, a euphemistic term for theft of liquid assets) and with filling out the endless stream of complicated forms they had to prepare listing their property and total assets, relatives, status of their own and their family's emigration efforts. He also defended them before the criminal courts for such crimes as trying to carry their own property out of the country (*Devisenschiebung*), defended them for—rightly or wrongly—accused incidents of *Rassenschande* (defiling the—other, not their—race), represented them in the German courts in civil and in countless criminal cases, filed their petitions with the various Nazi authorities, pleaded on their behalf with the Gestapo, and tried to obtain their release when, after having served a prison term, they were committed for indefinite extended terms in concentration camps.

Table 1. *(cont'd)*

Name	Faith	Born	Where	Died	How
Ida Emilie Albert		1870	Herrngartenstr 11	8-28-42	poison
Helene Ludwig née David		1869	Helenenstr 26	8-28-42	poison
Emilie Strauss	Jewish	1863	Stiftstr 8	8-28-42	poison
Hermine Bertha Levi	Jewish	1865	Geisbergstr 24	8-28-42	poison
Amalie Hirsch née Mainz		1865	Geisbergstr 24	8-27-42	poison
Hanna Arioni née Strauss	Protestant		Kaiser Friedrich Ring 72	8-29-42	poison
Frieda Schwarz née Cohen	Jewish	1866	Oranienstr 23	8-29-42	poison
Rosa Schoenfeld	Jewish	1876	Weissenburgstr 6	8-29-42	poison
Lina Rau, née Tendlau	Jewish	1870	Alexandrastr 6	8-29-42	poison
Bella Marx	Jewish	1864	Friedrichstr 38	8-29-42	poison
Emma Esther Loewenstein, née Blum	Jewish	1869	Lanzstr 6	8-29-42	poison
Hedwig Bielschowsky née Munter	Protestant	1873		8-29-42	poison
Fritz Altmann	Jewish	1870	Steubenstr 16	8-29-42	poison
Amalie Altmann née Bing	Jewish	1884	Steubenstr 16	8-29-42	poison
Elsbeth Minna Albrecht	Jewish	1869	Leberberg 5	8-2-42	poison
Selma Fiedler née Merten	Jewish	1871	Friedrichstr 33,[4]	8-31-42	poison
Barbara Faller née Czahlicza	Protestant	1876		9-1-42	gas
Elsa Hertz	Protestant		Kochbrunnenplatz 2	9-2-42	Luminal "accident"
Dr. August Walter Loebe	Protestant	1875		9-11-42	poison

[all these suicides were deportation related; the last large transport left 9-1-42]

As a teenager I helped in his law office as well as with the administrative work of the Jewish congregation in town. He was the elected head of the congregation during its most difficult years. Out of an original Jewish community of some 3500 members when the Nazis came to power (with four lone women KZ survivors returning after the end of the War, I being one), fully half the funerals between November 1938 and May 1945 were deaths from suicide.

In late August 1942, the last 450 remaining elderly Jews in town were notified that they would be deported to Theresienstadt by the end of the month. Fully 47 of these people elected to commit suicide rather than go on this journey, thirty of these within five days. My friend Paula Bertram, for example, had tried to poison herself, but when the investigating SA men broke down the door to her tiny apartment on Wilhelmstrasse, she was in a coma but still breathing. She was brought to the slaughterhouse ramps behind the railroad station, where the other deportees were made to board the train to their deaths, loaded onto the train with the others, and died en route. Was her death a suicide or was it murder?

My grandfather Hermann Michel returned from his initial *Kristallnacht* incarceration in Buchenwald a sick and dying man. Herr Heinrich Muth, the crude and merciless National Socialist party–appointed property manager of my grandparents' large house at Bleichstrasse 26, informed my grandmother during the funeral that she must sign the contract of sale to the chauffeur of the local *Kreisleiter*—without benefit of any exchange of money, except for substantial sums she was to pay for his commission and for structural changes planned by the would-be new owner—or risk immediate arrest at the grave site, right at the cemetery. She refused—for the moment. A few days later she was ordered to leave her homes and move into an unfinished, unheatable attic over a butcher shop. A few days after that, she received her deportation notice for the KZ Theresienstadt. She elected to decline this invitation and swallowed an overdose of veronal. She died several days later. Was this a case of voluntary suicide?

Julius and Elisabeth Hallheimer were among my parents' closest friends. Herr Hallheimer was a veteran of World War I and had lost the use of his right arm in service for Kaiser and Fatherland. He had started a small knitting mill, which provided him and his Christian wife, Elisabeth, with a comfortable lifestyle. In November 1938, the factory was "aryanized." Henceforth, it belonged to one of his former employees. He and his wife continued to live in their handsome apartment on Rheinstrasse 98, high up in the acacia trees, with their beloved cat. They were waiting for the other shoe to drop. As the husband of a non-Jewish woman, as a seriously wounded veteran of the Great War who had nobly declined the pension offered by the country for which he had fought, Herr Hallheimer hoped against hope that he might be spared the

worst victimization. He also tried unsuccessfully, to emigrate. When the selective arrests, torture and interrogation by the Gestapo, and deportation to Dachau or Buchenwald intensified, usually followed within a few months by notification of "death from natural causes" and an offer to purchase the ashes of the deceased for RM 150, the couple agreed to a pact of joint suicide should the dreaded call from the Gestapo reach them.

Unbeknownst to Herr Hallheimer, his wife had planned to go through the suicide motions, willing to risk death because she wanted to please and comfort her mate, but she secretly hoped to survive and had secured an antidote for the poison they would both swallow. When the order to appear at the Paulinenstrasse Gestapo headquarters came, they both knew what to do. Herr Hallheimer did not appear at the appointed time at the *Judenreferent's* office. Herr *Kriminalinspektor* Bodewig was in charge of this town's Final Solution to the all-important Jewish Question. His delegated search party of two criminal police agents broke down the door to the apartment. They found the couple in their beds. Herr Hallheimer was dead. Frau Hallheimer was rushed to the hospital and rescued. After the end of the war, she married the doctor who had helped her survive this act of courage and devotion to her first husband. Was theirs/his a suicide? Was it murder?

The Nazi measures of persecution, expropriation, and planned death increased in increments as, in their judgment, the German population and the outside world would permit the implementation of the various stages of destruction of an entire people. When the National Socialist regime took on this task, originally, it targeted two distinctly different Jewish groups within the German societal environment: the very assimilated and totally integrated sector who for generations had actively participated in German social, cultural, and professional life, had furnished writers and other artists, scientists, politicians, philanthropists, and Nobel prize winners totally disproportionate to their number in the general population. They represented the greatest challenge to the ultimate implementation of what was to be known as the Final Solution to the Jewish Question.

The other segment of Jewish life at that time was largely supported economically by the first group. These were Jews who had within recent years fled to Germany during the pogroms in Eastern Europe—in Poland and, especially, in Russia. Having earlier fled the German lands for these destinations during the persecutions at the time of the Great Plague, the Crusades, and similar periods of social unrest, their language, dress, customs, and religious practices differed greatly from those of the rest of the population as well as from their fellow Jews of German birth and made them easy targets of endless tirades and unflattering caricatures in Nazi hate literature such as Herr *Gauleiter* Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer* and the official NSDAP party organ, the *Völkische Beobachter.*

Extensive "scientific" education was offered in the public schools in support of Nazi racial theories and research. As long as I attended the public school facilities, which was until November 10, 1938 (*Kristallnacht*), some of my classmates would relate to me comments Dr. Wernicke had uttered during *National-sozialistische Erziehung* (National Socialist education) classes from 8 A.M. until 10 A.M. on Saturday mornings about me or Ellen Kahn, the only other remaining Jewish student. We would chuckle then, but it was not happy laughter.

Even younger children at play would enjoy board games such as *Juden Raus* (out with you, Jew), in which the best and most skillful player could eliminate three, four, five, or six Jews with a lucky throw of the dice. Given the enormous economic benefit of appropriating and aryanizing stores, real estate, jewelry, stocks and bonds, employment, and bank accounts, who could resist? And it was but a small step from the *Juden Raus* game and the encouraged emigration (which proved to be a painfully slow and inefficient process) to the dead Jews of the Einsatzgruppen and killing places such as Auschwitz, to the thirty-thousand unburied corpses found by the British liberators at Bergen-Belsen.

Once all Jews had been so identified, demonized, depicted as parasites, warmongers, worthless subhumans, vermin that deserved only to be killed, it was almost child's play to initiate the deportation of the "stateless" and Polish Jews in October 1938, which sent shock waves through the entire Jewish population in the country. There but for the grace of God went we all. A few days later, in the course of the *Kristallnacht* and its organized destruction, all able-bodied Jewish men were arrested and placed in "protective custody" in concentration camps, which were totally unprepared for this addition to their roster of inmates. Release from the camps, initially, was possible only for those prisoners who could submit proof of impending emigration.

My father and brother were singled out for a special, probably Gestapo-ordered, assassination attempt on the first anniversary of *Kristallnacht,* on November 10, 1939. The SA men who attempted this task bungled their job. My father and brother survived, for the moment. The Jewish community rallied to help, and one client, Dr. Mayer, a retired pharmacist, tried to assist in my father's recovery from severe loss of blood during the knifing attack. He visited a local chicken farm owned by Frau Fischer to obtain some fresh eggs, a commodity not available to Jews on our food ration cards. He obtained fifteen eggs, free of charge, from this woman's personal allocation as her gift for my father. He placed this precious commodity in his briefcase and left the farmhouse. Barely outside, he was approached by a stranger who identified himself as a Gestapo agent, demanded to see the contents of his briefcase, accused him of dealing in black market profiteering, and ordered him to report at the Gestapo office at eight the following morning.

Dr. Mayer informed my father of what had happened, went home to write his Christian wife and *Mischling* daughter a tearful farewell letter, and injected himself with an overdose of morphine. After the war was over his wife requested reparation payments from the German government's office of reparation, the *Wiedergutmachungsbehörde.* Her application was denied. She was informed that Herr Dr. Mayer's suicide note "at least I shall be spared a lingering illness . . . you two will no longer have to suffer" proved that his death was voluntary, not persecution-related. Were they correct? Did he die for the sake of fifteen fresh eggs or did he elect to take his life because he knew he would be killed shortly anyway? Does not just posing this question trivialize the persecution he suffered before he took this desperate step? Is the decision of the reparations office an insult? Was his suicide justified or permissible?

The Nazi leadership did not care where or how the Jews died. They were dissatisfied with the slow progress of their efforts. Suicides and emigrations were not proceeding sufficiently fast.

Assisting a Jew was not only *verboten,* it was dangerous. Still, the various measures intimidated the German population, though not nearly as much, of course, as their Jewish victims. Frau Fischer was interrogated about the matter of the fifteen eggs and had to pay a RM 50 fine for her involvement with Herr Dr. Mayer on behalf of my father. And no one, certainly no proud aryan non-Jewish person, wanted to be treated like these Jews were treated.

In the wake of the deportations in 1941, Bishop Antonius Hilfrich of Limburg an der Lahn petitioned his superior, Bishop Wienken in Berlin, October 27, 1941: "There are calls for help coming from Frankfurt on behalf of the Christian non-Aryans. . . . At the time of the deportation [of Jews] which left Frankfurt on the 19th or 20th of this month, no special arrangements were made for Catholic non-Aryans, as I have learned . . . perhaps one could take into consideration to establish special camps for the Christian non-Aryans, so that their religious concerns can be met. . . . The [sense of] terror among the Jews over the deportation is awful, on Monday, October 20, eleven corpses were discovered at the cemetery."[2]

The bishop did not express outrage at the fact that these Jewish victims had opted for suicide, for immediate, fast death. Death was an inevitable given. It was just the timing—whether days, weeks, or maybe even months—that was in question. He did not condemn their suicide. He expressed his interest for the baptized Jews who suffered along with their Jewish brethren and hoped to obtain preferential treatment because "the situation for these Catholics is particularly difficult. As non-Aryans they are persecuted in the same manner as the [other] non-Aryans, living under the strictures of the [current] laws against the Jews. However, at the same time their Jewish colleagues consider them to be traitors because of their [religious] conversion."[3]

The bishop was a learned man. He lived during the Nazi years, in the midst of the criminal actions in a powerful position. He was courageous and spoke out on behalf of his flock. He considered the Jews who were baptized Catholic to be in a dangerous, emotionally uncomfortable position that could not meet their religious needs. He wanted to see them kept in special camps, among other Jews who had been baptized in the Catholic faith, so their pastoral needs could be met. I was only a child then.

NOTES

1. This was a title or profession that did not even exist until so designated by the Nazi authorities.

2. *Materialien Zum Unterricht* (Hesse State Institute for Educational Planning and Development: Wiesbaden, Germany, 1991). These were Jews who, among other suicide victims, had chosen to kill themselves at the cemetery at the graves of their parents or other loved ones. Eleven such suicides occurred on one day alone, October 20, 1941.

3. Ibid.

4. At the synagogue assembly point for deportation.

Holocaust Suicides

Jack Nusan Porter

In his essay on "intellectual craftsmanship," the late sociologist C. Wright Mills showed scholars how to use their files creatively. Everyone has files; the question is how to employ them, how to cross-index them. Take, for example, a file on Elie Wiesel, Martin Buber, Gershom Scholem, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Now take those same files and cross-index them to Hasidism, Zionism, or socialism. The results are provocative. What does the Lubavitcher Rebbe think of socialism or Zionism? How do Elie Wiesel and Martin Buber differ regarding Hasidism? The findings would make not only a good essay but a very interesting dissertation.

Now, let's cross-index another topic—suicide. Wiesel and suicide. Interesting. Buber and suicide. Perhaps. The Lubavitcher Rebbe and suicide. Maybe. The results may be ludicrous. But let's not give up. Let's expand the file system to include a few other items and see what results. Holocaust and suicide, Holocaust writers and suicide, Holocaust survivors and suicide. Now, we have something, and it may even be worthwhile to ask what Wiesel, Buber, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe have to say about suicide, this most taboo of subjects, and in fact, they have much to say. Elie Wiesel has quietly taught a course at Boston University called The Literature of Memory: Suicide and/in Literature.

One of the founders of modern sociology, the French-Jewish anthropologist and sociologist Emile Durkheim, wrote a classic analysis called *Le Suicide* in 1897. In it he described several types of suicides and various correlations, which I will describe in a moment. This fundamental study showed that suicide is not just a deviant and isolated act but a key component in understanding how humans are integrated or not integrated into

society. The higher the level of integration and group solidarity, the lower the rate of suicide. For Jewish people, it means a test of assimilation: the higher the rate of assimilation, the higher the rate of suicide. German and Austrian Jews had higher rates of suicide than Polish, Russian, or Hungarian Jews. Leaders higher than followers. Intellectuals and doctors higher than farmers and tailors. Men higher than women. The sickly higher than the healthy. The old higher than the young. Single and divorced higher than married (especially for men—marriage is an inoculation against suicide). The deeply secular higher than the deeply religious. These findings are as true today as they were in Durkheim's time a century ago in France and Germany.

If this be so, then what explains the recent suicides, in the frame of five years, of prominent Holocaust writers and thinkers? Sociologically, let's examine the evidence and see if they prove Durkheim's theory correct, and by and large we will see that they do.

In these five years, 1987-92, the literary and academic worlds were shocked by the deaths of four world-renowned intellectuals, Jerzy Kosinski, Primo Levi, Terrence Des Pres, and Bruno Bettelheim, as well as the newspaper titan and Holocaust survivor Robert Maxwell. My research later uncovered others, some well known, others less known—the Polish writer Tadeusz Borowski (1922-51), who died by filling his kitchen with gas when he was not yet thirty; the poet Paul Celan (1920-1970), who drowned in the Seine at age forty-nine; and the philosopher Jean Améry (1912-78), who died of self-inflicted wounds (Améry is an anagram for Hans Mayer, his original Austrian name, and that fits my theory too—a confused and convoluted identity); Arthur Koestler, Stefan Zweig, and Walter Benjamin could also be added. The three latter were refugees of the Holocaust. Benjamin died in 1940 on the Spanish-French border, a day away from freedom; Zweig and his wife committed a double suicide in Brazil in 1940; and Koestler and his wife also committed a double suicide but much later, after the war. Even Art Spiegelman's mother, Anya Spiegelman, committed suicide, a rare case of a woman. Primo Levi (1919-87) was a candidate for a possible Nobel Prize in literature when he died in Turin, falling off his balcony. Robert Maxwell fell off his boat in 1994. Bruno Bettelheim was a well-known psychologist and writer who committed suicide in 1990.

Altogether, we are talking about twelve well-known suicide cases in which the Holocaust, I believe, was a factor, and it is this hypothesis that I have to prove. I have not even mentioned other, less well known surviving victims who took their lives years *after* the Holocaust or Judenrat leaders who took their lives *during* the Holocaust or the many Germans and Austrians who killed themselves *before* the Holocaust.

All of the them, except for Des Pres, an American-born lapsed Catholic and professor of English at Colgate University in upstate New York, were Holocaust survivors; all were engulfed in what the great Holocaust psychiatrist Leo Eitinger called the "survivors' disease." (Yet, one could arguably make a case that both Des Pres and Koestler, though not technically survivors, had become engulfed in, mesmerized by, and ultimately depressed by their study of the Holocaust, and so it should be seen as an important, though not the sole, factor in their suicides.)

Some might question whether Maxwell should be included since he is not a writer or intellectual, but if you look at Volume 10 of *Contemporary Authors,* you will see him listed as a writer/editor of several books on economics and politics. Though he was more of an entrepreneur and publisher, I include him since I believe, first, that he committed suicide (though that is debatable, and many accidents are really disguised suicides; William Zellner, writing on "auto-suicide," found that over 12 percent of all automobile accidents were actually suicides, another example of how suicide is hidden behind other acts such as alcoholism, drug addiction, and car mishaps); and, second, he did so in a typical flamboyant style that supports my theory of "stigmatized identity," a theory that analyzes the use of multiple names, pseudonyms, anagrams, false identities, multiple personae, sexual deviance, and games of hide-and-seek. Several of these men (Kosinski, Maxwell, and Celan) lived with these traits.

I include non-Jews such as Des Pres and Borowski because by entering the hell of the Holocaust, they became in essence "honorary Jews" or "honorary Holocaust survivors" and suffered because of it. I should say that I respect these people, but I am simply an anthropologist, emerging from the dark jungles of the mind, reporting on what I see and asking sensitive questions.

They were all strong and forceful personalities who went out as they had lived—in full control of their faculties. They may have been depressed but I believe most knew exactly what they were doing. (There are some gray area cases such as Primo Levi, who was being treated for severe clinical depression.) These were people who were usually in control during most of their lives, but the Holocaust and its burning memories became too much for them. That tied with such issues as aging, illness, and loss of control provides a classic reason for suicide. (Age and health are crucial independent variables in inducing people to commit suicide, but young people, in their teens and twenties, such as Borowski, are also prone to suicide.)

This is not a morbid subject for me. As a child of Holocaust survivors, I have lived with death my entire life. It is a fascinating subject. People need to talk more about death. Anything less is a form of denial, and these men were not deniers! They were more than simply Holocaust writers but some of the most interesting personalities of the twentieth century.

As a sociologist I was trained in graduate school to be sensitive to what Talcott Parsons called "pattern variables" and as a child of survivors, I ask what effect all this had on me and on my parents.

In graduate school, I learned not only about *Le Suicide* by Durkheim but also *The Sociological Imagination* by C. Wright Mills. Mills taught me to see how a personal anguish expressed by suicide could be a symptom of a larger, more complex societal pattern. One person unemployed is a private issue, but a million unemployed is a vast social and societal problem. One suicide could be dismissed (but it should not be) as a single psychiatric aberration, but many (and that could mean only three or four in a high school, for example) would indeed show us that something wrong is going on, and we should look to society and not to a person's psychological "problems." These are Durkheimian "social facts," unexplainable by psychology alone. A sociologist and a social worker looks at suicide differently than a psychiatrist. The latter sees a case of depression; we see a sociological, societal, or historical pattern of great significance.

Granted, suicide is at once morbid, frightening, fascinating, troubling, perplexing, and contradictory. Still, we must face it, head-on. It will teach us something. Among my sociology students, it is, next to sports and MTV, the most popular topic for discussion in class.

But let's return to the sociology of suicide. What are the pattern variables? I know that some literary critics hate this cold, mechanical manner of handling complex sociological data. They do not possess what Mills called the "sociological imagination," which helps us understand the nexus of biography and history and how personal problems can be emblematic of major societal and historical issues. But I will try to convince them in this essay. We can diagram these pattern variables.

Independent Variables	Intervening Variables	Dependent Variable
Age	Aging	Suicide
Sex	Depression	
Social class	Immigrant status	
Occupation	Post-traumatic stress	
Race	Drugs/alcohol	
Religion	Survivor's guilt	
Education	Death of loved one	
	Meaninglessness in life	
	Illness, ill health	

Suicide is defined as an intentional, self-inflicted act that ends in death. At times, accidents, natural causes, and even murder are confused with suicide. The death of Robert Maxwell is a case in point: was his falling off his boat, the *Lady Ghislaine,* near the coast of Spain an accident (falling into the water due to a sudden lurch as he was peeing in the water; or a heart attack that caused him to fall overboard; or murder by a disgruntled employee or rival; or a suicide; or a combination of several factors? The consequences that follows his death point to a possible suicide scandal. The same was true of Primo Levi. Did he die as a result of premeditated suicide or by accident, falling off his stairwell? Was the death of Terrence Des Pres a risky, deviant act that went awry or suicide? Des Pres was a man who took many risks intellectually as well as psychologically. I include him as a kind of "honorary survivor" who became engulfed in the terror and danger of the Holocaust and fell under its wheel.

What emerges, however, in this sociological search for patterns is fascinating. Koestler, Bettelheim, and Kosinski all killed themselves in the same way. All were members of the Hemlock Society. All did it by methods described by the society—Kosinski died by putting his head in a plastic bag and submerging it in the water in his bathtub. So did Bettelheim and Koestler. All were aging, ailing, and depressed yet determined to die in their own way. Several were very assimilated, almost "hidden Jews," including Koestler, Kosinski, Bettelheim, Celan, and Maxwell throughout most or part of their lives, and this is an important sociological factor leading to suicide.

Maxwell, Bettelheim, and Kosinski were pilloried and defamed by the press before they committed suicide and, upon their deaths, came ever more revelations, such as in the case of Maxwell and Bettelheim, revelations that a dead man could not defend himself against.

Many had several "personalities" or personae—Robert Maxwell, Jerzy Kosinski, and Jean Améry, even had new names. Jean Améry in Vienna was Hans Mayer; Maxwell was a Czech called Hoch; and Kosinski was originally Lewinkopf, and his mother's name was Weinreich. His father was Moshe Lewinkopf, the son of Nusyn and Basia Lewinkopf. (Kosinski is a common Polish name similar to "Smith".) Paul Celan's original name was Ancel.

What is certain was that Kosinski was constantly reinventing himself. In fact, it is hard to know at first that in his most important novel, *The Painted Bird,* the young boy is not even identified as "Jewish" but as a strange "gypsy" boy. Yet in fact, the young boy is allegedly Kosinski. He supposedly hid as a non-Jew in the woods to escape being killed. (This too was not entirely accurate.) Later, in America, he donned masks and walked around Manhattan in disguise. Both he and Robert Maxwell shared this obsession with dis-identifications. In essence, both were geniuses and charlatans.

As a sociologist sensitive to patterns and as a child of survivors, I immediately asked myself—why? What effect does the Holocaust have on survivors? Or were these simply "tired old men" (few women—Jewish women rarely commit suicide) who killed themselves when life became too painful, both physically and psychologically?

Who is a survivor? I have a broad definition, perhaps too broad for some readers. I include refugees such as Walter Benjamin, Stefan Zweig, Bruno Bettelheim, and Arthur Koestler; young suicide victims who killed themselves soon after the war like Borowski; well-known suicides such as Jean Améry, Paul Celan, and Primo Levi; as well as unique and controversial cases such as Terrence Des Pres and Robert Maxwell.

This essay discusses differences between intellectuals and writers who have high suicide rates and ordinary survivors who have very low rates. It is important to emphasize that survivors rarely commit suicide. Rates of suicide for middle- and working-class Jewish survivors are extremely low. What variables caused these so-called intellectual suicides, or are there several explanations and several different types of suicides? Did their role as intellectual outsiders play a part? Intellectuals, societal outsiders par excellence, are notorious for committing suicide because of the Durkheimian theory of anomie that I will discuss in a moment. What role does integration play? Assimilation into the general society, cut off from the integration of the primary group, the *gemeinshaft* of Jewry turns out to be a very important variable.

Suicide occurred often as "choiceless choices," to use Lawrence Langer's term, in several stages before, during, and after the Holocaust. Suicide before the Holocaust was most common among German and Austrian Jews from the rise of Nazism in 1933 on but especially after the Nuremberg Laws were passed in 1935 ostracizing Jews and turning them into social lepers, to use Eric Goldhagen's phrase. Suicides escalated after *Kristallnacht* in November 1938. It was said that one death in five was a suicide in Germany in the Jewish community in the 1930s.

These suicides are what Durkheim called *anomic* suicides. During that time of rapid, disruptive social and economic change, the rules for social integration were dismembered. The head of the family, usually a male, who ruled with an iron fist, was left with few guidelines—his entire world was turned upside down. Feeling cut off and alienated from his beloved German society, he might kill himself, often convincing his wife to do the same in a kind of modern-day suttee. This was very common among German and Austrian male Jews of wealth and prestige. Polish and Russian Jews, who had always been outsiders and who did not suffer such "relative deprivation," had much lower rates of suicide. Intellectual and upper-class Jews also were much more prone to suicide than working-class and religious Jews even if we hold ethnicity

(German versus Polish identity) constant. Social groups who encourage highly individualistic moral decisions and who live highly autonomous lives whereby they feel they must control all aspects of their lives are prone to suicide when their world is shattered, as in Nazi Germany.

The second period of suicides, during the Holocaust, occurred in the camps and ghettos. While anomic suicide was common, a new form, *egoistic* suicide, emerged. By contrast, egoistic suicide occurs when rules for social integration are clear enough but social integration is very low. According to Durkheim, a person who is excessively committed to personal beliefs and aims, rather than to those of the group, will be inadequately socially integrated. Anyone with few social bonds, a person cut loose and alone, is a prime candidate for egoistic suicide. Single, divorced, widowed, orphaned, and urban people, whose lack of contact with others often forces them to develop extreme self-reliance, are good candidates for egoistic suicide. Homeless alcoholics and drug addicts are other examples of egoistic suicide candidates. Survivors who were able to maintain some family ties or who had a sister or brother, father or mother, or even a friend and substitute sister or brother in the camps had a better chance to survive and were less likely to kill themselves.

A third type of suicide, according to Durkheim, was *fatalistic* suicide. He spends very little time on this type in his book, but it too was common during the Holocaust. It is a suicide that says I have very little to live for, my death is imminent, therefore I will kill myself by throwing myself onto the electrified fence or by attempting to scale the ghetto wall, knowing full well that I will be shot by a guard. Other historical examples would be black slaves on ships bound for the American plantations who threw themselves into the sea. Fatalistic means fate, not fatal. It means you are going to die anyway so why delay the agony. Naturally, anomic and egoistic influences contribute to this suicide type.

A fourth type of Durkheimian suicide was also common during the Holocaust; in fact, it is common in wartime in general, and it is what he called *altruistic* suicide. This occurs when a person's sense of responsibility to the group is so great that it overwhelms the individual's sense of self and the person sacrifices his or her life for the sake of that group, either to save the group directly or to act as a public symbol of defiance. Naturally, overtones of the other types of suicides can color this type as well. We must remember that these are Weberian *ideal types*. Life is always more complicated than our theories can possibly explain.

The suicide of Adam Czerniakow (1888-1942), chairman of the Warsaw Judenrat, is a good example of altruistic suicide. Initially, he cooperated in the deportations but committed suicide upon finding out that deportation meant death.

Arthur Zyglboim, the Bund's representative to the Polish government in exile, also committed suicide. His remains were brought from London in 1961 to be buried in Writers' Row in New Mount Carmel Cemetery located between Brooklyn and Queens. His ashes are under a stone set off by shrubs at the end of a row. The hexagonal monument, topped by a carved flame, quotes his 1943 suicide note: "I cannot remain silent, I cannot go on living, when the remnants of the Jewish people whom I represent are being annihilated. My life belongs to the Jewish people in Poland and, therefore, I give it to them."

I call these suicides "altruistic" because they are emblematic of a person who so loves his people or nation that he is ready to lay down his life for them. These suicides are a sign of protest, though some might see it as a sign of despair. Perhaps they are both. Buddhist monks during the Vietnam War who set themselves on fire are a similar type. Kamikaze pilots who crashed into American destroyers during World War II in the Pacific are another, though very different, example.

Men and women in the partisans, in the army and navy, and in other military arenas also have the opportunity to engage in altruistic suicide. The soldier who throws himself on a grenade to save his buddies is an example or the partisan who, though wounded, holds off the enemy so that the platoon can escape. My father, a partisan commander, told me stories of such bravery: one of the most powerful examples of altruism etched in his mind was the story of five young boys chosen from the Soviet army and asked to become human land mines. Buried in the road, wrapped in grenades, they would count off the first five tanks and then rip open their wooden "caskets" and plunge the grenades deep into the bellies of the German tanks as they made their way toward Leningrad. Each one was given the Hero of the Soviet Union medal in a ceremony before the mission.

But it is suicide *after the Holocaust* that is the focus of this essay. Let us look at a few of these cases more closely. We will begin with Jerzy Kosinski.

Byron L. Sherwin, in a "friend's reminiscence" (June 1991), wrote the following:

> Jerzy Kosinski was my friend. His death is a loss that cannot be recovered. . . . There was no one like Jerzy. He was, in his own words, "his own event." Jerzy's life embraced countless contradictions, but few ambivalences. He always knew who and where he was. Jerzy was an abused child, and the scars from that abuse continuously festered throughout his life. . . . Hide-and-seek was, for him, not a childhood game, but a strategy for sheer physical survival. . . . He could enter any room and hide somewhere. Neither adults nor children could ever find him when he wished to remain hidden. Though a public figure, a celebrity, he

> never stopped hiding. It became for him a strategy for spiritual survival, a way of evading those who wished to harm him. Jerzy's personal motto, derived from Descartes, was *larvatus prodeo*—I go forth disguised." He was a socialite in hiding, a paranoid with real enemies.

Professor Antony Polonsky of Brandeis University, a British historian and expert on Polish historiography, knew both men and told me that Kosinski was, like Robert Maxwell, always trying on new identities, always playing a kind of hide-and-seek with reality, even with the truth.

Both Maxwell and Kosinski tried to hide their true identities and had several personae. Kosinski wrote under the name Joseph Novak early in his career, and in his last book, *The Hermit of 69th Street,* describes a writer named Norbert Kosky ("Kosinski without the "sin,") who is unjustly accused of telling tales and at the end of the book is drowned by thugs.

According to John Taylor, writing in *New York Magazine* (July 15, 1991): "When that book was perceived as a critical and commercial failure, according to [one] theory of his suicide, Kosinski believed his ability to continue writing and publishing was threatened." Actually, his novels were critical and commercial failures (except for *Being There*) long before 1991. His talent had precipitously declined after *The Painted Bird* appeared. Taylor, in his masterful essay, describes Kosinski's tortured last few months and his sudden death, a death that left his many friends angry.

It was a *Village Voice* article in 1982, however, that was the most devastating and from which he never fully recovered. It suggested that his first two books, nonfiction accounts of life in the Soviet Union, were somehow sponsored by the CIA; that his celebrated first novel, *The Painted Bird,* had been written in Polish and then translated with no credit given to the translator; and finally, that assistants, again never given full credit, helped write his later books. Zbigniew Brzezinski, a friend and fellow Polish exile, said that the allegations contributed to his death.

There were also allegations as well that he lived the war years comfortably in a Polish dacha and that his well-connected parents were always aware of his whereabouts. Kosinski often led people to believe that the life of the main character of the Gypsy-Jew boy in *The Painted Bird* closely paralleled his own experiences. At other times, however, Kosinski conceded that some of the episodes were either invented or based on the experiences of other children. Even more astounding, he once told Elie Wiesel that he was not even Jewish.

There is much more to say about his confused identity, his merging of truth and illusion, but the point I am trying to make is that identity problems coupled with other factors, such as deteriorating health, may have triggered his suicide, and, furthermore, the similarities of his suicide with other Holocaustal suicides are to say the least uncanny.

Robert Maxwell, an editor and publishing titan on several continents, was also a "bluffer." He was born Hoch Shmulevich from an Orthodox Hungarian and Czech background (the British, always infatuated by lovable rogues, often referred to him as the "bouncing Czech"); later he earned a medal of honor in the British army and became Captain Ian Robert Maxwell. He liked to be called Captain Bob. Like Kosinski, he married a non-Jewish woman of some means, and his children were raised as non-Jews. Also like Kosinski, Maxwell, late in life, "returned" to Judaism and to a love of Israel and the Jewish people (though that was often hidden from the general public and from his public persona). Maxwell organized the first European Conference on the Holocaust at Oxford University and supported through Macmillan Publishing Company several journals and books dealing with the Holocaust and genocide. Kosinski, too, immersed himself in Jewish texts toward the end of his life, forming a close relationship with Spertus College of Jewish Studies in Chicago and its vice-president for academic affairs, Rabbi Byron L. Sherwin. Unlike Maxwell, however, Kosinski was disturbed by the "Holocaust-centered mentality" that dominated American Jewish life, manifested in the construction of multimillion-dollar museums and monuments to commemorate the Holocaust. Instead he advocated building Jewish "identity centers," akin to Jewish community centers, which would advocate a deeper awareness of the "Jewish presence" in history, art, and science. As always, his views were seen as controversial and a bit strange by the Jewish community. Many were surprised, upon his death, that he was even Jewish, so identified was he with Polish culture.

Kosinski was, like Maxwell, always trying on new identities. He was a strange bird, a "black bird" that imitates others, a rara avis, a linguist, photographer, sociologist, raconteur, a hyper-depressed and creative individual, often out of step with the world and with the Jewish community. Many of his works are psycho-biographical. See, for example, his novel *Steps*. He was a very strange man, of whom much more no doubt will be written.

Both Celan and Améry had anagrammatic names. Celan's original name was Paul Ancel or Antschel, and he was born in Czernowitz in the Bukovina region of Romania in 1920. From his surname he formed the anagram "Celan" in 1947. That identity, according to Lawrence Langer's *Art from the Ashes* (1995:598), had complex geographical and cultural origins. Even more confusing was the fact that in spite of his long years of self-imposed exile in France, German remained Celan's mother tongue. He was born in Romania, wrote in German, but is thought of (from his name) as a French poet. He died in Paris, drowned in the Seine in April 1970. Jean Améry, like Celan, had Germanic-French identity problems. He was born Hans Mayer in Vienna in 1912. His father was Jewish, his mother Catholic. In 1937 he

married a Jewish woman, and in 1938, after the German annexation of Austria, he fled with her to Belgium. During the war he was tortured in several Gestapo prisons in Belgium and Holland.

Langer, in *Art from the Ashes* (p. 120), has a short but pithy analysis of why Améry, like Celan and Primo Levi, took his life: disillusionment and disenchantment with the world. Dejected by the world's seeming indifference, disillusioned and depressed, coupled with illness, both psychic and physical, these survivors saw suicide not as a cowardly act but a courageous one. They felt that no one was listening, that no one cared any more. As Langer poignantly asks: "We are left trying to decide whether his [Améry's] suicide was a victory or a defeat."

Perhaps no man planned and brooded about his death as much as Bruno Bettelheim. He was a world-famous psychoanalyst and child psychologist and, what was less known, had spent ten months and eleven days in Buchenwald and Dachau. He was a refugee rather than a survivor, having come to America before the war started. He was later director of the University of Chicago's Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School for emotionally disturbed children, especially violent, self-destructive autistic children, and the author of many books, including *The Informed Heart, Love is Not Enough, The Children of the Dream, The Uses of Enchantment, Freud and Man's Soul,* and *A Good Enough Parent.*

He committed suicide on March 13, 1990. In an interview with David James Fisher, published posthumously in the sociological journal *Society* (April 1991: 60-69), he was asked by Fisher: "Tell me your particular thoughts about old age," and the old curmudgeon replied: "Don't reach it! What I have experienced is a deterioration of physical strength and energy which I find very hard to take. It is depressing. . . . My children no longer need me. I feel that I have done my life's work, and I am fairly satisfied with it. But I feel a weakness that makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for me to go on." What he feared is what everyone his age (mid-eighties) fears—to be completely incapacitated and dependent on others and to live like that for many years in a nursing home at great personal cost and family anguish.

Bettelheim had several significant personal changes in his life, perhaps too many too soon—the recent death of his wife, a move to Los Angeles after many years living in Chicago, and then a move to Washington, D.C., a minor stroke that left him with difficulties in swallowing, and anxieties about an incapacitating illness. He could no longer write; he had lost his wife, Trude, and had become alienated from his children.

"What I wish for," he says in the Fisher interview, "is a fast and easy death. That's easy to wish for."

But Bettelheim feared something more than a painful death, and that was a life devoid of meaning. As he is quoted in Nina Sutton's biography:

"So, intricately, so inextricably interwoven are death and life's meaning that when life seems to have lost all meaning, suicide seems the inescapable consequence . . . very few suicides are due to the wish to end insufferable pain. . . . More frequently suicides are the consequence of an unalterable conviction that the person's life has completely and irremediably lost all meaning" (pp. 512-13, originally in his collection of essays *Surviving and Other Essays* [New York: Knopf, 1979], p. 4).

The next topic in Bettelheim's interview with Fisher is his impression of Los Angeles as compared to Chicago, which is instructive, and the interview comes back to cognate issues that bear on his state of mind—survival guilt, self-destructiveness, the concentration camp experience, Dachau, Buchenwald, and Primo Levi. Ironically, these two survivors knew each other, and Bettelheim admired Levi's work. Bettelheim framed his camp experiences as "the death drive" (*thanatos*) and noted that it could easily lead to self-destruction.

