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Transnational Perspectives on Authenticity, Representation, and Expressions of Visual Memory in Jewish Women and Childrens Holocaust Narratives

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TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON REPRSENTATION, ATHENTICITY, AND EXPRESSIONS OF VISUAL MEMORY IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S JEWISH HOLOCAUST NARRATIVES

by

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate my Master's Thesis to my dear friends Andrew Wojdyla and Theodora Ulmer, third and fourth-generation Holocaust survivors.

My thesis is also for my sister Lana Kiana García, who shares Sephardic Jewish ancestry, and has provided love and encouragement from the very beginning of this wonderful journey.

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TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON REPRESENTATION, AUTHENTICITY, AND EXPRESSIONS OF VISUAL MEMORY IN JEWISH WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S HOLOCAUST NARRATIVES

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ABSTRACT

This Master's Thesis explores the Jewish Holocaust (1939-1945) from within a Transnational American Studies framework by emphasizing the importance of learning about multiple genocides within a global or transnational context. An examination into the link between postcolonialism and the Holocaust contributes to broadening global dialogues on Holocaust remembrance and genocide prevention. Through the interdisciplinary vantage points of history, memory, and literature, this thesis invokes a transnational methodology to engage in an academic conversation about the United States government's lack of involvement in adequately addressing the Holocaust.

This thesis highlights Jewish Holocaust Literature as a means to understand the unique perspectives of people who experienced the Holocaust. Visual representations of trauma within Holocaust Literature can provide access points for readers to obtain rich, layered, and nuanced insight into the extreme experiences of Holocaust survivors. Through descriptive, metaphorical language, Holocaust survivor stories come alive in

multiple dimensions. Issues of representation and authenticity are central to critically examining Holocaust literary narratives; thus, it is necessary to recognize that because authors utilize narrative conventions, express a sense of self-reflexivity, and use memory and imagination to represent their experiences, each Holocaust narrative is mediated.

While Jewish male-authored Holocaust narratives demonstrate literary sophistication and nuanced descriptions of trauma, this thesis argues that scholars must more overtly study Jewish women and children's narratives in order to learn about how the most vulnerable people negotiate trauma. Women and children express particular vulnerabilities to persecution as well as strong senses of resiliency that must be recognized, studied, and remembered. Visual memories within representations of Jewish children's experiences of Kristallnacht in 1938 and the 1942 Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups in Paris are considered within a discussion on survival strategies and the differences between adult and child responses to trauma. This thesis examines how children of the Holocaust negotiate their Jewish identities, cope with displacement, separation from parents, and transition from childhood to adulthood.

Since the number of Holocaust survivors living today is rapidly dwindling, the effort to document and analyze their stories for the purpose of Holocaust memory and education is paramount. Scholars within and outside of American Studies must engage more actively in critical global conversations surrounding the contested sites of individual and collective memory of the Holocaust, and awareness about persecution and genocide. This Master's Thesis is meant to foster a multi-dimensional understanding of the complicated aforementioned issues while encouraging collective action against

racism, prejudice, and Holocaust denial, which remain ever-present in the contemporary world.

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Introduction

"[The survivor's] duty is to bear witness for the dead *and* for the living."

–Elie Wiesel, *Night*

To engage in studying the Jewish Holocaust from an academic standpoint is extremely challenging since its historical subject matter is densely complicated and deeply disturbing. Learning facts about the systematic murder of over six million Jews, and other persecuted groups, by Nazi Germany under the command of Adolf Hitler across Nazi-occupied Europe during World War II (1939-1945), through reading historical documents and personal testimonies, is overwhelming on many levels. The astounding quantity of material that exists detailing the genocide, including governmental records describing planning the stages of persecution and murder, eyewitness testimonies of perpetrators and victims, Nazi propaganda films, newspapers, documentary photographs, and Hollywood films could appear daunting and might easily deter young scholars who may be otherwise inclined to engage in a serious academic study of the Holocaust.

Holocaust scholar Doris L. Bergen speaks to the crucial need for awareness of the magnitude of Nazi genocide, stating: "The Holocaust was an event of global proportions, involving perpetrators, victims, bystanders, beneficiaries, and rescuers from all over Europe and elsewhere in the world. Any effort to grasp it in its entirety must begin with recognition of that massive scope."[1] Reading extensively about the Holocaust is also greatly challenging due to the mental shock one experiences when learning about the horrors of mass atrocities. Performing thorough critical inquires into subject matter on

the Holocaust, especially considering the wide breadth of information and the psychological stamina it requires, involves substantial interest, determination, and commitment on behalf of the scholar. Holocaust literary critic Ruth Franklin attests to the exceedingly challenging nature of Holocaust Literature when she states that the "canon is vast, diffuse, and growing steadily, not to mention extremely [psychologically] demanding on the reader."[2] Despite and because of the extraordinarily intense subject matter of the Holocaust, the area of study continues to fascinate scholars and non-scholars alike.

In order to garner substantial, nuanced information about the Holocaust, it is necessary to critically study historical and literary material from scholarly books, articles, museum archives, and survivors' narratives, including written and oral testimonies. Viewing documentary photographs, films, death camp art, and artifacts in specialty museum exhibits, either in person or via remote library research, can prove to be an important element of Holocaust academic study. Rigorous academic training from professors knowledgeable about the Jewish Holocaust and other genocides, such as the decimation of Native Americans in the United States or the Armenian (1915-1916), Cambodian (1975-1979), Bosnian (1992-1995), Iraqi (1987-1988) or Rwandan (1994) genocides, is key to more comprehensively examining the Holocaust.[3] Studying multiple genocides can aid American Studies students in understanding how cross-cultural, comparative approaches to access the Holocaust are useful, yet problematic in some respects. Michael Rothberg addresses how some Holocaust scholars participate in "asserting the uniqueness of the Holocaust [through] serv[ing] to counter the relative public silence about the specificity of the Nazi genocide of Jews in the early postwar

period that many historians of memory and students of historiography have described."[4] During the post World War II period, as people came to terms with the implications surrounding public memory and the Holocaust, new understandings were being shaped in relationship to remembrance of other genocides.

Invoking a transnational methodology while gazing through a literary theoretical prism to analyze Jewish survivor's narratives, this thesis underscores the importance of learning about the Jewish Holocaust from multiple disciplinary vantage points. The thesis also partakes in an academic conversation about the United States government's lack of involvement in adequately addressing the Jewish Holocaust. Recognition of the Holocaust, paired with collective action against persecution and genocide, are a primary means to remember the people who endured its terrible events or perished in the midst of them. My goal in situating the United States within a larger framework of Genocide Studies is to generate a transnational foundation.

Through engaging in current scholarly debates on academic literary criticism, this thesis also emphasizes the need to critically investigate the history, representation, and memory of the Holocaust. Marianne Hirsch explains how memory provides a bridge between the past and present, stating: "Memory signals an affective link to the past—a sense, precisely, of a material 'living connection'—and it is powerfully mediated by technologies like literature, photography, and testimony."[5] Furthering Hirsch's line of analysis, this thesis argues that literature, photography, testimony, but also film, are artistic sources that enable the Holocaust's memory to endure.

At its best, Holocaust Literature involves highly effective humanizing elements that encompass unique perspectives of people who experienced the Holocaust. When full of descriptive language and imagistic scenes, Holocaust survivor stories have the ability to come alive in multiple dimensions. Literary texts provide crucial entry points into personal experiences of how survivors negotiate trauma that otherwise would not be possible by only reading static historical archives which predominantly consist of rigid testimonies, scientific facts, and figures.

The relationship between the United States and genocide is vexed, yet American students and scholars must critically probe this complicated topic thoroughly in order to obtain insight into the importance of individual and collective Holocaust remembrance. When beginning to perform Holocaust research, it is necessary to consider Samantha Power's admonition: "It is daunting to acknowledge, but this country's policy of nonintervention in the face of genocide offers sad testimony not to a broken American political system but to one that is ruthlessly effective."[6] The United States' putative policy of genocide non-intervention is astounding to Genocide Studies scholars since we continually work to foster awareness about such important histories. The U.S. policy of non-action toward genocide will be further referenced in Chapter One. Since Genocide Studies is an exceedingly complex site of inquiry, a combination of scholarly approaches is needed in order for scholars to grasp a genuine understanding of the field. An interdisciplinary mode of study can guide young scholars in obtaining an informed perspective on one of the darkest times in world history.

Renowned Anishinabe writer and American Studies Distinguished Professor Gerald Vizenor, *via* literary-historical critic Hayden White, states that since multiple,

complex approaches to history exist due to a plethora of World War II Holocaust historical material, merely taking into account a singular, chronological history is insufficient for learning about intensely complicated world history events.[7] According to Vizenor and White, alternative modes of historical analysis are essential; therefore, because there are multiple sides to history and no reliable metanarrative exists, new methodological approaches to history must be invented. Vizenor argues for emphasizing "emotive histories" because they demand more than purely factual history, thus agreeing with Hayden White's contention that "emotive history"[8]—a middle voice in history or a history that lies between empirical and emotive discourse—is absolutely necessary.

British Historian Martin Gilbert's work exemplifies an "emotive history" due to his inclusion of historical commentary with first-hand survivors' narratives, which are innovatively interspersed into *Kristallnacht: Prelude to Destruction*. Gerald Vizenor maintains that descriptive narrative literary-histories are more challenging, and therefore more valuable, than conventional, singular modes of expressing history. Gilbert utilizes an interdisciplinary approach in his layered employment of both retrospective survivors' accounts and empirical facts about Kristallnacht. In Chapter Three, children's narrative accounts of Kristallnacht are explored in relation to their utilization of sensory memories as a means to recollect traumatic experiences.

Historical information is set forth at the beginning of *Kristallnacht* in order for the reader to acquire an understanding of the historical context relating to the subsequent literary descriptions of "the Night of Broken Glass." Martin Gilbert explains that *Kristallnacht* occurred on 9 and 10 November 1938, when "violence against the Jews of Germany was unleashed in a whirlwind of destruction. Within a few hours more than a

thousand synagogues were destroyed . . . 30,000 Jewish men between the ages of sixteen and sixty—a quarter of all Jewish men still in Germany—were arrested and sent to concentration camps."[9] Kristallnacht was a strong precursor for and harrowing catalyst of the events of the Holocaust that would most adversely affect Europe's Jewry over the next several years.

A poignant example of how Gilbert intertwines eyewitness testimony of life after Kristallnacht with historical information involves a thirteen-year-old girl named Ilse Morgenstern. She comments on her experience while Gilbert provides situational context for her situation:

> 'I [Ilse] was fortunate to find brave people who took me into hiding and saved my life.' . . . [Gilbert reflects on Ilse's story, stating:] Her parents were 'unable to emigrate anywhere in the world and died in an extermination camp in Poland. [Ilse:] Besides my brother, I am the only survivor in my family.' [Gilbert:] In all, 10,000 Jewish men were arrested in Vienna during November 10 [1938]. . . . Thirty Jews were reported to have committed suicide in Vienna on [that date].[10]

By weaving together and delicately shifting between retrospective personal testimony of child Holocaust survivor Ilse Morgenstern and historical contextual information on events in Nazi-occupied Vienna, Gilbert provides the reader with a comprehensive understanding of why Morgenstern must flee her home. Gilbert allows the reader to peer into the Holocaust's intricately complicated events through the sensibility of a young girl survivor. Although Ilse reflects on her experience as a thirteen-year-old girl in Nazi Germany, her testimony is taken when she is an elderly adult on July 11, 2005 *via* letter, thus her account is retrospective.[11] Since many survivors' narratives are recorded years or even decades after they witnessed and experienced the Holocaust, recollections

become temporally filtered and distorted due to the passage of time. Memories are also affected by a person's cultivated awareness of changing historical and social contexts. Chapter Two includes a consideration of how survivors' testimonies shift after long periods of time while incorporating a critical conversation on survivors' process of reconstructing fading memories.

Since *Kristallnacht* covers a range of time periods between November 9th 1938, the Holocaust (1939-1945), and the 2000s, and due to it including a variety of source material from personal testimonies to historical documents, Gilbert implicitly encourages flexibility and open-mindedness on the reader's behalf in order to grasp specific Holocaust stories through a creative, nonlinear lens. As discussed in Chapter Three, Gilbert's collection of elderly Jewish survivors stories, *via* current-day letters reflecting their Kristallnacht childhood experiences, in combination with recorded testimonies of children and grandchildren of Kristallnacht survivors, provides a multi-generational story-relaying technique which enhances and enlivens Holocaust historical narratives.