We are now coming closer to an explanation of Holocaustal suicide. Bettelheim echoes Jean Améry's encounter with torture in the camps. According to Langer (*Art from the Ashes,* 1995:120), torture was ineradicably burned into Améry. "The lingering sensation of having been reduced to nothing more than a creature of helpless flesh—an experience shared by countless inmates of the death camps—remains a source of permanent humiliation to many who endured it," Langer writes in *Art from the Ashes.*

Furthermore, while Améry's self-inflicted death remains a mystery to Langer, he admits that Améry's health was impaired by the harsh physical conditions of the camps. This, coupled with what Améry calls the "shame of destruction," led to self-immolation and suicide.

Améry subconsciously drifted toward this act of death; Bettelheim, however, consciously analyzed his condition and deliberately went about killing himself according to instructions from the Hemlock Society. But each of them killed themselves, as did so many of the others, because of a perceived meaninglessness of life and the felt impression that the world no longer cared.

As a rule, suicide increases with knowledge and learning. Learning does not determine progress. It is innocent. Nevertheless, the more knowledge one has, the more learning, the more education, the greater the likelihood one will commit suicide. Man kills himself more often, however, because of the loss of contact with his religious community; it is secular learning that results in a drift away from community. Learning Torah within the religious community in some way strengthens a person; learning outside the context of a community disintegrates a person, and when secular knowledge has no answers, people may turn to suicide as an alternative to meaninglessness. Religion, in short, has a prophylactic effect on suicide, and Judaism in particular has a pos-

itive influence. Suicide rates are low for most Jews, but they tend to be high among highly assimilated intellectuals and professors, especially those cut off from the Jewish community.

The irony in all this is that suicide is not the normal option for most Holocaust survivors, and this is true not only for Jews but for other minority groups such as blacks or Gypsies. True, blacks jumped overboard from slave ships on their way to America, but once on the plantation, the solidarity of the black family, especially the mother, kept an integrity that mollified the possibility of suicide. The reasoning: why give the white man a victory, why do the job for him? The same, by and large, is true for Jewish victims of pogroms, ghettos, and, later, the death camps. We are finding, however, that as blacks and other minorities enter the middle class and adopt "white" patterns, suicide rates increase.

I have found many things in my study, but one of the most important is that being Jewish is healthy, being religious is healthy, being part of a religious community is healthy, and having a religious mother is healthy.

It is the isolated, alienated intellectual who is in deep trouble unless he aligns himself with a community or primary group. (Steve Katz has pointed out to me that this was also true in the Gulag—intellectuals committed suicide more often than working-class Russians.) I do not judge these intellectuals. I will only say that they might have coped better with their existential condition had they believed in God more and been more integrated into their religious community. But then again, had they done so, they would not have become the critics of society that they were. That is why Elie Wiesel did not commit suicide, and that is why so many of his fellow survivor writers/intellectuals, his peers, did.

In short, being Jewish, religiously Jewish, is good for you.

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Victims of Evil or Evil of Victims?

DIDIER POLLEFEYT

WHEN ONE LOOKS AT THE BEHAVIOR of the victims during the Nazi genocide, at first sight it seems that all camps reveal a sad truth about humans. A great deal of literature on the concentration camps indicates that every trace of ethical life tends to get lost under extreme circumstances. Life in the camps is often brought forward to prove that man is essentially an animal that is involved in a merciless battle to survive. Stories in which unscrupulous prisoners treat each other with utmost cruelty and inhumanity are used to illustrate this hypothesis. The camps are called the "high schools" of egocentrism. Every individual was concerned merely with his or her own interests. The law of the camp was "Eat your own bread and—if possible—also that of your neighbor."[1] In those camps the logic of the *primum vivere, deinde philosophare* became a wry and often deadly reality. Many survivors similarly quote Bertolt Brecht's words: *"Erst kommt das Fressen und dann kommt die Moral"* (Eating comes first, then morality).[2]

These facts sometimes lead to a pessimistic conclusion that ethics are merely a superficial convention that is immediately threatened as soon as that thin layer of culture is worn away.[3] The behavior of the victims is said to reveal the "real nature" of man. Man is by nature involved in a war of all against all, and the basic dynamism of every human being is survival. The camps have shown that in the end humanity respects only the brutal law of the jungle, which is the absence of any law and the rule of the pure *Wille zur Macht.* Morality, in other words, is unnatural: it is imposed by culture but is in fact foreign to human nature.

As a counterargument against this view of the victims, one can say that such pessimistic antropological convictions did not arise in the Nazi

destruction and extermination camps but rather can be traced back to a certain philosophical literature of the last two centuries (Darwin, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche). This literature undoubtedly inspired Nazism and the camps, but this does not mean that they would prove its correctness. A distinction has to be made between the ideas used by Nazism and the ideas that can be deduced from the study of the victims of the camps. Nobody will deny that with very extreme means one can destroy the ethical relationships between human beings completely and can reduce man to a mere bundle of animal impulses. When one refuses to recognize that there is a bottommost limit to ethical life, then one does not do justice to the constitutive meaning of corporality in ethics (see below). It is questionable whether the cruelty of the victims is sufficient to call ethics merely a superficial convention that loses all its credibility at the first possible occasion. "I do not believe," writes the Italian author Primo Levi, "in the most obvious and easiest conclusions: that man is essentially an egocentric stupid brute and acts accordingly once all varnish of civilization is peeled off, so that the *Häftling* would be nothing but a human being without restraints."[4]

We can prove that ethics was omnipresent among the victims and could be destroyed only by very extreme and violent means (and never without serious feelings of agony and guilt). When one studies the behavior of the victims closely, it is obvious that the idea of man being the natural enemy of his fellow man is not that easily confirmed by the facts. Auschwitz has given us an indication that the so-called natural tendency of man toward evil is not so natural and that the situation of "war of all against all" had to be forced on the victims with violent means. When some Social Darwinistic philosophy wants to prove that it is right by referring to the Holocaust, or better to a selective representation of the victims of that Holocaust, then it wrongfully lifts up a factuality of the Holocaust to a moral truth.

Such a representation of immorality among the victims is often connected with the praising of a limited number of heroes who exceptionally have been able to lift themselves up above this bestiality. In this manner the human desire for an unmistakable ethical distinction between "animals" (diabolization) and "heroes" (divinization) is met with.[5] The hero is described as the one who faces the choice between standing up against and losing his life or losing face and staying alive. Undoubtedly a hero will choose the former alternative, driven by traditional "heroic virtues" such as courage, perseverance, loyalty, and honesty. The glorification of heroism is based on a Manichaean understanding of the world: us and them, friends and enemies, courage and cowardice, hero and traitor, black and white, absolute good and absolute evil. In heroism it soon becomes unclear what purpose heroic actions are precisely intended to serve: the salvation of real human beings or the heroic action for its own sake. The French anthropologist Tzvetan Todorov has indicated that

remaining loyal to an ideal is in heroism sometimes more important than the contents and the ethical implications of the ideal that one defends. The problem with heroes is that they do not necessarily love people, not even themselves.[6] For a hero death can get an absolute value when the Manichaean ideal demands it. The hero is prepared to die in order to live. The "daily virtues" that I will discuss further on in this essay are different from the heroic virtues because they allow the individual to enter reality and to do justice to its complexity. Sometimes it is much more difficult and ethically much more challenging when one chooses to stay alive in order to change reality from inside than when one prefers to die. When one sacrifices his life, a lot of courage is put in one moment. In extreme cases—and this was often true in the camps—this can be without any doubt the ultimate expression of human dignity, and it can sometimes even mean salvation for others. The daily virtues, however, require courage and ethical daring every day. In the daily virtues one does as much justice as possible to the complexity of reality in a realistic way and looks for the best or least bad solution for a concrete situation of moral conflict. The daily virtues require again and again that an ethical dilemma is understood as much as possible from inside and that a choice is made between the positive and negative values that are at stake at any moment.[7] The problem with the daily virtues, however, is that it is difficult to retell them in large stories. A pragmatic spirit that tries to fathom a moral conflict concerning its contents does not fit so well in the style of the story. The glorification of the hero often contains a great deal of aesthetical representation. One is morally not less authentic when one dies in a gas chamber with his or her children than when one is killed while creeping up on a bunker of the enemy. The hero must always be asked for whom or for what he is prepared to die: for the welfare of concrete human beings or to act in accordance with a (sometimes cruel) ideological system.

In reaction to this Manichaean representation of the victims in terms of "animals versus heroes" the philosopher Lawrence Langer has indicated that the victims simply were not given an opportunity to choose and did not have an autonomous ethical life because of the extreme circumstances in the camps.[8] In his opinion, the extraordinary situation of the Nazi camps forbids us to pass any moral judgment about the victims whatsoever.[9] In the context of the camp victims, the question of morality is irrelevant because there were usually no meaningful alternatives in the camps. Camp prisoners were seldom given the opportunity to make real ethical decisions for which they could consciously accept the meaning and consequences.[10] The central idea in Langer's thinking is the "choiceless choice." In the camps the victim was offered a choice which in fact was not one.[11] According to Langer, camp life was beyond good and bad. He gives the example of the mother who was

forced to choose which one of her children would be saved from execution. In such an extreme and imposed situation a moral choice is, according to Langer, no longer possible. Taking such a decision in such a case cannot possibly happen without losing one's own moral dignity. "What are we to learn from this interlude in history, during which moral intuitions so often were useless because physical and psychological constraints like hunger, illness, fear, despair and confusion created an unprecedented nonethical environment immune to the promptings of those intuitions? . . . History inflicts wounds on individual moral identity that are untraceable to personal choice."[12]

The behavior of the victims in this vision is understood less in terms of *im*morality than of *a*morality. It is the system that is responsible for the misery that the victims caused each other. One of the major aims of the camps was to deprive the victims of their personality and to exterminate them. When prisoners succeeded in surviving the camps, this was not so much a victory as a violation of the basic aim of the camp. Further on, however, I will argue—against Langer—that even in the camps ethical choices remained possible, although in less extreme situations than Langer's example. Many camp prisoners could not choose the purely good any longer but were still often able to choose between more evil or less evil.

In her study *Values and Violence in Auschwitz* the Polish sociologist Anna Pawelczynska has shown that both an implicit and an explicit hierarchy of values existed in the camps.[13] So she does not understand the behavior of the victims in terms of *im*morality or *a*morality, but she gives attention to morality that existed among the victims. She points out that most prisoners who arrived in the camps, except for the worst criminals, shared more or less the same moral universe. Despite their ideological, national, social, and religious differences, the victims all shared one central moral conviction: they felt the same about Nazism and the immoral character of the Nazi genocide. Each prisoner had to fight a battle between his or her own values and the evil that ruled those camps. The conviction and hope that human values would eventually overcome the inhuman camp system helped them in that fight. According to Pawelczynska, the moral framework that the victims shared with each other implicitly was the prewar Western system of values. This does not mean that these ethical values could be experienced in their purest form in the camps. The fundamental principle held by Pawelczynska is that the Western value system was reduced and adapted so that it could function in the camps. She clearly points out how even the victims spontaneously developed proper ethics that were in fact more a reduction than a restructuring of values.[14]

If we judge the behavior of the victims with the strictest criteria of Western morality, then we have to say that all prisoners violated the most ele-

mentary ethical rules at certain moments. The prisoners were a strong group under threat that had given up many moral regulations, that systematically refused to respect social habits, used vulgar language, showed at certain moments no respect for the dead, and so on. Only prisoners who received exceptional protection continued to function morally more or less normally. Pawelczynska's analysis also made it clear that also those prisoners who did not enjoy any privileges handled a system of values that was in line with prewar European morality. This system was reduced in the camps to a few elementary values. Many values were not appropriate there any longer. So the prisoners did not have to give up on their own system of values but had to review them. Prisoners who did not do this in the context of the reality of the camp and who wanted to realize their values without compromise died immediately. Prisoners who, in their minds, remained faithful to their old values and who had to violate these values continuously in the daily life in the camps were usually burdened down with an unbearable feeling of guilt. The only choice for victims was to reduce their ethical criteria to their most crucial components in an attempt to avoid the discordance between their behavior and convictions. The differences between the existing ethical systems became vague because every system was reduced to its nucleus. Different values were given a new interpretation so that their contents and implementation were reduced and standards such as respect for the dead body were eliminated. Survival required an undogmatic and non-Manichaean attitude. One could draw only the least bad conclusions in those very concrete and critical circumstances thanks to a very high flexibility in ethics. Only such an attitude made it possible for ethics to keep any existential relevance in these circumstances. All values of the civilized world were given a new formulation in the camps in one way or another. For example, the commandment "love your neighbor like yourself" was reduced to "do not harm your fellow human and save him if possible." The commandment against stealing also got a new meaning. Depending on the motive and the victim of theft, stealing was considered either a morally praiseworthy or a reprehensible action. Stealing from a living fellow prisoner who was in the same situation as the thief was considered a heavy moral offense for which prisoners sometimes punished each other mercilessly. Stealing possessions from the oppressors, in contrast, was seen as morally laudable, especially when the stolen property was shared with fellow prisoners. "Every prisoner had his own 'neighbors.' In the midst of the fight against a world of hatred, as a reaction to a degenerate system of terror, a world of friendship came into being. And precisely in this sense, regardless of prisoner conduct that did not harmonize with the standards of free societies, the concentration camp established a basic norm, the observance of which is indispensable everywhere, and it created a new moral value: that bond with the wronged which demanded the greatest renunciation."[15]

Following Sartre, Todorov makes a distinction between two kinds of morality: a morality that is aimed at individuals (a concrete morality) and one that is aimed at mankind (an abstract morality).[16] Todorov calls them a *"morale de sympathie"* and a *"morale de principes."* In the former "horizontal" morality, "goodness," is the key issue; in the latter "vertical" morality, "the good," is stressed. Todorov also refers to Vasilij Grossman's novel *Vie et destin* in which the character Ikonnov makes the difference between *la bonté* (goodness) and *le bien* (the good).[17] Starting from this difference, this character in Grossman's epic develops a theory in which he states that all religions and ideologies have tried to lay down the good (*le bien*). Because everyone claimed to have the correct definition of the good, many soon felt the urge to impose their own definition of the good on others."[18] "The notion of the good itself immediately became a scourge, even worse than evil."[19] The Jewish philosopher Peter Haas has shown in a revolutionary study how Nazism was based on such vertical and Manichaean ethics.[20] Nazism made it clear how those who wanted to impose their definition of the absolutely good did evil and how the (vertical) morality could turn into a cold monster.[21] In Grossman's opinion, there is fortunately still the goodness of every day (*la petite bonté*).[22] This goodness is revealed in the concrete openness of people to each other. It is a goodness without ideology, without pattern of thought, without solemn talk, and without impressive ethical legitimation, a goodness that does not ask whether the beneficiary deserves it and that withdraws discretely when the system tries to possess it.

When we start with the difference between "the good" (*le bien*) and "the goodness" (*la bonté*),[23] then the ethics of the camp do not have to be understood as a heroic effort to realize an abstract idea (*le bien*) but can be seen as the result of the goodness of every day, the "little," silent goodness of thousands of people without an ideology, without strong convictions, without big slogans or doctrines. Pawelczynska's analysis has indicated that the prewar ethos was not given up but given a new interpretation. In this respect Todorov shows how the victims developed "daily virtues" that added an adapted moral structure to the everyday camp life. These virtues were totally different from the "heroic virtues" of the vertical morality. Starting from the three grammatical persons, Todorov names those virtues: the human dignity (first person: I to I), the interpersonal care (second person: I to You), and the creativity (third person: I to They). They indicate that the basic values of Western civilization remained intact even during the Holocaust. In the camps people clearly needed not only food and drink, but they also hoped to satisfy needs that seem superfluous at first sight in this environment. Facing deportation, Etty Hillesum wrote in her diary: "My Lord, give me one single verse every day, and if, because there is no paper or no light anymore, I will not always be able to write it down, then I will

whisper it softly to your great heaven at night. But give me one single verse now and then."[24]

Many other testimonies indicate that in the end the freedom of choice could never be totally controlled or suppressed by any power. One evening; young Gerhard Durlacher, who would later become the famous Jewish author and who died only recently, secretly listened to a rehearsal of the Westerbork orchestra. He described it as an overwhelming aesthetic experience that liberated him. "Like in a dream I look into the enchanted garden of music. The camp has disappeared, I don't feel the hunger anymore and the pain is gone. . . . With my mouth open and with tears in my eyes I listen to the music and I am overjoyed when a part is repeated. . . . The faces radiate peace and calm, which cannot even be disturbed when the baton is tapped during play. Forty free people are sitting on the stage. Their fear has been deferred, just like mine."[25]

Daily expressions of human dignity, solidarity, and creativity enabled the victims to remain human beings in the most extreme circumstances. At the same time, this also implies criticism of the oppressors as people who were completely determined by the totalitarian system. The victims' attitude showed that determinism of the environment can never be total. Likewise, the Viennese psychiatrist (and survivor of Auschwitz and Dachau) Viktor E. Frankl has pointed out that people could be deprived of everything in the camps, except for the ultimate freedom to adopt a personal attitude toward the circumstances that were imposed on them. Like Frankl and unlike Langer, I also believe that even in the camps there must have been "remaining places of freedom" (*espaces de liberté*) where the daily virtues could be realized. Frankl wrote: "One constantly had to make choices. Every day, every hour the prisoner was given the opportunity to take a decision, whether or not he would submit to the powers that threatened to deprive him of his personality and of his inner freedom, powers that determined whether he would become the plaything of the circumstances or not, whether he would give up his spiritual freedom and his dignity in order to be turned into an ordinary camp resident."[26] This decision was very often possible only through subtle, passive, but sometimes extremely dangerous forms of resistance against the ruling order, so-called expressive acts (*Ausdruckhandlungen*).[27] In that totalitarian system the victims tried to find *espaces de liberté* and to make the most of them. Their attitude illustrates that even Nazism was not able to create a completely isolated system. I use the term "daily" virtues because they do not require exceptional (heroic) personalities with an extraordinary good character and because they are within the reach of every human being.

In literature on the victims, the "spectacular" character of the evil that was done by the prisoners to other prisoners is often accentuated. The smaller and the more impressive expressions of "ordinary" virtues in the extreme

circumstances of the camps are much more extraordinary, however. It goes without saying that in those extreme conditions it was possible almost completely to destroy the moral relationships between people. People could be reduced to creatures that could react only as animals. But it is much more "spectacular" that even there some people sometimes were able to reserve some space in their minds to welcome the other than itself in the littleness of things (Emmanuel Levinas). They succeeded in keeping their consciences free so as to be continuously stimulated and challenged by the suffering of others. In the presentation of the victims, sometimes a false Manichaean distinction between, on the one hand, a large group of reprobate, selfish "animals," reduced to their proper "being," and, on the other hand, a limited group of exceptions who rose above the circumstances in a heroic manner can be sited. There also existed among the victims a so-called gray area (Primo Levi) that simultaneously separates and connects (absolutely) good and (absolutely) evil. In this gray layer we can see many expressions of silent and unpretentious goodness, inspired by the vulnerability of the fellow man.

In this context Frankl's views are relevant. His experience in the camps convinced him that people are, even in the most extreme situations, perfectly capable of deciding how they will relate with themselves and with their neighbors, mentally and spiritually. In his opinion, what happened in the camps proves that people are always able to choose between humanity and inhumanity. Many examples led him to believe that it is possible to break through one's indifference to what is happening and suppress aggression even in the most precarious situations. Numerous examples of such courage and martyrdom show the unique human capacity to find and fulfill a sense in life, even in extremis and in ultimis—in the most extreme circumstances as in Auschwitz and even facing death in the gas chamber.[28] Frankl believes that humans can always maintain a certain form of spiritual independence, interhuman involvement, and creativeness under very heavy mental and physical pressures. "We, who have lived in the concentration camps, we have not forgotten the prisoners who wandered through the barracks, trying to comfort and console others, who gave their last crust of bread to a fellow prisoner. There probably were not many of them, but these men have given the ultimate proof that there is one thing that cannot be taken away: the very last human freedom—the choice to determine your own attitude and choose your own way in any circumstance."[29]

In Frankl's opinion, nothing can condition people to such an extent that they are deprived of all their freedom. People are capable of good and bad, and which option they choose depends on a personal decision and not on the circumstances. They can remain courageous, dignified, and unselfish or can forget human dignity in the bitter fight for self-preservation and become degraded to the level of animals. One can seize the opportunity offered in a

difficult situation and reach a higher moral level, or one can fail to take that opportunity.[30]

Frankl indicates that the chances of survival were considerably enhanced by developing the capacity to turn oneself to the other instead of to oneself. While staying in the camp, Frankl discovered that a prisoner's inner resistance could increase through belief in a goal that went beyond immediate self-preservation: making an effort to help someone in the camp but sometimes also thinking ahead to liberation, somebody who was waiting in the world outside the camp, a task to fulfill, and so on. Primo Levi put this idea strongly into words in one of his poems: "And when I, standing face to face with death, screamed no, that I was not ready yet, that there was still so much to do, I screamed because I saw you, next to me, like it is happening today, a man and a woman in the sun. I have come back because you were there."[31] For example, Frankl noticed how some prisoners, who should already have died, stayed alive. A prisoner who was totally indifferent to his neighbor became numb and soon started decaying both physically and spiritually. By taking care of others, a prisoner not only helped others to survive by giving material help and by recognizing them as real human beings but also increased his own chances of survival. Taking care of other people offers an epiphenomenal advantage. It indirectly creates a goal and a meaning to life other than trying to stay alive. It is a miracle how one finds more and more energy by devoting himself to the others. In other words, taking care is a virtue that carries its own reward: by taking pity on the other, one not only finds dignity and increases resistance in suffering but also stops focusing all attention on himself.[32] The considerate person is blessed in taking care of others, regardless of all possible future rewards, because through that care he (re)discovers himself as an ethical creature and at the same time is freed from the oppressive fullness of his own existence and from the suffering in the camps.[33]

I wish, however, to raise a serious objection to Frankl, where he tries to illustrate his views with things that occurred in the Holocaust. That Frankl links physical survival in the camps with a state of mental and ethical health is not unproblematical in the context of the Holocaust. Because Frankl strongly emphasizes the link between paying attention to one's neighbor and the chances of survival, his vision is very harsh toward the greater majority who did not succeed in surviving. This vision may also cause a strong feeling of guilt among the victims who were able to survive in a less distinguished manner. Almost every survivor of the camps will have to admit with a bleeding heart at a certain moment that he or she had to renounce the virtues of dignity, care, and creativeness simply to survive. Even today Frankl's vision sometimes has painful implications for those who are so hurt that they are no longer able

to experience their suffering as a challenge of self-realization and to develop their dignity, their openness toward others, and their creativity. In fact, Frankl's theory places a moral stain on all victims of the Nazi regime who have not chosen for their neighbors and who have not died with their heads held high. I believe that Frankl underestimates how drastically the extremely miserable situation affected most victims of Nazism (hunger, cold, hostility, lack of hygiene, no privacy, hard labor, humiliations, terror, unreliable fellow prisoners). He does not give enough stress to the unpredictable influence[34] of luck, coincidence, and the continuously changing and varying circumstances that influenced the chances of survival for the victims considerably (the nationality of the victims, their economic situation before the war, their familiarity with manual labor, their intellectual development, their appearance, their profession, their knowledge of foreign languages, their social class, whether they had experienced captivity before the camps, the number of prisoners in their group, the character of their direct superior, the moment of their arrival in the camp, the weather at the moment, the position they had in the camp structure, the kind of work they had to do, and subjective elements such as will to survive, ideology, or religion, personal character, and identification with the executioner).[35] That sixty thousand people survived Auschwitz is not primarily a subjective victory but is owing to objective circumstances and a complex concurrence of very diverse personal and nonpersonal elements. It is difficult to isolate one element as the ultimate explanation. The Manichaean distinction made by Frankl between people who became "saints" in the camps and those who degenerated into "animals" is much too simple.[36] It is inspired by the fear of a possible moral degeneration in *every* human being and by the desire to discover or add some form of ethical logic in the moral chaos of the Holocaust. Describing the survival of Auschwitz as a form of self-realization is incompassionate toward the suffering person who cannot bear the pain. It also means mocking those who did not survive the Holocaust. Such thinking spares the violence used by Nazism against the moral premises that we use to organize our lives and shifts the guilt and responsibility for the cruelties from the criminals to the victims. Langer was right in pointing out that when someone survived in Auschwitz and thereby jeopardized someone else, this was not so much because he or she made a wrong or bad choice but because the camp system was organized in such a way that the "required" number of dead was there every day. In other words, it must be emphasized that the value of something done by a human being depends not only on the motive of the person doing the action but also on the humanity of the world in which the action was done.

Indeed, it has often been made clear that in the Holocaust a moral fundamental attitude carried no rewards in terms of material benefit or survival but that it often required an extra effort that could be fatal. Langer also in-

dicates that, in contrast with Frankl's views, many moral people died and that survival sometimes meant a victory of evil. "In contradiction to those who argue that the only way of surviving was to cling to the values of civilized living despite the corrupting influence of the death camps, [the doctor-prisoner and survivor] Lingens-Reiner insists that those who tried to salvage such moral luggage imposed fatal burdens on themselves."[37] The same idea is evident in Primo Levi's writings: "Those who saved from the *Lager* were not the best, the ones who were predestined to the good, those who had a message; what I have seen and experienced proved exactly the opposite. Those who stayed alive, were preferably the worst, the selfish, the brutes, the heartless, the collaborators . . . , the spies. That was not a general practice (these did not exist and do not exist in human relations), but still a practice."[38]

The person who had daily virtues got great satisfaction but was at the same time jeopardized not only materially but also spiritually because taking up the care of others and failing caused a painful feeling of guilt. Moreover, taking care of others made one extremely vulnerable because the other's death could affect his own resistance seriously. When, on the other hand, one fought heroically for an abstract cause in the camps, the disappearance of a concrete individual could be put in perspective of that ideal. The more one was dedicated to a concrete individual, however, the more vulnerable one became. Although some people in Auschwitz succeeded in finding meaning by taking care of others "in a spectacular way," we must not forget that Auschwitz also shows us the irrevocable physical limits in the capacity to give sense (dignity, care, and creativity). The Holocaust not only shows that some people were able to keep their capacity to give their freedom an ethical meaning and direction but also that this capacity to give an ethical dimension is inevitably subject to biological limitations. This idea is probably not very comforting, but I believe it shows more courage when one dares to recognize that there is a limit at which giving meaning and commitment to the other is just not possible anymore. Only in this way we can take corporality in ethics really seriously, and we leave behind a dualistic view in which body and spirit are disconnected.[39]

Frankl's opinion is based on a dualistic view of man. He believes that human life is lived on three different levels. The first is the biological-physiological level and its chemical processes. The second is the psychological-sociological level. The third level is the spiritual-personal. Although Frankl believes these dimensions are related to each other, he still considers the spiritual dimension to be an autonomous dimension which is the most essential for human existence (*Trotzmacht des Geistes*). In Frankl's opinion, man can rise above the limits of the lower dimensions with this "power of the mind" and free himself from deterministic influences. But it

remains to be seen whether Frankl takes the psycho-physical connection of the spiritual life in the context of the Holocaust seriously enough. According to Frankl, "hunger was the same, but the people differed. Truly, calories did not matter" in the camps.[40]

Ethical life always arises from a fundamental trust in reality. But extreme forms of cold, hunger, or fear can affect this trust to such an extent that it is impossible for ethics of dignity and taking care of other people to grow. In such extreme cases of fear, we can understand perfectly that people can no longer function ethically and will see their neighbors only as a threat to the further development of their own identity. Auschwitz clearly proves that calories do matter in ethics and that a lack of food often makes it impossible to experience a situation of pain and suffering as a challenge to ethical development. Although the suffering victim also has a fundamental desire for fullness, goodness, and wholeness, in the given situation he may be forced to live within the narrow, closed limits of his tortured body to such an extent that giving in the form of human dignity, taking care of the others, and creativity is no longer possible. According to Stig Dagerman, "Hunger is a form of irresponsibility, not only a physical condition but also a moral one, leaving very little room for long thoughts."[41] In other words, if some examples of the Holocaust show in a hopeful way what man is capable of in terms of dignity and care in extreme circumstances, they must not make us forget that Auschwitz mainly shows us what man is no longer capable of in certain circumstances. Auschwitz also teaches us that there is not only a moral winner in every human being but also a very vulnerable being.

Frankl's vision is valuable insofar as it challenges us not to think too quickly that the bottom limit of ethics and giving sense has been reached. In fact, Frankl's view was developed with psychotherapeutic intentions, and that is why it strongly emphasizes the human capacities and the importance of choosing freely. In this respect it has great importance for health care. It clearly points out that we must not give up our belief in the suffering man too soon and that we have to stand by him as much as possible in order to grow in pain and suffering even more, where this is still possible. Man is not necessarily conditioned totally and by circumstances. In my opinion, the problem is that Frankl uses Auschwitz too much to serve his vision, whereas this historical drama should show the limits of his view. A fundamental lesson of the Holocaust is not only that in the end nothing can condition man totally, but how fragile is the capacity to take care of others, how much ethical life depends on corporality, how responsible we are to pay (individual and common) attention to this biological infrastructure of ethics, and how unrewarding ethics often are, at least in terms of being effective and in terms of material welfare.

Little, ordinary good things were not done by most victims as a consequence of making an unambiguous and heroic choice for an abstract ethical ideal. While such a choice for the purely good usually led to severe punishment and sometimes to death, many victims were able to develop themselves in the direction of the good through thousands of small, anonymous, and unpretentious expressions of dignity, care, and creativeness. By doing this, they offered during the Holocaust an existential-ethical answer to the daily vices of the criminals who caused the atrocities they suffered.[42] In this context, by analogy with Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil" in her study of the perpetrator, we could use the term "banality of the good." Auschwitz teaches us that both evil and goodness are ordinary human capacities. In this sense, the Holocaust did not change the nature of good and bad. The difference between the life of the victims in the camps and our daily life is not the respective presence or absence of ethics. The life of the victims is a larger representation of what happens in our daily life. Precisely because of these larger representations we think we can draw generalizing ethical conclusions about human nature.

In the camps there was more than just the law of the jungle. An unambiguous option for the good was not always possible. Usually the choice was between more or less evil. And the presence of this choice indicates precisely that ethical life remained possible even in the camps. This conclusion, however, should not make us too optimistic. The good in Auschwitz was possible only in rare cases. Auschwitz must be mainly a warning of the fragility of ethical life. In a context of extreme inhumanity in which one has to choose between the loss of bread (and life) and the loss of dignity, passing judgment becomes very difficult. An act can never be called good or bad in itself; one must bear in mind the situation at a certain moment and place and the different values at stake. The "true" identity of man will not reveal itself in such extreme circumstances because man was not created for such situations.

Notes

1. Primo Levi *Is dit een mens?,* trans. from the Italian by F. De Matteis-Vogels (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1987), p. 94; English trans.: [*This Is a Man?* (Abacus) (London: Sphere Books, 1987)].

2. Abel Herzberg, *Tweestromenland. Dagboeken uit Bergen-Belsen* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1978), p. 193; Victor Van Riet, *Wenteltrap Mauthausen* (Antwerp: Brito, 1972), p. 88.

3. See the work of Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983).

4. Levi, *Is dit een mens?,* p. 99.

5. Lawrence L. Langer, *Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), p. 87: "Our perception of that atmosphere, our need to see a shining clarity beyond its ambiguous smoke, may help to explain why some commentators, retreating from the theories of heroic spiritual resistance, adopt an opposite position, much more gloomy but equally comforting—the argument that the Jews were weak and helpless creatures who collaborated in their own extermination."

6. Tzvetan Todorov, *Face à l'extrême* (La couleur des idées) (Paris: Seuil, 1991; [Points, Essais 295] 2d ed., Paris: Seuil, 1994, p. 74); English trans.: *Facing the Extreme: Moral Life in the Concentration Camps* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996).

7. In the camps, mostly young people chose the heroic virtues, while adults were more inspired by daily virtues. Adults mostly were much more oriented toward the concrete love of a partner and the responsibility for their children, as they were in daily life.

8. Langer, *Versions of Survival;* Langer, "The Dilemma of Choice in the Deathcamps," in *Echoes from the Holocaust: Philosophical Reflections on a Dark Time,* ed. A. Rosenberg and G. E. Myers (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), pp. 118-127; "Beyond Theodicy: Jewish Victims and the Holocaust," *Religious Education* 84 (1989): 48-54; Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

9. Langer, *Versions of Survival,* p. 90: "One cannot repeat too often that the value of a human gesture depends not only on the motive of the gesture, but on the humanity of the world in whose presence it is made."

10. Langer "The Dilemma of Choice in the Deathcamps," pp. 123-24: "An entire ethical vocabulary, which for generations furnished a sanctuary for motive and character, no matter how terrible the external details, had been corrupted by the facts of this event."

11. Ibid., p. 124: "Once again the choice is not between life and death, resistance and submission, courage and cowardice, but between two forms of humiliation, in this instance each leading to the extinction of a life."

12. Langer, *Versions of Survival,* p. 201.

13. Anna Pawelczynska, *Values and Violence in Auschwitz: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1980), p. 7: "The value of humanism, which, although they underwent modifications in the clash with camp reality, fundamentally affected prisoners' attitudes, behavior, and forms of adaptation. These values affected the manner of experiencing life and death." See the critical review of her work by Alan L. Berger in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50 (1982): 483-84.

14. On this point the ethics of the survivors differed from the "ethical" system of the perpetrators. Nazi "ethics" was not a reduction but a restructuring (and perversion!) of Western morality. See P. J. Haas, *Morality After Auschwitz: The Radical Challenge of the Nazi Ethic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).

15. Pawelczynska, *Values and Violence in Auschwitz,* p. 144.

16. Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* (Paris: Nagel, 1970), pp. 41-42: "Entre deux types de morales. D'une part, une morale de la sympathie, du dévouement individuel; et d'autre part, une morale plus large, mais d'une efficacité plus contestable."

17. Vasilij Grossman, *Vie et destin: Roman,* trans. from the Russian by A. Berelowitch and E. Etkind (Paris: Julliard, 1983), pp. 379-86.

18. Ibid., p. 380: "Ainsi, le bien ayant perdu son universalité, le bien d'une secte, d'une classe, d'une nation, d'un Etat, pretend à cette universalité pour justifier sa lutte contre tout ce qui lui apparaît comme étant le mal."

19. Ibid., p. 380: "La notion même d'un tel bien devenait un fléau, devenait un mal plus grand que le mal."

20. Peter Haas, *Morality After Auschwitz.*

21. Grossman, *Vie et destin,* p. 382: "Là où se lève l'aube du bien, des enfants et des vieillards périssent, le sang coule."

22. Ibid., p. 383: "Cest la bonté d'une vieille qui, sur le bord de la route, donne un morceau de pain à un bagnard qui passe, c'est la bonté d'un soldat qui tend sa gourde à un ennemi blessé, la bonté de la jeunesse qui a pitié de la vieillesse, la bonté d'un paysan qui cache dans sa grange un vieillard juif. . . . Cette bonté privée d'un individu à l'égard d'un autre individu est une bonté sans témoins, une *petite bonté* sans idéologie. On pourrait la qualifier de bonté sans pensée. La bonté des hommes hors du bien religieux ou social [our italics]."

23. This does not mean, of course, that a theoretical discourse on the good (*le bien*) and the practice of goodness (*la bonté*) are diametrically opposed, as less as the grammatical rules of a language are opposed to the practice of language.

24. Etty Hillesum, *Etty. De nagelaten geschriften van Etty Hillesum, 1941-1943,* ed. K. A. D. Smelik, 3rd rev. ed. (Amsterdam: Balans, 1991), p. 563.

25. In Raf Bodelier, *Ordeverstoringen,* p. 122, from Gerhard Durlacher, "Requiem," *Herdenkingsnummer Nederlands Auschwitzcomité,* January 1988.

26. See Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy* (New York: Pocket Books, 1963), p. 38, and *The Unheard Cry for Meaning* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978).

27. Rudolf Ginters, Die Ausdruckshandlung: Eine Untersuchung ihrer sittlichen Bedeutsamkeit (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1976).

28. Frankl, *Unheard Cry for Meaning,* chap. 1, n. 3.

29. Ibid., p. 86.

30. Ibid., p. 88.

31. His poem of February 11, 1946, in Primo Levi, *Op een onzeker uur. Gedichten,* trans. from Italian by M. Asscher and R. Speelman (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1988), p. 19.

32. See Robert Antèlme, *L'espèce humaine,* 2d rev. ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), p. 221: "Pour tenir, il faut que chacun de nous sorte de lui-même, il faut qu'il se sente responsable de tous" (To stay alive, it is necessary that everyone of us is leaving him/herself, it is necessary that one feels responsible for all.)

33. Didier Pollefeyt, "The Trauma of the Holocaust as a Central Challenge of Levinas' Ethical and Theological Thought," in *The Holocaust: Remembering for the Future II on CD-ROM. Erinnerung an die Zukunft. Vom Vorurteil zur Vernichtung? Analysen und Strategien gegen Totalitarismus, Antisemitismus, Fremdenangst und Ausländerfeindlichkeit* (Papers presented at the International Scholars' Conference held in Berlin, May 13-17, 1994), ed. Marcia L. Littell, E. Geldbach, and G. J. Colijn (Stamford, Conn.: Vista InterMedia Corporation, 1996).

34. In a footnote in *The Unheard Cry for Meaning,* Frankl once made a correction on his own view which is in the line of my criticism. He argues in the third footnote of chapter 1 that a sense and a goal to live for constituted a *necessary* but not a *sufficient* cause to survive the camps. It is very typical, however, that he places this critical insight only in a footnote. If this idea had influenced the whole of his work, it would have argued for a fundamental revision of his approach.

35. For the complex factors playing a role in surviving the camp, see further Pawelczynska, *Values and Violence in Auschwitz,* pp. 51-67.

36. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning,* p. 38.

37. Langer, *Versions of Survival,* p. 74.

38. Primo Levi, *De verdronkenen en de geredden,* trans. from Italian by F. De Matteis-Vogels (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1991), p. 79; English trans. as *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).