The Generation of Postmemory by Marianne Hirsch and Martin Gilbert's *Kristallnacht* effectively utilize an interdisciplinary methodology, which necessarily complicates notions of memory, history, and trauma while also challenging conventional methods of conveying information about the Jewish Holocaust. Marianne Hirsch presents the reflections, experiences, and perspectives of Holocaust child survivors through visual and literary works of art in her recent work, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*. Hirsch describes "postmemory" as "the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and culture trauma of those who came before—to experiences they

'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up."[12] Chapter Three includes a discussion on the process of transferring memory between generations by means of personal narratives, images or photographs, and manners, which profoundly speaks to the need for capturing shared histories of Holocaust survivors and their children through literary channels.

As discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Three, *Kristallnacht* is an atypical book that reveals an emotive history that subtlety and seamlessly interweaves personal with historical narratives. Martin Gilbert's book is able to evoke emotion in the reader as descriptions of survivors' experiences of separation from and/or loss of family are told through vivid visual, aural, and other sensory memories of "the Night of Broken Glass." *Kristallnacht* works to raise the reader's awareness and consciousness of Jewish concerns while stimulating his/her sense of empathy regarding survivors' experiences of events leading to the Jewish Holocaust. *The Generation of Postmemory* and *Krisallnacht* acknowledge the Holocaust's tales of destruction and murder, yet persuasively privilege counternarratives or stories of survival and resistance in order to demonstrate the Nazis' failure in completely destroying the Jewish people, faith, culture, and overall sense of resilience.

Reading and critiquing Holocaust Literature is a meaningful way to become familiar with transcendent narratives of "survivance" which are comprised of women and children's Holocaust survivor stories.[13] Gerald Vizenor asserts that "survivance" relates to a focus and emphasis on survival, resilience, resistance, and agency of people, such as Native Americans and Jews, who have had genocidal crimes perpetrated against them rather than focusing on victimry, which entails the view that oppressed people are

voiceless and powerless. The implementation of "survivance" as a means for expressing resistance is of utmost importance for countering narratives of domination and oppression.[14]

Visual representations of trauma within Jewish Holocaust literature can provide access points for readers to obtain rich, layered, and nuanced insight into the extreme experiences of Holocaust survivors. Holocaust Literature is a distinct genre that is considerably more intense, challenging, dynamic, and unique than other genres of literature, yet only select narratives continue to be focused on directly; therefore, only a select few have become popularized by and for worldwide readers. Producers of Holocaust narratives must bear in mind the difficult task of representing tremendously complex historical events in understandable terms for readers. For Holocaust survivors, transmitting personal experiences of living in extreme circumstances during the Holocaust is unquestionably challenging, yet "[f]or the survivor who chooses to testify, it is clear: his duty is to bear witness for the dead *and* for the living."[15] While Holocaust narratives may be aimed at general readers, the main goal of Holocaust literature is to educate readers within and outside the United States as specifically as possible about the Holocaust.

Main Substantive Contributions

This thesis argues for the further implementation of Transnational Studies within American Studies, especially in connection with the complex study of history, memory, and culture in relation to the Jewish Holocaust, and for more comparative approaches to studying genocide. An exploration into the link between postcolonialism and the

Holocaust contributes to broadening global dialogues on Holocaust remembrance and genocide prevention, which is an important aspect of this project.

Issues of representation and authenticity are central to critically examining Holocaust literary narratives, thus it is necessary to recognize that each Holocaust narrative is mediated since they encompass an amalgam of recollections and renewed interpretations of traumatic events. This thesis employs an overarching transnational methodology while engaging in literary theory to provide a scholarly exploration into the narrative process while focusing on the interplay of visual memory and imagination in the following Holocaust narratives: Rena Kornreich Gelissen's *Rena's Promise*, Paul Steinberg's *Speak You Also*, and Wladislaw Szpilman's *The Pianist*. Narratives written by male Holocaust survivors and others such as Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz* and the graphic novel *Maus* by second-generation Holocaust survivor Art Spiegelman have been particularly emphasized and widely read as transnational culture texts. While these male-authored narratives demonstrate literary sophistication and nuanced descriptions of trauma, this thesis argues that scholars must more overtly study women and children's narratives in order to learn how some of the most vulnerable groups negotiate trauma.

Women and children express particular vulnerabilities to persecution and genocide as well as strong senses of resiliency that must be recognized, studied, and remembered. Although authored by a Jewish girl (Anne Frank), *The Diary of a Young Girl* is one of the most celebrated Holocaust narratives, yet there is still a noticeable absence of attention paid to Holocaust written and oral testimonies, as well as to memoirs written from the perspectives of women and children. Romany children's Holocaust stories remain among the most rarified in the Holocaust literary canon, thus Holocaust

scholars must perform further research on this subject.[16] By focusing on *Rena's Promise, The Journal of Hélène Berr, Kristallnacht*, *Auschwitz: A New History*, *Emil and Karl,* and *The Hidden Children of France*, the thesis argues that a gender and age-based analysis is crucial in studying Holocaust narratives in order to gain insight into the wide spectrum of Holocaust experiences. Judith Halberstam explains the use of the term "gender" within a wider context of gender analysis, declaring: "In American studies and cultural studies, as in the humanities more broadly, scholars use the term 'gender' when they wish to expose a seemingly neutral analysis as male oriented and when they wish to turn critical attention from men to women."[17] By underscoring the importance of shifting critical focus from male Holocaust narratives to female Holocaust narratives, this thesis aims to uncover and explore often-overlooked stories from new angles. Although Halberstam's explanation of gender may appear to exclusively pertain to cultural studies within American Studies, her statement also applies to transnational cultural work within American Studies, such as this project, which examines European cultural productions.

Critical Interventions

This thesis proposes four main critical interventions which challenge the ways in which trauma is traditionally understood within Holocaust Studies. First, it is of critical importance to study Holocaust Literature from transnational and interdisciplinary perspectives within the field of American Studies. The relationship between the United States and genocide, while ever complicated, is necessary as a basis for studying the events of the Holocaust within a global context. Issues of representation and authenticity regarding Holocaust narratives are central to understanding the challenge of Holocaust survivors to express their experiences through the written word for transnational

audiences. Second, in order to perform a thorough scholarly analysis of literary Holocaust narratives, it is necessary to examine the ways in which survivors utilize narrative conventions, express a sense of self-reflexivity, and use memory and imagination to represent their experiences. The chosen primary survivor narratives include lyrical, imagistic passages, thereby providing pointed evidence for the literary theoretical argument that relaying visual memory is key to writing impactful Holocaust narratives. Third, the more overt incorporation of women and children's Holocaust narratives into the Holocaust literary archive is imperative since their narratives have largely been marginalized, decentered, and excluded because male-authored narratives have held a dominant place within the Holocaust literary field.[18] Fourth, visual memories within representations of children's experiences of Kristallnacht in 1938 and the 1942 Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups in Paris must be more carefully considered within Holocaust literary studies. Multi-generational approaches to relaying Holocaust stories and the inter-generational transfer of trauma should be present within current dialogues on Children's Holocaust Literature. To understand children's unique survival strategies, this thesis necessarily explicates the differences between adult and child responses to trauma. By exposing connections between women and children Holocaust survivors, the creation of makeshift families after parent-child separations reveals a collective reaction to dangerous circumstances.

Methodological Approaches

The rationale behind a transnational methodological approach relates to how this study critically examines the Jewish Holocaust through European-authored survivor narratives within American Studies. Since the Jewish Holocaust was an event of world

history, it continues to profoundly affect Jews and non-Jews living in the United States and abroad. An analytical discussion on the relationship between the United States and genocide, African American racial genocide within the U.S., and the recent speech of President Obama at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Holocaust remembrance and genocide prevention aptly reflects a transnational perspective. In addition, through prominently featuring Michael Rothberg's book on postcolonialism, decolonization, and memory of the Holocaust, this thesis privileges transnationally-oriented dialogues on the ties between Jews, African Americans, and oppressed people of color across the globe.

Transnationalism encompasses the idea that national and international boundaries are not fixed or rigid, rather they are fluid, porous, and penetrable. Amy Kaplan, while she studies imperialism, empire, and the "making of U.S. culture" in particular, emphasizes the flexibility of international borders by asserting "that these domestic and foreign spaces are closer than we think."[19] Critiquing American Exceptionalism, or the notion that the United States embodies a unique democratic ideology and is a distinct nation in relation to culture and identity, Kaplan contends that boundaries between the "domestic" and the "foreign" are permeable, thus international pathways of knowledge are not only possible but they are abundant.[20] Key to the concept of transnationalism is the following insight: "The idea of nation as home is inextricable from the political, economic, and cultural movements of empire, movements that both erect and unsettle the ever-shifting boundaries between the domestic and the foreign, between 'at home' and 'abroad.'"[21] Boundaries between nation states "can expand and contract," change and shift as people, goods, and ideas continually move across them.[22] Benedict Anderson

explains that national borders are imagined or created, rather than real, therefore they are always in negotiation and in flux.[23]

This thesis's implementation of a transnational methodology directly answers Radway's call to actively reshape and reframe American Studies to include ever-shifting, multi-dimensional concepts of culture and examples of literature that extend across national and international borders. A pivotal concept in American Studies, transnationalism allows for expansive boundary-pushing perspectives that Janice Radway advocates for within the discipline. Radway's argument to displace a focus on a narrow, nationalistic view of the United States in favor of studying culture, literature, and identity from a transnational perspective within the context of American Studies is central in this thesis due to its examination of how European literary cultural productions transcend global lines of demarcation.

To engage in an American Studies interdisciplinary methodology permits the study of Holocaust narratives through merging the disciplines of History, Genocide Studies, Literature, Comparative Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, and Memory Studies. An interdisciplinary approach to studying issues of representation, authenticity, and expressions of visual memory aids in exposing a multi-angled vantage point where disciplines overlap, thereby moving us toward an in-depth understanding of the complex issues at the heart of this project.

Chapter Overview

Chapter One delves into a discussion on the transnational aspects of studying Holocaust Literature by examining the initial responses of Americans to the Holocaust.

After World War II many survivors of the Jewish Holocaust kept silent about their horrific experiences in large part because of post-traumatic stress related to "survivor guilt,"[24] and due to a general lack of public interest in personal Holocaust experiences. Once the war ended, Americans wanted to forget the disturbing details of genocide and were therefore reluctant to learn about Nazi-perpetrated mass atrocities against the Jews in Europe. The United States government's complicity or its "consistent policy of nonintervention in the face of genocide" in terms of the Jewish Holocaust and other genocides is forcefully highlighted in Samantha Power's work, which is discussed in Chapter One.[25]

In the 1950s a shift occurred in the American publics' willingness to confront the Holocaust through reading recently published survivors' testimonies. Since the 1960s especially, Americans have demonstrated a fervent interest in the Holocaust, which is reflected in consistent and increasing productions of Holocaust literature, theater, and film.[26] A discussion on Elie Wiesel as an advocate for genocide prevention is referenced in relation to the United Nations declaration on genocide along with the significance of creating legally enforceable international accountability for perpetrating crimes of genocide. A comprehensive definition of genocide, based on Raphael Lemkin's explanation of the term, is included in Chapter One. In addition, issues of representation and authenticity are centered in specific regard to the challenge of Holocaust survivors to express their traumatic experiences in the written word for transnational audiences.

In Chapter Two, a critical inquiry into literary constructions of Holocaust experiences from a male perspective in *Speak You Also* reveals the need for authors to implement metaphors and create a familiar language to "describe the indescribable"[27]

aspects of the Holocaust for readers. This particular critical discussion surrounds the challenges in structuring survivor narratives by intertwining memory with (re)imagined experiences to create cohesive, accessible narratives. The methods relating to how survivor testimonies are constructed and mediated become apparent through the survivor's engagement with specific narrative conventions. A sense of self-reflexivity, manifested in reflections on the writing process, is often present in Holocaust narratives. Holocaust narrators' strategic inclusion of vivid imagery and expressions of reconstructed visual memory is central to creating sophisticated literary style and techniques, substantive and impactful stories, and important lessons for readers.

Chapter Two concerns the imperativeness of more overtly including women and children's Holocaust narratives into the Holocaust literary canon. This chapter includes an analysis of why women and children were among the most vulnerable subjects of persecution and genocide. Women and children offer unique perspectives on the Holocaust and assert a form of agency that differs from that of their male counterparts. In this particular context, agency refers to women overcoming the added obstacle of gender discrimination through active resistance to racism, sexism, and oppression within the Holocaust. As claimed by S. Lillian Kremer: "Unlike male [Holocaust] narratives, in which women appear as minor figures and often as helpless victims, in women-centered novels female characters are fully defined protagonists, experiencing the Shoah [Holocaust] in all its evil manifestations."[28] Women and children are often the primary subjects within female literary narratives, whereas celebrated works such as Elie Wiesel's *Night* focuses on Wiesel as the male protagonist and his relationships, conversations, and experiences with male camp inmates.

Since men and women were usually separated in Holocaust concentration camps, stories about female bonding are often central within women's Holocaust Literature. In female-authored Holocaust Literature, women take center stage, becoming "assertive agents, forging communal bonds and struggling for control of their own destinies as they encounter daily rounds of hard labor, beatings, starvation, illness, sexual assault, forced separation from family and friends . . . "[29] Women experienced additional hardships such as discrimination based on sex as well as sexual assault by German officers. In various concentration camps women were subject to extreme humiliation when Nazis, who intended to strip women of their feminine identities, cut off all their hair. The act of hair removal was intended to harm women's self-esteem and was also an attempt to physically homogenize women and men. Many imprisoned women asserted a sense of agency, attempting to resist Nazi plans for dehumanization and degradation by acting out survival strategies such as drawing their own blood and applying it to their cheeks.[30] Jewish women added color to their faces through rubbing blood on their skin to appear healthier in order to avoid death after selections.

Since the number of Holocaust survivors living today is rapidly dwindling, the effort to document and analyze their stories for the purpose of Holocaust memory and education is paramount. Agency within the Holocaust encompassed a multitude of acts, but during the aftermath of the Holocaust it involved the "duty [of survivors] to bear witness": "In every ghetto, in every deportation train, in every labour camp, even in the death camps, the will to resist was strong and took many forms . . . Merely to give witness by one's own testimony was, in the end, to contribute to a moral victory. Simply to survive was a victory of the human spirit."[31] Women such as Eva Schloss performed

their "moral duty" by recording their testimonies of Holocaust survival experiences, thereby willfully engaging in written acts of agency post-World War II. Since the qualities of vulnerability and innocence are generally attributed to women and children, their images and stories of resistance contain significant appeal for readers. Within Holocaust Literature, women and especially children demonstrate a high level of sensory perceptions that make their stories especially vivid and memorable, which works to strengthen collective remembrance.

In Chapter Three, a conversation on children's experiences of Kristallnacht in 1938 and in the 1942 Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups in Paris manifests in relation to children's sensory memories involving specific traumatic situations. Also key to this chapter is the way in which children of the Holocaust negotiate their Jewish identities, cope with displacement and separation from parents, deal with imminent danger, navigate the transition from childhood to adulthood, and overcome the fear of death in the midst of genocide. In the recent French film *Sarah's Key*, a child's engagement in playing a hiding game despite traumatic circumstances of the Vélodrome d'Hiver round-ups reflects a child-like lack of awareness. In some instances, playing games works to save children's lives as is evident in a child's testimony of Kristallnacht, yet in other instances such as in *Sarah's Key*, playing a game ironically leads a child to his untimely death. Understanding children's tendencies toward survival and resilience is crucial, but it is also necessary to acknowledge the countless children who did not survive the Holocaust.

The transnational study of the complex relationship between the United States and genocide, issues of representation and authenticity within well-known Holocaust narratives authored by men, the importance of women and children's Holocaust

Literature, and the use of visual memories within children's narratives of Kristallnacht and the Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups in Paris, collectively aid in the essential expansion of American Studies to include critical analyses of the Jewish Holocaust. Scholars within and outside of American Studies must engage more actively in global dialogues surrounding the contested sites of individual and collective memory of the Holocaust, and awareness about persecution and genocide. This Master's Thesis is meant to foster a multi-dimensional understanding of the complicated aforementioned issues while encouraging collective action against racism, prejudice, and Holocaust denial, which remain ever-present in the contemporary world.

Chapter One

Transnationalism, Genocide, and Contested Sites of Individual & Collective Jewish Holocaust Memory

Situating American Studies within a Transnational American Studies

Scholarship within the discipline of American Studies has greatly expanded, including transnational perspectives on culture, identity, and literature through work done by scholars such as Jane C. Desmond and Virginia R. Dominguez. In "Resituating American Studies in a Critical Internationalism," Desmond and Dominguez define critical internationalism as "a conceptual orientation that situates the United States in a global context on a number of terrains simultaneously; in terms of the scholarship that gets read, written, and cited and, most importantly, in the way scholars conceive of new directions for formulating research."[32] Critical internationalism is a key concept that reorients American Studies scholarship in favor of positioning the United States within a transnational or global frame of reference.

Critical internationalism necessarily allows for moving beyond international boundaries in order to navigate intellectual sites of inquiry related to European cultural texts that reflect Jewish women and children's Holocaust experiences, which are a focus of this thesis. Current American Studies research is increasingly geared toward global perspectives, thereby pointedly acknowledging "transnational flows of people, products, capital, and ideas[4]."[33] For this thesis project, it is important to recognize that analysis of Jewish Holocaust Literature by American scholars is necessary for intellectual development based on topics of international significance. Therefore the production of

transnational scholarship must be located both inside and outside of the United States in order to increase global dialogues involving social and political issues such as genocide awareness and prevention, which affect multiple countries.

Locating transnationalism within American Studies creates an exciting space for cutting-edge scholarship from within a global atmosphere that can be consumed and produced by American Studies scholars, which broadens understandings of how people, cultures, and identities traverse national borders. As stated by Janice Radway in reference to Desmond and Dominguez's article on critical internationalism: "By focusing on trans-national American social and cultural relations, inter-American studies could foster the investigation of regional cultural flows, of people, ideas, institutions, movements, products, etc."[34] Through considering the name "Inter-American studies" rather than "American Studies," Radway articulates the need for scholarly examinations into transnational exchanges of people, ideas, knowledge, and goods as a means to understand how comparative work opens new arenas for progressive intellectual dialogues. Stating a primary concern of their article, Desmond and Dominguez maintain: "An examination of American studies research, citation practices, and curricula in this country dramatically reveals the absence of foreign scholars' perspectives."[35] During the time Desmond and Dominguez wrote their article in the mid 1990s, it is clear that American Studies scholarship was too limited in scope due to a lack of foreign scholarship. Today more attention is paid to foreign scholars' research than ever before, yet it is still necessary to further embrace foreign scholarship as well as literature produced by European Holocaust survivors since their experiences shed light on others, such as Native Americans, who have experienced cultural genocide.

To contextualize the transnational connections regarding the Jewish Holocaust, I examine how Americans initially reacted when receiving detailed information about the genocide. According to Lawrence Baron, the American public lacked interest in the Holocaust shortly after World War II.[36] Baron explains the reasons behind the overall lack of interest, stating that after the mid 1940s, Holocaust scholars agree that Americans largely disregarded the genocide because of their failure to understand the "Nazi's assault on European Jewry" and since Americans were interested in post-war peace, they wished to regain Germany as an ally of the United States.[37]

Although the aforementioned reasons for the public's avoidance regarding the Jewish Holocaust are convincing, it also should be noted that Americans were reluctant to substantively learn about the subject due to its deeply traumatic nature. Lawrence Baron does contend, however, that "[t]he widespread dissemination of footage and photographs of the liberation of concentration camps and death camps in newspapers, newsreels, and magazines in 1944 and 1945 exposed the American public to far more gruesome images [than Hollywood films did]."[38] While exposure to graphic images documenting the aftermath of atrocity during the liberation made Americans aware of the Holocaust's devastation, a significant absence of survivor's testimonies persisted until the 1950s.[39] Inevitably, Americans felt bombarded by shocking Holocaust images consisting of emaciated, dead bodies piled high, and thus they gradually became overwhelmed and eventually desensitized to visual Holocaust material. Shifting global relations between the United States and Europe, specifically related to Nazi Germany during World War II, contributed to a complex political atmosphere that some Americans were unwilling to confront unless they had a particular interest in current events.

Several decades passed before Americans were fully ready to face the Holocaust, especially in regard to Holocaust survivor literature. Samantha Power, as well as Lawrence Baron, draws critical attention to the lack of interest and knowledge about the Holocaust. As Power maintains: "Even such celebrated works as Elie Wiesel's *Night* and Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz* had trouble finding publishers. It was not really until the 1970s that Americans became prepared to discuss the [Holocaust's horrors]."[40] Even literary narratives such as Wiesel's and Levi's which eventually became well-known, were not initially regarded with interest by the general public. The content of Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz* is geared toward mature adult readers; therefore Americans were more open to reading less intense Holocaust accounts, which did not take place within concentration camps, such as *The Diary of A Young Girl*. Published in 1952, Anne Frank's *The Diary of A Young Girl* became hugely popular in a transnational context and remains the most widely read Holocaust text in the world. According to Ruth Franklin: "This book has a special status as a touchstone for countless readers, for whom it was likely their first encounter with Holocaust literature."[41] Along with reading Anne Frank's diary, in the late 1940s and during the 1950s, through the popular culture medium of television, Americans became exposed to the Holocaust's terrible conditions through television series.[42] As people slowly became aware of World War II atrocities, Elie Wiesel's survival story *Night* emerged in the mid 1950s, becoming extremely well regarded in the United States and internationally.

To further understand the connections between the Jewish Holocaust and the United States, it is essential to acknowledge the remarkable transnational impact that Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel had and continues to have on the American public. As

Ruth Franklin contends: "Elie Wiesel, by any estimation [is] the most influential Holocaust survivor in America if not the world."[43] Wiesel is especially known for his memoir *Night*, his prolific career as a writer, and his stature as a public figure due largely to winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. Also known for his work on genocide awareness, Wiesel is broadly regarded for reiterating the following phrase regarding worldwide genocide prevention: "Never again."[44] To expand current understandings of genocide, we must consider the Jewish Holocaust in relation to contemporary genocide scholarship. A cross-cultural and transnational perspective on the Jewish Holocaust and genocide more generally enables a challenging conversation that probes deeply into complex issues of trauma, history, and remembrance.

Comparative Genocide Studies & "Multidirectional Memory"

Michael Rothberg engages in an informative debate surrounding the Holocaust's uniqueness, explaining the task of performing genocide research within the context of other genocides across the world. Rothberg declares: "At the same time that this understanding of the Nazi genocide emerged, and in direct response to it, intellectuals interested in indigenous, minority, and colonial histories challenged the uniqueness of the Holocaust and fostered research into other histories of extreme violence, ethnic cleansing, and genocide."[45] Scholars who began studying the Holocaust also turned to indigenous issues within discussions on colonialism, working to contextualize the Holocaust's events more broadly. The struggles of people of color, in relationship to anti-colonial discourses, became a focal point within fields such as American Studies and Ethnic Studies. The problem associated with viewing the Holocaust as a unique event in world history, according to Rothberg, is "that it potentially creates a hierarchy of suffering

(which is morally offensive) and removes that suffering from the field of historical agency (which is both morally and intellectually suspect)[11."][46] Historically, non-Western genocides that involve minority, colonial subjects have held far less attention than Western genocides since its subjects had already been marginalized within society. Since the "hierarchy of suffering" involves subjectively ranking the victims and survivors of genocide, it therefore encourages competition among survivors, which creates substantial tension and struggle rather than solidarity.[47]

In Michael Rothberg's opinion, to compare public memories of genocide is to engage in "competitive memory," which diverts attention from studying and remembering genocides individually and all that they entail historically, socially, and culturally.[48] Garnering a thorough understanding of the Jewish Holocaust requires thinking beyond traditional confines of historical memory. As Rothberg maintains, "multidirectional memory posits collective memory as partially disengaged from exclusive versions of cultural identity and acknowledges how remembrance both cuts across and binds together diverse spatial, temporal, and cultural sites."[49] Cultural identity is a complicated and diverse field of study, which directly relates to cultural memory. The study of historical memory, whether it is individual or collective, necessitates scholars being open to exploring the Jewish Holocaust through various orientations while not losing sight of long-established methods based in traditional disciplines such as history.