39. Frankl, *The Unheard Cry for Meaning,* p. 28.

40. Ibid., p. 38. He also criticizes Bertold Brecht's idea that first comes food and then philosophy (*"Erst komt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral"*). See ibid., p. 24.

41. Stig Dagerman, *Duitse herfst. Een naoorlogse reportage,* trans. from Swedish by K. Woudstra (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1985), p. 15.

42. For the "daily vices" of the perpetrators, see Didier Pollefeyt, *"Auschwitz, or How Good People Can Do Evil: An Ethical Interpretation of the Perpetrators and the Victims of the Holocaust in Light of the French Thinker Tzvetan Todorov,"* in *Confronting the Holocaust: A Mandate for the 21st Century?* (Papers on CD-ROM, presented at the 26th Annual Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches held in Thomas, Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 3-5, 1996), ed. Marcia L. Littell and G. J. Colijn (Stamford, Conn.: Vista InterMedia Corporation, 1997).

Medicine in the Shadow of Nuremberg

DIANE M. PLOTKIN

IN 1946, FOLLOWING WHAT HAS BECOME KNOWN as the Nuremberg Medical Trial, twenty physicians were indicted for crimes against humanity. To prevent a repeat of their excesses, the military tribunal established ten basic principles for future moral, ethical, and legal behavior in the practice of medicine. These principles came to be known as the Nuremberg Code.[1] In essence, they require the patient's consent for any experiments to be conducted and demand that any medical experiments be conducted only by qualified medical personnel. They demand that experiments not be conducted if there is a risk of death or disabling injury and state that the subject must be at liberty to bring the experiment to an end if continuation will result in physical or mental anguish.

Subsequently, in September 1948, the World Medical Association, comprised of thirty-nine medical societies, including the American Medical Association, met and enacted the Geneva version of the Hippocratic Oath. In addition to the ethical boundaries imposed on physicians by the Nuremberg Code, one portion of the Geneva Convention reads, "I will not permit consideration of race, religion, nationality, party politics or social standing to intervene between my duty and my patient."[2]

To adapt them to more current issues in biomedical research, the statutes in the Nuremberg Code and Geneva Convention were later broadened by the Eighteenth World Medical Association in Helsinki, Finland, in June 1964 in what is known as the Declaration of Helsinki and amended in October 1975, October 1983, and September 1989. The Declaration of Helsinki's statutes fall into three categories: basic principles regarding biomedical research, clinical research, and nontherapeutic or nonclinical biomedical research, the last

statute of which reads, "In research on man, the interest of science and society should never take precedence over considerations related to the well-being of the subject."[3]

Today, fifty years after the Nuremberg Trials, we once again find ourselves facing moral issues regarding the value of life. As our world population grows, disease and starvation in underdeveloped and overpopulated countries increase. Dehumanizing terms such as "racial cleansing" are broadcast by the news media with very little, if any, thought about their ramifications. We have gone from the American eugenics movement of the early 1900s, which influenced the Nazis in their attempt to achieve a super race,[4] to an era in which we are confronted with many bioethical dilemmas, including "the importance of examination of racial criteria in medical research," "desensitizing doctors to causing deaths," "genetic screening and genetic engineering," and "community welfare [as] a legitimate consideration in weighing patient-benefit against cost,"[5] to name but a few. As we approach new frontiers in medical science, we must do all we can to prevent a "slippery slope" or descent into abuse from what has been the highest quality of medical practice into a far less caring, more financially expedient approach to patient care. To do this, it is necessary to take a look at the way biomedical ethics became so perverted in Nazi Germany as to allow for the crimes of experimentation, the euthanasia program, and "ethnic cleansing" through extermination of so-called inferior races, which physicians who had been educated in the most prestigious medical programs of the time performed in the name of medical science.

Concepts of "scientific racism" go back far earlier than the Nazi era. As early as 1727, the earl of Boulainvilliers argued that the nobility of France had descended from a superior race of Nordic Franks, while the peasantry were the descendants of subjugated Celtic Gauls.[6] During the period that has been termed the Enlightenment, although *liberté, egalité,* and *fratenité* were espoused by the French revolutionaries, they did not include women, and though the American Constitution supposedly extended these the rights to all citizens, it referred only to white males.

In the nineteenth century, Joseph Arthur de Gobineau's *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* argued that "'racial vitality'" lay at the root of all great transformations in human history, and Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species,* published in 1859, was to eventuate in a justification of a political order based on the theory of "survival of the [racially] fittest." Darwin's cousin Sir Francis Galton, an English statistician, was intrigued by Darwin's theory of natural selection, "the process by which some members of a species possess certain inherited advantages for survival at the expense of others who do not have those advantageous traits." In 1883, taking Darwin's theory one step further, he coined the term "eugenics," which meant "'the study of the

agencies under social control which seek to improve or impair the racial qualifies of future generations either physically or mentally.'"[7]

In 1920, *Morality and Strength,* by Ernst Mann, was published in Germany. It stated: "The sick and the weak cause only detriment to humanity. Each year, the entire population should undergo a medical examination and men who are sick and miserable should be turned over to the health police. The insane, the infirm and the incurable are an offense to human mercy and intelligence." In keeping with this policy, when Hitler came to power in 1933, he issued the "sterilization" law, under which all persons judged to have a hereditary illness were to be sterilized. Such illnesses included "hereditary schizophrenia, chronic depressive states, epilepsy, blindness and deafness." No condition that would possibly present a danger of degeneracy was to be overlooked, and it was considered a patriotic duty of all Germans to watch over the health and purity of their offspring. In keeping with this policy of racial purity, Hitler wrote, "'By consciously and systematically favoring the fertility of the most robust elements of our society . . . we shall obtain a race whose role shall be to eliminate the seeds first of the physical decadence, and then of the moral decadence, from which we are suffering today.'"[8]

In keeping with the emphasis on health and physical purity, doctors joined the Nazi party in greater numbers than any other professional group. According to Jeremiah Barondess, more than thirty-eight thousand physicians, almost half the doctors in the country, had joined the party by 1942. Most came to embrace the ideals of Nordic supremacism and accept the protocols of the Nazi ideal of "racial hygiene," which grew out of the concept of Social Darwinism and was to result in an effort to prevent the degeneration of the human race.[9] Instead, their efforts resulted in the degeneration of morality and lack of regard for their fellow human beings. As one physician, Dr. Lettich, who was deported to Auschwitz, wrote:

> We were astonished . . . by the fact that German doctors acted unanimously with total contempt for human life. They did not consider prisoners as men, but simply as "human material". . . .
>
> The S.S. doctors had chosen to serve death. For them, human life was of no intrinsic value.[10]

An article in *Time* magazine quotes psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton: "'What made the corruption of physicians so crucial to Hitler was that their support provided moral and scientific legitimacy for his crazed racial and biological notions. . . . '"[11] Although they performed thousands of medical experiments in the concentration camps, they achieved nothing. According to Albert Deutsch: "The Nazi doctors who tortured concentration camp prisoners to death in their experimental laboratories made a signal contribution to the evolution of medical ethics in the civilized world. They produced not a single

cure, nor did a single important medical discovery result from the experiments performed on their guinea pigs."[12]

Now, fifty years later, as we confront new and frightening possibilities regarding gene therapy, organ and tissue transplants, in vitro fertilization, and questions over the acceptance of abortion, euthanasia, or assisted death, are we once again flirting with disaster? As we find ourselves facing new and frightening questions regarding the future of our medical care as well as that of our descendants, are we in danger of once again becoming desensitized to the sanctity of life?

Hitler stated numerous times that "Christianity and its notion of charity should be replaced by the ethic of strength over weakness."[13] He had a horror of the word "sickness" and felt that "weak people had no right to live in society. They could only weaken their own strength and adulterate the purity of the Aryan race." He wrote in *Mein Kampf*: "'The role of the strongest is to dominate and not to melt with the weakest. . . . Only he who is born weak may consider this law cruel because he is no more than a weak and limited person. . . . A strong people will lead to a strong state.'" Heinrich Himmler " . . . stated that the law of nature must take its course in survival of the fittest."[14] In keeping with this ethic, the Aryan state began the euthanasia program, which was to lead, in short order, to the gas chambers. If we lose sight of the principles that were engendered by the horrors of World War II, might we not be in danger of overlooking the ethical boundaries written thereafter by the World Medical Association as well?

Today, one of the primary considerations hospital bioethics committees face is the value of life itself. What is "life worthy of life"? Philosophic materialism, the view that all that exists is matter or has come from matter, brings into question of the use of animals as well as humans for experimentation. According to this line of thinking, if there is no theistic view, no belief in God, regarding human worth, then what is the basis for human dignity or moral standing? Contradictory positions revolve around the question of who or what has "standing," meaning status or rank as an individual, and is, therefore, deserving of protection. Because ethical principles are rooted in the inherent worth and dignity of an individual, it is necessary to determine who or what has "inherent worth." Is the life of an animal less valuable than that of a human? What are the rights of the unborn fetus? One area of disagreement lies between those who take an antivivisectionist approach and those who approve of using animals for research. Questions regarding standing for animals as well as fetuses, infants, and the severely demented have centered on conditions for personhood. One argument holds that only if one is a person and possesses certain cognitive qualities does he or she have "moral standing." Conversely, if one does not possess cognitive properties, one lacks moral standing and is, therefore, not necessarily entitled to certain rights, in-

cluding the right to life. According to this argument, it follows that there is nothing inherently wrong with killing a creature or placing it at risk. According to the cognitivist model, there are six essential conditions to qualify as a creature with rank or standing: self-consciousness (consciousness of oneself as existing over time, with a past and future); freedom to act and the capacity to engage in purposive sequences of actions; having reasons for actions and the ability to appreciate reasons for acting; capacity to communicate with other persons using a language; capacity to make moral judgments; and rationality.[15]

Jeremy Bentham argues that although there are inherent differences between humans and animals, there are also important and relevant similarities, the most important being the capacity to suffer. Hence, according to his reasoning, if a creature suffers pain, its autonomy should be respected. Ronald Dworkin, on the other hand, maintains that autonomy "seems to be a distinctly human ability," while, according to Robert Frey, there is a continuum of moral standing, or comparative value, between human and animal that descends from humans down to the lowest level of existence.[16]

Larry Gostin writes that ethical principles for clinical research for the protection of human subjects in clinical research "are now well recognized and rooted in the inherent worth and dignity of the individual." These principles include a respect for persons as autonomous agents whose choices are to be observed. In addition, persons are to be protected from risks and adverse consequences of research and sometimes even excluded from research. Beneficence (doing good) and non-maleficence (doing no harm) require that researchers maximize benefits while minimizing risks, and justice requires that all humans be treated equally unless there is a strong ethical justification for treating them differently. When applied to larger populations, these ethical principles are designed to protect the health and dignity of all.[17] He does not, however, address the subject of using animals in clinical research.

Since World War II, however, despite the Nuremberg Code and its subsequent revisions, there have been several abuses in the field of biomedical research. One example is the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, in which treatment was withheld from men with syphilis so researchers could observe the course of the disease. This experiment was begun in 1932 and not terminated until 1970, long after treatment for the disease in its first and second stages was readily available. In Willowbrook, New York, retarded children, with the permission of their parents, were deliberately injected with hepatitis virus. The Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital experiments involved injecting twenty-two chronically ill and debilitated patients, without their consent, with live cancer cells. There were LSD experiments in Manhattan, DES experiments in Chicago, and unapproved use of drugs and vaccines on soldiers during Operation Desert Storm, to name but a few.[18]

In the 1970s, concern for the respect of persons and equitable distribution of risks as well as benefits of research resulted in the creation of the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. This in turn resulted in the publication of the *Belmont Report* in 1979 in an effort to identify the "ethical precepts underlying human experimentation as a basis for regulating research . . . [for] the need for ethical principles explicitly governing therapeutic research was widely recognized."[19] Researchers also recognized the need for further regulations, which issued from the National Commission as well as from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, now known as the Department of Health and Human Services.[20]

Nevertheless, despite the limitations regarding the use of humans as research subjects imposed in the Nuremberg Code and the ethical codes that followed, we may still unwittingly be research subjects by virtue of laboratories that use our genetic material for experimentation. One example involves the production of a pharmaceutical substance for the treatment of leukemia from spleen cells from a patient named John Moore. Treated for leukemia at the University of California, Moore underwent a splenectomy, after which, without his knowledge, cells from his resected spleen were used in the development of a cell line called the "Mo cell line." Although Moore had signed a surgical consent form authorizing the pathologist to dispose of any severed tissue, no reference was made to exploitation of these cells. Between 1976 and 1983 Moore returned several times, ostensibly for routine follow-up visits. During these visits, however, researchers obtained blood, bone marrow, and other substances to further their research. When researchers developed a "possible patentable device" using Moore's cells, he was asked to sign a consent form waiving his rights to any cell line that might subsequently be developed. Because he refused to sign, the case was brought to court, Moore alleging that there were thirteen forms of wrongdoing, including "conversion, breach of fiduciary duty and lack of informed consent." The judge ruled that it was only after the defendants had "expended great time, effort, and skills that the resected spleen had acquired the characteristics of property." In addition, he expressed the opinion that "medical progress would be impeded if patients were permitted to sell their organs and tissues" and that the commercialization of human body parts should be settled by legislation rather that judicial decision. In 1990, the case was still pending before the California Supreme Court.[21]

Although eugenics as a science has lost its credibility, genetic engineering presents the possibility of a frightening facsimile thereof. The ethical questions raised by this new science increase exponentially with each new advance in our ability to tinker with DNA. One article relates that science has indeed entered the age in which advances in academe and biotechnology re-

quire us to consider ever more carefully the right of dominion over our bodies, including their molecular structure.[22]

The Human Genome Project involved mapping and sequencing the 50,000 to 100,000 genes that contribute our genetic makeup. By the end of 1992 more than 6,000 of the estimated 100,000 genes in the human genome had been isolated. The techniques of identifying, cloning, expression, and transmission of genetic material will allow scientists to discover causes of disease as well as develop screening measures and progress toward prevention and cures, a field known as gene therapy, which potentiates treatment of all genetic disorders, including cancer, infectious diseases, and other acquired disorders by modifying cells in the human body.

There are two types of genetic cells: somatic, or body cells, and germline cells of human production (the sperm and the egg). Gene therapy involves "the insertion of a functioning gene into the somatic cells of a patient to correct an inborn error of metabolism or to provide a new function to a cell"[23] and can be divided into four categories: "somatic cell therapy, somatic cell enhancement, germ-line cell therapy, and germ-line enhancement."[24] There are, however, two reasons for genetic intervention: for therapeutic purposes and for enhancement, in which new genetic material is introduced to produce a genetic trait for nontherapeutic or nonmedical reasons. It is "germ-line enhancement" which involves "improving or establishing certain traits or qualities in future generations." This has also been termed "'eugenic genetic engineering.'"[25]

The first actual experiment in gene therapy took place on September 14, 1990, at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. The prospect of using gene therapy for the more than four thousand known genetic disorders holds out new hope for many patients, families, and physicians. This potential is, however, not without ethical and legal implications, for it may lead to argument or litigation regarding the ownership of portions of the human genome.[26] According to a short article in *Newsweek* in January 1996, GeneLink and Fort Worth's University of North Texas Health Science Center opened a "genetic banking service," which will store DNA for release to blood relatives in an effort to help descendants fight inherited diseases. As stated in the article, "For $175, customers swab their mouths with special kits, then ship the samples to GeneLink for 25 years of storage." Critics, however, fear the possibility of manipulating stored DNA in an effort to form a "master race."[27] One can easily see that the prospect of altering a body's genetic structure will bring about new ethical, legal, and social considerations.

In an effort to regulate the use of DNA, the National Institutes of Health established the Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee in 1974. A pamphlet entitled *Points to Consider* guides investigators in submitting

protocols for human gene therapy trials regarding issues concerning the potential clinical benefit as compared to the risks involved; free and informed consent; fair selection of subjects; "'biosafety'" precautions because of genetic uncertainty; public participation in genetic research policy; and consideration of long and broad-range consequences.[28] In addition, human gene therapy is regulated by each Institutional Biosafety Committee and its Institutional Review Board, which must approve all human clinical trials, as well as by the Food and Drug Administration.

Scenarios that ethical committees may face in the not too distant future involve such issues as embryo splitting for genetic selection, embryo transfers after splitting, and the possibility of cloning. Regarding this possibility, John A. Robertson writes:

> The most prevalent ethical concern, however, arises from the dangers that intentional creation of identical twins or multiples of one genome might pose to resulting offspring. The fear is that cloning will violate the inherent uniqueness and dignity of individuals, as well as create unrealistic parental expectations for their children. It also opens the door to identical embryos being created and sold because of their genetic desirability, as cattle embryos now are sold to increase animal yield and profitability. A worst-case scenario envisages the mass production of identical embryos to be sold to persons seeking desirable children. Finally, there are fears that embryos will be created to provide organ and tissue for existing children who need transplants.[29]

In another article, Robertson discusses the frightening possibility of intentional or nonintentional error in fertility clinics in which embryos produced are wrongfully implanted in mothers who are not the genetic parents. He asks whether, in such a case, the child would belong to the genetic or the gestational parents. Even worse is the possibility of embryos being stolen without the consent of their genetic parents and sold to otherwise infertile couples. Obviously this possibility calls for greater regulation of the infertility industry.[30] As stated by Senator Mark Hatfield, "The result . . . has reinforced our greatest fears about biomedical research: It can—and will—do anything, regardless of moral or ethical questions.[31]

Other questions never envisioned by those who established the principles in the Nuremberg Code involve not only artificial insemination but surrogate motherhood, fetal tissue transplants, and use of fetal tissue from aborted fetuses.[32] Interestingly, in Germany laws were passed in December 1990 with an eye toward human experimentation. These prohibit cloning as well as cross-species fertilization and fertilization of any egg except for the express purpose of bringing about pregnancy in the woman from whom it was obtained. Furthermore, German laws prohibit fertilization of more than

one egg at a time or sex selection except in cases of serious sex-related illness, fertilization from the sperm of a dead man, transfer of an unfertilized egg or nonimplanted embryo from one woman to another, and genetic manipulation of cells for use in human reproduction. In addition, they prohibit surrogate motherhood.[33]

Ironically, while many have difficulty conceiving, others wish to rid themselves of unwanted pregnancies. Hence physicians well as patients face issues and questions regarding the morality of abortion. One statement in the Hippocratic Oath reads, "I will not give to a woman an instrument to induce abortion."[34] In this era of prenatal diagnosis, however, there are those who choose to abort simply because they desire a child of the opposite sex. Of this, Dorothy Wertz and John Fletcher write, "Moral and social arguments weigh heavily against performing medical procedures for purposes of sex selection. The medical profession has a responsibility to abandon its posture of ethical neutrality and take a firm stand now against sex selection."[35] Nevertheless, abortion in early pregnancy is becoming not only legal but more readily available in several countries, including Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Canada, Spain, Belgium, France, Andorra, Mexico, Pakistan, and Ireland, as well as the United States.[36]

There are those who argue that legalized abortion is equivalent to the Holocaust. This is, however, a flawed analogy. It must be remembered that the Holocaust was a determined effort to exterminate an entire people. In doing so, it required the cooperation of government and industry. Thus in no way can it be compared to legalized abortion, either in scope or purpose. Furthermore, while there are those who argue that there is a moral equivalence between using the remains of fetal tissue from elective abortions and those who had been aborted in the concentration camps for purposes of experimentation, this too is a flawed analogy. Although in both cases the use of fetal remains may be unethical, "they are not unethical for the same reason, and to equate them is to insult the memory of those who suffered and died solely as a result of who they were and what they believed."[37]

While abortion may be one area of serious disagreement over the right to terminate a life before it is born, the question of euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide is another which critics fear may lead to the slippery slope of abuse. The actual meaning of the term "euthanasia" has shifted so that today it has lost its sinister implications in favor of the idea of bringing about a kinder, gentler death. Nevertheless, from World War II to the present some assert that we continue to see a destructive use of euphemisms. The term "artificial nutrition and hydration" is one that has seen some attention within the last decade, as evidenced by those who drew an analogy between the withdrawing of fluids and food from Nancy Cruzan and others who remain in a permanent state of unconsciousness and the actions of Nazi physicians

and nurses.[38] In a brief article on this topic John Trott muses, "Can nutrition which is in fact nutritious to the person receiving it be called 'artificial'?"[39]

Ronald Dworkin, in his book, *Life's Dominion: An Argument About Abortion, Euthanasia, and Individual Freedom,* offers a new way of interpreting disagreements regarding the fundamental differences between abortion and euthanasia by defining three fundamental bioethical concepts: "autonomy, beneficence, and sanctity of life."[40] In so doing, he considers hastening the deaths of three groups of persons: those who are competent but seriously ill, those who are permanently unconscious, and those who are conscious but incompetent, specifically those with progressive and incurable dementia.[41] Rebecca Dresser, however, argues that as long as a person is able to enjoy and participate in his or her life, any directive to the contrary should be disregarded, stating as a final argument: "If we were to adopt an alternative to the common vision of dementia, we might ask ourselves what we could do so that people with dementia may find that life among us need not be so terrifying and frustrating. We might ask ourselves what sorts of environments, interactions, and relationships would enhance their lives."[42]

Just as there is a difference between abortion and euthanasia, so is there a difference between euthanasia and assisted suicide. In euthanasia, the person who does the killing is someone other than the patient, such as a relative, a nurse, or a physician; in assisted suicide, the person who wishes to die does the actual killing, while the person who provides the means to do so is termed "the enabler."[43] Those who oppose euthanasia argue that "the medical profession is committed to healing" (a portion of the Hippocratic Oath reads, "I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect");[44] "physicians should not cause death"; "patients should not request physician-assisted suicide"; "physician-assisted suicide would lead to mistrust and abuses"; "physician-assisted suicide is unnecessary." There are, however, those who feel that physician-assisted suicide should be legalized, arguing that "there is a need to respond to current medical reality"; "to alleviate patient suffering"; "to optimize patient control"; "to minimize harm to the patient and others"; and "to act out of compassion."[45]

Those who would legalize euthanasia, however, suggest that there be a required counseling session to determine if this is the best or most "rational" choice for the person in question. Furthermore some proposals suggest a waiting period between the counseling session or sessions and the actual death event, a prohibition of fees for physicians or other persons assisting in the voluntary deaths, documentation of any procedure that would remain part of the patient's medical history, and a detailed report of any incidence of euthanasia.[46]

One area that would have to be better controlled were voluntary euthanasia to be legalized would be the possible trade in human organs thereby made available for transplant. Ethics committees face several sensitive issues,

one of which deals with problems in multiracial communities. For example, African American communities may be overrepresented among applicants for organs, in part because of susceptibility to hypertension, which results in organ damage, but are underrepresented among organ donors.[47] Other issues deal with ethics concerning acquiring organs from living relatives, organ donations between spouses (the wife is generally more willing to donate than the husband), and a market in acquisition of organs for profit. In the United States health services are generally available on the basis of individuals' ability to pay. "By legislation, however, transplantable organs [should not] be [made available] for purchase or sale."[48]

Surgeons who specialize in "artificial and transplanted organs are not free from legal and ethical hazards." An increase in demand for transplantable human organs has awakened a renewed interest in obtaining them from non-heartbeating cadavers,[49] all of which brings about the question of exactly when death occurs. According to a definition in Jane Norman's "Death: The Final Stage of Growth," "the actual death event is precipitated by failure of one or all of the three major organ systems: the central nervous system, the respiratory system, or the cardiovascular system.[50] Today, however, it is possible to provide organs for transplant by providing sufficient oxygen, at least for a time, to brain-dead persons. Thus, in an era in which legalized euthanasia might shorten the life of the unconscious or severely demented, medico-legal ethics would demand recognition of the inherent danger in trade and profit from organs obtained in either of these manners.

Finally, introduction of managed care and its resulting overseeing of patients' and physicians' rights to act as independent agents in the practice of medicine is severing the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship. Despite the Nuremberg Code, the Geneva Convention, and the Helsinki Code, all of which established codes of ethics for the highest standards of medical practice, patients today are less able to trust their physicians to provide the highest quality of medical treatment. Not only is there a third party, the insurance company, which oversees the type and amount of care to which the patient is entitled, but the physician's freedom to provide that care has been severely restricted. In response to this and other problems in the foreseeable future, a California neurologist, Dr. Vincent Riccardi, has established the American Medical Consumers, which he hopes will one day be able to negotiate for care on behalf of its patients.[51]

In California, patients who subscribe to an HMO (Health Management Organization) plan called Health Net are assigned to "primary care physicians," called "gatekeepers," who control access to other services as well as to specialists. In a plan called "capitation," Health Net collects money through payment of premiums, reserving much of it for its own profit, while paying physicians and some hospitals a set monthly fee. Each time a capitated

physician admits a patient to the hospital, it cuts into his income. Therefore, spending less for patient care produces a profit for him or her, while, increasingly, spending more results in financial losses for the individual doctor.[52] As a result, physicians paid under this plan hold back part of their allotted salaries to cover their operating costs as well as produce profit.

This and other reforms in the provision of medical care are increasingly creating dilemmas and ambiguities in the future of medical ethics. Susan M. Wolfe writes that physicians face three main areas of conflict with patients' interests in managed care: those "with limits set for the broader social good, the organization's good, and the physician's own good."[53] Thus today's physicians need clearer ethical guidance in dealing with these conflicts, and patients need to be better acquainted with what is available as well as not available to them. According to *U.S. News & World Report,* before signing up for any HMO plan, patients need to know at least the following: whether the physicians in the plan are paid a set salary that would be unaffected by the amount of care they provide; whether those physicians have to pay the cost of care if it exceeds their salaries; whether those physicians receive bonuses for limiting access to specialists as well as to such services as x-rays, laboratories, or emergency rooms; whether the doctors are paid in advance, and, if so, how much; whether the physicians will discuss with their patients diagnostic or treatment options requiring access to specialists not included in the particular HMO plan; whether the doctor will face consequences as a result of arguing on the side of the patients should there be a disagreement with the HMO; and how tightly linked the primary care physicians are to the individual HMO plan.[54]

As has become all too obvious, there is a need to add to the medico-legal and bioethics that already exist. Regarding this, Wolfe suggests the following: (1) "Health care organizations should not create financial incentives for physicians to deny patients potentially beneficial treatment." (2) "Avoiding incentives to deny care is part of a broader obligation to support the capacity of physicians to fulfill their obligations to patients." Regarding this, she maintains that the ultimate goal of any health organization is, or should be, to provide high-quality medical care. Anything less is unethical. (3) "Organizations should establish clear procedures allowing physicians to advocate for treatment for individual patients and providing fair initial determinations of benefits." (4) "Organizations should establish fair procedures for patients, surrogates, and health professionals to challenge a denial of benefits." and (5) "Organizations should establish processes for monitoring and continuously improving both individual and organizational ethical practice."[55]

Since World War II, modern bioethics has come of age through the continued monitoring of medical ethics as well as through new and exciting academic discoveries in medicine. As we face the possibility of longer and

healthier lives, however, our freedom to control our access to those who are in a position to help us maintain these lives is becoming increasingly diminished. We must remain vigilant about the quality of care we receive as well as our access to this care. If we do not, fifty years after the Nuremberg Medical Trials, despite all the medical and ethical advances we have made, we increasingly face the possibility and danger of allowing others to be in a position to determine who among us shall live and who shall die.

Notes

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31. Mark Hatfield, "Stealing God's Stuff," *Christianity Today,* January 10, 1994.

32. S. Sandy Sanbar, Allan Gibosfsky, Marvin H. Firestone, and Theodore R. LeBlang, eds., *Legal Medicine,* 3rd ed. (St. Louis: Mosby, 1995), p. 357.

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34. "The Oath of Hippocrates," *The World Book Encyclopedia,* vol. 9 (Chicago: Field Enterprises, 1977), p. 227.

35. Dorothy C. Wertz and John C. Fletcher, "Fatal Knowledge? Prenatal Diagnosis and Sex Selection," *Hastings Center Report,* May–June 1989, pp. 21-27.

36. Boland, "International Reproductive Policy," pp. 267-75.

37. Annas and Grodin, *Nazi Doctors,* p. 273.

38. Ibid., p. 260.

39. John Trott, "Euthanasia and Euphemisms," *Cornerstone* 19, no. 92 (1990), p. 12.

40. Ronald Dworkin, *Life's Dominion: An Argument About Abortion, Euthanasia, and Individual Freedom* (New York: 1993), as quoted in Rebecca Dresser, "Dworkin on Dementia: Elegant Theory, Questionable Policy," *Hastings Center Report,* November–December 1995, p. 32.

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43. Robert F. Weir, "The Morality of Physician-Assisted Suicide," *Law, Medicine and Health Care* 20 (Spring–Summer 1992): 117.

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45. Weir, "The Morality of Physician-Assisted Suicide," pp. 120-24.

46. Margaret Battin, "Voluntary Euthanasia and the Risks of Abuse: Can We Learn Anything from the Netherlands?" *Law, Medicine and Health Care* 20 (Spring–Summer 1992): 139-42.

47. Bernard M. Dickens, "Ethics Committees, Organ Transplantation, and Public Policy," *Law, Medicine and Health Care* 20 (Winter 1992): 302.

48. Ibid., p. 304.

49. Ficarra, Bernard, "Ethical-Legal Issues in Medicine: Ethics and Bioethics," in Sanbar et al., eds., *Legal Medicine,* p. 357.

50. Jane C. Norman, "Death: The Final Stage of Growth," *Type I Continuing Education for Texas Nurses 1995* (Sacramento: CME Resource, 1995), p. 31.

51. Erik Larson, "The Soul of an HMO," *Time,* January 22, 1996, p. 46.

52. Ibid., p. 47.

53. Susan W. Wolfe, "Health Care Reform and the Future of Physician Ethics," *Hastings Center Report,* March–April 1994, p. 33.

54. Susan Brink, "How Your HMO Could Hurt You," *U.S. News & World Report,* January 15, 1996, pp. 62-64.

55. Ibid., pp. 37-38.

Is Objectivity Morally Defensible in Discussing the Holocaust?

ROBERT S. FREY

PARKER J. PALMER, WHO HAS WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY and lectured widely on American education and epistemology, notes that we are well-educated people schooled in a manner of knowing that treats the world as an *object* to be dissected, decomposed, and manipulated. This manner of knowing gives us apparent power over the world.[1] Henry J. Folse refers to a "spectator account of knowledge."[2] Indeed, we in the late twentieth century often function in this capacity, as if we could observe the spectrum of reality, which we allow to impinge upon us and which we help to create, from a seat high atop a neutral epistemic stadium. Israel Scheffler writes, "A fundamental feature of science is its ideal of objectivity, an ideal that subjects all scientific statements to the test of independent and impartial criteria, recognizing no authority of persons in the realm of cognition."[3] According to Dorothy Nelkin, "A surprising number of scientists are attacking the work of social scientists and humanists who view science as an activity influenced by social, cultural, and political forces." For example, "In 1994, some scientists objected to a Smithsonian Institution exhibition on the costs and benefits of 'Science in American Life' as too critical of science."[4] And yet, to be sure, science is a "system of human activities."[5]

Peering inside the darkened, fragmented world of HaShoah,[6] Anne Harrington, professor of the history of science at Harvard University, has suggested that the most pernicious energy driving the engine of National Socialist medical science was not its racism, anti-Semitism, or political agendas. Rather, that energy was the perverse fidelity to an obscene *objectivity* that ultimately found it possible to see all activities through the lens of expediency, scientific interest, and efficiency. This constituted a very definite *moral-*

epistemological position that continues to infuse and, in fact, underwrite decision making throughout the broad spectra of Western education, business, and science and engineering.[7] It was eminent German sociologist Max Weber who expressed deep concern about "the technical expert, who, from a human point of view, is crippled."[8]

The Holocaust event is one of many dehumanizing and murderous scars upon human history. In sheer numbers of dead, even HaShoah pales before the cumulative loss of noncombatants in the twentieth century alone—Stalinist Russia, Kampuchea (Cambodia),[9] Argentina, Somalia, South Africa—and the listing continues ad nauseam. David E. Stannard wrote, "Proponents of the uniqueness of the Holocaust not only do damage to historical truth, but in their determination to belittle all genocides other than the Holocaust, they are, in fact, accomplices to the efforts of numerous governments to conceal and deny their own pasts or to obscure current campaigns of mass violence, such as those in Guatemala . . . and in east Timor."[10] The Holocaust is not a Jewish tragedy; it is a human tragedy of the broadest scope and proportion. Interestingly, however, the U.S. Library of Congress system classifies all nonfiction Holocaust literature with the nomenclature "Holocaust, Jewish (1933-45)." Jews were indeed the prototype for peoples to be exterminated by the German National Socialist (Nazi) elite. So "successful" was the Nazi Final Solution that 85 percent of the prewar Jewish population of Poland, which numbered 3.3 million, had been dehumanized and murdered by April 1945—worked to death, beaten to death, gassed with carbon monoxide and prussic acid, shot into mass graves.[11] To Jewish tears and Jewish corpses can be added those of Gypsies, Slavs, Polish and Russian intellectuals and political dissidents, Roman Catholic and Protestant clergy, homosexuals, and physically and mentally disabled Germans.

Scientific approaches, in which analysis and deconstruction within a subjectiveless bell jar are paramount, tend to submerge constructs of wholeness and completeness when extended to arenas outside of mathematics and the physical and natural sciences. According to Paul Komesaroff, a "significant proportion of the pathology of modern science can be accounted for by the continued ascendancy of the objectivist problematic."[12] An example of this pathological strand within scientific research occurred in the late 1980s at the National Women's Hospital in Auckland, New Zealand. There, patients with carcinoma in situ, an abnormal development of the cells of the cervix and generally regarded as a precursor to cancer, were given no treatment so as to test one doctor's view that these cervical cells did not develop into cancer. The women were not told that they were part of an experiment. Several of them subsequently developed cervical cancer and died.[13]

In contradistinction to analytical and deconstructive trajectories, there are, to be sure, specific research initiatives within the scientific community to

induce grand unification theories. Particle physics and astronomy come to mind immediately. Yet the merits of scientific rationality, though significant and highly appropriate for many valuable and life-enhancing courses of inquiry, are not sufficient to warrant this tradition being the foremost element in contemporary "knowability," judgment, and decision making. Nor is the scientific trend adequate as a primary means of educating children and young adults in state-sponsored public schools, as the late Paul K. Feyerabend noted so eloquently.[14] No other tradition, no other theory of knowledge, has access to the power and funding vested in state-sponsored education in America as does scientific rationality. It is not surprising, therefore, that our secondary schools, colleges, and universities produce an elite group of narrowly competent technical professionals, many of whom are fully capable of morally reprehensible and callous decision making. To borrow a metaphor from the field of spectroscopy and spectral analysis, too many of our business leaders and technical professionals have competencies that lie within extremely narrow bandwidths. And this narrowness, indeed professional myopia, is underwritten and encouraged at the level of everyday business, industrial, and scientific activity. The average individual is generally not encouraged to think independently. Decision making most often lies in the hands of an elite few, the majority of the "human resources" are functionally "crank turners"—each performing sets of repetitive tasks that have often been deconstructed into spreadsheet line items that can be tracked and quantified.

Given the vast numbers of the victims of organized, state-sponsored violence of the Holocaust years, we as human beings should be absolutely compelled to ask difficult, probing questions about who we are, what is our nature, what divides us, what we believe, what we will finance and profit from, and how we will do business. The timeworn mental pictures of what it means to be human require thorough and *inspired* reexamination and redefinition. Without a profound redefinition of the images we hold of ourselves individually as well as collectively—including in our capacities as co-worker, manager, or employee—we will never be able to envision the alternatives and the solutions necessary to assist us to use our intelligence and energies in humane, life-enhancing ways. And if American business is to compete and ultimately survive on a global scale, we who are part of it must begin to consider in a widespread manner the genuine human needs of the people who daily translate policies and procedures into revenue. Management regimes that facilitate this consideration must be conceptualized and implemented.

Theories of knowledge in addition to those employing scientific approaches need to be afforded access to the power of the educational infrastructure. It is imperative that science should *not* be presented as capable of explaining everything about life and reality as human beings experience it col-

lectively and individually. What is particularly dangerous about the current role of scientific methodologies dominating public education as well as business is that vast areas of human experience are, concomitantly, considered relatively valueless because they cannot be subjected to quantitative or computer-based analysis or framed as formulas or algorithms. Restricting the scope of legitimate issues and problems to those deemed by experts to be computable—reducible to binary data sets or executable software applications—can certainly contribute to a functional myopia wherein a human or pressing societal issue is not considered to be an issue because it lies outside of cybernetic parameters.[15] Because science does not have the capacity adequately to consider the emotional, spiritual, intuitive, or mythic dimensions of a human being, these dimensions are often assigned an importance value of nearly zero in scientific and business motifs. Or they are reduced to electrochemical or extraneous phenomena—an impediment to productivity.[16]

Given the contempt for the rich spectrum of human emotional, spiritual, and intuitive capabilities evidenced by many scientific approaches and methodologies, there should be little reason to wonder why individuals educated in the contemporary rational spirit have minimal capacity for empathy, either personally or professionally. It is empathy, an emotional form of imagination, that permits one person to feel another person's psychological and physical pain and suffering.[17] Sensitive, moral response to human needs is highly unlikely to occur if emotions are *taught* and perceived to be a stigma to understanding rather than a complementary attribute. Ethics and character education, no matter how well planned and articulated in the classroom, cannot be fully effective if they are merely tangential, nice-to-have elements of an essentially scientific core curriculum.

Ethics instruction must be integrated throughout existing courses. Thomas Lickona, a developmental psychologist and professor of education at SUNY at Cortland in central New York State, is an acknowledged leader of the character education movement that emphasizes the development of respect and responsibility. In addition, Boston University has established the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character specifically to develop character education.[18] And there is the Society for Values in Higher Education, which traces its history back to 1923. More than sixty years later, it includes scholars in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and professional studies. The society's common purpose is improved classroom teaching that opens for students the moral issues that arise in all serious inquiry. Fellows of the society serve on the faculties of more than four hundred colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. Another example of ethics-oriented scholarly activity is Kluwer Academic Publishers' *International Journal of Value-Based Management,* which presents papers that clarify the role of values in organizational behavior and in the process of decision making.

Parker Palmer has also observed that "knowledge contains its own morality, that it begins not in a neutrality but in a place of passion within the human soul."[19] The pervasive opinion is that science and rationality are intellectual "demilitarized zones," wherein reality can be examined in a clear light, unencumbered by religion, emotion, or historical context. Finer-grained examination should demonstrate that such is not the case. Scientific approaches and methodologies have appropriated intellect, reason, and rationality as their own. As such, the conceptual tools of the scientific mentality include abstraction, emotionlessness, and value-free judgment. A major thrust of scientific thinking is to excise all nonintellectual factors such as conscious and unconscious emotions and specific cultural moorings from analysis. To exhibit reason is to act in a nonemotional, nonsubjective, value-free manner. To be reasonable is to be *objective* and *de facto* in terms of judgment.

Max Horkheimer, an important philosopher associated with the Frankfurt School, contends that "reason has been so thoroughly purged of any specific trend or preference that it has finally renounced even the task of passing judgment on man's actions and way of life."[20] The entire concept of values is based on the affirmation that there are qualitative differences in reality. It is precisely these qualitative distinctions that scientific approaches and architectures of understanding, with their emphasis on the quantitative, specifically do not recognize. Science's claim to the truth is valid, however, only at selected points where reality impinges upon our senses in quantitative terms.[21]

American culture would be well served to apply the concept of biological diversity or "biodiversity" to our theories of knowledge—our epistemologies. Biodiversity involves both species and their supporting ecosystems. The federal government's Office of Technology Assessment in 1987 defined biodiversity as "'the variety and variability among living organisms and the ecological complexes in which they occur.'" A key difference from earlier natural resources management approaches is that the concept of biodiversity includes the recognition that all organisms, not just sport species or species of commercial interest, are important. Precisely the same premise obtains to our means of knowing and understanding reality. The now famous Miller-Urey experiment, which provided strong empirical evidence that life can indeed arise from nonlife,[23] assists us in comprehending human existence just as profoundly as does the intuitive thought of Henri Bergson, for example. French Nobel laureate Bergson (1859–1941) was the first to insist on the insufficiency of abstract intelligence to grasp the richness of experience. The inner depth of the psychic life cannot be measured or assessed by the quantitative methods of the physical sciences.

Gabriel Moran asserts, "Modern Western thought is based on the hope of ascending above the earthly conditions of human life. Religious versions

of the stairway or ladder often include the gods descending from the sky. Although modern thinkers see no gods coming down, the image of the ladder has remained. It invites us to climb upwards, and in business, government, sport, or war we continue trying to climb the ladder of success in search of the good life."[24] We who are part of the business community and we who are part of the academic community must attempt to recognize that genuine human power is not manifested in controlling market share or a Connecticut Avenue address in our nation's capital. Rather, it lies in the realization that human beings are fully capable of creating positive results at the micro level that are beneficial to all people at the macro level, regardless of class, skin color, religious perspective, nationality, gender, or level on the corporate organizational chart.

Philip W. Anderson, a condensed-matter physicist and Nobel laureate at Princeton University, contends that particle physics and indeed all reductionist approaches have only a limited ability to explain the world. Reality, according to Anderson, has a hierarchical structure with each level independent to some degree of the levels above and below. At each stage, entirely new laws, concepts, and generalizations are necessary. Psychology is not applied biology, nor is biology applied chemistry. Anderson's principle suggests that these antireductionist efforts may never culminate in a unified theory of complex systems.[25]

Humane direction for and control of the implementation of intelligence seem to be the fulcrum upon which a meaningful balance can be achieved among the human head, hand, and heart. The transcendent and the intellectual must be reengaged. Direction and control are in large part derived from collective models and images of nature and human beings and the reflexivity of these meta-constructs.

The growth of science and technology was made possible in part by Greek philosophy along with Jewish and Christian cosmology and linear concepts of history, which affirmed the rationality of the cosmos. Kenneth L. Vare said, "Only the world that can be understood can be planned."[26] A disenchanted, demythologized nature was open to empirical investigation and rational theory-building, as well as to human manipulation and control. American poet, storyteller, and award-winning author Robert Bly has noted that "Technology has destroyed interrelationships in the human community that have taken centuries to develop. The breaking of human beings' connection to land has harmed everyone. We are drowning in uncontrollable floods of information."[27]

You and I as individual people are fully empowered, if we so choose, to make a positive difference not only for ourselves but for our entire world. That choice is solely our own to make. We can, and mostly do, proceed along pathways of results that follow from low self-esteem, technical arrogance,

fractionated knowledge, and illusions of all kinds.[28] As prominent writer and lecturer Shad Helmstetter has postulated in his *What to Say When You Talk to Your Self,* our actions follow from our feelings, which in turn derive from our attitudes.[29] Attitudes are created by beliefs, and beliefs follow from our programming. In effect, *what we tell our minds* creates our reality by allowing us to process sensory stimuli from the "external" world of the Other in fundamentally different ways than we have before. If we change our programming and the language of that programming, we change our actions and reactions and ultimately the results in our individual worlds. Integrated over five billion people, these changes will literally remake our world at the macro level. The only way we can ever expect to see positive results at that macro level is to modify what each person tells him or herself at the level of the individual mind and spirit. Gandhi had invited each of us to be the change that we want to see in the world.

We turn to building bridges and to exactly what we tell our minds. To be sure, how we interpret the human mind and its powers is central to our understanding of ourselves as human beings and our place in the cosmos.[30] The balance that must come into existence between the material and the spirit-related is paramount. Somehow men and women must come to grips with being firmly embedded as active agents in the temporal world and yet comprehend that we all are fundamentally spirit. The Cartesian split between mind and body, object and subject, Us and Other must be healed. Just as twentieth-century physicists have demonstrated that elementary matter has the properties of both waves and particles, human beings also stand on that mirage-like cusp between transcendent spirit and negentropic aggregates of dust and energy. *Embedded,* and yet not completely *part of.* The Avenue of the Just at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem—a living memorial to the righteous gentiles who saved Jewish lives during the whirlwind of the Holocaust years—pays tribute to those who spanned the chasm of fear and loss with the bridges of hope, even at overwhelming personal peril, to ordinary men and women who functioned at the level of the everyday with mind and body as one, with the demarcation between subject and object blurred, and with risk-filled obligation and dedication to the lives of neighbors and strangers and friends. *In their ordinariness, lies our hope.* We, too, are fully capable of enhanced epistemologies that see human beings not as "objects" or "others" but as extensions of that life force which energizes us. Is science evil? Of course not. Are human beings intrinsically evil? Emphatically, no. Is science a limited form of knowing the world? To be sure, it is. Do human beings have *self-imposed* limitations? Absolutely. But human beings and the intellectual tools of humanity, which include science, constitute humankind's hope for the present and for the next millennium. Human spirit, intelligence, emotion, information, and muscle will forge our eschatology. Deity

will not. Harnessing all that we are will allow us to become all that we can be. That dynamic process of harnessing all that we are will begin as our individual and collective images about the future migrate in the direction of a human-directed "sustainable society."[31] Positive images and day-to-day decision making driven by those positive images will serve to broaden the epistemological pathway beyond objectified truth and objectively justified terror.

Notes

1. Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), p. 2.

2. Henry J. Folse, "What Does Quantum Theory Tell Us About the World?" *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 72 (Spring 1989): 179-205. Interestingly, the word "theory" comes from the Greek *theoros,* or spectator.

3. Israel Scheffler, *Science and Subjectivity* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), p. 1. Scheffler served at Harvard University as professor of education and philosophy.

4. Dorothy Nelkin, "What Are the Science Wars Really About?," *Chronicle of Higher Education,* July 26, 1996, p. A52.

5. Max Black, *The Prevalence of Humbug and Other Essays* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 85.

6. *HaShoah* is the English transliteration of a Hebrew word that means "the ruin, destruction, desolation, calamity." The word is used to refer to the state-sponsored, rationally conducted process of extermination of European and Soviet Jews, Roma and Senti (Gypsies), homosexuals, prisoners of war, political elites and intelligentsia, clergy, and physically and mentally handicapped Germans from 1933-1945.

7. Anne Harrington, "Unmasking Suffering's Masks: Reflections on Old and New Memories of Nazi Medicine," *Daedalus* 125 (Winter 1996): 184.

8. Hans Heinrich Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds. and trans., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 73.

During World War II, Louis Frederick Fieser led a team of Harvard University scientists in the development of napalm. In an interview conducted in 1967, Fieser remarked, "It's not my business to deal with political and moral questions." See Blank, *Prevalence of Humbug,* p. 92.

9. Under the leadership of Pol Pot, prime minister of "'Democratic Kampuchea," as many as four million Cambodians are thought to have perished during the 1970s. Born in Cambodia in 1928, Pol Pot (Saloth Sar) participated in the anti-French resistance under Ho Chi Minh during the 1940s and later studied radio electronics in Paris on a scholarship. He helped to organize the communist guerrilla force known as the Khmer Rouge.

10. David E. Stannard, "The Dangers of Calling the Holocaust Unique," *Chronicle of Higher Education,* August 2, 1996, pp. B-1-B-2.

11. The Final Solution to the Jewish Question is the code term for the Nazi strategic decision systematically to destroy the Jews of Europe and the former Soviet Union

that was officially sanctioned and coordinated during a senior-level conference held on January 20, 1942, in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee. Professor Emerita Leni Yahil notes that this meeting occurred only after practical measures of extermination were already under way. See Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, 1932-1945,* trans. Ina Friedman and Haya Galai (1987; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 312.

12. Paul A. Komesaroff, *Objectivity, Science and Society: Interpreting Nature and Society in the Age of the Crisis of Science* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 6.

13. Peter Singer, "Ethics and the Limits of Scientific Freedom," *Monist: An International Journal of General Philosophical Inquiry* 79 (April 1996): 219.

A similar study conducted by investigators from the Institute of Cytology and Preventive Oncology in New Delhi, India, from 1976 through 1988 has been called into serious question by medical ethicists and gynecologists in India and the UK. See Ganapati Mudur, "Indian Study of Women with Cervical Lesions Called Unethical," *British Medical Journal* 314(7087) (April 12, 1997).

14. Paul K. Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge* (London: NLB, 1975), p. 217.

15. See Bernard Fryshman, "Computer Teaching in the Yeshiva: Processing the Data, Programming the Risks," *Jewish Observer* 16 (1983): 15. *Cybernetics* is a term coined by mathematician Norbert Wiener in his 1948 work entitled *Cybernetics.*

16. It is only relatively recently that the practitioners of science have deliberately disclaimed competence regarding social issues. According to Komesaroff, "The profound insights of the theory of nature are now largely withheld from social life." See (*Objectivity, Science and Society,* p. 6).

17. Richard L. Means, *The Ethical Imperative: The Crisis in American Values* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1970), p. 145. See also Erich H. Loewy, "Obligations, Communities, and Suffering: Problems of Community Seen in a New Light," *Bridges: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Theology, Philosophy, History, and Science* 2 (Spring/Summer 1990): 1-16.

18. Roger Rosenblatt, "Teaching Johnny to Be Good," *New York Times Magazine,* April 30, 1995, pp. 36-41, 50, 60, 64, 74.

19. Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known,* p. 7.

20. Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Seabury, 1974), p. 9.

The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research (Frankfurt School) came into existence in the mid-1920s. In addition to Horkheimer, the major philosophers and social critics included Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, Otto Kirchheimer, Leo Lowenthal, Herbert Marcuse, Franz Neumann, and Friedrich Pollock. They drew on the German philosophical tradition—Kantian, Marxian, and Hegelian thought—for their philosophical approaches. See Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (New York: Urizen Books, 1978), p. xi.

In the writings of the early Frankfurt School are found powerful critiques of science. "The main thrust of their critique was an attempt to trace the consequences for society of the rapid expansion of the mathematical sciences." "In science was realized the *telos* to which Enlightenment had always tended: it was total, exact, deductive and objectivist." See Komesaroff, *Objectivity, Science and Society,* pp. 11-12, 14. Max

Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno wrote *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* which was a famous attack on science and its cultural consequences, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

21. Aryeh Carmell and Cyril Domb., eds., *Challenge: Torah View on Science and Its Problems,* 2d rev. ed. (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1978), p. 51.

In general terms, "a science is a system of truths and meanings about the world, transmitted through the mediation of a formal theoretical structure" (Komesaroff, *Objectivity, Science and Society,* p 5).

22. U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment. *Technologies to Maintain Biological Diversity* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1987).

23. See, James Trefil, "However It Began on Earth, Life May Have Been Inevitable," *Smithsonian 25* (February 1995): 35. Nobel laureate chemist Harold C. Urey, along with Stanley L. Miller, demonstrated that, when subjected to simulated primordial atmospheric pressures, temperature, and radiation, inorganic chemicals metamorphosed into organic compounds. Their work was analogous to that of Russian biophysicist Alexander I. Oparin, who had investigated coascervates, which are analogous to primitive cells. Coascervates are gel-like structures that form when glycerin is mixed with other molecules.

24. Gabriel Moran, *No Ladder to the Sky: Education and Morality* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 3.

25. John Horgan, "From Complexity to Perplexity," *Scientific American,* June 1995, p. 108.

26. Kenneth L. Vaux, ed., *To Create a Different Future: Religious Hope and Technological Planning* (New York: Friendship Press, 1972), pp. 112, 113. Cf. David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter Between Christianity and Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), who state that the assertion that Christianity gave birth to modern science is without adequate historical grounding (p. 5). The key figures of the Scientific Revolution—Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Descartes, and Newton—believed strongly "that nature's essential structure and operation were knowable" (p. 53).

27. Robert Bly, *The Sibling Society* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1996), p. 169.

28. Richard Bach, *Illusions: The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1977).

29. Shad Helmstetter, *What to Say When You Talk to Your Self* (1982; reprint, New York: Pocket Books, 1987), pp. 70-71.

30. William Barrett, *Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1986), p. 107.

31. "The insight that images of the future can exert a powerful influence on behavior in the present has emerged in virtually every area of the social sciences. Historians such as Frederick L. Polak, Mircea Eliade, and Frank E. Manual have explored the role that images of an idealized future play in the dynamics of historical change" (Robert L. Olson, "Sustainability as a Social Vision," *Journal of Social Issues* 51 [1995]: 15).

The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) defined "sustainable development" as meeting "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Daniel J. Adams, an associate professor of theology at the Hanil Theological Seminary in Korea, notes aptly the "delegitimation of the metanarrative of development" that has accompanied the decline in influence and power of the West in the postmodern era ("Possibilities for Theology in the Postmodern Era," *Asia Journal of Theology* 10 [1996]: 92).

Indifferent Accomplices

ERIC STERLING

This, this was the thing I had wanted to understand ever since the war. Nothing else. How a human being can remain indifferent. The executioners I understood; also the victims, though with more difficulty. For the others, all the others, those who were neither for nor against, those who sprawled in passive patience, those who told themselves, "The storm will blow over and everything will be normal again," those who thought themselves above the battle, those who were permanently and merely spectators—all those were closed to me, incomprehensible.

—Elie Wiesel, *Messenger*

HOLOCAUST SCHOLARS HAVE WRITTEN PROLIFICALLY about the atrocities committed by Nazi soldiers as well as the courageous rescues of Jews by altruistic people. These two groups represent the two extremes of immoral and moral participants during the Holocaust. Discussions involving bystanders, however, prove more problematic because such people are neither completely evil nor virtuous. Some bystanders claim that they were unaware of the atrocities that the Nazis perpetrated while others maintain that they desired to help but feared retribution. Although the latter excuse possesses more credibility than the former, neither rationalization proves acceptable. Oftentimes, bystanders failed to help Holocaust victims because they prospered socioeconomically through the persecution of Jews. Regardless of the reason, by refraining from helping Jews or hindering German soldiers, by-

standers aided the Nazis in their attempt to commit genocide and consequently were accomplices who violated moral law.

Some bystanders protest that they were not apathetic to the suffering of Jews during the Holocaust, that they merely were unaware of the genocide. Yet one must wonder how they could have been ignorant of the murder of six million Jews—the mass deportations, bloody shootings, and manifold other atrocities that occurred in their vicinity. Gentiles residing near the Mauthausen concentration camp maintained that they neither saw nor heard anything that led them to believe that genocide was occurring near their homes. Yet such an excuse is inconceivable: how, for instance, could anyone fail to discern the distinct smell of death that permeated the vicinity? Captain J.D. Fletcher noted that "the next indication of the camp's nearness—the smell . . . could almost be seen and hung over the camp like a fog of death" (*Seventy-First,* p. 5). Gerald Parshall claims that "at every camp, the signal for the approach of trauma was the same. The smell. The invisible smell hit the liberators even before they reached the gate" (p. 53). Perhaps the truth is not that these bystanders failed to realize what was occurring but rather that they chose to ignore it. They feared what they might see so they refused to observe; they realized that if they cared, they would have to act, so they chose not to care. Robert Herzstein quotes President Richard von Weizsacker of the Federal Republic of Germany as saying that Germans "had a responsibility to understand how it [the Holocaust] all happened. And they had a responsibility to acknowledge that claiming ignorance was no defense—they could have known what was going on had they wished to" (p. 261). The people living near the camps exhibited indifference, not ignorance.

American military officers determined that the bystanders residing near the camps were guilty of apathy. Shocked by the horrific sights despite the cruelties they had witnessed earlier during World War II, Generals Dwight Eisenhower and George Patton as well as Colonel Haydon Sears refused to accept the ignorance and innocence of the nearby inhabitants. Parshall notes that the feeble "denials only deepened American anger" (p. 55). Eisenhower, Patton, Sears, and others demanded that those bystanders who lived near the camps observe the miserable and inhumane conditions, help the survivors, and bury the dead; these American officers made such orders because they were outraged by the bystanders' indifference toward human suffering. As Ian Kershaw has noted, "The road to Auschwitz was built by hate, but paved with indifference" (p. 277).

During the controversy regarding his military past, Kurt Waldheim protested that he was merely a bystander while serving in the Austrian army during World War II. Waldheim claimed that he had no idea of the destruction around him and merely functioned as a low-level officer and translator. Herzstein "reject[s], however, his protestations of ignorance and innocence"

because of Waldheim's painstaking records involving Jews in Ionnina, the Kozara operation, the Italian Eleventh Army in Greece, and Nazi military activity in the Balkans (p. 260). In *The Waldheim Report,* the International Commission of Historians stated: "Even the mere knowledge of infringement of human rights near one's place of duty may constitute a certain guilt. . . . The Commission has not noted a single instance in which Waldheim protested or took steps—to prevent, or at least to impede its execution—against an order to commit a wrong that he must doubtlessly have recognized as such" (Kurz, pp. 210-11). Thus Waldheim functioned as an accomplice not so much by what he did than by what he failed to do. Waldheim clearly realized what occurred around him, partly because his role as a translator brought him into contact with much information. His decision to overlook mass murders demonstrates that his ambition superseded his morality. As Herzstein notes, "If history teaches us anything, it is that the Hitlers and the Mengeles could never have accomplished their atrocious deeds by themselves. It took hundreds of thousands of ordinary men—well-meaning but ambitious men like Kurt Waldheim—to make the Third Reich possible" (p. 260). Herzstein's comment does not imply that bystanders are as blameworthy as perpetrators but maintains, nonetheless, that the apathetic enabled the success of the murderers.

Although significantly more reasonable than the claim of ignorance, the excuse that some bystanders provide, that they wanted to help yet felt powerless, is, nonetheless, an excuse. If people wanted to aid Jews but chose not to do so, they failed to make a difference and were of no use to those who suffered. Victims of the Holocaust desperately needed action, not pity. Bystanders were not cruel or malevolent, but they could have saved innocent lives yet elected to refrain from doing so. Bystanders refused to help because apathy was so easy whereas helping the Jews would require effort and caring. Frau S. exemplifies the bystander who was not evil or perhaps even anti-Semitic but who did not wish to make an effort to help because she did not care and was too selfish. Frau S. encountered starving and suffering Jewish prisoners held at the Mauthausen camp yet decided not to help them. In her interview with Gordon J. Horwitz, she mentions that during a march, she noticed a Jew who struggled when he walked because he was barefoot and in pain. Frau S. "pitied him, but secretly I had to laugh so as I saw him hop and jump" (p. 113). Her two reactions are contradictory, suggesting that one may be inaccurate. If Frau S. actually empathized with the man's plight, would she have laughed? Her laughter at the Jew's pain implies the insincerity of her pity, especially since she neglected to aid him. Although it may be possible that she laughed because she felt nervous or relieved that she herself was not victimized, her refusal to offer the starving man bread connotes her lack of pathos. When she possessed the opportunity, she considered offering

bread to the starving prisoner yet feared that she would not have enough for herself: "I did have it, but too little" (p. 113). This comment also connotes that she may be rationalizing her refusal to help the prisoner: she may indeed have possessed little to eat, but she surely possessed more food than he—a concentration camp inmate who must have needed nourishment more than she did. In her excuse, this bystander, instead of helping to ease the unfortunate's suffering, focuses on her own, manifesting her egocentricism. Although the presenting of food to a Jewish prisoner could cause Nazi soldiers to arrest her, the feeble excuse that she provides to Horwitz denotes her selfishness and her refusal to get involved. She remarked that she was "happy when I hear nothing and see nothing of it. As far as I am concerned, they aren't interned. That's it. Over. It does not interest me at all" (p. 114). Horwitz observes that "Frau S. faces a choice and makes a choice: though she sees, she will look away and ignore what her eyes tell her" (p. 114). Frau S.'s comments manifest that honest people simply turned away from the suffering of Jewish victims; it was not hidden from view. She, like other bystanders, may not have been anti-Semitic but chose to ignore her opportunity to help an innocent Jewish victim of the Holocaust.

While visiting Mauthausen several years after the Holocaust, playwright Arthur Miller wondered why people living on the lonely roads near the camp never turned to look at him: "Naturally, I assumed they were doing precisely what they were doing now when the trucks packed with people whined up this road during the years the camp was in operation. Nor could I blame them altogether, and that was the troublesome part. I inevitably wondered what I would have done in their place, powerless as they were to intervene—if indeed such a thought had ever entered their heads" (*Timebends,* p. 523). Miller's introspective statement appears initially to accept the excuse that such bystanders were powerless, especially when the dramatist ponders whether he, himself, would have acted altruistically. But on closer examination, the comment does condemn bystanders for failing to turn and look at those who passed by them during the Holocaust, for failing to care about anyone but themselves. Satisfied with the knowledge that they were safe, they contentedly proceeded with their lives. Miller's quotation does not show helplessness, but rather self-interest. The people the playwright describes exhibit indifference, not fear or powerlessness. Miller even admits that the thought of helping Jews perhaps never occurred to them. Furthermore, the playwright stresses in his Holocaust plays *Incident at Vichy* and *Broken Glass* the need for social responsibility during the Holocaust, the importance of helping those who suffer.

This apathy of many bystanders derives partly from their inability to identify, and thus empathize, with those they consider different, alien. In Miller's drama *Incident at Vichy,* Leduc, a Jew about to be interrogated by a Nazi

racial anthropologist, tells the gentile Von Berg, who is sympathetic toward Jews but has never tried to aid them, that the latter's compassionate feelings are irrelevant, for only deeds matter: "Part of knowing who we are is knowing we are not someone else. And Jew is the only name we give to that stranger, that agony we cannot feel, that death we look at like a cold abstraction. Each man has his Jew; it is the other . . . —the man whose death leaves you relieved that you are not him, despite your decency" (p. 66). Many Aryans could not identify with Jews because the Semites were dehumanized. Nazi propaganda portrayed Jews as subhuman and unscrupulous beings, creatures undeserving of civil rights. Richard Rubenstein correctly notes that "men without political rights are superfluous men. They have lost all right to life and human dignity" (p. 33). For instance, the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 helped to create a breach between Aryans and Jews by limiting their interaction. The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor prohibited marriage and sexual relations between Aryans and Jews, implying that such unions would taint Aryan blood, that Jews were inferior beings unworthy of associating with gentiles. Violators of this law were labeled *Rassenschanders* (race defilers), signifying that Jews were racially inferior to, and significantly different from, Aryans—as well as socially and genetically impure. Kershaw notes that in Bavaria, "following the law of 30 April 1939, preventing Jews and non-Jews from living in the same tenement blocks, the social isolation was increased by the creation of 'Jew houses' and the formation of ghettos in the large cities" (p. 358). Since Jews were separated from gentiles, the latter group, because of their lack of contact with Semites, were vulnerable to Nazi propagandistic lies. If Aryans accepted the ideology that Jews were inferior beings who would contaminate gentiles and Germany itself, it stands to reason that they would consider Jews unworthy of being saved or helped during the Holocaust. Even if they did not persecute Semites, if bystanders considered Jews less than human or inferior human beings, they would not assume risks to aid them in times of need. Samuel and Pearl Oliner observe that "victims perceived as attractive and innocent are more likely to receive help than others. Physical attributes, such as beauty and vigor, contribute to a positive perception. A belief in the victim's innocence strengthens the tendency to help him or her. Innocence implies that it is not inherent character flaws but external circumstances that are responsible for someone's victimization. . . . Nazi propaganda portrayed Jews as genetically flawed in both character and physical appearance" (p. 149). Books that the Nazis circulated, such as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and *The Poisoned Mushroom,* asserted that Jews threatened the Aryan population and desired to control the world. Robert Gellately points out that "even 'friendly' or social relations with Jews constituted an area of potential 'criminality', but not officially a specific crime as such. 'Behaviour friendly to

the Jews' (*judenfreundliches Verhalten*) was a term of abuse" (p. 160). As a result of the dissemination of Nazi ideology, even if bystanders felt no animosity toward their Jewish neighbors, they refused to assume risks that would help them, for public opinion had turned against Jews.

Some Aryans did not attempt to help Jews because they accepted the fallacious ideology of a utopian Germany that was possible if the country were *Judenfrei*. German theorist Ernst Bloch observes that the Nazis employed utopian propaganda to incite anti-Semitism and to justify their actions, including their persecution of Jews. Bloch notes that "a group which had the leisure to develop ideas [could] deceive themselves and especially others by means of these ideas. So, since ideologies are always originally those of the ruling class, they justify existing social conditions by denying their economic roots and disguising exploitation" (1:153). Propagandists such as Adolf Hitler, Joseph Goebbels, and Julius Streicher blamed all social and economic problems in Germany on Jews and promised that the isolation and subsequent removal of this group from the country would solve the woes of Aryan citizens. Kershaw observes that the mandatory wearing of the yellow star branded Jews as aliens and resulted in "the depiction of Jews as the pariahs of the 'National Community'" (p. 359). Many gullible Aryan citizens accepted Nazi ideology, but even those who did not embrace it still feared the animosity they would encounter from Nazis if they helped Jews.

Many Aryans declined to help Jews because they benefited personally from the persecution of Semites, as did the faltering German economy. During the 1920s, the Germany economy, partly because of war reparations from World War I, collapsed; the value of the mark plummeted to 75 marks to a dollar in 1921, 400 to a doilar in 1922, 18,000 to a dollar in January 1923, 160,000 to a dollar in July 1923, one million to a dollar the following month, and four billion to a dollar by November (Shirer, p. 61). The currency became worthless. Germany's finances did not make a healthy recovery until economic measures against Jews created a monetary resurgence. The stealing of Jewish wealth as well as the prohibition against Jews possessing various jobs resulted in the concomitant socioeconomic advancement of Aryans. For instance, unemployed and unskilled Aryans acquired good jobs after Jews were fired because of various Nazi laws that prohibited the employment of Jews; the firing or murder of a Jew signified a job for an Aryan. Kershaw states that many "'Aryan' businessmen saw in the 'Jewish boycott' a chance to damage or even ruin rivals by reporting their Jewish background to the local Party" (pp. 245-46). Delighted by the amelioration in the economy and their own individual prosperity, Aryans did not care that such a financial recovery derived from the persecution of Jews. Even if a gentile did not directly hurt Jews, that person served as an accomplice by failing to help Jews and by benefiting financially from the destruction of Semites.

Waldheim reflected the Aryan indifference to Jewish suffering when he mentioned the socioeconomic benefits that people received during the Holocaust. In 1980, Waldheim remarked that "for many of those affected by the Second World War, life is easier and better" (qtd. in Rosenbaum and Hoffer, p. vii). His statement is veracious: many Aryans benefited socioeconomically from the war. The statement, however, callously and conveniently overlooks the method by which they prospered—genocide and the theft of Jewish property and money. Again, even if bystanders did not participate in or even condone the persecution of Jews, they reaped the benefits of it. Although reports indicate that Waldheim by no means acted as a mere bystander during the war, his myopic comment exemplifies the indifference by which Aryans profited. As the downtrodden became prosperous during the war, some considered the fate of others to be irrelevant.

This newfound prosperity excited many Aryans, allowing them to overlook what caused it. A significant financial and social disparity evolved between the Aryans who benefited from the persecution of Semites and the suffering Jews themselves. Some gentiles felt guilty because of the origin of their success and thus strove to repress it. Kershaw notes that "remarkable as it may sound, the Jewish Question was of no more than minimal interest to the vast majority of Germans during the war years in which the mass slaughter of Jews was taking place in the occupied territories. . . . The war seems to have encouraged a 'retreat into the private sphere' as regards . . . the Jewish issue in particular" (pp. 359-60). For example, as Yitzhak Arad walked through Vilna in 1943, he noticed, upon escaping the ghetto, that on Sunday morning, "the city streets were filled with strollers and churchgoers. It was like a dream world to me, reminding me of prewar Warsaw. Children were playing in yards and gardens; people wore festive clothes; laughter, song, and music came from the houses. The war and its horrors were not in evidence at all. For a moment I tried to compare this life with ours, with the reality of being a Jew. They were two different worlds, a tremendous distance apart, with no bridge between, although only a few hundred meters separated these streets from the ghetto and only a few kilometers separated them from Ponary" (p. 8). Ironically, some of the people in Arad's description had just come from church, where they worshipped God and prayed for peace, yet they exhibited no concern for the thousands of Jews who were dying in the nearby Vilna Ghetto. Raul Hilberg says that bystanders who profited from the persecution of Jews "outnumbered givers in the Jewish catastrophe. In many instances, little or nothing had to be done by the beneficiaries to enjoy the largesse. When Jewish enterprises were liquidated, the non-Jewish manufacturers and distributors automatically gained market shares" (*Perpetrators*, p. 214). What separates these indifferent and successful people from the starving and persecuted Jews they failed to help is merely their religious background.

Although one may argue that although bystanders did not aid Jews, they did not injure them either, such an argument is fallacious because those who did not help Jews actually hindered their ability to survive. Those who refused to feed Jews forced them to leave their hiding places and thus take enormous risks that sometimes led to their captures and subsequent deaths. Those who declined to hide Jews in their houses left the Semites with no choice but to live in sewers, to venture from one precarious hiding place to another, to split up their families, and to face deportation to death camps. Although one may argue that bystanders took no sides, the Nazis obviously held a great advantage because they were the aggressors and possessed weapons; no level playing field existed. Experiencing a serious disadvantage, Jews oftentimes required the help of Aryans to survive; without aid, Jews often fell victim to Nazi soldiers. Raul Hilberg notes that "neutrality is a zero quantity which helps the stronger party in an unequal struggle. The Jews needed native help more than the Germans did" (*Destruction,* p. 203). By refraining from helping Jews, apathetic bystanders permitted Nazis to maintain their enormous advantage over the Jews and persecute them with virtually no resistance.

By not intervening, and thus by allowing Nazis to murder innocent men, women, and children, bystanders ignored their moral obligation to help their fellow human beings. Although some bystanders mention decrees that prohibited the provision of aid to Jews and laws that required Aryans to turn in Jews to Nazi authorities, this argument proves irrelevant when one considers the moral obligation to help those in need. It is essential to distinguish between moral and social law. Moral law involves the ethical treatment of other people and transcends time and place while social law, contrariwise, is merely a cultural construct, arbitrary laws created by a government in a given place and time. In a corrupt and evil regime such as the Third Reich, cruel and immoral laws are created. Although it is usually considered ethical to obey laws created by legislative bodies, when these laws are immoral, human beings behave properly when disobeying them and unscrupulously when following them. The bystanders would have acted ethically had they disobeyed such unfair ordinances. Thus when apathetic gentiles who failed to help Jews mention that they were merely obeying the law, they actually employ these edicts as a shield behind which they hide their indifference.

Moral issues regarding the Holocaust often involve reactions of the clergy toward the Third Reich and its treatment of Jews, especially because God's ministers are supposed to set excellent role models and because of their sworn duty to aid those who suffer. Some Christian clergymen behaved admirably and heroically during the Holocaust while others acted shamefully. One pastor who acted benevolently was Heinrich Gruber. When Adolf Eichmann confronted Pastor Gruber, claiming that neither Jews nor anyone else

would ever thank him for aiding Jews, the clergyman responded: "Do you know the road leading from Jerusalem to Jericho? . . . On this road there was once a Jew brought down by robbers, and he who had helped that Jew was a man who was not a Jew. The God whom I worship, He told me, 'Go and do as he did' (Robinson, p. 125). Eichmann considered only what other people would think and deemed it irrelevant that Gruber was obeying moral law and God's commandment. Gruber realized that God, not his fellow human beings, would judge him, and he acted accordingly. The distinction between Gruber's altruistic comportment and the inactivity of bystanders derives from the fact that the pastor followed the Word of God, his conscience, and morality—regardless of societal pressures. As Martin Niemoller remarked, "No more are we ready to keep silent at man's behest when God commands us to speak" (qtd. in Shirer, p. 239).

In her memoirs, Corrie ten Boom, a gentile sent to Ravensbruck because she aided Jews, relates her attempt to hide a Jewish woman and baby from the Gestapo. When she asked a pastor to hide them, he refused, saying that he would not risk his life for a Jewish baby. Ten Boom's father retorted, "You say we could lose our lives for this child. I would consider that the greatest honor that could come to my family" (p. 99). Like Gruber, ten Boom's father preferred to risk his life and that of his family rather than act apathetically as innocent Jews perished. The narration implies that the ten Boom family acted more like Christians than did the pastor, that it is better to die while saving lives than prosper while ignoring human suffering and that it is honorable to obey moral law when it conflicts with social law. Many Jewish lives would have been spared had more people acted like the ten Boom family. In an interview with Harry James Cargas, Wiesel says, "When the chips were down, very few non-Jews came to the aid of the Jews during the Holocaust—which for us was an eye-opener with sad—not angry but sad—connotations. We were very sad. This is man" (*Against Silence,* 1:272). Wiesel correctly notes that one may judge a people by how they respond in times of crisis; during the Holocaust, when many lives were at stake, some gentiles acted heroically, yet a large percentage reacted apathetically.

Perhaps most shocking was the indifference of the clergy. Although some Christian clergymen (such as Father Maximilian Kolbe, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Niemoller, and Heinrich Gruber) acted benevolently and selflessly, many others reacted to the genocide with indifference. In fact, Hilberg notes that "in Lithuania, Bishop Brizgys set an example for the entire population by forbidding the clergy to aid the Jews in any way. Across the whole occupied territory Jews were turning to the Christian population for assistance—in vain" *(Destruction,* pp. 201-2). The phrase "set an example" is significant because it implies that clergymen obeyed the order of Brizgys by refusing to offer aid to Jews; furthermore, church parishioners, following the dictates and

examples of their spiritual advisers, acted with indifference to the suffering of many innocent people. Richard Rubenstein and John Roth note that Jews were excluded "from circles in which people honor reciprocal responsibilities to protect each other. As far as Germany's churches and the Vatican's policies were concerned, such an exclusion was illustrated by the fact the Christians did protest Nazi encroachments when Christian lives were at stake, though imperfectly even then, but threats to Jews tended to be observed silently" (p. 217). Such deplorable behavior (saving Christian lives while acting indifferently to the slayings of Jews) actually contradicts the tenets upon which Christianity was formed. The quotation by Rubenstein and Roth manifests that Christians did realize the danger of the Nazi government but interceded only when it was in their self-interest to do so.

One Christian who has received much criticism for his apathy toward Jewish suffering is Pope Pius XII. His refusal to chastise Hitler publicly for the mass murders provided an indirect sanction of the genocide. As a Christian and as Roman Catholicism's spiritual leader, the pope had a moral obligation to preserve as many human beings as possible. Since many Catholics fought in Hitler's army, a public condemnation of anti-Semitism and genocide might have caused Nazi soldiers to refrain from killing Jews. Wiesel asks, "Where were the humanists, the leaders, the liberals, the spokesmen for mankind? The victims needed them. If they had spoken up, the killers would not have killed, or would have killed less. If they had spoken up, the slaughterer would not have succeeded in his task" (*Against Silence,* 1:110). Although it is true that the Vatican did hide some Jews and saved some Jewish lives, Pius XII could have saved thousands more had he publicly rebuked Hitler and the murder of Jews. Yet because he coveted his role as political pawnbroker and despised communist Russia, he allowed Hitler to continue murdering innocent Jews. Citing Luke 10:27 (love "thy neighbor as thyself"), Rubenstein and Roth state that "for anyone who claims to be a Christian, a follower of Jesus, loving one's neighbor as oneself defines the boundaries of obligation. . . . A Christian is to emulate the Good Samaritan's compassionate service" (p. 217). Instead, many Aryans let self-interest supersede moral integrity and Christian behavior. David Wyman states that the "Holocaust was certainly a Jewish tragedy. But it was not *only* a Jewish tragedy. It was also a Christian tragedy, a tragedy for Western civilization, and a tragedy for all humankind. The killing was done by people, to other people, while still other people stood by. The perpetrators, where they were not actually Christians, arose from a Christian culture. The bystanders most capable of helping were Christians" (p. xvi). This quotation by no means signifies that all Christians were indifferent, for some helped Jews during the Holocaust; yet many Aryans who called themselves Christians felt no compassion for the sufferers and believed that because they were not injured by the killings, they could ignore them.