Performing an inquiry into Holocaust Literature within the discipline of American Studies must involve expanding our knowledge bases multifariously. If we only study the Jewish Holocaust through a singular discipline such as history or literature, there

remains a substantial risk of skimming over alternative modes of attaining "multi-directional" insight and understanding. Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* "brings together Holocaust studies and postcolonial studies for the first time in a book-length work" within a transnational space by means of examining "black Atlantic and French-Algerian contact zones, a[s] it reads both of these formations across and through diasporic Jewish history."[50] Considering both the African and Jewish diasporas through comparative analysis by focusing on political and social "contact zones" enriches the conversation on the relationship between the Holocaust and postcolonialism.

A chapter on African American scholar and social activist W.E.B. Du Bois's experiences in Warsaw, Poland, during the late 1940s innovatively connects Holocaust memory with problems of the global color line. As Rothberg states: "Observing the remains of the Warsaw ghetto, site of the heroic and desperate 1943 revolt of Jews condemned to die in the Treblinka death camp, Du Bois reflected on matters of race, identity, and resistance."[51] The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943 was the largest and arguably the most important act of Jewish resistance during World War II.[52] Spurred into rethinking the boundaries of his own academic work, Du Bois embarks on a journey to uncover the connections between African Americans and Jews while placing an emphasis on the power of coordinated resistance to racial oppression.[53]

Within American Studies, we must encourage the forging of alliances among and between people who have been marginalized, such as Jews and African Americans, in hopes of creating solidarity in the fight for global justice. In "The Color Line Belts the World" W.E.B. Du Bois writes in 1906 about the social problems faced by African

Americans and other people of color who live abroad, particularly emphasizing the problems surrounding colonial domination by Europeans. Du Bois insists: "The awakening of the brown and black races will follow in time, no unprejudiced student of history can doubt. Shall the awakening of these sleepy millions be in accordance with, and aided by, the great deals of white civilization, or in spite of them and against them? This is the problem of the Color Line."[54] Speaking about an "awakening" or an increased awareness of oppression in order to engage in social activism, Du Bois calls "the darker races" to action while simultaneously challenging European oppressors to help the oppressed break free from imposed societal constraints. In the "Problem of the Color Line" Du Bois urges other activists and newly awakened minorities to understand that "Force and Fear have hitherto marked the white attitude toward darker races; [Du Bois asks:] shall this continue or be replaced by Freedom and Friendship."[55] According to Du Bois, replacing "Force and Fear" on behalf of Anglo colonial oppressors toward minority people with "Freedom and Friendship" of opposing groups is the proper way to foster fair and just treatment of all people regardless of race.

Studying W.E.B. Du Bois's work in connection with the Holocaust expands the postcolonial intellectual terrain, thus encouraging broad thinking by students and scholars of Genocide Studies and American Studies. Although Du Bois's primarily concerns were racism, oppression, and colonialism in relation to African Americans, Du Bois additionally became interested in Jewish concerns, subsequently "writ[ing] in 'The Negro and the Warsaw Ghetto,' an essay published in 1952 in the magazine *Jewish Life*, [leading] him to reassess and revisit his declaration in 1900 that 'the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line."[56] Through becoming keenly

interested in the Jewish plight, Du Bois extends his transnational perspective while demonstrating awareness of the shared histories of African Americans and Jews within his thought-provoking dialogues on "the problem of the colour line." Contending that "Du Bois can serve as a model of multidirectional memory because of the way his writings on Jews, race, and genocide hold together commonality and difference in a revised version of double consciousness,"[57] Michael Rothberg reveals how Du Bois embodies a salient example of the progressive space that multidirectional memory can occupy. Although similarities among genocides exist, important differences must be drawn and recognized in order to consider each genocide through individual lenses.

Double consciousness, or the perception that one is always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, applies to Jews who were persecuted during the Holocaust in reference to their own sense of internalized oppression because of their Jewish heritage.[58] Survivors of genocide, whether they are African, Native American, or Jewish, hold in common the experience of being persecuted and violently abused due to their racial or ethnic affiliation, which is socially constructed. The social construction of race, pseudo race science, and eugenics is an important area of study within the Holocaust, but it will not be delved into here.

The thesis refers to Michael Rothberg's transnational analysis of the Holocaust in part to expose the fact that scholars have by and large overlooked W.E.B. Du Bois's work on African American and Jewish connections. Drawing attention to Du Bois's travels in post-World War II Poland spotlights "the years in which Du Bois visited and wrote about Warsaw [which] remain underexamined in Holocaust studies, but they have left their mark both on Holocaust memory and on interdisciplinary cultural studies."[59] Rothberg

reconfigures Holocaust memory by inserting Du Bois's work into scholarly conversations, therefore reversing an absence within the theoretical cultural studies literature.

The interdisciplinary nature of W.E.B. Du Bois's work provides evidence that such multi-dimensional scholarship within the field of Holocaust studies complicates previously held notions while challenging academics to become more open-minded about the possibilities allowed by our own cross-disciplinary scholarship. As Michael Rothberg argues, Du Bois's "visit to Warsaw reveals a dynamic intertwining of histories and memories that has methodological implications for Holocaust studies, postcolonial studies, and African American studies."[60] The blending of disciplines for the purposes of understanding comparative and transnational relationships creates unusual sites for historical and political analysis, which "remap the seemingly divergent genealogies of Holocaust memory and the global color line."[61] Through converging Holocaust memory and the global color line, Du Bois, as interpreted by Rothberg, shows the potential for imaginatively reshaping the boundaries of global race relations and Holocaust remembrance. Moving beyond "the logic of competition[,]" Du Bois acknowledges the differences in twentieth century "racial terror" experienced by African Americans and Jews while developing a means to resist racial oppression and colonialism worldwide.[62]

In *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, & U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945*, Melanie McAlister centers on two prominent black intellectuals and their support for the creation of a Jewish homeland. McAlister states that "the two most influential black nationalist thinkers in the United States—Du Bois and Marcus Garvey—actively supported plans for a Jewish state[8] [Israel]."[63] W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey,

through their work within Black Internationalism, understood the close connections between African Americans and Jews, expressing encouragement for Israel to become a nation-state. According to Michelle Anne Stephens, Black Internationalism relates to transnational perspectives on identity, politics, and the struggles for black colonial subjects to be recognized "as national peoples" within colonial empires.[64] Transnational or global political alliances between blacks worked to strengthen the goals of social activists such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey. Jewish solidarity in the United States and Europe was important for creating support for establishing Israel as a homeland for Jews. As stated by McAlister: "The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 was celebrated in the U.S. news media and widely seen as a historic recognition of and (partial) atonement for the European Holocaust[11]."[65] Americans' widespread support for founding the state of Israel reflects a public willingness to newly acknowledge the immense damage of the Holocaust in causing suffering of European Jews and American Jews.

By assuming more responsibility than previously, the United States, in its support of Israel, demonstrated an interest in how international affairs affect Americans and Jewish people across the globe, thus showing the potential for transnational political alliances. In addition, the fact that African Americans "responded with special enthusiasm to the idea of liberation and a homeland for Jews[,]" even if they were not interested in going "back to Africa" themselves, remains extremely important in regard to mutual support.[66] Interracial solidarity allows for consideration of the ties between African Americans and Jews in relation to colonialism, postcolonialism and the Holocaust, igniting a sense of hope for a more harmonious future. Understanding global

racial connections is increasingly necessary for work done within comparative genocide contexts as is evident in Dylan Rodriguez's scholarship.

African American Racial Genocide in the United States

In his article on the myth of national racial progress in the current United States multiculturalist age, Dylan Rodríguez argues that racial genocide exists in the form of the U.S. prison industrial complex. Rodríguez radically reconceptualizes conventional definitions of genocide in order to center racial genocide involving the subjugation of African Americans through criminalization and mass imprisonment in the United States.[67] Patrick Wolfe additionally recognizes the connections between African American exploitation within the current United States prison system, thereby stating: "Today in the US, the blatant racial zoning of large cities and the penal system suggests that, once colonized people outlive their utility, settler societies can fall back on the repertoire of strategies (in this case, special sequestration) whereby they have also dealt with the native surplus."[68] Within the United States, after the ending of slavery and "the Jim Crow reign of terror[,]" African Americans have long been subject to not only racial discrimination but "continue to have value as a source of super-cheap labour" especially in prisons.[69]

While Dylan Rodríguez's focus is not primarily on the destruction of Jews during the Holocaust, he nonetheless devotes attention to a Jewish lawyer named Raphael Lemkin's coining of "genocide" in 1944.[70] Through Lemkin, the Geneva Convention implemented a wide-reaching definition of genocide in an attempt to legally hold perpetrators accountable for a slew of mass atrocity crimes and crimes against humanity.

Despite the controversy surrounding the varying definitions of "genocide," the significance of its meaning is substantial, particularly for this thesis. Journalist and genocide scholar, and now U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power explains: "The word that Lemkin settled upon was a hybrid that combined the Greek derivative *geno*, meaning 'race' or 'tribe,' together with the Latin derivative *cide*, from *caeder*, meaning 'killing.' . . . Because of the world's lasting association with Hitler's horrors, it would also send shudders down the spines of those who heard it."[71] Although Power reveals the impact that "genocide" in association with "Hitler's horrors" continues to have on people, Rodríguez emphasizes the problems related to the Jewish Holocaust as the prototype for genocide, declaring:

> While there are endemic limitations that emerge from Lemkin's paradigmatic center of the Nazi case, his text holds significant value within its own parameters: perhaps most importantly, his insistence on a strong juridical structure of international accountability for genocide as a 'composite' of practices, usually though not exclusively carried out by members of the offending state . . . [72]

The meaning of genocide can morph depending on the context in which it is used, incorporating a wide range of structured, large-scale murderous operations. Rodríguez exposes issues with the Jewish Holocaust as the leading example of genocide because it tends to exclude other interpretations of genocide.

Dylan Rodríguez's critical insight allows for accepting the significance of the United Nations declaration on genocide in that it enforces legal international responsibility. Prosecuting genocidal crimes from within the "offending state" is inherently problematic in terms of accusing the United States government of African American-centered racial genocide. Articulated differently, Rodríguez maintains that

prosecuting perpetrators of genocide within "the offending state" is highly problematic because its unlikely that U.S. government would admit to "committing racial genocide against its domestic Black population."[73] Although it is improbable that United States government as a perpetrator of genocide would be tried within the U.S., it is significant that the Nuremberg Trials, although they "were an experiment," took place in Germany, where the Holocaust's events were centered during the war.[74]

International responsibility for crimes of genocide is critically important in the fight for international justice and solidarity among persecuted people. In 1961, Adolf Eichman's televised trial in Israel marked the beginning of widespread international Holocaust awareness.[75] British Historian Richard Overy asserts that "[f]or the first time the leaders of a major state [Germany] were to be arraigned by the international community for conspiring to perpetrate, or cause to be perpetrated, a whole series of crimes against peace and against humanity."[76] The Nuremberg trials marked a substantial achievement in arraigning war criminals for the sake of international justice. While supplying the basis for the origination of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which was established on July 1, 2000, the ICC currently serves as a permanent tribunal for prosecuting perpetrators for committing genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, including the prosecution of crimes against aggression.[77] Viewing the Holocaust within Genocide Studies and from American Studies, it is vitally important to not only consider the meaning of genocide but also to examine the complex definitions and relationships of history and memory.

Contested Sites of History & Memory Within the Holocaust

An inquiry into the Holocaust's complex events should begin with an understanding of history and memory as categories, the result being a solid foundation for advanced study of Jewish women and children's Holocaust histories. The late Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot provocatively engages in debates over the production of history within the context of French colonialism, eventually moving into a discussion about Holocaust denial. Trouillot distinguishes between historical agents and commentators, asserting: "Human beings participate in history both as actors and narrators. . . . In vernacular use, history means both 'what happened' and 'that which is said to have happened.'"[78] In the case of Holocaust history, a division exists between disparate historical narratives, which often begin by "objectively" detailing Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933 within the context of World War II and recorded "subjective" personal narratives of both "perpetrators" and "victims" of war.