Yet not all those bystanders who stood by and failed to act resided in Europe. Many such culprits lived in the United States. According to David Wyman, comparatively few American non-Jews recognized that the plight of the European Jews was their plight too. "Most were either unaware, did not care, or saw the European Jewish catastrophe as a Jewish problem, or one for Jews to deal with" (p. xvi). Caring more about public opinion and polls than human lives, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt refused to allow helpless Jews to immigrate to America. Knowing that Americans feared losing jobs to Jews and that many voters were anti-Semitic, Roosevelt closed the door to immigration, prohibiting ships of desperate Jews from docking in American ports. One such ship, the *St. Louis,* which carried 937 Jews who had escaped Hitler's Germany, was prohibited from docking in Cuba and in Florida, and because other countries refused to accept these passengers, hundreds died when the ship returned to Germany. Apparently the inscription on the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free," meant nothing to Americans interested only in their own prosperity.

Not all bystanders were anti-Semitic, and some genuinely did sympathize with the plight of the Jews. But by failing to act, they played into the hands of Nazis (who possessed an overwhelming advantage over their innocent victims) and thus were accomplices. It is true that if more bystanders had behaved altruistically, many Jews would have died anyway. But thousands more would have survived the Holocaust. Many gentiles failed to act because they believed that they had nothing to gain by aiding Jews. They rested easily, for they were not the scapegoats targeted for genocide. Consequently, bystanders ignored their moral responsibility to their fellow man and woman, and they failed to realize that they could attain strength by helping Jews oppose the Nazis rather than by being indifferent. As Martin Niemoller said:

> First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—
> because I was not a socialist.
> Then they came for, the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—
> because I was not a trade unionist.
> Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
> because I was not a Jew.
> Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.
>
> ["Niemoller," p. 1061]

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Intruding on Private Grief

ALASTAIR G. HUNTER

EDWARD SAID'S STRICTURES ON THE SUBJECT of Orientalism have at their heart two principles.[1] The first is that, for reasons both cultural and psychological, Western academics, travelers, commentators, and colonizers have signally failed to comprehend the hearts and minds of the peoples, cultures, and religions of the East. The second, almost inevitable consequence is that, unwilling to admit that failure—and unable to recognize it—the West proceeded to reinvent the East in its own terms, thereby manufacturing a pseudo-science ("Orientalism") which gave the *appearance* of knowledge and insight but whose ostensible subject was so profoundly and systematically misrepresented that the discipline itself amounted to little more than a tissue of lies.

There is truth in Said's analysis, and few moderns who have firsthand experience (I hesitate to say knowledge) of the East will fail to acknowledge that truth or deny some personal complicity in its effects. I still have vivid memories of my own encounter with Pakistan in the late 1960s—I spent three years living and working in the northeast border city of Sialkot. New arrivals were provided with authoritative advice from British expatriates, some of whom had lived in the country for upward of twenty years, on the character of the "natives." Much of it I quickly discovered to be superficial, based on cultural misunderstandings, and occasionally malicious. Some I no doubt absorbed unthinkingly. And all of it came back to haunt me when I first read Said.

Attacks on Said have been cogent and intense and have come from a variety of angles.[2] From the perspective of this essay, the most pointed critique is that which perceives Said to be guilty of creating an absolute out of a set

of accidental circumstances; of arguing from a (no doubt numerous and appalling) set of particulars to an unjustified general conclusion. The accident that many early commentators got many things wrong does not lead to the conclusion that all who contribute to this field are preordained to perpetuate misinformation. And the perhaps curious fact that there is no parallel academic discipline of "Occidentalism" practiced in the universities of Arabia or Africa, India or China, is not necessarily the fault of Orientalists.[3] There is no ineluctable law requiring that every discipline which *can* exist *must,* or that A's interest in B be mirrored by B's interest in A.

Mutatis mutandis, the long infatuation of Christian scholars with Judaism shares many of the features excoriated by Said: racial clichés, cultural stereotypes, and plain errors resulting from entrenched presuppositions. That some of these clichés and stereotypes are designed to flatter, and arise out of genuine respect, does not justify them, though it may explain why Said's attack on Orientalism has not found any clear articulation in a corresponding critique of Jewish studies. Indeed, the lack of a suitable equivalent to the expression "Orientalism" is symbolic. Unlike Orientalism, a great many Jewish scholars are actively involved in Jewish studies as the subject is defined in the West, often in partnership with non-Jewish colleagues; this has meant that, at least in recent decades, the charges of colonialism and patronizing condescension which carry real force in Said's analysis are much harder to sustain in the study of Judaism.

Nevertheless, if Said's point about Orientalism has weight, there is no doubt a similar case to be made regarding Jewish studies. Some unavoidable gap must exist between those who examine the subject *from within,* as it were, and those who stand "outside the camp." It is the purpose of this essay to look more closely at this problem, in particular as regards Holocaust studies, where other, more poignant barriers separate not just Christian from Jew but Jew from fellow Jew. Can an American Jew of the diaspora, from a family settled in the United States long before the Third Reich, consider him or herself as a insider vis-à-vis the tragedy of the shtetls? More oddly, perhaps, what can the Falasha of Ethiopia (who were, according to some scholars, not Jews at all but Judaized Christians[4]) have to contribute? As a scholar from the Christian tradition I do not propose to address these latter cases: I allude to them merely to indicate some ramifications of the problem.

The dilemma described above is a very general one and has received particular attention in the areas of gender and ethnicity in recent years. Can a man successfully write about the experiences of a woman? Can whites contribute valid insights to black discourse? There is no lack of strident voices protesting not just the virtue but the necessity of exclusivism, and insofar as these voices represent reactions to long histories of smug and patronizing appro-

priation of the experience of the oppressed, they may be justified and are certainly understandable. I recall to this day the profound—and salutary—sense of alienation I experienced on reading Mary Daly's *Beyond God the Father*.[5] This was a work that so utterly rejected the male academic with his pretense of God-like authority and objectivity that even as I read (and I believed I was reading sympathetically) I found myself almost physically driven away.[6] "This is not for you. My work is for others, and you are intruding" seemed to be its repeated subtext.

In other, less currently contentious areas, similar difficulties present: the well-known "impossibility" of translation, the distorting and distancing effects of time, the fact that those to who are disabled see a world to which the nondisabled are "blind." It would not be entirely irrational to respond to these problems by deciding to leave it strictly to those with firsthand knowledge to report and reflect on what they know.

I believe that we must resist—and resist vigorously—any such abandonment of the obligation to seek understanding. Communication, to have any chance of succeeding, must find imaginative ways to break down or to surmount the inherent improbability of the whole exercise.[7] We cannot afford to give in to the argument that only those on the inside have a right to speak; and the reason for this resistance lies in a kind of logical syllogism that runs as follows:

Proposition 1:	Any experience is unique to its experiencer.
Proposition 2:	Only the experiencer can report on that experience.
Implication:	Those who do not have the experience in question cannot comprehend any such report.

I am not sure whether the advocates of such rules as "only women can talk of women's experiences" quite realize the implications. If we cannot critically evaluate what we are being told, then either there is no communication at all (surely an extreme case), or we must accept without question whatever is told to us from any such privileged position. My response to that might with justice be that to be simply *told* that "this is how it is," without any possibility of reflection or personal understanding, is a form of intellectual fascism—collusion with a privileged authority that accords itself a quasi-racist underpinning. Perhaps more important, I might also respond that to accept without questioning, or (worse) without the possibility of questioning, is an abdication of *moral* responsibility. If the process of ethical investigation of a given claim is in principle denied to me, then if I accept that claim, I must also knowingly accept the risk of unknowingly endorsing or committing what could be a morally wrong action.

There is another, more positive approach to the question. We can postulate the existence of a quality that might be described as *shared* or *common humanity,* a general experience, or set of experiences, that transcends or belies our differences. There is certainly a close biological and genetic equality among all human beings.[8] Are there not also emotional, psychic, spiritual, and intellectual experiences and traits that dissolve differences? As Shylock (appropriately in the context of this essay) said, "If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh?"[9] Facility with language is apparently a shared intellectual experience; belief and the need to believe cross every known barrier; grief, joy, and humor inhabit—do they not?—the emotional and psychic self of each of us.

It is particularly important to recognize this quality in discussions of "evil." We are prone, when faced with horrendous events and actions, to ascribe them to some inhuman force—the Devil, if we believe in such a being, or some abstract power that overwhelms our "normal" human instincts. The Nazi perpetrators of genocide are often described thus, together with the regime of Pol Pot in Cambodia. Neither the Holocaust nor the Killing Fields seem to be tolerable in any acceptable definition of human nature. More recently, the horrifying massacre of small children in Dunblane by an apparently deranged gunman in March 1996 produced a very similar reaction. Speaker after speaker: media commentators, politicians, and church leaders all fell readily into using the tag "evil Thomas Hamilton." This presumably affords some comfort in the face of unspeakable atrocities, but its superficial attraction leads in fact to a wholly unimaginable terror. For if we persist in explaining all such matters as the work of a disembodied evil, we have no hope of understanding them, far less of preventing their recurrence. Unless the Nazis were as human as the rest of us, we may as well resign ourselves to future Holocausts, as incomprehensible as they are inevitable. And unless Thomas Hamilton was a human being suffering some terrible psychological trauma which, however problematic, could *in principle* be explained, we will have to condition ourselves to periodic culling of our populations by the monstrous forces of hell. Hannah Arendt spoke of the banality of evil: that may be to diminish it too much, but it is an abdication of responsibility if we refuse to recognize the *humanity* of evil, its place in all our hearts and minds.

Notwithstanding these remarks on the continuity of human experience, I do not wish to minimize the real differences that exist. Those who are committed practitioners of a particular religion, for example, will bring to it a perspective not available to nonbelievers. Similarly, there are genuine natural restrictions on the extent to which one can imaginatively empathize with, say, the experience of racial discrimination if one belongs to the dominant culture, or that of childbirth if one has never given birth. Some special privileging

must be allowed to those whose voice is that of the insider; what concerns me is that we should not give improper weight to that voice. It has a special right of comment, it carries weight when it sounds a caveat concerning the accuracy or aptness of a position or description, but it does not have the right of veto or embargo. And in all of this, it is essential to register the fact that none of us necessarily understands, or is capable of giving expression to, our own experiences simply because they are our experiences. To listen to actors attempting (often very haltingly or naively) to articulate their art is to realize very clearly the truth of this observation. Perhaps in the end communication is incremental—while a WASP male and a pregnant Chinese peasant may be close to the ideal of extreme opposites, we can surely contemplate a series of intervening mediators capable of constructing a series of small communicative bridges. It would not be safe to push this analogy very far—such a "bridge" may well collapse if extended over too many sections, or the communication engine may run out of steam before it reaches the other end.

The final point I wish to make in this elucidation of general principles concerns the place of the so-called Enlightenment agenda. Much has been said and written in recent years about the supposed failure of the Enlightenment experiment. It has to be said that this criticism has often come from those with a vested interest in discounting the clear advantages of a rational scientific exploration of truth. I hear it from neoconservatives of many religious varieties, for whom it offers a lifeline in the face of the destructive effects of rationalism when applied to the pseudo-histories of religion. Thus Creationists denounce evolution as though there were an option and in the fond belief that a moral utopia would follow the adoption of the biblical account.[10] (One wonders, incidentally, why the fourteenth century in Europe, which undoubtedly held creationist beliefs, was such a moral wilderness.) I also hear it from followers of all sorts of new age creeds, who care little about the destruction of traditional religious traditions but whose fond belief in fairies, ley lines, and astrology sits ill at ease with logical analysis.[11]

But if the key to the Enlightenment is the ideal of a shared language of discourse which is genuinely independent of both individual prejudice and supernatural explanations, then we must think carefully before rejecting it. This is not for a moment to claim that the Enlightenment discourse has disposed of the supernatural or has miraculously produced a breed of scholars free of prejudice, false assumptions, and hidden presuppositions. What it does is to force us to recognize the existence of these factors and to build that awareness into our debate. This essay and nearly everything I write as a scholar assumes a set of linguistic conventions which are common not just to the academy but to the generality of public discourse. *This holds equally for postmodernism and deconstruction*—for these are the reductio ad abusurdum of the Enlightenment program and may in the end not demonstrate anything

more important than the truism that you can take anything too far. "μηδεν αγαν" ("nothing in excess"), as the Greeks put it.[12] The whole scientific revolution—the whole communications explosion that is at the heart of our advancing culture—is utterly rooted in the materialistic, "objective," scientific logic of the Enlightenment. Computers work, essentially, because of the 100 percent reliability of the mathematical binary arithmetic on which their languages are based.

These observations have particular point in the sensitive and often misunderstood areas to which this book, and this essay, are addressed. Shoah as a historical, theological, cultural, and ethical study *needs* that common discourse if, for example, the lies of the deniers are to be countered. We need to know—as Deborah Lipstadt has carefully demonstrated—both the nature of the truth we have to tell and the nature of those who, for reasons of prejudice and racial hatred, wish to undermine that truth.[13] We need, in short, a shared language that will enable us to say, "This is thus, and that is not." But if we reject our common discourse, the terms "truth" and "lie" lose their content, and when that happens we lose the *moral* grounds upon which to deny the deniers their facile and misleading claim to "equal time" and a "fair hearing." I am not here encroaching on philosophical questions of truth and falsehood, but rather defending appropriate understandings of contingent truth and unproblematic lies.

There are two features of the Shoah that pose very specific problems for the sort of shared discourse I have endeavored to defend in general terms in the first two sections of this essay. One is its supposed uniqueness—never before has such a thing happened; it must never happen again. And the other is its Jewishness—the very word *Shoah,* a Hebrew term that has replaced the earlier Greek expression *holocaust,* is somehow symbolic of the vital importance in many people's eyes of establishing that "ownership." Whether intended or not, this dual emphasis has introduced an element of introspection to the discipline which almost rules out non-Jewish participation. What began as a private grief is in danger of becoming a private field of study; we who do not belong can, if we are oversensitive, feel that we are indeed trespassers—intruders on a private grief.

I want to say at this point, before I go further, that I do not believe that Jewish scholars or individual Jews have *in fact* or *deliberately* sought to exclude non-Jews from this conversation. Indeed, in a way that says much for their openness and graciousness, Jews have made space for Christians and others to contribute to Shoah studies even when that very participation must have caused pain. Conferences such as the European "Remembering for the Future" in 1988 and 1993, and the American "Scholars' Conference" have endorsed an impressive ecumenicity which suggests that my opening

reflections have been at the heart of the debate. We can share, we can understand, we can communicate.

That said, however, it seems to me that there are problems at a somewhat deeper level which emerge from the assertion of uniqueness and the affirmation of Jewishness, and in the rest of this essay I would like to explore these rather frankly.

Uniqueness is a problem if it closes the door to communication and to the common project of countering genocide, if it is defined in strict terms as something both unrepeatable and unimaginably different. If Shoah is unique in this way, it has nothing to tell us about the problem of genocide in general. All we can do is study it historically, try (if we may) to understand its roots, and do all we can to restore the memory of the victims. But we cannot (presumably) draw lessons from it, and we cannot give it a place or context in the wider perspective of history. Perhaps this is a paper tiger, a description of something that is not in fact encountered, but I think not. I fear that there is a certain body of opinion which, so to speak, wants to say "hands off," almost as though there is something precious about the sacrifice—too precious to permit it to be compared with lesser horrors.

Theologically, culturally, politically, and psychologically, even if the Shoah itself is unique, its consequences are shared. The danger with an overemphasis on its uniqueness, its exclusiveness as a Jewish experience, is that non-Jews have a reason (or an excuse) to avoid the issues. Theologically, for example, the churches have notably failed to address the difficulties of continuing to hold a broadly optimistic view of Providence and the justice of God. Such a position has always been problematic, in that injustice and unimaginable suffering have been the constant companions of human society; but previous attempts to gloss the problem either by asserting that in general good outweighed evil, or by affirming that individual suffering had a meaning in the longer perspective of eternity and God's will, have surely been damningly exposed by the sheer pointlessness and meaninglessness of the Shoah. Where, in all conscience, is the balance of good in this? What horrendous deity can incorporate such an event in his/her/its will? I do not hear these fundamental concerns echoed in the liturgies, the prayers, the hymns, and the homilies of Christian churches.

Culturally, the nature and persistence of anti-Semitism must surely be a shared study in the light of the Holocaust. The resurgence of anti-Semitism in Western Europe in unholy alliance with extreme nationalism and the indefatigable efforts of those who deny the facts of the Holocaust show clearly that there is a sickness at the heart of these societies which has never been properly treated. There are clear parallels with the wider phenomenon of racism—and it is evident that if we can identify cultural lessons from the history of anti-Semitism's role in preparing the ground for genocide, we may be better

prepared to avert future disasters. Contemporary European discrimination against Turkish and Algerian immigrant workers is already close to a crisis point, involving as it does an explosive mixture of government legislation and popular racism.[14] There is evidence that Nazi government propaganda, which explicitly dehumanized the Jews, was effective in preparing the population in general to accept the *endlösung* without significant protest. This suggests that current discriminatory legislation should be monitored very closely indeed, not just in relation to its inherent injustice but for its tendency to bolster popular fascism.[15]

While the political consequences of the Shoah are generally well known—the demise of the great Jewish culture of Central and Eastern Europe, the rise of the State of Israel, and the increasing concentration of the Jewish diaspora in the United States—it may be that there has too often been a certain timidity in relation to Middle Eastern affairs caused precisely by the sense that the Jews have special rights conferred upon them by the experience of the Shoah. Tensions between Palestinians and Jews in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank have become the focus not so much of mediatory international debate and realpolitik as of powerful interest groups with little desire to resolve problems through dialogue. The rhetoric of "rights," rather than the negotiation of a modus vivendi, characterizes a permanent crisis whose intransigence is a direct consequence of special privilege claimed on both sides. Yet, for all its singularity it is not unique. The problem of Northern Ireland shares many of the same characteristics and offers the same heady cocktail of religious conviction, claim to land, and history of oppression (real or imagined). Once again, the need for common cause in approaching similar problems is surely evident.

It is perhaps in the field of psychology that the themes of this essay are best represented. Studies of the traumas arising from situations of captivity, torture, and the loss of families and of the consequences of terrorist activity have made use of the testimonies of Holocaust survivors. In this field the documentary film record, *Shoah,* has been a most significant contribution, and more recently, the children of survivors have begun to write of their struggles to come to terms with their own special psychological difficulties.[16] It is well beyond my competence to comment on this area as anything other than an observer; but there does appear to be a difference between the account of Shoah as a unique total event and the psychological experiences of individuals caught up in it or involved in its aftermath. The element of shared humanity at this level is vastly greater than the isolation caused by the feeling that this has never happened before: indeed, that feeling is itself a profoundly *shared* feeling, to be found wherever individuals try to come to terms with events and phenomena that appear to them to be incomprehensible.

The *Jewishness* of the Shoah, though at an obvious level indisputable, is in certain respects a dangerous doctrine if pressed too far. From a historical

perspective, it is now accepted that Nazi policy toward the Romanies was in many ways similar to that directed at the Jews, down to a clear intention to eradicate them as an ethic group. Thus, even at the time, the policy of genocide was not unique in the sense of being directed only ever once and against one people. Recognition of this makes it easier to see how Shoah studies quite properly can and should contribute to our understanding of other genocidal regimes, before and since—a point surely embedded in the concept of remembering for the future.

This idea is relatively uncontroversial. It is when comment relates, so to speak, to the interior experience of Jewishness and genocide that a more delicate question is raised. Quite rightly, it can be said that non-Jews cannot fully understand what it means to have *as a community* experienced the loss of six million people in twelve years. Consequently, there are emotional and spiritual factors that should not be open to general discussion. A familiar example concerns the debate as to whether fiction or poetry can be produced with the Shoah as its subject, and in general, whether the Shoah can become a literary subject. Needless to say, the fact that this is in dispute has not prevented the creation of numerous fictionalized accounts, of which *Schindler's List* is only the most recent (though undoubtedly the most widely known).[17] What, for example, is the status of Elie Wiesel's *Night?* Autobiography? Literature? Poetic fiction? As soon as such questions are asked, and as soon as texts are published openly, the desire to keep the experience private is starkly challenged by the conflicting desire to communicate. Communication in its turn both presupposes and expects response; thus if it is legitimate to raise specifically Jewish questions in public, it is perfectly proper to seek non-Jewish input. Indeed, there are consequences of the Holocaust for Jews and Judaism which are perhaps more easily seen by those outside the camp: where the basic sympathies of such scholars are not in question, they should be listened to and their arguments examined. Further, it is important to judge such arguments *not* on how closely they conform to a politically correct consensus but on their validity and viability. This is particularly the case when non-Jews are perceived to be critical of cherished positions, or at points involving particularly sensitive issues; I want therefore to round off this essay with two cases with which I am personally familiar.

I presented a paper at the Scholars' Conference in Minneapolis in 1996 in which I raised the question of the Amalekites—more of a hot potato than I realized when I began to work on it.[18] An early indication of this was that I had a number of inquiries about it in advance of the conference, based (presumably) on the title alone. One in particular drew my attention to a little-known but potentially delicate controversy relating to modern analogies between Amalekites and Palestinians. That this is a highly sensitive matter is obvious when one recalls that the Hebrew Bible virtually recommends

genocide against the Amalekites (and, for that matter, other Canaanite peoples). As it happened, the main thrust of my paper was an examination of the attitudes of scholarly commentators to the pertinent biblical passages, which are on the face of it uncompromising in demanding the eradication of the enemies of Israel from the land. Whatever one makes of this material, it plainly is potentially embarrassing in the context of the study of Shoah and the resolute denunciation of genocide which is its most obvious implication. In taking up this question, I was quite clear that neither rabbinic teaching nor Christian interpretation is under any obligation to take such injunctions literally—nor do I for a moment imagine that anyone would want to return to such a fundamentalist reading. Nevertheless, there is an obligation upon those who regard these texts as part of their scriptures to make some comment—if only to explain that what seemed to our early ancestors an appropriate understanding of God is no longer endorsed. What I found (not entirely to my surprise) was that, with a very few exceptions indeed, commentaries and scholarly articles, far from dissociating themselves from the biblical material, actually justified it. The terms of that justification were, as often as not, some form of the argument that "the Amalekites (Canaanites and others) were morally depraved: therefore they deserved to be annihilated." To say that this is a dangerously specious argument is to understate the case, and in my paper I went on to consider some of the implications of this scholarly moral failure. This is by no means an anti-Jewish observation: by far the majority of the scholars I addressed were Christian.

The responses to my paper when I read a synopsis of it were varied and in the main fair. But a common observation was to question the validity of what I had to say not on its logical or academic grounds but on the grounds that, because I was not Jewish, I was missing some important aspect of the subject. In particular, it was said that since I was not able to judge rabbinic forms of exegesis from the inside (an entirely correct statement), my remarks about the dangers of not rejecting the Amalekite approach could be ignored (a deduction that is not entailed by the first proposition). It is not my intention to protest the validity of the paper in question; rather, I want to suggest that this could be an example of unwillingness to hear what the outsider says when what he or she has to say is uncomfortable.

A similar though more aggressive response was experienced by my colleague Keith Whitelam of the University of Stirling when he recently published a book questioning the whole basis of scholarly study of Ancient Israel.[19] The book's thesis was that much of what has been written under the heading "History of Israel" in the last eighty years or so has had more to do with twentieth-century European and Middle Eastern political realities than with any objective view of the late second millennium B.C.E. In particular, certain highly regarded scholars can be charged with imperialism and racism.[20]

The book is part of an increasingly acrimonious debate about the historical reliability, and even viability, of biblical traditions such as the Patriarchal stories, the accounts in Joshua and Judges of the conquest and settlement, and the grand dramas of the empires of David and Solomon. It further touched a particularly raw nerve in its claim to be clearing the ground for a history of the hitherto silenced voice of Palestine.

It was hardly surprising that the book received strongly critical reviews. Many, of course, took issue with the evidence and the arguments, and until more work has been done on the subject it may be that we shall have to wait to see whether Whitelam's thesis stands up. But it was disturbing that one particular charge was that of anti-Semitism—a charge that was based not on knowledge of the author, or of his personal attitudes, but on the proposition that any work critical of a central tenet of faith (in this case the historical validity of Jewish possession of the land continuously from the second millennium) was in itself sufficient to justify the charge. This is undoubtedly an enormously delicate matter, not made any easier because many who are openly anti-Semitic will use that pernicious prejudice as a ground for denying to Jews their human rights, including, of course, the right to make claims of a historical and political nature. But there is a difference between legitimate critique and malicious prejudice, and that distinction can be endangered if the assumption of anti-Semitism is made whenever criticism is encountered.

I have argued that (however limited) participation in Shoah studies is not just possible across the Jewish-Christian divide; it is vital for the health of the discipline. The value of this interaction is precisely that it is *inter*action: there may be things that non-Jews can usefully contribute, but there is much that Jewish thinkers in their analysis of the Shoah have to say to Christians. Not necessarily directly (why should Jewish work on the Holocaust have the benefit of Christians in mind?), but certainly indirectly. Their work serves to remind Christians (and the secular world) to put their own house in order. On both sides, this may be distressing. I believe (if I may use such language) that friends must be able to say hard things to each other as well as kind words, even at the risk of damage to the friendship. *But* (and this is my greatest fear) such hard things ought never to be a matter for satisfaction, must never be other than supremely difficult to say—and must work within the shared (dare I say Enlightenment?) discourse. It is that discourse, that common perception and common set of rules of language and analysis, which enables as to hear hard things with more than the understandable emotional hurt which is often our first reaction. It is—despite those who say that the Shoah destroyed the Enlightenment—one of our strongest weapons in the battle against prejudice, misunderstanding, racial hatred, and bigotry. But it is

never to be taken for granted: it is a resource requiring constant exercise and frequent repair. For it was not European addiction to the Enlightenment that permitted Shoah. It was European indifference to signs of its disrepair, European complacency born out of arrogance, that gave Hitler his opportunity.

Notes

1. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).

2. In particular, 'orientalism' is criticized as having fallen into the trap of a kind of political correctness which reads back into the past the perceptions of the present, and condemns earlier enthusiasts for failures which (given the cultural context) they *could* not have remedied.

3. Though Japan, where interest in the study of the West is strong, may be the exception that proves my point.

4. David Kessler, *The Falashas: A Short History of the Ethiopian Jews* (London: Frank Cass, 1996).

5. Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

6. But at the same time failing to see that "sympathetically" was a marker of condescension.

7. I mean by the use of "improbability" that at the very least we must credit postmodernism and deconstruction with a perfectly valid insight into the fundamental insecurity of language. Nevertheless, the fact that we can share ideas about deconstruction suggests that we do not face a worst-case scenario!

8. Steven Rose, R.C. Lewontin, and Leon J. Kamin, *Not in Our Genes: Biology, Ideology and Human Nature* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1984).

9. Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice,* III.i.69.

10. Are they aware—do they read their Bibles—that there are several competing accounts of Creation in its pages?

11. I am perhaps guilty, like the baby in *Alice Through the Looking Glass,* of only "doing it to annoy" because I know "it teases." But there is a serious point. Religion, be it new age or old hat, is not somehow exempt from the rules of logic. Creationists are wrong because they are *logically* in error, not because their religion is bad (though undoubtedly it is).

12. Deconstruction and its accomplices, far from being irrational, exhibit a similar sort of neurotic rationalism to that expressed to comic effect in the Alice stories of Lewis Carroll, works that have become effectively the iconic texts of our fin de siècle distrust of language.

13. Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York: Free Press, 1984).

14. These are just two cases out of many, and I do not intend to single out any particular countries for special criticism.

15. *Gastarbeiten* in Germany, Algerian nationals in France, and would-be refugees in the United Kingdom (whose rights to any form of social support have recently been removed) are pertinent examples.

16. Aaron Hass, *The Aftermath: Living with the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Second Generation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

17. It would be interesting to consider here the role of Simon Wiesental's *The Sunflower* (New York: Schoken, 1976), which poses an ethical or moral problem raised by the Holocaust and actively seeks debate at an ecumenical level. On a strict view, this whole project is illegitimate.

18. "The Strange Case of the Amalekites: Genocide in the Hebrew Bible and the Third Reich—a Sinister Inclusion."

19. Keith W. Whitelam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel* (London: Routledge, 1996).

20. Just as in the case of my paper on the Amalekites, the irony is that these were in the main Christian scholars.

Christians as Holocaust Scholars

Leon Stein

Harry James Cargas, an authentic "post-Auschwitz Christian," expresses in one of his most recent books about the Holocaust an important problem that sometimes arises among Christian teachers and scholars of the Holocaust: "Some Jews have been suspicious of my motive—I cannot blame them, given the history of Jewish-Christian encounters. Some Christians have been suspicious as well. Their suspicions are less understandable."[1]

Such concern about a Christian scholar and teacher of the Holocaust is understandable, for some Jewish observers could interpret a Christian entry into the daunting area of the Holocaust as a result of mere guilt, remorse, or a "Johnny-come-lately" desire to enter a growing and popular field. With some notable exceptions, the major impulse in the study and teaching on the Holocaust came first from Jews in Europe, Israel, and the United States. Christian scholars in the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany entered the field in the late 1960s and the decade of the 1970s. Moreover, both the historical and theological vantage points of the Christian scholar and teacher are bound to differ somewhat from those of his or her Jewish colleagues. Ian Kershaw, a distinguished Christian scholar of Nazi Germany, observed:

> The mystification and religious-cultural eschatology which has come for some writers to be incorporated in the word "Holocaust" has not made the task of Jewish historians an easy one in a subject understandably and justifiably charged with passion and moral judgment. . . . Given the highly emotive nature of the problem, non-Jewish historians face arguably even greater difficulties in attempting to find the language sensitive and appropriate to the horror of Auschwitz. The sensitivity of the

problem is such that overheated reaction and counterreaction easily spring from a misplaced or misunderstood word or sentence.[2]

Some non-Jewish historians have been tempted to historicize, relativize, or submerge the absolute uniqueness of the Holocaust into the general history of evil, inhumanity, genocide, and dictatorship. This has been true particularly for some historians in the Federal Republic of Germany, occasioning a fierce "battle of the historians" that raged in that country over the past decade. Far worse still is the growing worldwide industry of Holocaust denial undertaken by Christian anti-Semites, a phenomenon as unique as the Holocaust itself. For this form of soul-murder seeks to kill memory and compassion and annihilate the Jews a second time, thereby making a new Holocaust more likely. All these actions of pseudo-scholars can only fan Jewish anger and suspicion.

In the areas of theology, theodicy, and ethics some Christian thinkers of great learning and goodwill are inclined to view the Holocaust solely in terms of Christian theology. The crux of this interpretation is the explanation of the Holocaust as a "second crucifixion" and the birth of the State of Israel as the "resurrection." Thus, François Mauriac's well-intentioned dedication of his book on the life of Christ "To Elie Wiesel, who was a crucified Jewish child. His friend, F. M."[3]

This outlook is perfectly understandable among historians or theologians of authentic Christian background, but, taken alone, that is, without the aid of Jewish theologians and philosophers, it submerges the differences between Judaism and Christianity. It ignores the fact that anti-Semitism over the centuries was greatly motivated by resentment against the Jews for killing one of their own and then, even worse, refusing to accept the divinity of the "crucified God."[4]

Then comes the refusal of most mainline Christians and their churches to accept the fact that the Jews can be saved without the aid of Jesus Christ, the only true savior and messiah. Over the years I have made it a point in my humanities and Holocaust courses to ask my Christian students whether they have been taught that salvation is possible *without* believing that Jesus Christ is the true savior of mankind. The overwhelming majority of my Christian students have responded in the negative, implying that Jews cannot be saved without the aid of Jesus. To be fair, some of my Christian students have expressed indignation against this view. But the majority opinion reflects the unequivocal passage in the Fourth Gospel of Saint John, 3:16 and 3:18: "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. . . . He that believeth in him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."[5]

Many Christians remain unaware that this stands in contrast to the teachings of the Talmud, the Zohar, the Book of Job, the greatest Jewish philosopher, Moses Maimonides, and of course the Avenue of the Righteous at Yad Vashem in Israel honoring non-Jews who saved Jews during the Holocaust—that righteous gentiles do have a share in the world to come. This is all the more reason for Christians who venture into the field of Holocaust studies to immerse themselves in Jewish perspectives by way of preparation.

One response to the Holocaust taken by some Christian historians and theologians is that the Nazis were simply anti-Christian, "pagans," and therefore apostates. If this assertion is stated without qualifications, it can be taken as a defensive reaction on the part of non-Jews. It can imply that the true Nazis were non-Christians and that the millions of other Christians who either perpetrated the Holocaust or stood by are blameless. Some Christians (and Jews as well) fall into the trap of calling the Nazis "beasts," provoking Yehuda Bauer's wise response that this is an "insult to the animal kingdom."[6]

The issue that the Nazis were anti-Christian is one of the trickiest questions in Holocaust studies and must be clarified at all times. To some extent, the Nazis were anti-Christian because they held in contempt such Christian values as compassion, brotherhood, human life, and the Old Testament. But the majority of the killers and the indifferent in Europe were baptized Christians, and a considerable proportion of Nazis were churchgoers (at least 20 percent of SS members) who saw no conflict between their normative Christianity and their murder of Jews. The prominent German theologian Hans Küng pointed out a fact now widely accepted among Christian scholars of the Holocaust:

> The racist antisemitism of the Nazis which reached its climax in the terrorism of the Holocaust *could not have been possible without the prehistory of the religious anti-Judaism of the Christian Church extending over at least two thousand years.* And is not the case of the Austrian Catholic Adolf Hitler the most abysmal example of this? Even now many people do not recognize the religious roots of his antisemitism. It is well-known that from as early as the Enlightenment, Austria's Catholic church had fueled the traditional anti-Judaism of the Austrian population and used it as an instrument against both the monarchy and the democracy.[7]

The first absolute assertion of the Jew as devil in Christian Scripture occurs in the Fourth Gospel of John, 8:44, in which Jesus the Jew dissociates himself from his fellow Jews, saying: " Ye are of *your* father the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning."[8]

Two thousand years later, Hitler said in *Mein Kampf.* "The personification of the devil as the symbol of all evil assumes the living shape of the Jew. . . . Hence today, I believe that I am acting in accordance of the will of

the Almighty Creator: *by defending myself against the Jew I am fighting for the work of the Lord.*"[9]

Later, in the early days of the Third Reich, when some German bishops asked Hitler about his policies toward the Jews, he responded that in persecuting the Jews he was simply doing what the church had been doing for the past two thousand years. This was a half-truth, for the Nazi view was biological rather than spiritual, seeking not the conversion of souls but the total destruction of bodies. Christianity was a necessary but not a sufficient condition of the Holocaust. But as Rosemary Ruether and other Christian scholars assert, it was the anti-Jewish teachings of Christianity that became translated into the biological racial ideas of the Nazis.

So when Franklin Littell maintains that the Christians "who stayed Christian" in the Nazi period remained true to their faith, one must ask—true to which component of the Christian tradition—the many anti-Jewish statements of the New Testament and Church Fathers or the injunctions of Jesus and the Good Samaritan to love one's neighbor and help him in distress? Both these sides were present in the Christian theological and ethical heritage.

Witness the following two episodes in the inspiring memoir *The Hiding Place,* the story of Corrie ten Boom and her family, who hid Jews in Haarlem, Holland, and were imprisoned and sent to concentration camps for their actions. In the first episode, the ten Booms witness the public arrest of Jews: "Those poor people, Father echoed. . . . I pity the poor Germans, Corrie. They have touched the apple of God's eye." In the second episode, Corrie narrates how she spent her birthday, April 15, 1944, in prison: "I sat on the cot, opened the Gospel of John, and read until the ache in my heart went away."[10] Fortunately for the Jews helped by Corrie, the anti-Jewish passages in St. John were either overlooked or marginalized by Corrie in favor of the idea of the Jew as the "suffering servant" of God. Most important, Corrie believed that the original covenant between God and the Jews had never been abrogated. Unfortunately, millions of other Christians did not agree.

Another possible objection to Christian scholarship and teaching of the Holocaust is an insufficient and stereotypical knowledge of Judaism, the Jewish people, and Jewish history on the part of academics from a Christian background. The Jewish scholar Susannah Heschel found this to be the case in Germany. This failing is by no means only a Christian problem. Until recently, courses on the Holocaust have tended to focus on the Jews as victims rather than people, corpses rather than representatives of a living religion and a profound cultural heritage.

A distinguished Jewish participant at a major and successful conference between Jewish and Christian seminarians and professors came away with misgivings: "In statements made by my Christian colleagues during our

symposium, I felt that they still did not understand the real meaning of Israel to the Jewish people."[11]

A growing number of Christian scholars and teachers are now introducing a multicultural Jewish component in their courses on the Holocaust. This is absolutely critical in the area of Holocaust education, which is increasingly directed toward non-Jews and is often the major educational vehicle through which students learn about Jewish religious values and practices, cultural traditions, and the civilization the Nazis destroyed. Many of my Christian students in courses on the Holocaust crave background knowledge about the Jews. Anti-Jewish stereotypes such as "Christ-killers," "greedy," "pushy," and "conspiratorial"—characterizations that helped cause the Holocaust—still persist in American society.

The Christian scholar and teacher has a particular obligation to demolish such views. Moreover, the values of the covenant, Sinai, the prophets, and the immense contributions of the Jews to Western civilization must be counterposed to the absolute negation of Auschwitz. Basic beliefs, precepts, and ideas of Judaism should be presented and discussed by the Christian scholar-teacher of the Holocaust. These would include ethical monotheism, covenant, law, prophets, and the witness tradition that culminated in the writings of Elie Wiesel. The structure of Jewish history should be presented. Jewish holidays and festivals should be described. Values such as the sanctity of life, the dual obligation to self and others, and the significance of family values, study, and social justice should be discussed. The often cited paradigm of the Jewish saga as both unique and universal should be analyzed, particularly with regard to the implications of the Holocaust.

Jewish coexistence with other cultures and the commonality of Jews and Christians should be mentioned. So should the differences between Judaism and Christianity, such as the absence of the idea of original sin in Judaism and the refusal of the Jews to accept Jesus as the savior. Thus, when asked about the "Jews for Jesus," I respond that they are really *not* Jews but Christians because they believe that Jesus is the true messiah. There is nothing wrong with that, but let them call themselves Christians in the interest of integrity. This false advertising on the part of some Christian missionaries raises the hackles of many Jews, particularly Holocaust survivors who have been trained to understand the real meaning of code words.