A division between actors and narrators of history implies a power imbalance surrounding who possesses the authority to centrally partake in or interpret history. Further explaining the differences between concrete, linear recordings of historical events and individual interpretations of those events, Michel-Rolph Trouillot affirms: "The first meaning places the emphasis on the sociohistorical process, the second on our knowledge of that process or on a story about that process."[79] The study of past events such as the Holocaust is necessary for understanding "what actually took place" within a broader social and historical context, yet it is also crucial to examine how historical events are made sense of by individual narrators of history. By focusing on the subjective narratives

of Holocaust witnesses, we are able to learn how survivors of war explain their personal experiences of historical events.

Conventional, chronological histories aid in understanding history systematically, but nonlinear historical accounts challenge people to question traditional methods of historical study, opening creative spaces for multidimensional readings of past events. Michel-Rolph Trouillot validates the stance of non-Western historian Ibn Khaldhún who "fruitfully applied a cyclical view of time to the study of history."[80] A cyclical rather than a linear account of time encourages an alternative method to understanding history. Recognizing multiple approaches to learning historical knowledge potentially leads to a holographic historical study of past events, thus launching new scholarly possibilities within exceedingly complex histories.

One such complicated history involves a Catholic Priest named Father Patrick Desbois who began a quest in Ukraine in 2007. Uncovering the history of more than one and a half million victims of the Holocaust who were killed by Nazis, Desbois thereby made a significant intervention into recorded Holocaust survivors' accounts. Through recording oral testimony *via* videorecording and written records of locals who remembered the killings, Father DesBois begins his project by compiling notes about his experience. Through his effort, Father DesBois makes known a largely forgotten history about Ukrainian Jewish Holocaust victims. In *The Holocaust by Bullets*, Father Desbois remarks on the circumstances surrounding the killings in Ukraine during World War II: "These [Ukrainian Jewish] victims—mostly women, children, and old people—were taken from their homes, on foot or by cart or truck, to locations just outside the towns and villages where they lived, if even that far. There they were shot, usually the same day or

hour, at close range, face to face or in the back, one human being killing another, and all the presence of local residents, the victims' non-Jewish neighbors, even friends."[81] Although gas chambers are the most widely known method for killing Jews during the Holocaust, Father Desbois upsets such assumptions by uncovering the lesser-known history of SS mobile killing squads in Ukrainian forests. Despite the commonly held notion that acts of Nazi atrocity were committed in secret, it becomes apparent through Father Desbois's work that much of the killings took place in full view of the public. The SS murdered Jews with guns, holding their victims intimately close, thus revealing the outright barbarity of their genocidal operations.

The main aim of Father Desbois's work is to ensure that the memory of the Holocaust's victims by bullets endures. Paul A. Shapiro, author of the preface to *The Holocaust by Bullets* and Director of the Center for Advanced Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, states: "The victims were not nameless corpses. By restoring their memory, he is resurrecting our own humanity as well and denying victory to the perpetrators and to all who have sympathized or may yet sympathize with them."[82] Father Desbois's *The Holocaust by Bullets* is an effort to personalize Holocaust victims by telling their stories through archival research and first-hand interviews of family members and villagers who witnessed the atrocities. Unveiling these lost stories aids in the project to emphasize narratives of survivance rather than encouraging victimry, which entails a denial of agency, and may include narratives of Nazi perpetrators or Holocaust deniers. Father Desbois's work demonstrates a blending between history and memory that urges its readers to understand "the importance of action" in order to avoid assuming the passive role of bystanders while in the midst of genocide.[83] In *The Holocaust by*

Bullets, through drawing attention to distinct voices that relay personal memories of the killings in Ukraine, individual memory is honored while collective memory is also documented within Holocaust Studies.

Individual & Collective Historical Memory

Holocaust history and memory are important categories to explore since these sites of study are interrelated, although they diverge into individual and collective. Jay Winter distinguishes between history and memory while also acknowledging their convergence. Winter declares: "History is a profession with rules about evidence, about publication, and peer review. Memory is a process distinct from history, though not isolated from it."[84] Since history necessarily encompasses a disciplinary system of checks and balances for the regimented recording of factual information, it follows that memory is inherently informed by history. As maintained by Winter: "History and memory overlap . . . [and] In virtually all acts of remembrance, history and memory are braided together in the public domain, jointly informing our shifting and contested understandings of the past."[85] The interdependence of history and memory permits an opening for public, collective remembrance, which inhabits a site for debates over how to interpret the past. History and memory as sites of analysis comprise a vexed, complicated terrain that must be critically probed within Holocaust Studies.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot further distinguishes between history and memory as he recognizes their overlap by delineating that "history is to a collective as remembrance is to an individual, the more or less conscious retrieval of past experiences stored in memory. Its numerous variations aside, we can call it, for short, the storage model of

memory-history."[86] Historical narratives are based on collective experiences whereas memory or remembrance surrounds an individual's impressions of their own experiences of historical occurrences. Although history is usually understood as a true account of the past, we must acknowledge that an individual's history and memory are constructed; hence their interpretations are unavoidably effected by a person's life experience and worldview. Jay Winter aptly expresses the idea that memories change over time, claiming: "Schacter notes that our memories are not photographic, producing snapshots of the past. Instead 'we recreate or reconstruct our experiences rather than retrieve copies of them, sometimes in the process of reconstructing we add feelings, beliefs, or even knowledge obtained after the experience.'"[87] In other words, memories are not pure, direct recollections of experiences or historical events. Rather, they are tainted by our interpretations or the stories we create based on our individual perceptions and retrospective contextual knowledge of past events. Holocaust survivors' use of the imagination to reconstruct individual memories and experiences of the Holocaust is discussed in Chapter Two.

Arguing that history and memory are inevitably intertwined, Elrud Ibsch explores the ways in which the two are deeply connected, recognizing that it is impossible to separate history and memory. Ibsch engages in the debate about scholars who defend the "dualism of memory and history" declaring: "Whoever is writing today about the Holocaust will experience a strong interdependence between memory and history. . . . There is no history without memory and no memory without a historical dimension."[88] Since history and memory are completely dependent on one another, we must accept their mutual relationship. Yet, differing narratives of history can create conflict and struggle

for those who are claiming authority over certain historical events. The uneven power relations of national, official historical accounts and individual society members' accounts of history lends to the notion of history and memory as contested sites. In connection with the topic of written Holocaust narratives, Ibsch describes how memory and imagination merge, stating: "Oral history or published memoirs were indispensible sources for writing the history of the genocide. Memoirs of survivors bear evidence of both truth and emotions."[89] Referencing the tendency for survivors to remain silent about their experiences immediately preceding the war, Ibsch points toward the importance of exposing truths while utilizing memory and "emotions." Through incorporating emotional reactions to historical truths, Holocaust survivors' published memoirs bear personal witness to collective historical atrocities.

Recorded oral accounts of historical events combined with imaginative interpretations and emotional reactions by war survivors work together in creating literary-historical pieces of writing, which can eventually be published for widespread consumption. Furthermore, within the realm of Holocaust literature Ibsch states: "I propose to consider memory, history, and literature as mutually dependent and drawing from the same sources[,]" yet he also recognizes that "[i]f the experience is a traumatic one, then the transfer into language may become problematic."[90] Substantial issues surrounding transforming lived experienced into written words can be extremely challenging for survivors who have witnessed and lived through trauma; thus it is understandable that many Holocaust survivors choose to remain silent about their wartime ordeals. One reason that survivors are silent about their experiences relates to their misperception that young people in particular have no interest in the Holocaust.

Even in Germany today, children's awareness about the Holocaust is increasing due to mandatory school curricula on the subject and presentations given in schools by Holocaust survivors.[91]

For Holocaust survivors, the challenge to reformulate memories of traumatic experiences represents a substantial obstacle in exposing their stories, especially because words cannot convey the full truth of their extreme traumas. Remarking on survivors' hardships of recreating events for readers *via* language, which is the subject of Chapter Two of this thesis, Elrud Ibsch declares: "It is not difficult to imagine that those who have experienced the concentration camps and who have lost the categories within which normal reactions to experiences develop, have a long way to go in regaining both the parameters of 'reality' and a sense of self-acceptance."[92] "Normal reactions to experiences" within Holocaust narratives are not possible considering the extraordinary nature of the events that survivors endured. Thus they must create an alternative literary landscape to map their experiences onto for readers. Through the process of "regaining" a sense of reality and acceptance of self in order to record their experiences during the war's aftermath, survivors are conscious of the limits of language, yet they are the necessary bearers of remembered Holocaust history.

Obtaining a solid comprehension of Holocaust Literature genres is mandatory for understanding the differences among varying forms of survivor narratives. Distinguishing between genres allows for a necessary categorization of literature types, which is useful for engaging in narrative comparisons. According to Elrud Ibsch: "*Memory*, *remembered history*, and *imagined history* represent different chronological stages with respect to the historical event of the Holocaust and, at the same time, different

genre conventions, ranging from diaries, autobiographies, autobiographical novels to, finally, narrative fiction."[93] Holocaust literary narratives tend to entail an amalgam of time periods, historical descriptions, and imagined or partially fictive histories, which can shape differing genres accordingly. Narrative conventions such as the use of autobiographical details and memories, historical and social context but also irony, metaphor, simile, along with various themes and structures, contribute to a breadth of documented personal Holocaust experiences.

Despite the presence of a wide array of Holocaust narratives and testimonies within the literary canon, considerable absences still remain that must be accounted for and remedied by scholars who are working to present a fuller historical archive. For example, by contending that the writings of European Jews who live in Israel and the United States should be included into Holocaust literary-history, Elrud Ibsch maintains that "Art Spiegelman's words: 'Remembering those who remembered the Death Camps is a hard act to follow' (Rubin 138) must be read as an observation of an author of the generation-after but may also be read as a challenge to the literary historian."[94] The "generation-after" or second-generation Holocaust survivors' narratives are sometimes regarded as farther from "the truth" because these survivors did not directly experience atrocity as their parents did during World War II. However, the transfer of trauma between generations is widely acknowledged, and the authority of Holocaust survivors' children is generally accepted.[95] Evoking the words of second-generation Holocaust survivor Art Spiegelman in order to call into question the Holocaust literary canon's absence of narratives of European Jews who live outside of Europe, Ibsch provokes literary historians to redefine and expand the Holocaust literary canon's current contours.

The Intertwining of Culture, History, & Memory

Marita Sturken undertakes the highly contested subject of historical remembrance or memorialization, revealing her comprehension of the complex relationship between culture, memory, and history as well as current debates over their fluid definitions. According to Sturken: "Memory forms the fabric of human life . . . [and] establishes life's continuity; it gives meaning to the present, as each moment is constituted by the past. As the means by which we remember who we are, memory provides the very core of identity."[96] Memory works by storing information within the mind, enabling us to connect past and present life events while forming our personal identities based on remembered experiences. For Holocaust survivors, memory remains the powerful faculty for recalling traumatic past events, yet it is difficult to evoke certain memories while trying to understand, contextualize, and perhaps intentionally forget sensitive memories in an attempt to move into the present moment. For individuals, the present time is heavily influenced by the past, and since there is no clear divide between the past and present, the passage of time is continuous.

In *Tangled Memories*, Marita Sturken aims at making explicit distinctions between key terms in order to set the groundwork for her theoretical interventions. Explaining the difference between personal and collective memory, Sturken attests: "The collective remembering of a specific culture can often appear similar to the memory of an individual—it provides cultural identity and gives a sense of the importance of the past. Yet the process of cultural memory is bound up in complex political stakes and meanings."[97] Collective remembrance speaks to the significance of shared historical recognition within societies, but it departs from individual remembrance in that memory

is linked to politics, especially in relationship to public memorialization of significant historical events such as the Holocaust. Sturken specifies that which constitutes cultural memory when she states that it "is produced in the United States in various forms, including memorials, public art, popular culture, literature, commodities, and activism. It is generated in the context of a debate over who defines cultural memory, what counts as cultural memory, and, indeed, what cultural memory means."[98] For this thesis project, cultural memory in the form of literature is the main focus, but it is also important to acknowledge the role that popular culture art forms, such as mainstream films, plays in the process of building and defining cultural memory within a specific national context. Critical debates over who has authority to define and claim particular cultural identities lies at the heart of Memory Studies and crosses into discussions of identity politics.

The Importance of Counternarratives

Drawing connections between personal and collective memory within the production of history, Marita Sturken exposes how they are intimately interdependent. For example, Sturken claims: "History can be thought of as a narrative that has in some way been sanctioned or valorized by institutional frameworks or publishing enterprises. One cannot say that history comprises a single narrative; many histories are constantly under debate and in conflict with each other."[99] Dominant historical narratives or *metanarratives* teach us about generally accepted historical accounts that are recognized by nation-states, but as Sturken recognizes, multiple historical narratives nevertheless exist although there is considerable disagreement over which versions of past events are to be officially approved and included in the historical archive. *Counternarratives* or narratives that move against the dominant historical narrative are crucial for this project

in specific relation to the need for more awareness of women and children's Jewish Holocaust stories. Their personal stories become established as collective memory within the historical context of World War II. Thus, although many dominant Holocaust narratives exist, this thesis project works to reconfigure the Holocaust literary canon by placing counternarratives at the center.

Holocaust Literature is intimately tied to collective or public memory of the Holocaust. The acceptance of imagination within Holocaust narratives, especially memoirs, is a relatively recent phenomenon, which is indicative of the changing nature of how the Holocaust is publically commemorated through literature. As David G. Roskies and Naomi Diamant state: "The growing public awareness of the Holocaust happened at the intersection of the private and public spheres: real and proxy witnesses began to write, publish, discovering new means of artistic expression and commemoration . . . "[100] Producing knowledge about the Holocaust on behalf of the public allows for the merging of personal and collective memory, working to create a newly formed area of literature that reflects both historical and artistic recollections. Holocaust Literature continues to grow and change, reflecting the current historical and social environments in which pieces of writing are produced.

Holocaust survivors' literature encompasses reflections on extreme violence and inhumane conditions that lie outside of all that is considered normal human experience. Holocaust memory remains a heavily contested site due to its sensitive subject matter and because of the fact that "the absolute extremity of the Holocaust has rendered obsolete, if not obscene, all accepted norms of beauty, human agency, and moral accountability."[101] Holocaust survivor's beliefs in "beauty, human agency, and moral accountability" were

understandably tested and frequently disavowed due to the severe trauma associated with Nazi brutality.[102] In their work, Roskies and Diamant aim to upset "all such essentialist claims" in favor of offering a nuanced guide to understanding a selection of secular Holocaust literature in relation to memory and history. According to Roskies and Diamant: "'Memory' has become the new catchword of Holocaust studies, understood to be a species of trauma, and memoir has become the favored genre of Holocaust writing.[103] Memoirs are deeply personal and direct forms of writing that hinge on a survivor's (re)imagined traumatic experiences told through first-person narration.

Memory, history, and trauma are intricately intertwined within the genre of Holocaust Literature, the memoir becoming Holocaust Literature's foremost subgenre, although "from its very inception, Holocaust literature defied genre boundaries and crossed disciplines."[104] For this particular study, it is necessary to admit that Holocaust Literature is difficult to define and categorize since its content is complex, varied, and involves multiple branches of knowledge. To read Holocaust Literature is to remember that "[i]t is the struggle against forgetting, mediated in a host of ways in social practices, in literature, and the arts."[105] It is important to not only remember dominant historical events but also the individuals who died or were directly or indirectly affected by the Holocaust, thus engaging in Holocaust remembering is necessary both "an act of defiance" and an act of resistance against persecution and genocide.

Imperialism, Racism, & The Holocaust

In *War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust,* Doris L. Bergen explores the links between the Holocaust, imperialism, and racism. Bergen attests:

"European imperialism, especially in its nineteenth-century forms, was also indirectly part of the preconditions of the Holocaust."[106] To conscientiously study the Holocaust is to examine previous historical patterns of domination and resistance within Europe. During the Spanish Inquisition, between 1492 and 1497, Jews and Muslims were ordered to either convert to Christianity or leave the Iberian Peninsula. Thus the purging of Jews in Europe originated long before the Holocaust began.[107] The exploitation of people of color by European imperialists caused a hierarchical structure to originate, and thus "[f]rom their experiences in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere, European methods and technologies for oppressing and enslaving large groups of people . . . [and later] transferred onto targets of abuse within Europe, such as Jews."[108] European imperialists increasingly oppressed people outside of Europe, but eventually oppressed Jews located inside of Europe creating deep societal problems stemming from rampant racism. The social construction of race lent to an environment in which there was a hierarchical division between "superior" and "inferior" people who inhabited a particular society. In regard to the formation of hierarchies, Bergen explains: "The notion that humanity was divided into races that struggled with one another for survival and dominance was in large part a product of the colonial experience."[109] In colonial contexts, racial hierarchies were established to suppress minority groups while Anglo Europeans gained power and control over the masses economically, socially, and politically.

An obvious negative effect of racial hierarchies is that of tension and competition for dominance among differing groups of people within colonial systems based on "[n]otions of racial superiority."[110] In Africa during the nineteenth century, German forces carried out atrocities against the Herero and Nama people, demonstrating a long

history of racism and hatred preceding the Holocaust. Before the Nazis targeted Jews in Germany, anti-Black racism was prevalent as were vicious anti-Slavic sentiments within the German state.[111] Eventually "[t]his tangled web of prejudices toward [Blacks,] Slavs, Communists, and Jews would emerge in a more massive and violent but still recognizable form in Hitler's Germany."[112] Though most people tend to focus on Jews as victims of Hitler and Nazi Germany, we must also acknowledge that other minorities were also targets for persecution. According to Doris Bergen, "Nazi officials created a category called 'asocials' into which they put all kinds of people they considered problematic: Gypsies, the homeless, criminals deemed incurable, people with certain mental disorders, or those accused of sexual perversions."[113] "Asocials" were figuratively, if not literally, segregated from the rest of Germany society because they were considered outside the realm of human normalcy.

Recognition of the need for further research on Romany women and children's Holocaust oral testimonies is referenced in Chapter Three. Scholar of Children's Holocaust Literature Andrea Reiter explicitly points to an absence in Holocaust and Genocide Studies in relation to Romany "asocials," stating: "Between half a million and a million European Romanies perished during the Third Reich, yet the history of the Romanies, or 'Gypsies', is generally relegated to footnote status in Holocaust studies."[114] Through acknowledging Holocaust accounts by Romanies, it is possible to insert their lesser-known histories into scholarly dialogues about Holocaust literature. Nazis labeled minorities who were located on the periphery of society, such as Romanies, as weak and degenerate, thereby reasoning that they threatened the "racial purity" of Germans, especially through intermarriage. For the Nazis, failing to take action about the existence

of "degenerates" would be risking the decline of German civil society. Along with the aforementioned groups of people deemed "asocial," Jehovah's Witnesses and Freemasons counted as social outcasts.[115]

Since there was a significant population increase in Germany prior to 1933, the Nazis were able to exploit Germans' anxieties surrounding societal "degenerates," publishing a vast amount of propaganda to sway public opinion against "asocials."[116] Doris Bergen sets forth a claim that aids in our understanding of the Holocaust's prelude, stating: "If historical prejudices made the timber of European and Germany society combustible, Hitler lit the match that set the house on fire."[117] The impetus for the Holocaust depended on already established historical prejudices, therefore foreshadowing the events yet to manifest under the political direction of Hitler. When Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany as chancellor in 1933, it "marked the beginning of a revolution that would transform German politics and society[,]"[118] although according to Bergen, Hitler's rise was unremarkable since he had yet to become a formidable leader.

Gradually increasing influence on Germany's citizens through fear-inciting rallies and speeches, Adolf Hitler gained tremendous psychological power over his constituents. Over the coming years, "Hitler's Nazis used a combination of intimidation and legislation to create a mood of hostility toward Germany's Jews, a kind of open season for abuse."[119] Jews were subject to informal and formal systematic persecution for many years in Nazi Germany, creating a tense and fearful atmosphere for Jews and other "asocials." The implementation of the Nuremberg Laws marked one of "[t]he key pieces of legislation when it came to attacks on Jews . . . pass[ing] in the fall of 1935[,]"[120] which further pushed Jews to the periphery of German society. As Jews were figuratively moved to the

margins of Germany society, they began to experience life as second-class citizens, as was the case with colonized subjects in Africa and Asia. During World War II, Jews suffered as they were physically imprisoned in ghettos across Nazi-controlled Europe.[121] The systematic persecution of Jews and other minorities during Hitler's reign was countered to some extent through resistance work.[122]

Much of our work in American Studies, such as this particular project, is meant to expose the pitfalls of colonization, racism, and persecution through multiple methodological vantage points, encouraging awareness about active collective resistance against destructive colonial domination. Pertinent to work done in American Studies because it coalesces transnational theories, postcolonial studies, and memory studies, Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory* allows for studying collective and individual memory and identity while "focus[ing] on both agents and sites of memory, and especially on their interaction within specific historical and political contexts of struggle and contestation."[123] Contextualizing Holocaust memory studies by methodically investigating the relationship between history, memory, representation, remembrance, and politics, Rothberg asserts that "pursuing memory's multidirectionality encourages us to think of the public sphere as a malleable discursive space in which groups do not simply articulate established positions but actually come into being though their dialogical interactions with others; both the subjects and spaces of the public are open to continual reconstruction."[124] By challenging normative definitions of memory in order to open new possibilities for analyzing sites of memory within the public realm, Rothberg recognizes that conceptualizing collective and individual remembrance and memory "has the potential to create new forms of solidarity and new visions of

justice."[125] Despite justice representing different forms based on varying political, historical, and social contexts, Rothberg and other Holocaust scholars realize that the main goal of engaging in memory studies revolves around seeking international justice through active resistance to oppression.

Global Holocaust Awareness & Prevention

On April 23, 2012 at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, President Barack Obama delivered a strongly worded speech on remembrance of the Jewish Holocaust in the United States while calling for global responsibility in genocide prevention. President Barack Obama, introduced by Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, speaks about his experience with Wiesel at Buchenwald, stating:

> And at the end of our visit that day, Elie spoke of his father [Shlomo]. 'I thought one day I will come back and speak to him,' he said, 'of times in which memory has become a sacred duty of all people of good will.' Elie you've devoted your life to upholding that sacred duty. You've challenged us all, as individuals, as nations, to do the same, with the power of your example, the eloquence of you words, as you did again just now.[126]

Through appreciating the "sacred duty" to bear witness and uphold the memory of the Holocaust, President Obama strengthens Elie Wiesel's resolve to fight against persecution of the Jewish people. Elie Wiesel embodies resilience in surviving Holocaust horrors while retaining a personal sense of dignity, which has been reinforced by his persuasive and impactful speeches and descriptive, meaningful writings on his experiences. In bearing witness to atrocity and genocide as a Holocaust survivor for the purpose of educating the global public, Elie Wiesel actively works toward the attainment of a genocide-free global society.

With a global focus on Holocaust awareness and prevention, President Obama warned his audience about the imperativeness of remembering the Holocaust by hearing from the survivors themselves. At the forefront of his speech, President Obama speaks against Holocaust denial: "And I've walked those sacred grounds at Yad Vashem with its lesson for all nations: The *Shoah* cannot be denied."[127] Located in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem is Israel's official Holocaust memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Since anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial is ever-present in the world, it is especially noteworthy that President Obama reiterated the dangers of denial on an international stage. Recognizing that lessons derived from the Holocaust teaches us about the hazards of hatred, persecution, and genocidal destruction for the international community, President Obama's statements implicitly reflects a transnational awareness of Holocaust remembrance.

President Barack Obama's speech is a call to action by members of the global community to understand cultural diversity through embracing the "other" by practicing tolerance and widespread inclusion. Implicitly promoting the development of a higher consciousness for every citizen, President Obama declares: "We must tell our children [of the Holocaust]. But more than that, we must teach them. Because remembrance without resolve is a hollow gesture. Awareness without action changes nothing. In a sense, 'Never again' is a challenge to us all to pause and to look within."[128] To merely know about the Holocaust does not suffice; instead, we must learn about the Holocaust through research and visits to memorials. Holocaust education is key to creating engaged historical consciousness along with both individual and collective activism against hatred, which is necessary for teaching tolerance to current and future generations.