Contributions of the Jews to Europe and America should be listed because the word "Jew" has often been laden with negative connotations. Students should be informed of Jewish achievements from Jesus to Buber, Karl Marx to Groucho Marx, Maimonides to the Three Stooges, Queen Esther to Betty Friedan. Teachers should distribute positive statements by non-Jews about Jews made by George Washington, Mark Twain, and Leo Tolstoy.[12] James Moore, who teaches Holocaust studies at Valparaiso

University (a Christian institution) uses personal accounts by Jews during the Holocaust to break down stereotypes by discussing Jewish religious and cultural responses during the Holocaust itself. According to Moore, this enables the students to reexperience the "Jewish world" of the Holocaust victim and survivor and thus "to realize the validity of the Jewish perspective portrayed through these lives. . . . Christian students are radically changed by the extraordinary witness of the Jewish people in the midst of that evil."[13]

Finally, it would be counterproductive for Christians to overcompensate by indulging in emotional outbursts of guilt and indiscriminate attacks on their own Christian heritage. This approach is bound to turn people off. What is needed is a fair, mature attempt to face the basic issues, not a lessening of one's authentic Christianity.

To sum up possible objections and dangers that Christian scholars and teachers may encounter when presenting the Holocaust, it might be useful to offer the arguments of both a Christian and a Jewish scholar. Franklin Littell states a liberal Christian view. He urges that the Christian must honestly confront what he or she would have done when Jews were being murdered, at a time when "most Christians went over to the adversary." Littell continues:

> We cannot get away from the truth that our relationships to the event are vastly different. Even the tones of voice that are options for us may differ. A Jewish scholar, particularly one who is himself a survivor, has the moral right to pursue studies of the Holocaust in the mood and style of clinical objectivity. Like Emmanuel Ringelblum, assembling his documents for his chronicle in the last days of the Warsaw Ghetto . . . a Jewish scholar may be as "clinical" and "objective" as he pleases, for his or her own life has been pledged to give a bona fide [though] not all Jews would agree.
>
> I question whether a Christian scholar has the moral right to adopt that stance, just as I question that the familiar Western bias of generalization and abstraction, have offered ways about telling the truth about what happened. The Christian scholar may not forget Soren Kiekegaard's story of the professor who was driven above all by a quest for "objectivity." If he could have observed the crucifixion of Jesus he would have asked, if possible to have it repeated, so he could be sure to give as accurate and detailed a description of the event as humanly possible. We who are professing Christians may not deal with the crucifixion of European Jewry in such a way. The Holocaust is a river of fire that flows across our whole history, communal and individual, and it compels us either to keep silent or to begin anew with totally fresh categories of thought and ways of acting.[14]

The Jewish scholar Daniel Landes agonizes about the problem: "Every Jew has ambiguous feelings when reflecting upon Christian responses to the

Holocaust. . . . It is with bitterness that a Jew notes that it took the Holocaust to allow sensitive Christians to see the suffering of Jews not as a testimony to the church triumphant but rather as a spiritual challenge of the highest order to Christianity. . . . The Christian theological matrix is not his own. It takes a certain *chutzpah* (gall), therefore, to comment upon an understanding emanating from a different and 'other' experience. . . . Finally, as the sensitive non-Jew participates in the plight of the sufferers, he must remember his other role: He is a member of Western Civilization, shaped in great measure by Christians which participated and allowed for the death of six million Jews."[15]

Nevertheless, Alex Grobman welcomed "serious and sensitive" responses on the part of the Christian community, and it is to these that we now turn.

In the past three decades the contributions of Christian scholars and teachers to the understanding and pedagogy of the Holocaust have been wide-ranging and profound. Conferences, courses, commemorations, activities, and scholarly secular and theological works by Christians have occurred increasingly from the 1970s to the present.

The first conference, "The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust," was organized by Franklin Littell, a distinguished historian and Methodist theologian, and Hubert G. Locke, a scholar of sociology, social welfare, and public policy. Locke has written eloquently: "I am 44 years old. The Holocaust is not my history. My history begins in the black ghetto of Detroit, but the Holocaust is a key event for me as an academic and citizen. Who will be the victims of the future, the passive by-standers, the committers of the deeds? Where do the roads begin today into the next Holocaust?"[16]

The main ideas set forth in this conference in 1970 set the tone and agendas for serious Christian work for the future with emphasis on the following issues:

1. The significance of the Holocaust for the Christian world is just beginning to be studied and considered by Christians, for most Christians learn and behave as if the Holocaust never happened.

2. The Holocaust is as much a part of Christian history and traditions as it is of Jewish history and culture, a dire challenge to Christian beliefs, theology, and behavior, for the Holocaust was a Christian tragedy perpetrated by the baptized. The very credibility of Christianity is at stake. What is needed is a reassessment of Christian anti-Jewish writings, a critique of the dogmas of triumphalism and supercession, and a restructuring of Christian theology and attitudes that have prevailed over two thousand years.

3. Christianity must rediscover its Jewish roots and begin to undo the vast accretion of centuries of "the teaching of contempt" that culminated in the Holocaust.

4. History remains unredeemed because of the Holocaust. Christians must work together with Jews to overcome the conditions that made the Holocaust possible.

5. The implications of the Holocaust are relevant for the problems of modern society such as prejudice, poverty, alienation, and violence.

6. There must be ongoing dialogues between Christians and Jews in a concerted effort toward truth, mutual acceptance rather than mere tolerance, and mutual understanding.

It is for all these reasons that controversies about the authority of Christians to write and teach about the Holocaust are largely absent from Holocaust studies, unlike the recent debates on whether Christians should teach Jewish studies. The Holocaust transcends Jewish studies. It is very much part of Christian history as well and a matter of Christian responsibility.

Alice Eckardt, a prominent scholar of Christian theology, concludes: "There is a new breed coming. There are seminars, dissertations in theological faculties and seminaries in the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, and Germany that may be said to inaugurate a Christian reentry into history."[17] Many subsequent conferences have borne out this conclusion.

The conferences on the "German Church Struggle and the Holocaust" have met since 1970. The worldwide international scholars' conference "Remembering for the Future: The Impact of the Holocaust and Genocide on Jews and Christians," held at Oxford University in July 1988, was the largest conference on the Holocaust ever convened, featuring more than 250 papers, at least half of them written by Christian scholars, teachers, and theologians.

Christian scholars play an important role in the United States Holocaust Commission founded in 1979, among them Harry James Cargas and the Reverend John T. Pawlikowski. One great sign of hope is that the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., is the second most popular tourist attraction in the capital and is visited by more Christians than Jews.

Protestant and Catholic writers and theologians of the Holocaust have played a courageous and imaginative role in helping to revise traditional Christian theology in the light of the Holocaust. On the Protestant side, as early as the 1930s James Parkes began to investigate the Christian roots of anti-Semitism, and in the late 1940s the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr stressed the Jewish roots of Christianity and wrote a powerful preface to one of the first excellent general histories of the Holocaust.[18]

Christian novelists and playwrights played an important role in making a large audience aware of the Holocaust. John Hersey's *The Wall,* a novel of the Warsaw Ghetto, based on the life of the Jewish chronicler Emmanuel Ringelblum, appeared in 1950. In 1963 the German dramatist Rolf Hochhuth criticized the inaction of Pope Plus XII during the Holocaust in his massive drama *The Deputy,* which provoked more controversy than any other modern play. In so doing, Hochhuth made history and stimulated much further scholarship.

In the 1960s and 1970s Franklin Littell emerged as a major Protestant Christian spokesman on Holocaust issues. In a series of important works he called the credibility of Christianity into question by exposing the "teaching of contempt" against the Jews over the centuries, showing how the Nazi "Aryans" betrayed the teachings of Jesus, and documented the complicity, inaction, and indifference of many churches and the learned professions during the Holocaust. In addition, he provided an important list of "early warnings" that could herald a future dictatorship leading to mass murder.[19]

Important Protestant scholars charted the path of the anti-Nazi German Protestant resister Dietrich Bonhoeffer to the realization that the Hebrew Bible was the foundation of Western morality and the idea that one could not be both an anti-Semite and a true Christian. And in a massive projected four-volume work, the Episcopalian theologian Paul Van Buren offers the insight that the Christian path to redemption might well lie in study and teaching about the Holocaust.[20]

The most radical revision of Protestant Christian theology is Alice Eckardt and Roy Eckardt's moving work *Long Night's Journey into Day,* which has a foreword by the brilliant Jewish theologian Irving Greenberg. The book is a scathing indictment of traditional and normative Christian beliefs and practices toward the Jews. For them the Holocaust is "uniquely unique," a major turning point in history. They ask, What has become of the credibility of Christianity? In the eloquent words of Robert McAfee Brown, the Protestant theologian and expert on Elie Wiesel: "The Jew laments: Since the world is so evil, why does the messiah not come. The Christian wonders, why since the messiah has come, does the world remain so evil?"[21] For the Eckardts, Christ represents a beginning rather than an end since the world remains unredeemed.

As long as the Christian world goes on as if the Holocaust never happened, the Eckardts urge a *metanoia,* a "revolution of total freedom for Christian thought." "The one thing Christians of today can do about the Holocaust is to work against its repetition."[22] How? By purging the New Testament of anti-Jewish passages, ending missions to convert the Jews that aim toward a new "final solution," and holding up as true models those Christians who risked and gave their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

Oddly, this emphasis on Christian rescuers of Jews was first undertaken by Jews themselves. Only in recent years have Christians entered this field of study. In a recent "Christian interpretation" of the righteous gentiles of the Holocaust, the Baptist scholar David Gushee acknowledges that much of the Christian silence about these rescuers "simply reflects the complacent non-response to the Holocaust that characterizes too large a portion of the Christian church. In my experience of North American church life—in particular more conservative regions—the Holocaust has very little place . . . and has had little or no effect on the shape of theology, worship, biblical interpretation, or moral instruction. A celebration of the relatively few Christian heroes during the Holocaust would be tantamount to an admission of guilt."[23]

Like the Eckardts, Gushee invokes the rescuers to point the way to an authentic Christian ethics, yet one that goes beyond the merely "normative," ritualistic ethics that were powerless in the Holocaust. It is ironic that these exemplars of Christian morality are better known in the Jewish community than the Christian and that it took fifty-one years to exonerate Dietrich Bonhoeffer from the charge of treason to the state in Germany. Gushee urges a reborn Christian faith that nurtures righteousness, a spirituality that does justice, and a moral Christian leadership. Says Gushee, "The church revealed during the Holocaust bears little resemblance to the church described in the Bible."[24] Thus the "righteous gentiles" of the Holocaust have a fundamental role to play in Christian education and rebirth.

Protestant educators marvel at the effect a well-taught course on the Holocaust can have on their students. David Rausch observes that "profound changes" have taken place in Christian students of all ages from all walks of life. Holocaust education, he points out, demolishes still widespread stereotypes about the Jews, enhances relations with the Jewish community, and promotes an appreciation of *all* life and *all* peoples: "It teaches one about structures of evil, the dangers of civil religion, and moral responsibility in an immoral environment."[25]

I can testify that teaching about the Holocaust to Christian students has produced the most rewarding experiences an educator can enjoy. The responses of the Christian students testified to a near-revelation experience, often stronger than those of the Jewish students. Years after the course, Christian students still send clippings of articles, news events, and citations of new books.

Catholic scholars and teachers of the Holocaust have followed in the footsteps of Jacques Maritain, Edward Flannery, and Pope John XXIII, who acknowledged Christian responsibility for the Holocaust, viewed anti-Semitism as anti-Christian, and supported reforms in the church. In a path-breaking work written in the 1970s, Rosemary Ruether showed how the

anti-Jewish teachings of the Catholic Church led to the social condemnation of Jewish *peoplehood* as evil. Given the horrors that Christians perpetrated on Jews, Ruether would agree with the Eckardts that history remains unredeemed despite the ministry of Jesus.[26]

The Catholic theologian John T. Pawlikowski views the Holocaust as a "rational" event, a transformation of values in which the "Aryan" race, Hitler, and murder itself became deified. He implicated the Enlightenment and even "liberal thought" for creating an atmosphere of secularism and total freedom where anything could be possible and where man would aspire to become God.

Though this critique of modernity is valid to an extent, it overlooks two glaring facts. First, the Nazis were fanatically opposed to the individual and constitutional rights represented by liberalism and despised the rationalism of the Enlightenment. In fact, they associated those values with the Jews. Second, many Nazis professed to be Christians as well, seeing no conflict between their churchgoing and their racial ideology. The "rationality" of the Nazis lay in their means of technology and bureaucracy but, in the last analysis, Nazism had many features of a pseudo-religion.

Pawlikowski rightly maintains that many Catholics remained silent during the Holocaust and that anti-Jewish theological attitudes still remain "deeply ingrained in Catholicism." He suggests some very important reforms in the Catholic Church. The deeply anti-Jewish passages in the New Testament must be criticized sternly. He urges that "the time has come to eliminate the term 'Old Testament' from the vocabulary of the Bible . . . it tends to create an attitude that these pre-Christian books are inferior and outdated in their religious outlook when compared with passages in the New Testament."[27] The Hebrew Scriptures remain vital in their own right.

Additional insights are provided by the Catholic theologian David Tracy, who urges a "hermenutics of suspicion" of anti-Jewish Christian teachings and argues for a more active role of the church in the world. The superb Austrian Catholic historian Friedrich Heer devoted a study based on massive learning to the history of anti-Semitism in which he criticized systematically the withdrawal of the Catholic and Lutheran churches from history. The Augustinian position that this world is sinful and that the other world is the only true reality fostered an attitude of passivity and even acceptance of evil. The solution is for Christians to rediscover the traditional Jewish idea of the human partnership with God in an attempt to repair the world.[28]

Some Catholic historians have become deeply immersed in Jewish history and culture. Paul Johnson's popular *History of the Jews* features an excellent chapter on the Holocaust, though he erroneously refers to the Jews as a "race" rather than as a people. The prominent German theologian Hans Küng has published a massive study of Judaism which details the persecution

of the Jews by the church: "It is shocking to see how the Christian church of all bodies oppressed and persecuted the Jews . . . in the name of the Jew Jesus." He refers to the Holocaust as a "past that will not go away," as a "singular crime," asserting that the pogroms against the Jews in 1938 took place in "full public view." He condemns Pope Plus XII for his "prudent silence" and his opposition to the creation and recognition of the State of Israel, while praising his successor, Pope John XXIII, for saving thousands of Jews during the Holocaust and fighting to end centuries of contempt against the Jews in the face of considerable Catholic opposition.

Küng also documents the emergence of hate radio programs by the American anti-Semite Father Charles Coughlin in the 1930s. Coughlin reached an audience of about thirty million listeners, a notable media achievement for its time. And in a stunning insight (also developed by the Eckardts and the Catholic scholar Eva Fleischner) Küng characterizes the Holocaust as the "nadir and the end-point of modernity . . . the starting point and the beginning of postmodernity."[30] The Holocaust calls all the achievements of modernity—state, technology, the learned professions, the belief in human greatness—into question, thus ushering in an age of intellectual and moral uncertainty. The solution is a reconciliation of Catholics and Jews based on an acknowledgment of Christian responsibility and Jewish willingness to learn more about the origins of Christianity as it relates to Judaism. This cooperation can pave the way toward a more tolerant, postideological world. Küng ends his work with a reaffirmation of the "double-covenant" idea long advocated by liberal Christians, affirming the equal legitimacy of the Jewish and Christian religions. For Küng the Jews remain God's chosen witnesses to both good and evil, a surviving beacon to mankind.

In a criticism sometimes directed by Christians against Jews, Küng referred negatively to Jewish "particularism." For this he was taken to task by Rosemary Ruether, who argued that the historic Jesus was born a Jew and died a Jew, "never fundamentally departing from the ground of Torah and Israel."[31]

The most prolific Catholic teacher and public scholar of the Holocaust is Harry James Cargas, of whom it may be said (to paraphrase Romain Rolland) that he thinks as a man of action and acts as a man of thought. He was brought to the Holocaust by the shattering revelations of Elie Wiesel, the Holocaust survivor and later Nobel Prize winner. His remarkable interviews with Wiesel and other prominent Holocaust survivors are models of what a Christian can achieve in this area. We learn that the publication of Wiesel's memoir-novel *Night* was first supported by the French Catholic François Mauriac and then became popular among American non-Jews. "The serious, sincere attempt being made by some young Christian theologians and teachers [to confront the Holocaust] must be pursued," urges Wiesel.[32]

Cargas, the paradigm of a "post-Auschwitz Christian," urged the Catholic Church to excommunicate Hitler and other Catholic top Nazis and to incorporate a new liturgy on the Jews and the Holocaust. He helped to expose the Vatican's suppression of the papal letter of Pope Plus XI of 1939 in which the Pope intended to condemn Nazi anti-Semitism openly. Cargas produced an open letter to Pope John Paul II, condemning his meetings with Kurt Waldheim, the Austrian official who hid his Nazi past.

These Catholic efforts to publicize the Holocaust have borne fruit. A study of Catholic educational institutions in the late 1980s revealed that close to 65 percent of all Catholic high schools teach the lessons of the Holocaust (as opposed to only 14 percent in 1970), correct the "teaching of contempt," and instruct in a positive way about Jews and Judaism.

The past decade has witnessed a profusion of outstanding works of scholarship and thought-provoking courses on the Holocaust by Protestant and Catholic scholars. Many have chosen controversial topics. Space permits only a partial listing of their most important achievements. They include the work of John F. Morley on Vatican diplomacy during the Holocaust based on recently released archives, revealing that Vatican indifference to the plight of the Jews was owing to a policy of "reserve," "prudence," and diplomatic self-interest.[34]

The study of the controversy of the location of a Carmelite convent inside Auschwitz was edited ably by Carol Rittner, a Catholic, and John K. Roth, a Protestant. This useful compilation of essays deals with the Jewish and American Christian pressure to move the convent, the agreement to move it, and the delaying tactics used by the Polish Catholic Church and the Vatican. An overwhelming majority of American Christians, with the sole exception of the columnist Patrick Buchanan, were in favor of removing the convent to an area outside the Auschwitz camp. Rittner and Roth also edited a collection of readings on women in the Holocaust.[35]

The American Protestant scholar and professor of Holocaust studies David Wyman has produced seminal works on American indifference to the Jews during the Holocaust. In his preface to *The Abandonment of the Jews,* Wyman remarks: "I have written not as an insider. I am a Christian, a Protestant. . . . But I have advocated a Jewish state for a very long time. . . . My commitment to Israel has increased by years of study of the Holocaust." The Christian historian Robert Ericksen wrote a revealing work on German theologians in the Nazi period, documenting how some of the most important German scholars of Judaism and Christianity Nazified their ideas and betrayed Christianity. The great works of Christopher Browning of Pacific Lutheran University have studied the complex immediate origins of the Holocaust and the behavior of "ordinary men" who became killers through

conditioning and peer group pressure. His work has been a breakthrough in Holocaust studies.[36]

Finally, while controversy swirls around the recent book of the Jewish scholar Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, its immediate predecessor should have an equal claim to fame. That is the study of the Christian historian John Weiss, *Ideology of Death: Why the Holocaust Happened in Germany.* Weiss's book should be read in conjunction with Goldhagen's study of ordinary German murderers, for Weiss showed how both Christian and racist anti-Semitism became ingrained in German society and culture on all levels before the Holocaust. His study of Austrian anti-Semitism is particularly informative and his conclusion sobering: "The tragedy is not that an obsessed fanatic somehow gained power, but that his bellicose racial hatred was shared by legions of his fellow Germans and Austrians." In his preface Weiss states that his father was a Catholic follower of Father Coughlin and his mother a descendant of English Protestants. Weiss was raised in an anti-Semitic neighborhood and attended the exclusionary Henry Ford Trade School: "I am bothered by the assumption of many scholars that an interest in anti-semitism indicates Jewish origins and the companion idea that it is somehow not a 'normal' historical topic for a mainstream historian. . . . As for me, I have gained . . . some slight awareness of the ambivalent position of Jewish intellectuals among a Christian majority. Even with the best of intentions, others often do not take one's views at face value and regard them as conditioned by ethnic or religious considerations. . . . I do not think that I have exaggerated the role of German and Austrian Christianity in modern anti-semitism. If I have it is not because I am Jewish or bitter, it is because I am wrong."[37]

Such a profession of intellectual and moral integrity on the part of a great scholar and teacher of the Holocaust leads one to conclude that, though there are caveats and problems stated in the earlier part of this essay, Christians are definitely intellectually and morally entitled to teach about the Holocaust. Indeed, Cargas and Weiss seem to imply that their writings on the Holocaust have encountered stronger opposition from Christians than from Jews.

There are some very practical reasons for this vocation of Christian scholars and teachers. They can serve as excellent role models for both Christian and Jewish students, illustrating the importance of studying the Holocaust as a challenge and a warning for *all* people. Non-Jewish historians have applied the unique *novum* of the Holocaust to the pathology of twentieth-century dictatorship, the potential breakdown of respect for life and civility, the failure of the learned professions, the clergy, and the universities, the problems of industrial society and technology, the potential of ordinary men and women to become obedient killers, and the place of the Holocaust in a century of "ethnic cleansing." In the words of Franklin Littell, "Hatred of the Jews is often the first seismographic reading of the covert emergence of a

false particularism and we must learn to recognize it as such. . . . For scholars of other disciplines . . . antisemitism is a code to identify the totalitarian ideologies and systems which are the curse of the twentieth century" such as communism, Islamic fundamentalism, and the American radical right.[38] Christian historians have shown that a danger to Jews is a danger to free society and therefore to non-Jews as well. They have done excellent studies of the Nazi persecution and murder of the handicapped, Slavic peoples, the Gypsies, homosexuals, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Christian scholars realize that they have an intellectual and moral responsibility to deal with their heritage. They understand that there is a relation between Golgotha and Auschwitz and that Western civilization will never regain its vitality and self-respect until this connection is explored fully. In the words of a profound Jewish scholar of the humanities, "We do hear sincere calls for self-examination to a rethinking of a profoundly flawed history."[39]

Christian participation in Holocaust scholarship and teaching provides a dramatic refutation of Holocaust deniers on a Christian as well as a scholarly level. In teaching by example, Christians show that the Holocaust is not just a Jewish issue and that Christians are passionately opposed to denial that it occurred. These thoughtful good Samaritans promote in their readers and students interest in Jewish values, history, and traditions as well as the legacy of Christianity. They foster dialogue and interfaith cooperation, provide new scholarly and pedagogical insights, and needed moral and intellectual leadership. Though they are in the minority, their presence is dynamic and vital.

I am reminded of November 1988, the fiftieth anniversary of the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in Germany. I attended a meeting of Jewish and Christian clergy in the Chicago area who were responding to the vandalization of synagogues and Jewish-owned stores. The priests and ministers announced to the Jews who were present, "This time you are no longer alone."

Notes

1. Harry James Cargas, *Reflections of a Post-Auschwitz Christian* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), p. 17.

2. Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (Suffolk: Edward Arnold, 1985), p. 31.

3. Harry James Cargas, *Conversations with Elie Wiesel,* 2nd ed. (South Bend, Ind.: Justice Books, 1992), p. 35.

4. See Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

5. *The New Testament* (New York: American Bible Society), p. 96.

6. Remarks made at international conference, "Remembering for the Future II," Berlin, March 1994.

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Art After Auschwitz

STEPHEN C. FEINSTEIN

IN HIS ESSAY "TRIVIALIZING MEMORY," Elie Wiesel posits the fundamental questions that confront artists, writers, and filmmakers who try to capture an understanding of the Holocaust. In describing that event, Wiesel suggests that it represented a universe "parallel to creation," a negative reality that not only made the civilized person into the *muselmander* but also "defeated culture; later it defeated art, because just as no one could imagine Auschwitz before Auschwitz, no one could now retell Auschwitz after Auschwitz."[1]

Wiesel's concern over what he calls "the victory of the executioner" and humanity's greatest defeat is real. Not only Wiesel but others such as Theodor Adorno, Jean Améry, and Primo Levi have suggested that there exists a wall which the nonsurvivor can never surmount and which art, in any form, can never conceptualize. But are such comments representative of a fear of art? Will attempts by artists to comprehend the Holocaust in a visual fashion suggest contradictory messages? Can the artist, especially one who was not there, stumble upon some essential truth that even the survivor may have missed? Is it dangerous for art and artists to stimulate the imagination on a subject like the Holocaust because the limits have been surpassed by the event itself? Yet, if one of the central problems of the Holocaust is memory, Geoffrey Hartman has astutely noted that "it will require both scholarship and art to defeat an encroaching anti-memory."[2]

Saul Friedlander has suggested that examining memory and reinterpreting the past through representation allow one to see hidden forms and new levels of discourse and also to try to exorcise the evil of this past. He has also warned, however, of "an aesthetic frisson, created by the opposition between the harmony of kitsch and the constant evocation of themes and death and

destruction.[3] And though Nazism has disappeared, it remains an obsession for the contemporary imagination. Hartman has commented further that "the role of art remains mysterious" and art must be on guard to avoid the cliché and estranged, "insofar as its symbols become trite and ritualistic rather than realizing."[4]

Yet it is a perfectly human desire to indulge in art, even art that involves violent and grotesque subjects. Murray Edelman has suggested that political art has a cardinal role in civil society, supplying the basis for political discourse and clarifying other complex issues that may fade from common memory: "Art should be recognized as a major and integral part of the transaction that engenders social behavior. . . . Works of art generate the ideas about leadership, bravery, cowardice, altruism, dangers, authority, and fantasies about the future that people typically assume to be reflections of their own observations and reasoning."[5]

While it seems easy to suggest that both art and films have a bias and involve degrees of misrepresentation, it may also be observed that even stories told by survivors distort the past. Each memoir of the Lager, for example, portrays both common and abnormal experiences. Everything may be the truth, but what can be conveyed in a long-term sense is more a question and a problem. Holocaust museums occasionally have to deal with issues of inauthenticity in how they tell the story and interpret materials. Omer Bartov suggests that Holocaust museums present a specific problem for the viewer: "And having been 'there' (in the museum, not the past it represents), we now think we *know,* because we *saw* and *felt* it, and on the basis of that 'knowledge' we can also reevaluate, or reconfirm, our perceptions of our own society, and of ourselves."[6] At the same time, it is important to point out that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, more than other structures, is itself an architectural space and artwork that not only houses a collection of information and some artifacts but seeks to be a metaphorical translation of aspects of the Holocaust as an event into a specific space. This may be why the museum is so effective—it is a unique blend of architecture as metaphor that sets it apart from Holocaust memorials, which, for the most part, are problematic. Frank Rich has noted that the numerous Holocaust memorials in Europe and the United States share one common trait: impermanence. Raul Hilberg has gone even further and described much of the memorial architecture as "kitsch" or "done without taste, without awareness."[7] The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as an architectonic space does not receive such negative criticisms.

The contemporary world's exceptional focus on politics and rights for minorities, with the lurking fear of brutalization close to the surface of society, has produced a substantial number of art exhibitions that deal with subjects focused around feminism, AIDS, homosexuality, black conscious-

ness, the Holocaust, and the genocide in Bosnia. Exhibits have been produced reflecting on responses by Japanese Americans interned in American detention camps during World War II. Installation art has served as a particularly responsive bridge between the artistic community and political issues. These shows may not solve the question of permanence and full comprehension, but often they provide an emotional stimulus to the imagination that may be lacking in a documentary rendition motivated entirely by historical scholarship. They may also provide models of action and, most significantly, force viewers to reconsider or reconstruct their belief systems toward a particular issue. The often disharmonious and contradictory nature of artistic production may stand in contrast to some coldly rational and highly accurate scholarly treatises, which, despite their scholarship and "truth," may fall short of conveying understanding. Edelman has noted that "art can also emancipate the mind from stereotypes, prejudices and narrow horizons."[8]

Art was important in the Nazi regime and has a logical relationship with the Holocaust, despite the aesthetic and ethical problems that such horror raises for artists. Hitler himself aspired to become an artist but failed to be admitted to art school. *Mein Kampf,* Hitler's 1923 plan for himself and the world, denounced modernism and abstract and Dadaist art as an affront to civilization. The Great German Art Exhibition opened in Munich on July 18, 1937, with a display of six hundred "Aryan" works of art. Hitler used this occasion to lay out, in essence, his plan for extermination:

> From now on we are going to wage a merciless war of destruction against the last remaining elements of cultural disintegration. . . . Should there be someone among [the artists] who still believes in a higher destiny—well now, he has had four years' time to prove himself. These four years are sufficient for us, too, to reach a definite judgment. From now on—of that you can be certain—all those mutually supporting and thereby sustaining cliques of chatterers, dilettantes, and art forgers will be picked up and liquidated. For all we care, those prehistoric Stone-Age culture-barbarians and art-stutterers can return to the caves of their ancestors and there can apply their primitive international scratchings.[9]

A day later, the first of many "degenerate" (*Entartete Kunst*) art shows was opened just across from the Great German Art Exhibition. These shows, which may have drawn the largest crowds in museum history, juxtaposed "degenerate" art influenced by "the Jews" to the Aryan ideal as expressed in painting and sculpture. Much of the viewing audience saw through the Nazi charade. Nevertheless, many important avant-garde works from the Weimar period were destroyed as part of the war on culture, which later spread to include "degenerate" music. It is not a speculation to say that art was co-opted

as a device for identifying the victims during the Holocaust and also for carrying out the "Final Solution." The political cartoons in Julius Streicher's *Der Sturmer* may be considered negative art, but art nonetheless, which stimulated a negative imagination.

Administration of visual arts in Nazi Germany, according to Jonathan Petropoulos, paralleled treatment of the Jews. After 1937, Nazi policy turned to the outright theft of Jewish art and was part of the process of victimizing Jews, based on the idea that no armistice was ever signed with the Jewish people. A parallel development, once World War II began, was the return of German art from outlying areas into the Reich. This, in essence, justified the massive pilfering of art from occupied countries, the ownership of which is still an outstanding question during the 1990s.[10]

Despite taboos that were associated with trying to engage the Holocaust as an artistic subject, especially the issue of artists simply trying to "reproduce" a memory of an event they did not experience and competition with the archival photographic record, the quest for a visual language and means to convey memory continues today. The quest, in a certain sense, is for a new language with new symbols and new metaphors. Primo Levi understood this well when he was writing about his experiences, when he said, "Daily language is for the description of daily experience, but here is another world, here one would need a language 'of the other world.'"[11] It is also a form of memory that treads on sacred soil. As Wiesel writes, "In the Jewish tradition, death is a private, intimate matter, and we are forbidden to transform it into a spectacle. If that is true for an individual, it is six million times more true for one of the largest communities of the dead in history."[12] While it is easy to agree with Wiesel when he says, "Study the texts," he includes in his "texts" two visual works, the film *Night and Fog* by Alain Resnais and Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah,* both of which would qualify as highly edited, even artistic representations of the Holocaust.[13]

The American/British artist R. B. Kitaj, whose paintings are dense with Holocaust imagery, has noted the role of the artist who deals with the subject must be troublesome and elusive: "The fact is that no one can touch anything but its shadow, which lies across the paths of some of us, however indistinct. Like most people, I only know the shadow, its aspect in my life. . . . In the lives of those who were *there,* the shadows, *their* shadows are not indistinct at all. They are called *memories.* It feels very strange/awful/awe-full to be alive, still, in the stinking aftermath of the Shoah, to know people who were *there* during that time."[14]

The bottom line regarding art and the Holocaust may be identified precisely: the Nazis used an attack on art as a prelude to attacks on the imagination and then on the actual victims. Since almost the beginning of Nazi persecution, artists have tried to grapple with the subject. Art about the

Holocaust, therefore, is nothing new, nor is the territory of the Shoah sacred space, despite warnings from survivors and philosophers. If artists can simply capture the shadow of the Shoah, that may be sufficient, as Christian artists have hardly captured the image of Golgotha.

A typology of art about the Holocaust is complex. It is, however, important to think about it not because of the meager number of artistic responses but precisely for the opposite reason—the huge numbers of artistic productions that are occasionally visible but not cataloged systematically. On the simplest level, one may divide artists into survivors, the second generation, and those who were only indirectly or obliquely touched by the event as outsiders, whose work may justify a classification as empathizers.

One of the paradoxes of the Nazi regime was that the delay in the total destruction of the Jewish population because of the need for slave labor or simply technical delays in killing allowed for use of Jewish intelligence and artistic skills, especially in a camp like Terezin, located forty kilometers north of Prague. At Terezin, in other camps, and in hiding, Jewish artists with skills and even children without training created an array of visual responses that stands as a "visual memoir" to the camp experience, especially the tragedies of everyday life not documented by photography. Most of these artists perished, but their art survived because it was buried or hidden. The greatest reserve is now in the State Jewish Museum in Prague and the museums of Terezin, Auschwitz, and other camps. A great deal of this art has been donated to outside repositories such as Yad VaShem and YIVO in New York.

The art of the camps tells the entire story of the Holocaust. While there is a vast archive of photographs from the Holocaust, taken most often by the perpetrators or liberators, there is a gray area for which there is no photo documentation, such as in the gas chambers and works that show daily human functions as they really were. Artists such as Bedrich Fritta, Otto Ungar, and Freidl Brandeis-Dicker exposed the movie-set world of Terezin, which was visited twice by the International Red Cross and was filmed for Nazi propaganda. Leo Haas's drawings dramatize daily survival in Nisko. Roman Kramztyk, Halina Olomucki, and Maurcy Bromberg, among others, documented the travail of life in the Warsaw Ghetto.[15] Felix Nussbaum, deported on the last train from Belgium to Auschwitz, where he perished, left a fantastic visual record of his own persecution, which becomes more surrealistic as the possibility of death becomes closer. His remarkable paintings done in hiding show his surrealistic vision of the world around him and his identification as Jew and victim. In 1998, the city of Osnabrück, Germany, Nussbaum's hometown, opened a museum displaying the artist's works.

One of the most prolific artists of the Holocaust was Charlotte Salomon, a twenty-five-year-old woman who painted 765 paintings during 1941-42

when she was in hiding. The series, entitled *Life or Theater?,* suggests the drama of optimism against a sea of pessimistic reality. It may be considered a visual equivalent of *The Diary of Anne Frank* because of its artistic brilliance, irony, comprehensiveness, and diary-like quality. Charlotte Salomon died at Auschwitz.[16]

Marc Chagall's *White Crucifixion,* a response to *Kristallnacht* in 1938, remains the icon among many paintings that describe Jewish suffering before 1939. Unlike artists who merely depicted suffering, Chagall used the theme of a crucified "Jewish" Jesus set against vignettes of Jewish persecution that unfolded in the Nazi era. During World War II, as more information about Jewish persecution leaked out of Central Europe, Chagall continued to paint crucifixion scenes in which the vision of Jesus, the Jewish messiah, became that of a tormented contemporary Jew. *Yellow Crucifixion* of 1943 depicted Jesus wearing tephillan and an image of SS *Struma* sinking to the left of Golgotha.

Lazar Segall (Lithuania/Brazil) produced a monumental statement (seven feet, six inches by nine feet in size) on the prewar refugee crisis in his work of 1939-41 *Emigrant Ship,* which depicts an overcrowded ship on the high seas in search of a destination. It shows the pathos and despair of the refugees, insecure, sick, cold, and alone. From 1940 to 1943, Segall produced a series entitled *Visions of War,* which was not concerned with the military campaigns but thematically examined the destruction of innocent human life and evoked the visions of the camps.

The liberation of the camps and the same movies that later influenced Rico LeBrun led to Segall's strongest statement on the Holocaust, *Concentration Camp,* of 1945. This powerful work summarizes in an expressionist manner the trauma and inhumanity of the death camps. It compiles many images of despair into a narrow space and represents a level of sensitivity by the artist to his own world that he left behind and now observed as a survivor through early emigration. As comprehensive as this work seeks to be, however, it probably is less effective than many "memoir" type drawings and paintings by survivors, who had a considerable edge over the outsider in trying to capture the sense of the destruction. As Segall was an outsider, this work is also less successful than Chagall's symbolic approaches to the Shoah or even Picasso's *Charnal House* of 1945. Segall continued to possess a haunting vision of the Holocaust, and the theme appears in works done until the time of his death. *Survivors* (1946) shows the handful of those who marched out of the camps, standing huddled against a somber background and landscape riddled with bodies. *Exodus,* of 1947, seems to evoke the theme of new life and power through the mass of survivors and must be read as a work linked to the refugee question and rebirth of Israel. *The Condemned,* (1950-51) and *Barbed Wire* (1955-56) continued to dwell on themes of persecution and human destruction.

Yankel Adler, a German-Jewish painter who immigrated to Glasgow, painted *Two Rabbis* (1942), which depicted two Hasidic rabbis with burning eyes, devoid of the spontaneity that usually characterized their life. The word "Misercor(dia) (pity)" is written on the tiny scroll the rabbis carry.[17] *No Man's Land* (1943) was a surrealistic landscape of mutilation and barrenness, while *Destruction* (1943) portrayed a double mutilation. The canvas itself appears mutilated, peering into another destroyed world, with a surrealistic, eerie sun overhead.

The American artist Ben Shahn produced strong responses to Jewish and other persecution, such as the famous colored poster that tersely details the destruction of Lidice (*This Is Nazi Brutality,* 1942) and the fate of its population. This work is suggestive of the vitality of poster art that was developed to reach out to the masses in every Allied country to define the enemy, develop and maintain support for the war effort, create a method of understanding the brutality of the war, especially against civilians, and enhance patriotism. While posters might be judged to be the most prolific form of war art, it is interesting that most poster art dealing with the Holocaust comes from the Soviet Union, and then only after 1943 and more particularly when the war was drawing to a close, as the reality of the death camps became apparent during their liberation by Soviet armies. In the Soviet Union, Lazar Ran, Mark Zhitnitsky, and Dimitri Lion created posters and socialist realist paintings defining Auschwitz, Maidanek, and the heroism of Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto. Only Lion was able to move beyond socialist realism to a new abstract visual language to describe the Holocaust.