By explaining the meaning behind the "Never again" refrain, President Obama reinforces the notion of activism against persecution. Echoing Elie Wiesel's "'Never again' is a challenge to reject hatred in all of its forms, including anti-Semitism which has no place in a civilized world."[129] President Obama underscores the importance of internally reflecting on the challenge to end genocide wherever it occurs in the world. The rejection of hatred by means of social and political activism is strongly emphasized by Michel-Rolph Trouillot. Claiming that "no amount of historical research about the Holocaust and no amount of guilt about Germany's past can serve as a substitute for marching in the streets against German skinheads today[,]"[130] Trouillot further emphasizes President Obama's urging to pair knowledge with collective action in the struggle against hatred and racism.[131] To be active in the struggle against anti-Semitism is to cultivate awareness of past persecution and Holocaust traumas, thereby igniting a sense of global solidarity among those invested in promoting a more peaceful global society. As stated by President Obama, genocide prevention remains a moral responsibility for the United States as well as other nations.[132] Since cultural and ethnic genocide is still raging today in various parts of the world, our work as scholars and activists is far from finished.

Against Holocaust Denial & "Against Forgetting"

A main purpose of this project is to foster an awareness of Holocaust denial by educating people about tolerance and understanding of the Jewish people by analyzing their personal experiences as expressed through literary forms. In his treatise, Robert Eagleston explains that Holocaust denial must be discussed in regard to definitions of history and genre. Eagleston avows that Holocaust denial "is the claim that the murder of

approximately six million Jews in the Nazi genocide during the Second World War did not happen," and it is essentially "anti-Semitic and race-hate thinly camouflaged."[133] Despite overwhelming evidence that the Holocaust took place, a large number of people insist that it did not occur, which exposes their blatant hatred and racism toward Jews. Since our modern world is comprised of people from multiple ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds, embracing people of different backgrounds is the goal of those who purport to be open-minded, tolerant, and informed citizens. According to Eagelston: "Part of being postmodern is being aware that, as a result of the colonial and post-colonial history of the world, the cultures we inhabit are multicultures."[134] According to Desmond and Dominguez, we often think that multiculturalism only pertains to diverse groups of people living in the United States, but cultural diversity obviously exists abroad, which effects people living in the United States and beyond.

In order to resist anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial, and racism more generally, it is essential to study diverse cultures while understanding the impact of colonial histories and legacies on people of color. Battling against hate and misunderstanding, scholars in American Studies and Genocide Studies hope to build awareness of the need for accepting and encouraging diversity while increasing a sense of inclusion for people of color within and outside of higher learning institutions. Robert Eaglestone reflects on the concept of multiculturalism as he posits:

> Multicultural societies are not those where different cultures are assimilated into a single culture (although wonderful things come from creative mixing of cultures). Rather, it is a culture of respect and negotiation between different traditions. . . . Part of what we, who live and share in this multiculture, have a duty to do is fight this hatred [of Holocaust deniers] wherever and wherever we find it.[135]

If citizens maintain a sense of tolerance and respect for other people and cultures, then a strong sense of understanding of different lifeways, traditions, and perspectives develops; hence it is possible for Holocaust deniers' hatred to be minimized or demolished altogether.

Remembering the Holocaust is essential for honoring the dead and becoming educated about its horrendous events while working toward ending persecution and genocide wherever it exists. In the words of Elie Wiesel: "To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive; to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time."[136] In order to be aware of the Holocaust, we must listen to survivor's stories and recognize their lessons "[f]or the youth of today, for the children who will be born tomorrow."[137] A main goal of this thesis project is to bring awareness of the Holocaust's horrors while also acknowledging the bravery of survivors who lived to tell their tales.

Within this chapter, the importance of transnational perspectives within American Studies in regard to genocide, the United States, and the Jewish Holocaust is evident as well as the necessity of comparative genocide analysis. The contested sites of history and memory must be considered within Holocaust Studies, as is evident in the critical discussions found here. The study of convergences and divergences of individual *versus* collective memory of the Holocaust is necessary to explore in order to gain a solid foundation for the critical examination of literary Holocaust narratives. The complex histories of colonialism and racism are considered in this chapter as a means to understand how the Holocaust must be contextualized more broadly. Holocaust education and awareness of genocide is crucial for working to collectively prevent genocide and move against Holocaust denial and honor Holocaust victims, while also

working to create alliances against persecution, racism, and oppression within a global context.

Chapter Two

"To Describe the Indescribable:" The Interplay of Memory and Imagination in Jewish Women & Children's Holocaust Narratives

While metaphors are often employed in literary Holocaust narratives "to describe the indescribable," portraying the Jewish Holocaust (*Shoah* in Hebrew) during World War II accurately through the written word is essentially an impossible task.[138] Despite the challenge in translating traumatic memories into language, some authors are able to meaningfully express their stories in ways that move their readers immensely. Instead of utilizing straightforward phrasing to describe, to the best of their ability, events that actually took place, many Holocaust survivors rely on metaphors and symbols as a means to relay information regarding their traumatic recollections. Since it is not possible to exactly reproduce Holocaust survivors' experiences, a language that is understandable, familiar, and knowable must be invented for readers.

Imagistic language is set forth in literary Holocaust narratives to assist readers in imagining the Holocaust's surreal events, which lie outside of normal human experience. Commenting on the difficulty of expressing Holocaust experiences through literature, Lawrence L. Langer states: "The challenge of the literary imagination is to find a way of making this fundamental truth [of Holocaust experiences] accessible to the mind and emotions of the reader."[139] Each Holocaust author must find an effective approach to access "the literary imagination" in order to create a distinctive narrative style that will reach the intended audience.[140] Although substantial limitations exist, "[a]rtistic expression nonetheless makes available to the imagination a dimension of Holocaust

atrocity that few other kinds of writing can achieve."[141] Holocaust Literature challenges the reader to actively imagine the surreal nature of Nazi-perpetrated atrocities and genocide in a way that significantly differs from traditional genres, which tend to focus on everyday life events and experiences.

This chapter's central focus surrounds an analysis of how Jewish Holocaust survivors employ narrative styles and techniques in their stories, especially those of women and children who explore—through the use of metaphor, visually descriptive language, and the interplay of memory and imagination—the trauma at the crux of each narrative. This chapter, secondly, threads in an investigation of self-reflexive commentary on memory and the writing process in Paul Steinberg's memoir *Speak You Also*. A main argument of this chapter is that since Holocaust narratives are always mediated, "authentic" Holocaust narratives do not actually exist because survivors rely on reinventing past memories and experiences to write their stories. This chapter additionally argues that Holocaust survivors such as Rena Kornreich Gelissen, Paul Steinberg, and the fictional characters Emil and Karl, must rely upon the survival technique of group solidarity and companionship to endure Holocaust traumas. The reaffirmation of life in the midst of trauma is a common theme in Holocaust Literature, which is symbolic of the human spirit's resiliency. Finally, the overarching argument is as follows: despite the fact that male-centered survivor stories are the most frequently read by general audiences with the exception of *The Diary of A Young Girl*, it is necessary for women and children's voices to be heard, valued, and studied academically in order for a fuller representation of war witness accounts within the Holocaust literary canon.

Privileging Women and Children's Counternarratives

In the past two decades, scholars have increasingly recognized women's Holocaust testimonies and narratives, yet more attention must be devoted to their study within Holocaust Studies. Remarking on how women are important participants in history, Jay Winter attests: "Women join men in forming a new class of historical actors—what we now term 'witnesses,' people who were there, people who have seen war at close range, people whose memories are part of the historical record."[142] Winter advances the idea that individual memories become part of a larger historical collective remembrance while alluding to the agency of women war witnesses. As discussed in Chapter One, individual and collective memory remains a heavily contested site of study within Holocaust Studies. Actors or agents, rather than narrators of history, terms derived from Michel-Rolph Trouillot, possess a certain authoritative power that tends to be acknowledged and honored within public discourses.

Women are being viewed in the current political global environment as active agents of history rather than submissive bystanders; thus women's narratives should be more visibly included into the broader Holocaust literary canon. S. Lillian Kremer focuses on an absence pertaining to women's stories in the Holocaust literary archive: "Studies of Holocaust literature written before the late 1970s by male critics focused on works by male Europeans and Israelis. Other than a few significant exceptions, prominent critics have given scant attention to the noteworthy body of Holocaust writing by Americans and women."[143] Centering attention on female-authored Holocaust narratives by American Jews is another way to substantially expand the Holocaust literary archive. As Kremer attests: "With the intention of extending the canon, this text

explores English-language fiction by émigré women living in America whose creative writing is influenced by Holocaust memory and experience, and fiction by American-born women encountering the Holocaust through research and imagination."[144] Distinguishing between Holocaust "memory and experience" and "research and imagination," Kremer highlights varying degrees of closeness to the Holocaust, revealing that women who did not directly experience the Holocaust must rely on "research and imagination" to create their narratives. Examining Holocaust-centered work of American women who are not Holocaust survivors, while also including analysis of émigré Holocaust survivor narratives, Kremer provides a far-reaching study that is "reflective of the diverse Holocaust experience of nationally, culturally, and socially distinct women."[145] Due to Kremer's reflections on women's Holocaust experiences through national, cultural, and social lenses, her gendered work is transnational in nature.

A significant shift has occurred over the last two decades in studying Holocaust Literature from a gendered perspective, demonstrating how scholars have actively worked to reshape the field in order to include women's Holocaust narrative accounts. Increasing awareness of female-authored narratives lies at the heart of S. Lillian Kremer's project as she aims at promoting egalitarianism among men and women authors within Holocaust literary studies. In underscoring the need to make prominent Women's Holocaust Literature, Kremer declares: "Though slow in appearing, feminist perspectives have emerged in Holocaust historiography during the last two decades and have become central elements of the Holocaust canon."[146] Feminist perspectives of the Holocaust are key to understanding the added difficulties for women in overcoming gender discrimination and sexism within and outside of concentration camps; thus, a sense of

agency as a means of resistance was important for Jewish women during World War II. The effort to move women's Holocaust narratives from the periphery to the center of the Holocaust literary canon is enormously important for this thesis project, as it argues to further highlight women's agency while prioritizing accounts of their experiences.

Although a considerable move to center women's Holocaust narratives within the literary archive has already taken place, their narratives can still be considered counternarratives. Since women, along with children, were among the most vulnerable groups of people who experienced the Holocaust and because their narratives are still less known than men's narratives, women's voices in particular must be heard, acknowledged, and remembered. Recognizing the inclusion of gender and sexuality into Holocaust Studies over the past two decades, Marianne Hirsch argues for a more explicit incorporation of women's Holocaust narratives into the Holocaust historical and literary archive by asserting:

> If gender and sexuality have entered Holocaust studies in the last twenty years, they have primarily been used to create a lens through which we can understand the particularities found in women's testimonies and memories, and to shape a platform that has enabled those stories to emerge and be heard in a context in which masculine and heteronormative stories had for the most part dominated.[147]

According to Hirsch, women's narrative accounts reveal unique viewpoints; therefore, it is especially critical to create a gendered, alternative "platform" or space in which women's stories can be made present as literary discussions are actively reframed from a female-centered perspective. The dominance of masculinity and heteronormativity within Holocaust Literature must be comparatively analyzed in relation to discourses of femininity and nonheteronormativty as Holocaust Studies reinvents itself over time. In

order for a richer, more dynamic area of study to emerge, the boundaries of Holocaust Studies must continually be reconfigured as new forms of analysis develop.

The study of women's Holocaust narratives is constantly changing because the methods for understanding complicated and nuanced themes, tropes, literary styles, descriptions of survival strategies, and healing processes that women must undergo during and after World War II are always in negotiation. Whether fiction, and I would argue, oral and written or historical testimony, women's Holocaust writing, "validates women's history, mourns the dead, empathizes with survivors whose memories are burdened by horrendous trauma, and celebrates regenerative psychological healing and communal restoration."[148] Women's Holocaust Literature encourages both individual and collective remembrance while opening a space for exploring the therapeutic aspect of writing for survivors and their descendants.

Rena's Promise: *A Tale of Two Sisters in Auschwitz* marks an example of a woman's narrative that fosters a distinctive sense of healing in response to trauma while contributing to the restoration of women survivors' morale. Companionship as a survival strategy is noticeably present in Rena's narrative. As previously stated, the study of women as Holocaust witnesses is vitally important in examining a wide range of wartime accounts. S. Lillian Kremer's contends: "The near absence of representation of women's gender-related Holocaust experience in critically celebrated literature is explained in some measure by the gender of most Holocaust authors and critics. Their work reflects their male experience and perspective."[149] According to Kremer, the lack of celebrated Women's Holocaust Literature is due to male critics primarily focusing on and praising Holocaust narratives by male survivors. Since male-authored literary criticism reflects

their biased masculine worldviews, it is important for all critics to aim at understanding differing survivor perspectives, such as those of women and children.

By focusing on girl-child bearers of history, new avenues of analysis become available in interpreting the perspective of Auschwitz survivor Rena Kornreich Gelissen. It is a difficult endeavor for a Holocaust survivor to remember traumatic memories of internment in Auschwitz, yet it is even more challenging to recall such memories years after the experiences occurred. Rena Kornreich Gelissen retroactively imagines experiences from girlhood while she is an older woman, and thus actively participates in reviving her own *postmemory* within a structured historical context. Co-author of *Rena's Promise*, Heather Dune Macadam, provides a glimpse into the difficulties surrounding the reconstructive narrative process: "My original approach to interviewing Rena about her story was to get her to start at the beginning and go to the end, from Point A to point B. . . . But the mind does not move linearly, it plays hopscotch and jump rope with our memories."[150] Dune Macadam reveals how challenging the task of (re)constructing memories is for developing a coherent narrative; thus, creative approaches to interviewing a survivor are necessary. Since our memories do not exist linearly, and since our mental images and thoughts manifest in multiple dimensions, the process of organizing recollected memories chronologically invariably requires a great amount of work.

Reconstructing Memories & Narrative Conventions

To comprehend the process of assembling a cohesive and accessible Holocaust narrative for readers, the critical work of Ruth Franklin, relating to the implementation of

imagination into Holocaust survivor tales, must be considered.[151] According to Franklin, the complex intertwining of memory and imagination comprises a considerable part of the writing process for survivors intent on recording their stories. Franklin contends that Holocaust narratives should not be exempt from scholarly criticism because they involve both memory and embellished reflections; such imaginative narratives are subject to scrutiny by literary scholars. Recognizing that all Holocaust narratives are mediated, Franklin states: "To consider any text 'pure testimony,' completely free from aestheticizing influences and narrative conventions is naïve. *Every canonical work of Holocaust literature involves some graying of the line between fiction and reality.*"[152] [emphasis original] Within Holocaust narratives, wide arrays of narrative techniques are utilized; hence all Holocaust Literature consists of a blurry combination of literary conventions and retrospective personal reflections on the historical past.

Holocaust survivors make sense out of traumatic, disordered, and nonsensical Holocaust events by ordering and structuring their literary material to create a streamlined narrative, further providing evidence that every literary work is mediated. Explaining the potential problems surrounding literary Holocaust portrayals, Ruth Franklin comments: "Aesthetically, the literary representation of horror has an inherent falsity, in that it requires the writer to impose a coherent pattern or form when in reality there was only chaos."[153] Through systematically structuring written reflections of traumatic experiences, writers work to assemble an organized narrative, which aids in rebuilding and rearranging the survivor's fragmented and fading memories. If the survivor writes his/her story post-World War II, the recollection of memories must be supplemented by (re)imaginings of traumatic personal experiences that have long been

suppressed or nearly lost to time. Not surprisingly, a large number of survivors choose to remain silent about their Holocaust memories because they are painful to recollect and due to the often misguided belief that no one is interested in hearing their stories.

The Interplay of Memory & Imagination

The art of the interplay between memory and imagination appears in full view at the conclusion of *Rena's Promise*. Rena temporarily rejoices but soon feels immense sorrow as she definitively discovers that her parents are dead. Rena employs her mother's figure as a guide in choosing which direction to travel upon liberation from Auschwitz. Joyously imagining how she will tell her mother about maintaining her promise of returning home with Danka, Rena conjures up an imaginative mother-daughter conversation. The reader intimately witnesses a farewell to Rena's beloved mother: "I stand in the middle of the crossroads waving to the vision that has kept me alive. Mama! She stands there for one brief moment, her arm still in the air. Good-bye. Her image shatters into a thousand shards of light. My eyes wince with pain as the slivers of glass fall from my eyes. The dream is gone. There is no one to go home to anymore."[163] The imagined spectacle of Rena's mother shatters as Rena feels glass in her eyes, and thus the dream vision disappears and violently collapses, signifying Rena's harsh entrance into a post-war reality. Rena and Danka must begin the process of healing from the tremendous trauma of Auschwitz and the loss of their parents. Rena acknowledges that her parents' imagined presence prevents Rena from "giving into death," proving that visual memories of the Shoah are among the most enduring types of memory. Through each Jewish women and children's Holocaust narrative explored in

the latter part of this chapter, the intertwining of memory and imagination, along with the use of vivid images and metaphors, make stories come alive in multiple dimensions.

Although there are varying degrees of mediation, each narrative must emerge from a layered process that involves interviews, translation, and publication. Survivors often rely upon professional writers to help extract, record, and methodologically arrange the survivor's memories of war experiences through multiple interview sessions. Another way in which Holocaust narratives are mediated relates to the process of transcribing primary Holocaust accounts, which often involves translation of a survivor's native language into the language of the interviewer. If a literary work is published outside the survivor's home country, an additional level of mediation occurs when the text is translated into a third language. After a Holocaust narrative is published, it becomes a formal account that depicts a survivor's wartime experiences for a range of audiences.

Paul Steinberg's memoir, *Speak You Also*, directly confronts the challenges of reconstructing memories for a literary audience through supplying self-reflexive commentaries on memory and the writing process. Steinberg describes the nature of memory in relation to his Holocaust experiences: "Memory is kind to us, beneficent. It muddles certain areas, erases things here and there. Small islands remain, specific spots, isolated, standing out starkly against murky depths our words cannot begin to fathom. . . . My plan is to navigate among the little islands of memory that still remain."[154] According to Steinberg, memory is disjointed, foggy, and sometimes unreliable, but memory is meant to operate in this way because otherwise the mind would be overly crowded with information. Alluding to his darkest memories, Steinberg acknowledges

that some memories are ultimately unspeakable. Steinberg's creative meditations on memory are an important element of *Speak You Also* because they expose the need to overcome considerable psychological obstacles for the purpose of recollecting past Holocaust experiences.

Paul Steinberg's task in *Speak You Also* is to negotiate the complicated terrain of his own memory, concentrating on and retrieving key memories that continue to exist although they are buried deep within his mind. Words cannot thoroughly describe the experiences survivors endured, according to Steinberg, but descriptive language can aid in shedding light on personal reactions to extreme circumstances, which opens a window for peering into specific Holocaust stories. Since the clarity of memories tend to become increasingly cloudy over time, Steinberg and other Holocaust writers must find a sufficient means to reassemble fragmented pieces of individual memory in an effort to partake in providing narratives that are part of collective remembrance of the Holocaust.

Paul Steinberg's recounting of his experience in the Drancy concentration camp on the outskirts of Paris, and then in Auschwitz in German-occupied Poland, is interspersed with present-time "digressions" on the struggles associated with writing a comprehensible, cogent, and compelling Holocaust memoir decades after the events occurred. In "Digression III," a self-reflexive discourse on Steinberg's thoughts regarding the reformulation of incomplete memories for his memoir, Steinberg reveals that he "wonder[s] if by digging [for memories] so hard [he] might not be distorting things, inventing empty phantasms, virtual images. . . . The play of memory and imagination seems as haphazard as the famous games of love and chance."[155] Steinberg expresses self-consciousness in relation to distorting and inventing memories for the

purposes of writing a memoir, yet he acknowledges this revealing aspect of the process to recall memory. Attempting to accurately remember traumatic Holocaust experiences while aiming to understand the interactions of memory and imagination is mentally demanding but important for Steinberg's project of individual Holocaust remembrance.

Holocaust Literature as a Genre

Interpreting and classifying European literary texts related to the Holocaust demands a dialogue about the process of determining which testimonies are made central in the Holocaust literary canon. Elrud Ibsch remarks on how Holocaust survivors' "right to speak" directly after World War II can determine which texts scholars consider the most authentic.[156] The "right to speak" pertains to the notion that only survivors of genocide possess the authority to describe specific Holocaust experiences since they were some of the only people to witness the atrocities directly. Ibsch states: "[The Holocaust survivors'] testimonies were the only accepted genre because of the intolerable gap between the 'loathsome realities of the Holocaust' and any expression of the imagination."[157] Stated differently, direct testimonies of survivors were initially deemed acceptable if they strictly documented the "historical truth" or included only concrete, unembellished, and realistic accounts of historical events. In many cases, survivors intentionally enhance memories for the purpose of dramatizing their stories for readers. Within Holocaust Studies, it only became acceptable for literary narratives to combine historical truths with imagined versions of certain events within the last couple of decades.[158]

Holocaust Literature must become more centrally emphasized in Literature as a discipline and within English departments throughout the United States. Recognizing the changing nature of Holocaust Studies, Elrud Ibsch draws attention to the problem of marginalizing Holocaust Literature in relation to the broader category of Literature; therefore, he argues that it is necessary to actively move Holocaust narratives to a more prominent position within the genre. Ibsch contends: "Literary scholarship, however, still lacks comprehensive histories of Holocaust literature, [thereby] caus[ing] Holocaust literature to be relegated to a position at the periphery of the literary canon."[159] Within English departments in the United States, Holocaust Literature is not often focused on; instead, American and British Literature hold precedence. Debates surrounding which particular narratives should be incorporated into the Holocaust literary archive is key to understanding how scholars assess and legitimate literary works. Within Holocaust Literature, numerous subgenres exist, including Children's Holocaust Literature, which occupies a central place in this thesis.

Often relegated to the Holocaust literary canon's periphery because children's oral and written testimonies and narratives tend to be viewed as unreliable, Children's Holocaust Literature must be recognized and valued more explicitly by literary scholars. Child Holocaust literary scholar Andrea Reiter asks: "So what is it that distinguishes the diaries and reports by children from those of adults? First and foremost, it is the child's limited perspective based on its worldview, still very much in flux and more impressionable."[160] Since children have fewer experiences in the world than adults, and because their personalities and philosophical outlooks are in the process of forming, children's accounts are generally seen as untrustworthy. On the other hand, since

children are usually not yet aware of social, historical, and political events, one could argue that their oral or written statements are more uncomplicated and straight-forward than adults' accounts.

Children and adult's Holocaust narratives are analyzed differently. Since children are more vulnerable subjects of persecution and genocide, their stories are regarded with an increased sense of sympathy. As stated by Sue Vice:

> Discussing the child-victims of mass-murder can appear to call upon sentimentality rather than objectivity, although the history of these not only has its own rationale,[14] but in itself reveals the Nazi's project to have been genocidal. Children were included in the Nazis' racial murder because they not only represented the threat of future revenge for their parents' death,[15] but were themselves the next Jewish generation.[161]

In contrast to adult narratives, an emphasis on emotions or sentimentality within children's Holocaust testimonies can lead to detachment from objective representations, interpretations, and analyses of recorded experiences, and yet a combination of emotive recollections and historically-based experiences provocatively provides a richer site for literary analysis. From the perspective of Nazi perpetrators, Jewish children posed a substantial threat to the racial "purity" of German society since they represented future generations of Jews. As discussed in Chapter One, Jews and other "asocials" were viewed as societal degenerates who posed a risk to "Aryan" Germans. Although children are often perceived as vulnerable and innocent subjects of Nazi-led persecution and genocide, they possess a sense of agency that is evident in their implementation of various Holocaust survival techniques.

Authenticity in Holocaust Narratives

Although initially the blending of memory and imagination in the narrative process can be disorganized and inherently chaotic, Paul Steinberg and other Holocaust writers are eventually able to compose organized, logical pieces of writing which are digestible for readers despite their deeply traumatic nature. Holocaust narratives are intriguing to people because they encompass a hybrid collection of old, reconstituted memories and new, reformulated concepts of past events, creating multiple layers within stories. Purely "authentic" Holocaust narratives do not exist because survivors' stories are a calculated mixture of straightforward accounts of what occurred (such accounts naturally change over time) and (re)rendered, imagined or interpreted versions of the past. Michel-Rolph Trouillot presents a notion of authenticity in relation to the production of historical knowledge, maintaining:

> Historical representations—be they books, commercial exhibits or public commemorations—cannot be conceived only as vehicles for the transmission of knowledge. The must establish some relation to that knowledge. Further, not any relation will do. Authenticity is required, lest the representation becomes a fake, a morally repugnant spectacle