Shahn's visual representation of the Holocaust intensified when he was working for the Office of War Information, where he saw a series of photographs taken in Warsaw and other places from 1939 onward that inspired him to paint children and other scenes of the war and Holocaust: *Boy* (1944), *Hunger,* (1946), *Cherubs and Children* (1944), and *Italian Landscape II* (1944), were inspired by wartime photographs. These wartime images remained in Shahn's oeuvre until the end of his life. In 1962, Shahn produced a black serigraph entitled *Martyrology.* The Hebrew inscription in *Martyrology,* taken from the Musaf Service for Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement), deals with the legend of the execution of ten Jewish sages by the Roman emperor Hadrian. The work is double printed, with the second printing deliberately off center so as to create the impression of tears. In 1963, he produced a serigraph in black with brown Hebrew calligraphy entitled *Warsaw, 1943;* Shahn used the same inscription on a serigraph entitled *Warsaw.* This work shows the upper torso of a man, head obscured and hands clutching his face in emotion. *Alphabet and Warsaw* appeared in 1966 as a serigraph in black with watercolor and conte crayon rubbing.

A strong postwar response was produced from the palettes of many important artists. Rico LeBrun, an important postwar abstractionist and non-Jew, insisted that "the Holocaust was a subject that no serious artist could neglect." The contemporary American painter Leonard Baskin, LeBrun's colleague and friend, described his approach to the subject as confronting "the mind-curdling reality of the least human of human endeavors, and in paintings. and drawings of dissolution, dismemberment and incineration he is saying, all is not vanity, all is horror."[18] Baskin himself has produced a significant body of work dealing in indirect but not obscure ways with the Holocaust. One of his latest series, *Angels to the Jews,* suggests the impotence of God during the Shoah and the various theological concerns that emanate from Auschwitz and the religious identity of victims of perpetrators.

Not every artist who produced works in the camps and ghettos perished. Many survived, continued to produce art, and have been recognized as important on the world art scene. Therefore, a discussion of art from the camps would not be complete without relating how survivors who were artists in the camps created art in the aftermath of the Shoah. Zoran Music, Samuel Bak, Hannelore Baron, Marek Oberlander, Janusz Stern, Isaac Celnikier, Alice Cahana, and Walter Spitzer, for example, became recognized artists in the post–World War II world. An important question to focus on, therefore, is the relationship of art to survival and to an ongoing mission to tell the story in the aftermath of Auschwitz.

Survivors share a special vision of having been victims during the Holocaust. Nonsurvivors cannot possess the same vision. Survivors possess memories which others can comprehend only indirectly. In some respects, the only "authentic" Holocaust art may be said to be the art of survivors. These artists experienced the terror of being hidden, the ghettos, and the death camps. Their art is somewhere between visual memoir and metaphoric memory. Sometimes art is created as a coping mechanism. Questions of aesthetics certainly exist in art, creating a tension between memory and witnessing versus a purely artistic approach to the subject. Some artists, like Edith Altman, Gabrielle Rossmer, and Gerda Meyer Bernstein, all of whom are involved in room installations, fall into a category between survivors and second-generation artists. Coming to the United States as children just before the war, they escaped extended ghettoization and later horrors but carry with them some of the burdens of survivors and certainly part of the trauma of their parents' victimization and near destruction. There is a temptation to call this subgroup "evaders," but though there may have been an evasion in the physical sense, the historical, personal, and psychological meaning of the Holocaust is very real for them.

For many members of the second generation, art and literature are mediums for expressing their special relationship to the Holocaust and to their

parents. The second generation does not have a direct memory of ghettos and death camps. But they may carry the memory and burdens of their parents' trauma, conveyed directly or indirectly. After the camps were liberated, many survivors made new lives for themselves in Israel or Western countries. Some bore no outward traces of their dehumanization. Others suffered a great deal in a way that was conveyed directly or indirectly to their children. Some things could not disappear: numbers tattooed on parents' forearms, screams in the night, absence of grandparents, uncles, aunts, and extended family, and dark shadows in a family past that would not be talked about.

For the second generation, art provided an appropriate entry for answering questions of memory, absence, presence, and identity. In their own way, these are authentic responses because the visual representations of the second generation mark the continued impact of the terrible period of the Holocaust on a generation that did not directly experience it. Most of the second generation cannot conceive of their existence without some vast imprint of the Holocaust on it. The memory of the event that affected their parents also produced different media responses. Joyce Lyon, Pier Marton, Art Spiegelman, Deborah Teicholz, Haim Maor, Wendy Joy Kuppermann, and Mindy Weisel are among this group. Their mediums of expression include painting, photography, video, installation art, and comic strips.

Artists who were not directly involved with the Holocaust have also attempted to engage the subject. This is probably the most difficult road because the stimulus may be some knowledge about the Holocaust itself or analogies made between the Holocaust and contemporary events that demand an emotional or political response in art. Artists may be Jews or non-Jews. This "outsider" generation (sometimes called "empathizers") has important ethical boundaries to consider when approaching the subject. The art of this group cannot be "memory," for they did not experience the event itself. It may be an interpretation (derived from their own sense of vulnerability as Jews or artists), a historical narrative, reflections on place, absence and presence, or a Proustian-like stimulus to a book, photograph, film, confrontation with a survivor, neo-Nazi, use of landscape as metaphor, or simply a confrontation with the impenetrability of the subject. The greater question at hand, however, may not be the Holocaust but an attempt to penetrate the nature of man and seek light through the darkness of the late twentieth century.

Leon Golub, Mauricio Lasansky, Larry Rivers, Audrey Flack, Jerome Witkin, Arnold Trachtman, Judy Chicago, Robert Morris, Pearl Hirshfield, Jeffrey Wollin, Susan Erony, Robert Barancik, Marlene Miller, and Shirley Samberg are among hundreds of American artists who have tried to deal with the Holocaust, with varying degrees of success. Among contemporary European artists whose works integrate Holocaust and memory themes are Anselm Kiefer, Sigmar Polke, Friedrich Hundertwasser, Theo Tobiasse, Christian

Boltanski, and Magdalena Abakanowicz. Boltanski, for example, was born after the war of a father who had converted to Catholicism but had to hide because the Nazi law decreed him to be a Jew. His installations have evolved into major multimedia spaces with intense use of photographs to evoke the Shoah. Abakanowicz, a Polish artist, has indicated that her installations are not related to the Holocaust specifically but to the trauma of wartime Poland and her own memories of crowds. Kiefer, a German painter, has used art to investigate the issue of perpetrators and victims in the German past. For Kiefer, Paul Celan's famous poem *Deathfugue* became an important point of departure for a deconstruction of German memory. For these artists, there is an ongoing dialogue with the past and future through the art.

There is also a geographic relationship of place to artist. In the United States, where the Holocaust has been said to have become "Americanized" because of the integration of the subject into popular culture and pedagogy (academic curriculum, literature and film, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the use of the Holocaust in defining prejudice), large numbers of artists have embraced the subject. In Western Europe, where there is a sense of Jewish absence as a result of the extensiveness of the destruction, the artistic response was occasionally delayed, limited in scope, subsumed into the question of national suffering during World War II, and often taken up by non-Jews. The most pronounced artistic response has come in Germany, by German artists. In Eastern Europe, because of Communism and the Cold War until the early 1990s, artistic creation and dialogue about the Holocaust were severely limited by the socialist realist ideologies imposed on artists. Only in Poland was the issue reflected in visual works, mainly because the crime was carried out by the Nazis on Polish territory and the six large death camps are physically and psychologically, so to speak, in the backyard.

Israel is a special case altogether, although not for the obvious reasons. For a long time, while Holocaust survivors were certainly welcomed in Israel, they were perceived not to represent the new Israeli, a symbol of power, but rather the opposite, powerlessness. While both Tom Segev and James E. Young have pointed to the fact that Yad VaShem was one of the first national memorials to the Shoah, it has been plagued with political controversies.[19] The trial of war criminal Adolph Eichmann in 1961 brought the Holocaust back to center stage in Israel, and it became part of public dialogue and political rhetoric. Still, few artists beyond the survivors who were attempting to recreate some images from their memories of the camps indulged in visual representations. One reason was the small size of the Israeli art market and relative limitations on exhibition space. Often, art about the Holocaust that was exhibited was not found in the major art museums but rather in places such as the art galleries at Yad VaShem and Lochamei Hagetaot, both

"Holocaust museums," which immediately removed any concern with the aesthetic in favor of subject matter.

Medium is another factor that may be used in categorizing artists. Painting, drawing, and graphics are the most traditional forms of visual representation and are probably the most prolific form of artistic production. Sculpture has had an extensive, although perhaps problematic, presence because most sculpture consists of public monuments, which are related less to aesthetics and more to the politics of memory.[20]

Multimedia room installations have become a popular artistic motif since the 1960s. The installation represents a form of art particularly adaptable and fitting to concepts of memory associated with the Holocaust. As a mixed form of sculpture, painting, film, graphic elements, and text, it is a means of telling the story of the Holocaust in metaphorical, linguistic, and semi-historical contexts. At the same time, the installation can provide a sense of a setting for the drama of the Holocaust by creating an environment that evokes certain elements of the event or its memory and contemporary effects. Installations also tend to be historical in their methods and use of artifacts. Photographs, vitrines, images, and symbols of the Nazi era and the death camps and of a horrible past can be arranged in a way that is both artistic and pedagogical. The result may be a disquieting revelation for the viewer, while creating an individual aesthetic.

Photography and film have provided some representations of the Holocaust, but contemporary photographers cannot reproduce documentary photographic records. Their task is often defined as trying to subvert what the lens wrought through photography by creating contemporary deconstructions using postmodernist approaches to places where criminal offenses against victims occurred, whether in the center of Europe or in the concentration and death camps. An interesting question that arises among photographers is that of metaphor: where can the line be drawn to determine where understanding begins and ends regarding sites of destruction? Can mere photographs of the soil at Dachau or Auschwitz, for example, shown without title, be sufficient to provide a Holocaust aesthetic? Jeffrey Wollin, Wendy Joy Kuppermann, Alan Cohen, David Levinthal, and Susana Pieratzki, to name a few, have attempted, often with stunning success, to suggest some of the hidden aspects of the Shoah through photography. With film, an important question is drawing the line between new document and performance. The latter, a mixture of other artistic forms, includes dance and theater, sometimes walking the very fine line between sensitivity and kitsch.[21]

An important issue regarding Holocaust-generated art is disaporism. Diasporism is an artistic theory developed by the artist R. B. Kitaj. Diasporism is not a theory that merely affects Jews, but it is particularly significant for Jewish painters, especially in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Kitaj's concept

is that a diasporist lives in two societies at once, which after the Holocaust places the Jew conceptually in possibly not only two but three places: where he is, where he once was (Jerusalem and other places in the diaspora), and where he might have been (Auschwitz). Thus Diasporist painting for Kitaj is a visual form that involves *midrash,* a rendition of a Judaic theological term on canvas: "Diasporist painting is unfolding commentary on its life source, the contemplation of a transience, a *Midrash* (exposition, exegesis of nonliteral meaning) in paint and somehow, collected, these paintings, these circumstantial allusions, form themselves into secular Responsa or reactions to one's transient restlessness, un-at-homeness, groundlessness. Because it is art of some kind, the act [of painting] need not be an unhappy one."[22]

After learning of the events of the Holocaust, Kitaj reflected that the test for the artist is to remain loyal to his artistic training, "like formal and thematic daring and invention, probing drawing skills, touch and gesture, experiment, delight in paint and color, reverence for pictures by other artists and so on."[23] This attempt to maintain allegiance to "formal" art is perhaps a reference to the abstract expressionism of the New York school of artists after World War II, for whom the human figure dissolved in wild, almost unintelligible abstraction. Artists associated with this school are well known: Jackson Pollack, Mark Rothko, Ad Reinhardt, Adolph Gottleib, Barnett Newman, and others. All of their works have their own internal structural coherence without reference to the outside world. Perhaps, however, all of these works may be a response to the chaos of the 1940-45 period, when the artists created their own chaos on canvas (the "action" painters, Pollack, De Kooning, and others) in opposition to those who sought to restore some order through their art (the "chromaticists"). Most of the chromaticists—Mark Rothko, Adolph Gottleib, Barnett Newman, and Ad Reinhardt—were Jews.[25]

Then there is the question of theme and symbol. The most ambitious and successful approach to this issue was developed by Zivi Amishai-Maisels in her monumental work *Depiction and Interpretation,* which outlines and analyzes the multifaceted new iconography that emerged from Holocaust art: barbed wire, the crematorium chimney, mothers and children, the child alone, the scream, relics, biblical imagery, and images of the crucified Jew.[25] These new images, sometimes based on a reworking of older themes such as biblical texts, parallel the work of many theologians who have similarly been involved with reinterpretation of both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament in light of the Shoah. A painting such as Marc Chagall's *White Crucifixion* (1938) is "midrashic" and may be as complex as any scholarly biblical treatise. With the other symbols, artists are searching for unique creativity without using the allusions from photographs to produce something that is too clichéd.

A category of Holocaust art that has emerged recently may be called "Holocaust projects." These are very broad and comprehensive visions of the Holocaust conceived by the artists to explain the entire event and occasionally to make some allusions to contemporary aspects of inequality, prejudice, and even genocide. By their very nature, however, such works are problematic. All of the categories discussed thus far have involved artists who usually entered the Holocaust through a specific theme, which they used as the basis for a metaphorical treatment of the Holocaust itself. Large-scale projects that try to tell visually exactly what the Holocaust was fall into the pit of trying to explain the unexplainable and usually fail. The failure is linked most specifically to banal comparisons that may represent injustice but are not Holocaust.

The most recent example of the problems of such representation was Judy Chicago's *Holocaust Project.* Stimulated by her own Jewish roots and absence of Jewish identity, plus a belated discovery of the Holocaust, Chicago's project, a series of large air-brushed and photographically based paintings done in conjunction with her husband, photographer Donald Woodman, plus a few other items including a needlepoint tapestry and several stained-glass pieces, tries to be too inclusive: along with the story of the Holocaust are modern parables of misuse of medicine, experiments on animals, poverty of immigrant workers, police brutality, and other social themes. The strongest theme is feminism in contrast to the underlying concept that National Socialism represented male dominance in the extreme. There is no doubt that the NSDAP imposed a male-dominant regime on Germany. But women were both victims and perpetrators, the latter category being most visible at the trial of the female SS guards at Bergen-Belsen. The result of this artistic venture is perhaps useful in book form, but from an artistic viewpoint it has met with strong critical negativity. On the other side, a complex, multimedia series of installations called *The Anne Frank Project* by Ellen Rothenberg succeeded remarkably in deconstructing the traditional lines of association between the *Diary of Anne Frank* and the audience and also successfully included a discourse on gathering of evidence, historical method, feminist issues, and questions of victims, perpetrators, and onlookers. Lest it not be clear, Rothenberg's art was not a chronological discourse on Anne Frank but a postmodernist deconstruction that made something old and known, new and intriguing.

The most innovative and sometimes controversial form of Holocaust art is the comic book. Political cartoons from World War II provide a basis for understanding several aspects of the Holocaust and World War II. First, political cartoons were created in the world of the camps. Laughter for Jews was always an important component of life. For centuries, Jewish existence was footnoted by anecdotes and jokes about oppressors. The Holocaust did not obliterate Jewish humor and humanity, even in the most dire circumstances.

The Dachau camp artist Hans Queck, for example, produced cartoons describing the debilitating conditions in the camp. One shows an inmate stealing a bone from a dog. George Sreitwolf produced greeting cards at Mauthausen. Karl Schwesig produced mock postage stamps at Gurs in France depicting the "liberty, equality, and fraternity" of camp life.

On the outside, political cartoons appeared regularly in the newspapers of the Allied nations' newspapers. These attempted not only to mock and belittle the enemy but to bring him down to life size, especially after Allied losses at the outset of the war. An examination of these cartoons, especially those in American newspapers, provides a way to examine aspects of the war as it may be perceived through cartoons, versus a much more grim reality.

The Nazis also used cartoons, the most notorious appearing in Julius Streicher's anti-Semitic newspaper, *Der Sturmer*, which created the most vile portraits of Jews and contributed to the growth of anti-Semitism and stereotyping that allowed perpetrators to do their work without moral conscience and bystanders to look the other way.

The most innovative use of a comic-book approach to the Holocaust is Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. In the eyes of some survivors, however, it was a publication that came close to blasphemy. If the medium of the comic book was outrageous, then depicting Jews as mice and Germans as cats seemed to be both an irreverent and an unfitting reminder of German propaganda through films such as Fritz Hippler's *The Eternal Jew* (1940), "reducing a distinctly human evil to a hunter-prey phenomenon natural to the animal kingdom."[26]

Maus: A Survivor's Tale is a second-generation work that parallels painting, photography, and other visual works. It is both art and literature, and the artistic side should not be belittled because of the cartoon format. Adam Gopnik has suggested that cartoons are "a relatively novel offspring of an extremely sophisticated visual culture."[27] Spiegelman has also suggested that he is working as an illustrator and that the artistic work is "driven by its words. It's built on a testimony of sorts."[28] Spiegelman worked on *Maus* for thirteen years and sees it as a complete work, with no sequels. In this quest to tell several Holocaust stories, the artist rejected photo-realism, elaborate detail, and shading and reduced the text to fit the artistic space. In contemplating the nature of the extended text in cartoons, one might be led to think back about the effect of Auschwitz prisoners numbers appearing in abstract works of more formal artists. Both have power for translating aspects of the event into the mind of the viewer or reader.

As the twentieth century draws to a close and art and museums take on a greater presence in popular culture, it seems very clear that the Holocaust will be a distinct subject. Since 1993, there have been several comprehensive shows dealing with the art of the Holocaust. *Burnt Whole* (1994) at the

Washington Project for the Arts dealt with responses to the concept of "holocaust" by thirty artists all born after 1945. *After Auschwitz* (1994-95) at Royal Festival Hall and the Imperial War Museum brought together an international array of artists from different generations of the Holocaust and post-Holocaust era. *Witness and Legacy: Contemporary Art About the Holocaust* (1995) at the Minnesota Museum of American Art displayed the multimedia works of twenty-two American artists.[29] *Where Is Abel, Thy Brother?,* a comprehensive exhibition of twenty international artists displayed by Zacheta Gallery of Contemporary Art in Warsaw, also produced a remarkable nontraditional catalog (twenty-two pamphlets) with the Holocaust as a central motif. Smaller Jewish and Holocaust museums have had shows dedicated to the works of individual artists, often survivors.

Distinctiveness in art by subject matter is not necessarily a virtue, however. Too often, a political direction in art, no matter how directly it relates to civil society and its individual and collective memories, is often a deterrence, rather than an incentive, for an audience. Only when visual presentations in the arts that deal with the Holocaust are found in permanent collections of major museums and are integrated as mainstream art of the second part of the twentieth century can one say that the Holocaust has been fully integrated into contemporary culture.

It is useful to remember what Emil Fackenheim has called the 614th commandment—not to give Hitler a posthumous victory. Fackenheim's approach was not to deny God because of his identification with the Jewish people. It might be suggested that this be interpreted as not to neglect art as an important device and medium for exploring the meaning of the Holocaust. Art is not only a means of telling the story. It is a means of commemorating and suggesting new insights into human suffering and inspiration. As technologies continue to evolve, the boundaries of visual arts cannot be estimated. Although painting is one of the oldest renditions of the visual arts, installation art and other forms have the ability to take advantage of new technologies to improve their conveyance to the viewer.

Art, however, like literature, has certain problems. Not all artistic manifestations are good aesthetically, and many may have poor narrative qualities. Many, however, are brilliant. But the results to date cannot be ignored and must be placed in a context alongside the narrative literary texts that already exist, as well as poetry. Artistic representations of the Holocaust often necessitate inclusion of literary texts, whether as a film narration that may be either precise or obscure, accompanying poetry, testimony through film, or written text in paintings and whether it be subtle like the appearance of a number or an attempt to enter an area of memory that is not the artist's own.

If there is a problem with art, it is less with the artist and more with the medium and the audience. Mediums of visual memory are less accessible than

printed materials. Access to visual responses of the Holocaust necessitate a gallery experience, which involves other people and does not have the intimacy of reading a book. The gallery experience also necessitates some art appreciation by viewers, lest the purposes of a painting, for example, escape them. Thus for painters or visual artists, the task of conveying memory is more complex because of potential insufficiencies of both their own work and limitations of the audience.

Notes

1. Elie Wiesel, "Trivializing Memory," in *From the Kingdom of Memory* (New York, Schocken Books/Summit Books, 1990), p. 166.

2. Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Darkness Visible," in *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory,* ed. Hartman (Cambridge, Blackwell, 1994), p. 10.

3. Saul Friedlander, *Reflections on Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 18.

4. Hartman, "Darkness Visible," p. 19.

5. Murray Edelman, *From Art to Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 2-3.

6. Omer Bartov, *Murder in Our Midst* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), pp. 169, 179.

7. Frank Rich, "The Holocaust Boom," *New York Times,* April 7, 1994, p. A15, (Raul Hilberg, "Conscience from Burlington," *Hadassah Magazine,* August–September 1991, p. 23.

8. Edelman, *From Art to Politics,* p. 12.

9. Adolf Hitler, speech on July 18, 1937, as quoted in "1937: Modern Art and Politics in Prewar Germany," in Stephanie Barron, *"Degenerate Art": The Fate of the Avant Garde in Germany* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1991), p. 17. See full text of this speech in David Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 170-74.

10. Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 9, 123.

11. Primo Levi as quoted in Michael Kimmelmann, "Horror Unforgotten: The Politics of Memory," *New York Times,* March 11, 1994, p. B1.

12. Elie Wiesel, "Art and the Holocaust: Trivializing Memory," *New York Times,* June 11, 1989, sec. 2, p. B1.

13. Wiesel, "Trivializing Memory," pp. 171-72.

14. R.B. Kitaj, *First Diasporist Manifesto* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), p. 55.

15. For more information of these and other artists of the camps, see Janet Blatter and Sybil Milton, *Art of the Holocaust* (New York: The Rutledge Press, 1981), and Mary Constanza, *The Living Witness* (New York: Free Press, 1982).

16. The most complete edition of the gouaches of Charlotte Salomon is *Charlotte Salomon: Life or Theater?* (New York: Viking Press, 1981). The most recent biography of Salomon is Mary Felstiner, *To Paint Her Life: Charlotte Salomon in the Nazi Era* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994).

17. For a more extended discussion of this work, see Avram Kampf, *The Jewish Experience in the Art of the Twentieth Century* (South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin and Garvey, 1984), p. 116.

18. LeBrun as quoted in Leonard Baskin, *Iconologia* (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), p. 22.

19. See Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), part 8.

20. See James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

21. My discussion here excludes the broad work of Hollywood and European film studios that have created full-length feature films about the Holocaust. These raise issues that cannot be dealt with in this essay but are not far afield in the area of aesthetics, drawing the line between fiction and reality and kitsch.

22. Kitaj, *First Diasporist Manifesto,* p. 31.

23. Ibid., p. 102.

24. For an excellent discussion of art of the Holocaust and the abstract expressionists, see *Tradition and Transformation: A History of Jewish Art and Architecture,* Chapter 9B, "From Holocaust Art to Abstract Expressionism (Pepper Pike, Ohio: Jewish Artists and Architecture Partners, 1988), videotape narrated by Ori Z. Soltes.

25. Ziva Amishai-Maisels, *Depiction and Interpretation* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993), pp. 131-98.

26. Mark Cory, "Comedic Distance in Holocaust Literature," *Journal of American Culture* 18 (Spring 1995): 38. Corey points out that caricatures account for 20 percent of surviving Holocaust art. Corey also asserts that *Maus* is only secondarily concerned with the Holocaust and that its prime interest is the second generation. See also Andrew Weinstein, "Art After Auschwitz," *Boulevard* 9 (1994): 187-96.

27. Adam Gopnik, "Comics and Catastrophe," *New Republic,* June 22, 1987.

28. In Pursuit of the Pleasure Principle," interview of Art Spiegelman by Elena Lappin, *Jewish Quarterly,* Spring 1995, p. 7.

29. Cataloges were produced for each of these shows. See Monica Bohm Duchen, ed., *After Auschwitz* (London: Lund Humphries, 1995); Stephen Feinstein, ed., *Witness and Legacy: Contemporary Art About the Holocaust* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1995), Karen Holtzman, exhibition curator, *Burnt Whole: Contemporary Artists Reflect on the Holocaust* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Project for the Arts, 1994); and Anda Rottenberg, curator, *Where is Abel, Thy Brother?* (Warsaw: Zacheta Gallery of Contemporary Art, 1996). Also of interest is Vivian Alpert Thompson, *A Mission in Art: Recent Holocaust Works in America* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1988).

Reflections on Post-Holocaust Ethics

JOHN K. ROTH

Now we are returning home.
—Calel Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?*

ON AUGUST 20, 1942, A POLISH JEW named Calel Perechodnik returned home. This fact is known because Perechodnik recorded it in the writing that he began to do on May 7, 1943. Sheltered at the time by a Polish woman in Warsaw, the twenty-six-year-old engineer would spend the next 105 days producing a remarkable document that is at once a diary, memoir, and confession rooted in the Holocaust.

Shortly before Perechodnik died in 1944, he entrusted his reflections to a Polish friend. The manuscript survived, but it was forgotten and virtually unknown in the United States until Frank Fox's translation appeared in 1996.[1] Charged with ethical issues, Perechodnik's testament is of special significance because he was a Jewish ghetto policeman in Otwock, a small Polish town near Warsaw. Although that was not his chosen profession, it was a part he decided to play in February 1941—not knowing all that would soon be required of him.

Already the German occupiers of his native Poland had forced Perechodnik, his family, and millions of other Polish Jews into wretched ghettos. "Seeing that the war was not coming to an end and in order to be free from the roundup for labor camps," Perechodnik would write, "I entered the ranks of the Ghetto Polizei."[2]

When Calel Perechodnik returned home on August 20, 1942, he knew in ways that can scarcely be imagined how optimistic, mistaken, fateful, and

deadly even his most realistic assumptions had been. His decision to join what the Germans called the Ordnungsdienst (Order Service) had not only required Perechodnik to assist them in the destruction of the European Jews but also implicated him, however unintentionally, in the deportation of his own wife and child to the gas chambers at Treblinka on August 19, 1942. Perechodnik's testament says that he returned home on August 20, but his words—expressing the meaning of his experience—indicate that "home" could never be a reality for him again.

How do we explain the century, the world, that led Calel Perechodnik to the choices he made and their consequences? Are such times and places ones in which we feel—casually, comfortably, confidently—at home? Or does Calel Perechodnik's *Am I a Murderer?* make it impossible to return home without the company of profoundly disturbing questions that rightly make us wonder about our comfort and interrupt our confidence as a new century approaches, one that may prove even more devastating than the bloody twentieth?

The disturbing questions that Perechodnik's testament provokes can concentrate on him and his decisions. This essay, however, has a different focus because it is too easy to cast blame on Perechodnik and thereby to miss the point that most deserves consideration: a genocidal Nazi state created the circumstances in which the intention was that all Jews, including Perechodnik, should die. By showing how the destruction process capitalized on a cunning that enticed and then required Jews to participate in the annihilation of their own people, Perechodnik's case serves best as a point of departure to reveal, first, how calculated and systematic the Holocaust turned out to be and, second, how far those facts reach to question some of our fondest assumptions about moral judgments and ethical norms. Thus, with the stage set by the multifaceted tragedy of Calel Perechodnik, we may reflect on some of the fundamental moral dilemmas that confront humankind, and especially Americans, as we try to return home in a post-Holocaust world.

Calling their regime the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party ruled Germany from 1933 to 1945. The Holocaust happened during those years. It was Nazi Germany's planned total destruction of the European Jews and the actual murder of nearly six million of them, including about 1.5 million children under age fifteen. This genocidal campaign—the most systematic, bureaucratic, and unrelenting the world has seen—also destroyed millions of non-Jewish civilians. They included Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), Slavs, Jehovah's Witnesses, Freemasons, homosexuals, the mentally retarded, physically handicapped, and insane. Those people, the Nazis believed, posed a threat to the Third Reich's racial purity that approached, though it could never equal, the one posed by Jews.

Nazi Germany's system of concentration camps, ghettos, murder squadrons, and killing centers took the lives of more than twelve million defenseless humans. Although not every Nazi victim was Jewish, the Nazi intent was to rid Europe, if not the world, of Jews. Hitler went far in meeting that goal. Vast numbers of the Jewish victims came from Poland—Calel Perechodnik and his family among them—where the Germans annihilated 90 percent of that country's three million Jews. Located in Poland, Auschwitz was the largest Nazi killing center. More than one million Jews were gassed there. Although Europe's Jews resisted the onslaught as best they could, by the time Germany surrendered in early May 1945, two-thirds of the European Jews—and about one-third of the Jews worldwide—were dead.

One of the most disturbing moral issues posed by the Holocaust is summed up in *The Cunning of History,* a short but hardly sweet book by Richard L. Rubenstein. It hits hard by contending that "the Holocaust bears witness to *the advance of civilization.*" To begin to see how that proposition bears on Calel Perechodnik's case and how that assertion is charged with ominous portents for the future, consider that in 1933, the year Hitler took power in Germany, the Chicago World's Fair celebrated what its promoters optimistically acclaimed as "A Century of Progress." As *The Cunning of History* points out, the fair's theme was expressed in a slogan: "Science Explores; Technology Executes; Mankind Conforms."[3] Cast in those terms, the Holocaust not only bears witness to the tragically cunning and ironic elements of "progress" but also delivers a warning about what could—but ought not—lie ahead for humanity.

The Final Solution was symptomatic of the modern state's perennial temptation to destroy people who are regarded as undesirable, superfluous, or unwanted because of their religion, race, politics, ethnicity, or economic redundancy. The Nazis identified what they took to be a practical problem: the need to eliminate the Jews and other so-called racial inferiors from their midst. Then they moved to solve it. Consequently, the Holocaust did not result from spontaneous, irrational outbursts of random violence. Nor was the Final Solution a bizarre historical anomaly. It was instead a state-sponsored program of population riddance made possible by modern planning and the best technology available at the time.

The Holocaust did not occur until the mid-twentieth century, but conditions necessary, though not sufficient, to produce it were forming centuries before. Decisive in that process was Christian anti-Judaism and its demonization of the Jew. For example, Rubenstein appraises the Christian New Testament correctly in his *After Auschwitz* when he writes that "no other religion is as horribly defamed in the classic literature of a rival tradition as is Judaism." The reason for that defamation was the Christian belief

that the Jews were, as Rubenstein puts it, "the God-bearing and the God-murdering people *par excellence.*" Jesus, the incarnation of God according to Christian tradition, was one of the Jewish people, but the Christian telling of this story depicted the Jews as collectively responsible for his crucifixion and thus for rejecting God through deicide, the most heinous crime of all. Christian contempt for Jews was advanced further by the belief that the dispersion of the Jews from their traditional homeland after the Judeo-Roman War and the Fall of Jerusalem in C.E. 70—and perhaps all of their subsequent misfortune—was God's punishment for their failure to see the light. The effect of this centuries-old tradition was, as Rubenstein says, "to cast them [the Jews] out of any common universe of moral obligation with the Christians among whom they were domiciled. In times of acute social stress, it had the practical effect of decriminalizing any assault visited upon them."[4] Building on a long history that went beyond religious to racist anti-Semitism, the assaults reached their zenith when Nazi Germany became a genocidal state.

When we think of the dilemmas that Calel Perechodnik and his family confronted in wartime Poland, it is crucial to understand that the Nazis' anti-Semitic racism eventually entailed a destruction process that required and received cooperation from every sector of German society. On the whole, moreover, the Nazi killers and those Germans who aided and abetted them directly—or indirectly as bystanders—were civilized people from a society that was scientifically advanced, technologically competent, culturally sophisticated, efficiently organized, and even religiously devout. Those people were, as Holocaust scholar Michael Berenbaum has cogently observed, "both ordinary and extraordinary, a cross section of the men and women of Germany, its allies, and their collaborators as well as the best and the brightest."[5]

Some Germans and members of populations allied with the Nazis resisted Hitler and would not belong in the following catalog, but they were still exceptions to prove the rule that there were, for example, pastors and priests who led their churches in welcoming Nazification and the segregation of Jews it entailed. In addition, teachers and writers helped to till the soil where Hitler's racist anti-Semitism took root. Their students and readers reaped the wasteful harvest. Lawyers drafted and judges enforced the laws that isolated Jews and set them up for the kill. Government and church personnel provided birth records to document who was Jewish and who was not. Other workers entered such information into state-of-the-art data-processing machines. University administrators curtailed admissions for Jewish students and dismissed Jewish faculty members. Bureaucrats in the Finance Ministry handled confiscations of Jewish wealth and property. Postal officials delivered mail about definition and expropriation, denaturalization and deportation.

Driven by their biomedical visions, physicians were among the first to experiment with the gassing of "lives unworthy of life." Scientists performed research and tested their racial theories on those branded sub- or nonhuman by German science. Business executives found that Nazi concentration camps could provide cheap labor; they worked people to death, turning the Nazi motto, *Arbeit macht frei* (Work makes one free), into a mocking truth. Radio performers were joined by artists such as the gifted film director Leni Reifenstahl to broadcast and screen the polished propaganda that made Hitler's policies persuasive to so many. Railroad personnel drove the trains that transported Jews to death, while other officials took charge of the billing arrangements for this service. Factory workers modified trucks so that they became deadly gas vans; city policemen became members of squadrons that made mass murder of Jews their specialty. Meanwhile, stockholders made profits from firms that supplied Zyklon B to gas people and that built crematoriums to burn the corpses.

It is instructive to consider the crematorium builders in more detail in light of Richard Rubenstein's argument that the Holocaust is symptomatic of an ironic advance of civilization, for his thesis gets telling support from "Engineers of Death," the title of a *New York Times* article that has reminded me of Rubenstein's contention ever since that newspaper account by Gerald Fleming came to my attention several years ago. A noted historian, Fleming has also written *Hitler and the Final Solution*. That important book tries to identify when the decision was made to destroy the European Jews by mass murder, a puzzle that persists because no written order by Hitler seems to exist. What occasioned Fleming's writing in the *New York Times,* however, was a Holocaust puzzle of a different kind.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War, scholars have had better access to historical documents in Moscow. Research about World War II and the Holocaust in particular has benefited from that accessibility. For some time, Fleming had been studying the Auschwitz Central Building Authority records that were captured by Soviet troops and stored in Soviet archives. In May 1993, his searching led him to File 17/9 of the Red Army's intelligence branch. Previously off-limits to historians from the West, this file contained information about four senior engineers who had worked for a German firm named Topf and Söhne. It was known that these men had been arrested by the Soviets in 1946, but Western intelligence lost track of them after that.

Topf had been manufacturing cremation furnaces for civilian use since 1912. That fact was less than noteworthy, but the puzzle that eventually took Fleming to File 17/9 involved another piece of information that was much more significant. Nameplates on the crematorium furnaces at Nazi concentration camps in Buchenwald, Dachau, Mauthausen, Gross-Rosen, and

Birkenau (the main killing center at Auschwitz) showed that they, too, were Topf products.

At the war's end, Kurt Prüfer, a specialist in furnace construction and one of Topf's senior engineers, had been interrogated by the American Third Army. He persuaded his interrogators that the concentration camp crematoriums had existed for health reasons only. The Americans released him. The Red Army, however, could document another story. Although German orders in late November 1944 called for the destruction of equipment and records that would implicate Auschwitz-Birkenau as a death factory, the enterprise was simply too vast to cover up. When the Red Army liberated that place two months later, the massive evidence included, in Fleming's words, details about "the construction of the technology of mass death, complete with the precise costs of crematoriums and calculations of the number of corpses each could incinerate in a day."[6] Well beyond documenting the Red Army's arrest of Prüfer and three of his colleagues in Erfurt, Germany, on March 4, 1946, File 17/9 contained transcripts of the revealing interviews that interrogators had conducted with Prüfer and his associates.

At Auschwitz-Birkenau the *Krema,* as they were sometimes called in German, were full-fledged installations of mass death.[7] Especially given the constraints on wartime building projects, the construction of the four carefully planned units at Birkenau took time. Topf was only one of the eleven civilian companies needed to produce them. Utilizing prisoner labor as much as possible, the building began in the summer of 1942, but it was nearly a year before the last facility was operational. Each included an undressing room, a gas chamber, and a room containing Topf's incineration ovens. These lethal places were designed to dispatch thousands of people per day. Even so, Prüfer told his Red Army interrogators, "the [crematorium] bricks were damaged after six months because the strain on the furnaces was colossal." Periodic malfunctions notwithstanding, the gassing and burning went on and on.

"From 1940 to 1944," Prüfer went on to tell his captors, "twenty crematoriums for concentration camps were built under my direction." His work took him to Auschwitz five times; he knew that "innocent human beings were being liquidated" there. In addition to excerpts from the Red Army's interviews with Prüfer, Fleming's article contains parts of the depositions taken from one of Prüfer's supervisors, Fritz Sander, a crematorium ventilation specialist whose work for Topf took him to Auschwitz three times, often in tandem with Prüfer. In late 1942, Sander submitted plans to "improve" what was happening at Auschwitz-Birkenau. He envisioned a crematorium with even higher capacity than those already planned for installation there. To Sander's dismay, his project was not accepted. It would

have used "the conveyer belt principle," he explained. "That is to say, the corpses must be brought to the incineration furnaces without interruption."

Apparently without remorse or apology, Sander admitted his knowledge of the mass murder at Auschwitz. "I was a German engineer and key member of the Topf works," he reasoned on March 7, 1946. "I saw it as my duty to apply my specialist knowledge in this way in order to help Germany win the war, just as an aircraft construction engineer builds airplanes in wartime, which are also connected with the destruction of human beings." Less than three weeks later, Sander died in Red Army custody, the victim of a heart attack. Having been sentenced to "25 years deprivation of liberty," Prüfer died of a brain hemorrhage on October 24, 1952.

As Fleming's "Engineers of Death" suggests, short of Germany's military defeat by the Allies, no other constraints—social or political, moral or religious—were sufficient to stop the Final Solution. That fact led to Calel Perechodnik's fateful decisions. It also led Richard Rubenstein to write *The Cunning of History.* In addition, and Perechodnik would probably join him if he could, that same fact made Rubenstein wonder about the truths that Thomas Jefferson taught Americans to hold "self-evident."

None of those truths is more crucial than the claim that persons are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights." Those rights, Jefferson believed, are not merely legal privileges that people grant to each other as they please. Rather, his philosophy held, reason—rightly used—shows that such rights are "natural." Part and parcel of what is meant by *human* existence, they belong equally to all humanity and presumably cannot be violated with impunity. Nonetheless, the sense in which rights are unalienable—inviolable, absolute, unassailable, inherent—is an elusive part of Jefferson's Declaration, for it also states that "to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men." Apparently unalienable rights are not invulnerable; but if they are not invulnerable, then in what way are they unalienable?

One answer could be that what *is* and what *ought to be* are often not the same, and reason can make the distinction. To speak of unalienable rights, therefore, is to speak of conditions of existence so basic that they ought never to be abrogated. Persuasive though it may be, such reasoning may still give too little comfort. As Calel Perechodnik knew all too well, rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are qualified repeatedly. But even more radically, Auschwitz questions the *functional* status of unalienable rights. In Rubenstein's words, the Holocaust, genocide, and related instances of state-sponsored population elimination suggest that "there are absolutely no limits to the degradation and assault the managers and technicians of violence can inflict upon men and women who lack the power of effective resistance."[8]

True, nearly everyone says that certain rights must not be usurped. Still, if those rights are violated completely and all too often with impunity—and Perechodnik's case shows that they can be and are—how can they convincingly be called "natural" or "unalienable"? Is that not one more idealistic illusion, another instance of how humanistic optimism obscures reality? Rubenstein's proposition is debatable—it should be on the agenda especially when we Americans talk about ethics—but he contends that greater credibility is found when one concludes that "*rights do not belong to men by nature.* To the extent that men have rights, they have them only as members of the polis, the political community. . . . Outside of the polis there are no inborn restraints on the human exercise of destructive power."[9]

A contemporary of Calel Perechodnik—albeit one who made very different choices—was an Austrian Jew named Hans Maier. Like Perechodnik, Maier knew too well whereof Richard Rubenstein speaks. Born on October 31, 1912, the only child of a Catholic mother and a Jewish father, more than anything else he thought of himself as Austrian, not least because his father's family had lived in that country since the seventeenth century. Hans Maier, however, lived in the twentieth century, and so it was that in the autumn of 1935 he studied a newspaper in a Viennese coffeehouse. The Nuremberg Laws had just been promulgated in Nazi Germany. Maier's reading made him see—unmistakably—the fatal interdependence of all human actions. Even if he did not think of himself as Jewish, the Nazis' definitions meant that the cunning of history had given him that identity. By identifying him as a Jew, Maier would write later on, Nazi power made him "a dead man on leave, someone to be murdered, who only by chance was not yet where he properly belonged."[10]

When Nazi Germany occupied Austria in March 1938, Maier drew his conclusions. Fleeing his native land for Belgium, he joined the Resistance after that country fell to the Third Reich in 1940. Arrested by Nazi police in 1943, Maier was sent to Auschwitz and then to Bergen-Belsen, where he was liberated in 1945. Eventually taking the name Jean Améry, by which he is remembered, this philosopher waited twenty years before breaking his silence about the Holocaust. When Améry did decide to write, the result was a series of remarkable essays about his experience. In English they appear in a volume entitled *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities.* One is simply entitled "Torture."

Torture drove Améry to the following observation: "The expectation of help, the certainty of help," he wrote, "is indeed one of the fundamental experiences of human beings." Thus the gravest loss produced by the Holocaust, Améry went on to suggest, was that it destroyed what he called "trust in the world, . . . the certainty that by reason of written or unwritten social contracts

the other person will spare me—more precisely stated, that he will respect my physical, and with it also my metaphysical, being."[11]

Jean Améry would join Calel Perechodnik and Richard Rubenstein in interrogating American affirmations about unalienable rights. "Every morning when I get up," Améry wrote, "I can read the Auschwitz number on my forearm. . . . Every day anew I lose my trust in the world. . . . Declarations of human rights, democratic constitutions, the free world and the free press, nothing," he went on to say, "can again lull me into the slumber of security from which I awoke in 1935."[12]

Far from scorning the human dignity that those institutions claim to honor, Améry yearned for the right to live, which he equated with dignity itself. His experiences, however, taught him that "it is certainly true that dignity can be bestowed only by society, whether it be the dignity of some office, a professional or, very generally speaking, civil dignity; and the merely individual, subjective claim ('I am a human being and as such I have my dignity, no matter what you may do or say!') is an empty academic game, or madness."[13]

Lucidity, believed Améry, demanded the recognition of this reality, but lucidity did not end there. "What happened, happened," he wrote. "But *that* it happened cannot be so easily accepted."[14] So lucidity also entailed rebellion against power that would make anyone "a dead man on leave." Unfortunately, it must also be acknowledged that Améry's hopes for such protest were less than optimistic. On October 17, 1978, he took leave and became a dead man by his own hand.

Améry's testimony questions assumptions that have long been at the heart of American understandings. They include beliefs that the most basic human rights are a gift of God and that nature and reason testify to a universal moral structure that underwrites them. But what if we live in the time of the death of God? What if there is no God? What if nature is amoral? Granting that reason can make critical distinctions between what *is* and what *ought to be,* what if reason also insists that the most telling truth of all is that history is what Georg Hegel, the nineteenth-century German philosopher, called it: a slaughter bench, a realm where unalienable rights are hardly worth the paper they are written on—unless political might ensures them.

Such questions have crossed American minds in the past, but in a post-Holocaust age they cross-examine American optimism more severely than before. For it is no longer clear that anything but human power does secure a person's rights, and, if rights depend on human power alone, then they may well be natural and unalienable in name only. In such circumstances, to call rights unalienable may still be a legitimate rhetorical device, perhaps buttressed by religious discourse, to muster consensus that certain privileges

and prerogatives must not be taken away. No doubt the idea of unalienable rights functions—and will continue to do so—precisely in that way as an ingredient in American experience. But ideas do not necessarily correspond to facts any more than dreams do to waking life. It appears increasingly that rights are functionally unalienable—which may be what counts most in the long and short of it—only in a state that will successfully defend and honor them as such.

As an American who studies and teaches about the Holocaust, I am currently researching post-Holocaust ethics. As this essay suggests, the inquiry that I have under way is driven by what I call "Rubenstein's dilemma." Driven home by the powerful Holocaust oppression that ruined the lives of Calel Perechodnik, Jean Améry, and millions of others, this dilemma is important for every person and for every community, but it is especially provocative for us Americans, who have a tradition that speaks of "self-evident" truths about "unalienable rights" to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The Holocaust's evil appears to be so overwhelming that it forms an ultimate refutation of moral relativism. No one, it seems, could encounter Auschwitz and deny that there is a fundamental and objective difference between right and wrong. Nevertheless, the Final Solution paradoxically calls into question the practical status of moral norms. Thus the dilemma I have in mind is underscored by statements from *The Cunning of History* that warrant repeating. As Rubenstein assesses the situation, and the cases of Calel Perechodnik and Jean Améry come to mind, the Holocaust suggests that "there are absolutely no limits to the degradation and assault the managers and technicians of violence can inflict upon men and women who lack the power of effective resistance." A key implication of that point of view, adds Rubenstein, is that "until ethical theorists and theologians are prepared to face without sentimentality the kind of action it is possible freely to perpetuate under conditions of utter respectability in an advanced, contemporary society, none of their assertions about the existence of moral norms will have much credibility." Rubenstein knows, of course, that there are philosophical arguments to defend "a higher moral law" and ethical principles that hold persons and even nations morally responsible for their actions. Yet the Holocaust, he contends, sadly shows that there is "little or no penalty for their violation. And norms that can be freely violated are as good as none at all."[15]

The answer to Rubenstein's dilemma, if there is one, will not be found in some clinching intellectual argument or irrefutable philosophical analysis, for the best responses to this challenge are not that easy or simple. Instead they involve sustained reflection on the memories people should share, the emotions we should express, the beliefs we should hold, the decisions we should make about how to live after Auschwitz, and the ques-

tions that we ask about all of those aspects of our experience, individually and collectively.

The Holocaust made Calel Perechodnik ask, "Am I a murderer?" His confession answers yes. As we hear his answer, however, it should settle nothing. Instead it should arouse us to soul-searching and community building that resist as best we can every inclination and power that make the best senses of returning home impossible. Some of the steps, though by no means all, that need to be taken in that direction can be discerned by recalling one more set of Holocaust encounters.

About the time that Calel Perechodnik was writing his testament in hiding and Jean Améry was enduring Auschwitz, Albert Camus, a member of the French Resistance against Nazi Germany, was working on *The Plague,* which would become his most important novel. Set in the Algerian city of Oran in the 1940s, the story chronicles Dr. Bernard Rieux's battle against a deadly pestilence. As Pierre Sauvage points out in his masterful film *Weapons of the Spirit,* Camus wrote *The Plague* while living in the vicinity of Le Chambon sur Lignon, a mountain village in south-central France. Led by André and Magda Trocmé, Le Chambon's Protestant pastor and his wife, that place became a haven in Nazi-occupied Europe. Jews—some five thousand—and other refugees found help there while the Holocaust raged around them.

Le Chambon did not become a Holocaust haven overnight. It did so over time and partly because the Chambonnais had a tradition of bringing their religion to pointed public expression. Since the sixteenth century, for example, Le Chambon has been predominantly Protestant, an anomaly in Catholic France. Many of the villagers are descendants of Huguenots who fled to that high plateau so they could practice their Protestant Christianity without fear of punishment. But persecution persisted. Some people and pastors of Le Chambon were hanged or burned at the stake for fidelity to the biblical principles that gave meaning to their lives.

Far from weakening their faith, such persecution—and the memory of it—strengthened the solidarity of the hardy Chambonnais. That solidarity manifested itself distinctively soon after Nazi Germany invaded France on May 12, 1940. Even before that plague arrived, André Trocmé had been preaching the simple lessons of the Christian gospel: peace, understanding, love. His was a message of nonviolence, but a nonviolence that rejected inaction and deplored complicity with injustice. André and Magda Trocmé's ways meant learning to read the signs of the times so that steps could be taken to get people out of harm's way. Those steps meant actively resisting evil when confronted by it. That meant remaining human in inhuman times. When the time came for the people of Le Chambon to resist the Nazi death machine, to act in solidarity and on behalf of others, the villagers—Protes-

tant and Catholic alike—backed André Trocmé. Unlike so many other "Christians" during the Holocaust, they made their village an ark of hope in a sea of flames and ashes.

Le Chambon's resistance to the Holocaust started with small gestures—with Magda Trocmé, for example, opening her door and welcoming a German Jewish woman into her home. She and everyone else were aware of the danger, but that did not deter them. They regarded their acts of rescue as natural, as just the right thing to do. As Magda Trocmé said, "None of us thought that we were heroes. We were just people trying to do our best."[16] When Camus had Dr. Rieux conclude *The Plague* by observing that "there are more things to admire in men than to despise," the people of Le Chambon may well have been on his mind.[17]

In the story, Rieux says that he compiled the chronicle "so that he should not be one of those who hold their peace but should bear witness in favor of those plague-stricken people; so that some memorial of the injustice and outrage done them might endure." Though the plague eventually left Oran, Dr. Rieux believed that there was nothing final about the victory. "The plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good," he says at the novel's end. The fight against "terror and its relentless onslaughts," concludes Dr. Rieux, must be "never ending."[18] Surely Jean Améry and Calel Perechodnik would agree.

NOTES

1. Calel Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer? Testament of a Jewish Ghetto Policeman,* ed. and trans. Frank Fox (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).

2. Ibid., p. 9.

3. Richard L. Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History: The Holocaust and the American Future* (1975; reprint, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1987), pp. 91, 78.

4. Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism,* 2d ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), pp. 131-32.

5. Michael Berenbaum, *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,* with photographs edited by Arnold Kramer (Boston: Little, Brown, 1993), p. 220.

6. Gerald Fleming, "Engineers of Death," *New York Times,* July 18, 1993, p. E19. In my discussion of Fleming's findings, all the quotations are from this source and page.

7. Two especially significant works on Auschwitz are Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, eds., *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp* (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) and Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996). In the context of this discussion, the following articles in *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp* are particularly relevant: Francisek

Piper, "Gas Chambers and Crematoria," 157-82, and Jean-Claude Pressac with Robert Jan van Pelt, "The Machinery of Mass Murder at Auschwitz," 183-245. For further information about Kurt Prüfer, see *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present,* especially 269-71.

8. Rubenstein, *Cunning of History,* p. 90.

9. Ibid., p. 89.

10. Jean Améry, *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities,* trans. Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld (1966; reprint, New York: Schocken, 1986), p. 86.

11. Ibid., p. 28.

12. Ibid., pp. 94-95.

13. Ibid., p. 89.

14. Ibid., p. xi.

15. Rubenstein, *Cunning of History,* pp. 90, 67, 88.

16. This account of Le Chambon draws on Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, eds., *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust* (New York: Paragon House, 1993), pp. 309-16.

17. Albert Camus, *The Plague,* trans. Gilbert Stuart (1948; reprint, New York: Vintage Books, 1991), p. 308.

18. Ibid., pp. 286-87.

Afterword

HARRY JAMES CARGAS

WHEN THIS BOOK, *Problems Unique to the Holocaust,* was conceived, it was thought that each chapter would deal with a particular issue directly related to the Shoah. Since the time of that decision, recent scholarship on the Event has taken on controversy; it seems necessary to address that debate. It is impossible to overlook Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's book *Hitler's Willing Executioners,* which was a major part of the author's doctorate qualification at Harvard University. Two questions must be asked: How well did Goldhagen prove his thesis and is it an acceptable work of scholarship? I find the book wrong and unconvincing in substance and arguments.

We begin with the second question: Is the book an acceptable scholarly contribution to the field of Holocaust studies by ordinary graduate university standards? The best way to implement the examination is to look at the vocabulary the author uses. It is replete with conjectures and assumptions that must be recognized for what they are: weak bases for constructing solid arguments. The approach in this first part may prove more methodical than exciting, but any serious evaluation of this text requires such a procedure.

The "technique" the author resorts to is seen in the first page of his text when, in writing of an "ordinary" German police battalion officer, Goldhagen tells how the German stood up for his men's actions, which included "presumably, their slaughtering of Jews."[1] To build arguments on words like "presumably" is to fly in the face of scholarship. It establishes a pattern that becomes all too obvious throughout the book. Still referring to the same captain, Goldhagen says that "His conception of the obligations that Germans owed the 'subhuman' Poles must have been immeasurably greater than those

owed Jews" (p. 4). What kind of conclusions are we to be persuaded into by "must have been"?

A very puzzling feature of the volume is found in the repeated use of generalizations. Goldhagen too easily makes inferences to support his thesis that "Every German was inquisitor, judge and executioner" (p. 194). Not some, not many, but "every." How such a sentence was not red-penciled by anyone on Goldhagen's graduation committee is perplexing.

Next we cite Goldhagen's words setting the reader up to accept what he has to offer in spite of what might seem thoroughly unquestioning naiveté among all Germans: " . . . such beliefs, [on the part of German citizens] however reasonable or absurd some of them may be, could be and were subscribed to by the vast majority, if not all of the people in a given society. The beliefs seemed to be so self-evidently true that they formed part of the people's 'natural world,' of the 'natural order' of things" (p. 29). Thus "all" are possibly condemned with a stroke of the pen.

Another damning sentence is found some pages later. "All the institutions of society, moreover, continued to preach the anti-Semitic litany" (p. 60). How are we to understand a sentence like "No German could extricate himself from the magical spell that riveted his attention on the Jews" (p. 63)? One is tempted to ask, "None? Not even one?" And we will be forced to recall some, albeit too few, who did resist. (We dare not forget them.)

One tries to place one's self in the situation of a professor reading this dissertation. Should we accept a statement like "The urgent Jewish danger was clear to all" (p. 69)? How persuasive, to an academic reader, is the following pair of sentences: "The sometimes mild proposals of those who did offer 'solutions' [to the Jewish Problem] stood in such glaring contrast to the mortal danger that they asserted the Jews to be posing that it must be considered that some anti-Semites, as rabid as their hatred for Jews was, either were not able to make the imaginative and moral leap to contemplating large-scale violence or remained ethically inhibited in this era that has not yet loosened all expressive imaginative restraints. Or perhaps, constrained by the limited real possibilities for action, boundaries imposed by the German state, they—as Hitler would in his initial years of power—bowed to pragmatism, offering prescriptions far less radical than those that they truly desired" (p. 70). How cogently are conclusions to be regarded which are introduced by "it must be considered that" and "perhaps"? This does not appear to be scholarship at its finest since it does not admit of other possibilities.

Still in the first fifth of Goldhagen's book we are told that "few could have had illusions about the fate of the Jews" (p. 105). How clear an exposé is indicated by "few"? Next we may point out several questions, meant to be

rhetorical, which are posed regarding the men of Police Battalion 65 and their bulletin board assignment to massacre Jews. "What did they say to each other upon reading that another operation in the ongoing destruction of the Jews was in the offing, and upon going down the roster of those who would be carrying it out? Did they mutter curses? Did they bemoan that their fate was to be mass murderers? Did they lament the fate of the Jews?" It is clear that the book's audience is to understand here that the "they" in these questions refers to everybody concerned, without exception. Goldhagen continues, "They have given no testimony of such reactions, no testimony that recounts the men's hatred of reading the information posted on that genocidal board. Surely, such thoughts and emotions would have stuck in their memories had they conceived of them as the distribution point of cataclysmic news" (p. 201). This is a particularly weak mode of proving something—by that which was unsaid.

Again referring to the battalion captain mentioned in the opening text of *Hitler's Willing Executioners,* the author writes of a particular aspect of his relationship with his men who were told to kill helpless Jews. "And now their commander was giving at least some of the them the option not to kill. He was a genuine man who was, by all accounts, solicitous of them. Some of the men stepped forward. If they were hesitant, however, their uncertainty must have been further intensified by Captain Hoffmann's reaction" (p. 214). There is that element of conjecture, again, passed off as factual, "must have been."

While no one will deny that a reader should properly approach a thesis with an open mind, it also would be appropriate to include some basic skepticism. The usual approach to examining a doctoral thesis contains an element of "I don't believe you; prove it." Examples noted above will not bear the brunt of rigorous scrutiny. Nor will suggested but unverifiable conclusions like "The men's silence on this point is almost as revealing as self-indicting admissions would be" (p. 249).

To build an argument on what is not known to have been said or written is not to lead from strength. It is my opinion that Goldhagen is wrong but neither pernicious nor a fool. His condemnation of all Germans is a gross error but not an attempt to lie. This must not sound condescending. Here is the work of a good person searching for truth, and it is important to evaluate that search on its own merits. Thus it may be of value to quote just one paragraph from one of the monstrous publications whose authors are dedicated to the perverse opinion that the Holocaust never happened. Here is what Arthur Butz says in his infamous book, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century.* This is an example of how conclusions can be arrived at by unwarranted inferences. (Again, the point of the example has to do with the style of Goldhagen, not his character or intent.)

> In many cases deported Jewish families were broken up for what was undoubtedly intended by the Germans to be a period of limited duration. This was particularly the case when the husband seemed a good labor conscript; just as German men were conscripted for hazardous military service, Jews were conscripted for unpleasant labor tasks. Under such conditions it is reasonable to expect that many of these lonely wives and husbands would have, during or at the end of the war, established other relations that seemed more valuable than the previous relationships. In such cases, then, there would have been a strong motivation not to reestablish contact with the legal spouse. Moreover none of the "social and economic constraints" which we noted above were present, and Jews were in a position to choose numerous destinations in the resettlement programs that the Allies sponsored after the war. This possibility could account for a surprisingly large number of "missing" Jews. For example suppose that a man and wife with two small children were deported, with the man being sent to a labor camp and the wife and children being sent to a resettlement camp in the East. Let us suppose that the wife failed to reestablish contact with her husband. We thus seem to have four people reported dead or missing; the husband says his wife and children are presumably dead and the wife says her husband was lost. However, this one separation of husband and wife could account for even more missing Jews, for it is likely that the parents and other relatives of the wife, on the one hand, and the parents and other relatives of the husband, on the other, would also have lost touch with each other. Thus one has some number of people on the husband's side claiming that some number of people on the wife's side are missing and vice versa. Obviously, the possibilities of accounting for missing Jews in this way are practically boundless.[2]

It is no great insight to point out that once somebody has a thesis, assumptions about facts can be manipulated to support that thesis, or worse. As with Butz's efforts, they can be used to distort the truth as well. Did so few Jewish families want to be reunited after the war?

And Goldhagen often casts a shadow over his own findings: "It is impossible to say how many men killed with what frequency. It is even harder to know how many men perpetrated what kinds of gratuitous cruelties and how often they did so" (p. 261). Yet we are presented with interpretations throughout the volume that are rooted in such impossibilities. In trying to prove how Germans treated dogs better than they did Jews, it is written that "At the slightest hint of illness or irregular behavior exhibited by the dogs, the Germans were directed to whisk the dogs to a veterinarian for care. Jews who were sick, especially the gravely ill, or those who gave the slightest indication of having contagious illnesses, like typhus, made no visits to the

doctor" (p. 268). In these two sentences words like "whisk" and "hint" are loaded and "no visits" is simply untrue. Of course Jews suffered terribly during the Holocaust. But there is no reason to cheapen the experience by overdramatizing it. That kind of thing clearly can be counterproductive.

Another red-flag phrase can be found on page 339 in the first three words, which are clear indications of a weakness of solid evidence: "It appears unlikely that the Germans lamented their vicious assault on the Jews. . . ." Goldhagen erects an entire theoretical underpinning on speculation. Certainly some Germans were brutal almost beyond description, but it must not be forgotten that we are being told about *all* Germans.

Hyperbolic expressions are found in this book which, again, are unnecessary in the light of actual events. The emotional pull of "The Jewish prisoners were discriminated against in *every conceivable manner*" (my italics, p. 341) detracts from rational discussion. What is the value of these words: "In institutions where intimate contact existed between Germans and Jews, mainly where the opportunity to be brutal existed, German cruelty was nearly universal" (p. 377)? Troubling too is "It was an unspoken maxim among the perpetrators that death is not a sufficient punishment for the world-historical malefactors" (p. 398). It is left for readers to wonder just how the author was privy to an unspoken maxim.

Then we read, "It is also likely . . ." (p. 417)—but enough. These many examples do not exhaust the possibilities but they must suffice. The point is made. Goldhagen tries to present a strong case, but it is built on arguable—very arguable—generalizations. Nor is this the only criticism to be made. It is not an original insight to note that the book is an undisciplined exercise. *Hitler's Willing Executioners* is too long, perhaps even by half, and contains much repetition, which was duly observed by Gordon Craig in *The New York Review of Books:* "It is a pity that the author's habit of stopping periodically and repeating much that he has said before gives the book a disjointed feel that might easily have been corrected by a good editor."[3]

Then too there is the problem of self-aggrandizement. Goldhagen seems to have forgotten the old Roman admonition to those who would consider themselves great: "Remember, thou art only a man." The author's self-congratulatory attitude is well expressed early in the book: "Explaining why the Holocaust occurred requires a radical revision of what has until now been written. This book is that revision" (p. 9). It is difficult, after reading these words, not to think of the word "arrogant" here. Many great scholars have dealt with the subject, "But only I. . . ." Of this approach, V.R. Berghahn is quite critical in *The New York Times Book Review:* "With a few exceptions, he takes all previous scholarship to task, contending that even the most eminent students of the Holocaust have been much too timid to give a really tough answer to the question of German culpability."[4]

But there are far greater problems with the book than irritating matters of expression. And, again, others have commented on them as well. We go beyond the abuse of generalizations here. Among the most devastating evaluations of the book under consideration was one written by one of the most prolific authors ever to publish anywhere, Jacob Neusner, who has well over three hundred books to his credit. His essay, awaiting publication at the time of this writing and tentatively titled "Hype, Hysteria, and Hate the Hun: The Latest Pseudo-Scholarship from Harvard," is quoted here with the author's permission. Referring to Goldhagen's volume, Neusner calls it a "hysterical book" and says that "the work makes a classic error, by treating examples as proof of something beyond themselves."

Neusner sees the singling out of Germany (apart from, say, Austria, Romania, Poland, or Russia) as irresponsible. In fact, Neusner makes a strong case for Austria (where Hitler was born and Eichmann spent his youth) being a better target than Germany for Goldhagen's attack. An important question is proffered by Neusner in a brief paragraph: "Further, we must ask, where is the argument to the contrary, the null-hypothesis to test the hypothesis against contrary data, that any serious social scientist will require as part of the presentation of a solemn dissertation? And enough said to remove the work from the shelves of reputable social science, which prefers testing a hypothesis to merely shouting it long and loud enough to prevail."

Burton Boxerman also complains of Goldhagen's failure to attempt any "balance" in his presentation, complaining that "He either completely ignores or trivializes non-supporting evidence. For example, he devotes a mere five pages to the Weimar Republic and the 14 years preceding the rise of Adolf Hitler, a period known for tolerance of the Jews."[5] Clive James, in an April 22, 1996, *New Yorker* article remarks that while Goldhagen "is ready to concede that there were exceptions, he thinks that they don't count. . . ." (p. 44). And James, too, is disturbed that Goldhagen has almost nothing to say about resisters and resistance groups in Nazi Germany—great heroes whose personal risks and sacrifices must, in justice, never be disregarded.

In a letter in *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* Andrew J. Winnick, writing from Dossenheim, Germany, accuses Goldhagen of setting up an easy target to knock over. Winnick, identifying himself as an American Jew who has traveled to Germany for thirty years and lived there since 1989, writes that he feels the book is "sadly, but basically, misguided and misinformed. First, Goldhagen clearly states that it is 'commonly believed' that the Holocaust was carried out 'exclusively [by] a select group of Nazi fanatics.' This is an absurd straw man."[6]

When one uses generalizations one runs the risk of self-contradiction. When we read that "a few Germans defiantly expressed their solidarity with the beleaguered Jews," how are we to react to universal condemnation of

German citizens? And how can such universal condemnation be balanced with the author's statement that "Many abhorred the licentious violence in their midst" or his recognition of those who "gave aid to approximately ten thousand German Jews who tried to escape deportation by hiding" (p. 123). Ten thousand is not an insignificant number.

And we must give attention to those we do not read about. Omitted from this study is Carl von Ossietzky, who died in a Nazi prison after winning the Nobel Peace Prize, a prize that spotlighted what much of the world thought about Hitler. Why is the White Rose movement not mentioned, whose two anti-Hitler founders, the brother and sister Hans and Sophie Scholl, were beheaded for their resistance? A large number of other executions followed. Louis Snyder, in his book, *Hitler's German Enemies,* compares their defiance to Patrick Henry's stance against King George III. Nor do we find the name Helmuth von Moltke in this text, a leading figure in the Resistance. This person from a historic military family, who was hanged as a resister just before the war's end, simply does not fit into Goldhagen's pictures of "all Germans." Nor does the name of Bernhard Lichtenberg appear, a Catholic prelate who closed each evening's service with a prayer "for the Jews, and the poor prisoners in the concentration camps." He was sentenced to Dachau but died, as Martin Gilbert put in quotes, "on the way."[7] The leadership of Bishop Clemens von Galen and others must not be ignored. The list of such names is abysmally short, I repeat, too short, but there *is* a list. We need to know about these men and women for two reasons. One has to do with justice. We are required, by virtue of our common humanity, to preserve their honor. As for the second, their heroic examples must be available to us *as models.* For us to think that everyone caved in to Nazi philosophy might affect our own behavior in time of crisis. Why should I act with integrity when no one else will?

Do not misunderstand me. In his book *The Path of the Righteous* Mordecai Paldiel, the director of the Yad Vashem section on righteous gentiles, recounts the stories of eighteen Germans—and this is by no means all—who risked their lives to aid Jews in significant ways.[8] Not one of these people is mentioned in Goldhagen's 622 pages. We dishonor these people by making them invisible.

In no way do I think that the horrors perpetrated against Jews in Nazi Germany by "ordinary citizens" are to be minimized. Germany was the locale from which sprang one of the greatest crimes in history. But Goldhagen has not been as systematic as he would like to have been. I conclude with the important Israeli scholar Robert S. Wistrich, who says Goldhagen does not prove his thesis "that the killers killed because they were Germans or that their actions were representative of a 'vast majority' hell-bent on destroying the Jews. Anti-Semitism alone can no more fully explain such revolting and

self-defeating cruelty than it can fully account for the massacres carried out by the German Army, the SS and the *Einsatzgruppen*—the mobile killing units used on the Eastern Front—or, finally the assembly-line murder of the gas chambers. Although anti-Semitism was certainly decisive for the Nazi leadership, Goldhagen has simply not presented a persuasive case that it was what primarily or exclusively motivated ordinary Germans."[9]

Notes

1. Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Knopf, 1996), p. 3. All future references to this book are to this edition.

2. Arthur Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* (Torrance, Calif.: Noontide, 1977), p. 243.

3. Gordon Craig, "How Hell Worked," *The New York Review of Books* (April 19, 1996), p. 7

4. V.R. Berghahn, "The road to Extermination" *The New York Times Book Review* (April 14, 1996), p. 6.

5. Burton Boxerman, "Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust," *St. Louis Jewish Light* (July 1996), p. 7.

6. Andrew J. Winnick, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 10, 1996), p. B3.

7. Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust* (New York: Holt, 1985), p. 216.

8. Mordecai Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous* (Hoboken, N.J. : KTAV, 1993)

9. Robert S. Wistrich, "Helping Hitler," *Commentary* 102 (July 1996): 31.

Contributors

Harry James Cargas is Professor Emeritus at Webster University in St. Louis. He has published thirty-two books, nine of which deal with the Holocaust. Titles include *Conversations with Elie Wiesel, Shadows of Auschwitz, Reflections of a Post-Auschwitz Christian,* and *Voices from the Holocaust.* He is vice president of the Annual Scholars Conference in the Holocaust and was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to the original board of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council.

Stephen C. Feinstein is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, and is on leave as acting director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis. Among his publications are "Mediums of Meaning: Artistic Responses of the Second Generation" in Efraim Sicher's *Breaking Crystal* and, as the editor, *Confronting the Holocaust: A Mandate for the 21st Century.*

Robert Frey is the founding editor of *Bridges: A Journal of Theology, Philosophy, History, and Science* and *Successful Proposal Strategies In Small Businesses: Winning Government, Private Sector and International Contracts.* His books include *The Imperative Response* and *Our Future in Light of Twentieth-Century Evil.* He is the Director of Marketing Communications at EA Engineering, Science and Technology, Inc., in Hunt Valley, Maryland.

Rev. Alastair Hunter is a Senior Lecturer in biblical studies in the department of theology and religious studies at the University of Glasgow where he was Dean of the Faculty for four years. He teaches Hebrew, Old Testament Hebrew, wisdom literature, Psalms, and responses to the Holocaust. He has published widely in *Scottish Journal of Theology* and *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* and has contributed chapters to a number of books.

Rabbi Steven L. Jacobs serves at Temple B'nai Shalom in Huntsville, Alabama. He was educated at Pennsylvania State University and Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. He has served a number of congregations in Alabama, Tennessee, Ohio, New York, and Texas. Among his books are *Rethinking Jewish Faith: The Child of a Survivor Responds, Raphael Lemkin's*

Thoughts on Nazi Genocide: Not Guilty?, Contemporary Jewish Religious Responses to the Shoah, and *Contemporary Christian Religious Responses to the Shoah.* He is on the Alabama State Holocaust Advisory Council.

Charlotte Guthmann Opfermann was born in Wiesbaden, Germany, and survived twelve years of Nazidom, two of those years in incarceration. She lost her entire family in the Holocaust. She splits her teaching time between The College of the Mainland in Texas City, Texas, and Germany, where she lectures on the Shoah on the average of six times a year. She has written and narrated Holocaust films in her native land, has worked in television there and published books and articles, contributed to textbooks, and is widely recognized as an authority in her field.

David Patterson is Distinguished Professor and director of The University of Memphis Honors Program. His more than eighty articles deal with topics such as Judaism, the Holocaust, literature, and philosophy. His books include *Faith and Philosophy, In Dialogue and Dilemma with Elie Wiesel,* and *When Learned Men Murder.*

Susan Pentlin, a professor of modern languages at Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg, has taught at the University of Kansas, the University of Missouri (Columbia), and Dom Gymnasium in Freising, Germany. She serves on the Missouri Commission of Human Rights and wrote her dissertation on the "Effect of the Third Reich on the Teaching of German in the United States." She has published in *The Missouri Historical Review* and *Resources in Education* and has presented papers on the Holocaust at numerous conferences throughout the world.

Diane Plotkin is a professor of world literature and Holocaust studies at Brookhaven College in Farmers Branch, Texas. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Dallas Memorial Center for Holocaust Studies. She is the coeditor of *Sisters in Sorrow: Voices of Care in the Holocaust* (Texas A&M University Press).

Didier Pollefeyt is assistant professor on the faculty of theology of the Katholieke University of Leuven in Belgium. He has published extensively on the Holocaust since completing his doctoral dissertation on "Ethics after Auschwitz." Two of his studies have earned awards from the Auschwitz Foundation in Brussels. He is the editor of *Jews and Christians: Rivals or Partners for the Kingdom of God.*

Jack Nusan Porter has over four hundred publications to his credit, including more than twenty books. His articles have appeared in *Judaism Midstream, The YIVO Annual,* and elsewhere. Porter is the founder of the *Journal of the History of Sociology,* is listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in Israel,* and is the recipient of a number of fellowships for his work. He is vice-president of the Association for Genocide Scholars and is on the National Task Force of the Black Family Study Center at Philander

Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas. He is also the spiritual leader at Temple Emanuel in Marlboro, Massachusetts.

John K. Roth is the Pitzer Professor of Philosophy at Claremont McKenna College, where he has taught since 1966. He is the author or editor of more than twenty books and has published hundreds of articles. Many of his writings, including *Approaches to Auschwitz: The Holocaust and Its Legacy* (with Richard L. Rubenstein) and *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust* (edited with Carol Rittner), focus on the Holocaust. In 1988, he was named the U.S. National Professor of the Year by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Leon Stein is a professor of history at Roosevelt University in Chicago and the Education Director for the Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois. He has published numerous articles in *Central European History,* the *Journal of the History of Ideas,* and *Remembrance for the Future* (I and II). He has helped to train over one thousand teachers in Holocaust studies.

Eric Sterling earned his doctorate at Indiana University (Bloomington) and is associate professor of English at Auburn University. He has published on Arthur Miller's *Incident at Vichy* in the *Publications of the Arkansas Philosophical Association* and on Janusz Korczak in the *Polish Review.* He has a chapter on Yitzhak Wittenberg in *Those Who Resisted* and is a member of the Annual Scholars Conference on the Holocaust.

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Harry James Cargas

1932-1998

Harry James Cargas was a Renaissance man—not in any ostentatiousness or arrogance in his bearing, but in the empathy and catholicity of his life and learning. His accomplishments as a scholar were manifold, and his energy as a Christian activist was virtually without equal.

Consider his achievements as a scholar. With degrees from the University of Michigan and St. Louis University, he taught for three decades at Webster University. In addition to his yeoman work as a teacher and mentor, he published an extraordinary number of books. He wrote on Teilhard and on Daniel Berrigan, on amnesty and the sanctuary movement. Many of his books have dealt with the Holocaust, both as a Jewish experience and a continuing Christian trauma.

Some of his books on the Holocaust and the related crisis in Christian/Jewish relations have become classics and are known to everyone working the field. I would mention especially his *Harry James Cargas in Conversation with Elie Wiesel* (1976), *Responses to Elie Wiesel* (edited, 1978), *A Christian Response to the Holocaust* (1981), *The Holocaust: An Annotated Bibliography* (American Library Association, 1985), *Reflections of a Post-Auschwitz Christian* (1989), and *Voices from the Holocaust* (edited, 1993).

While he was producing books of this quality he was lecturing widely on campuses and in major conferences—especially in Europe, Israel, and North America. He was the founding editor of *Holocaust and Genocide Studies.* His numerous articles appeared in journals such as *America, The Christian Century, Cross Currents,* and *National Catholic Reporter.* For more than twenty years he had a weekly radio commentary, and KMMU in 1995 published a book of selections: *KMMU Presents the Best Harry James Cargas Commen-*

taries. In short, he believed in the teacher's vocation at both the scholarly and the popular level—and carried both tasks well.

Consider his energy as a Christian activist. Harry James Cargas served for a term on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, was one of two non-Jews on the International Advisory Committee of Yad Vashem (Jerusalem), and was a vice president of the Annual Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches.

As a devoted layman, he was intensely committed to the renovation of Christian preaching and teaching in the shadow of Auschwitz. As a Roman Catholic radical, he was untiring in his work to have the church fulfil the great promise of the Ecumenical Council: Vatican II (1961-65). One of his final contributions was to edit a volume of letters to Pope John Paul II from leaders of different religious connections: *Holocaust Scholars Write to the Vatican* (1998).

The astonishing mass of his writings, both books and articles, presents a forbidding prospect to any student who thinks of working on Harry James Cargas and his contributions to the life of the mind and the life of the Spirit. He believed in the power of the word, spoken and written. Appropriately, a tribute volume of essays by his colleagues reached him in manuscript during his final illness (now published as *Peace, In Deed,* edited by Zev Garber and Richard Libowitz). No student of Christian thought and action during and after the Holocaust, and no student of Catholic development after Vatican II, can neglect study of the contributions of Harry James Cargas.

The present volume, *Problems Unique to the Holocaust,* brings to voice thirteen of Professor Cargas's colleagues in the Annual Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches. As his final edited volume, it provides in both depth and breadth a view of the sector where he thought the questions of responsible post-Auschwitz Christian thought and action are to be found and confronted.

It has been said that "only he who draws the knife shall win Isaac." Harry James Cargas was, first and foremost, one who never feared to draw the knife—on our bigotries, on our self-centered anxieties, on our sectarianism, on our paralyzing fear to serve God in purity of heart.

Franklin H. Littell
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania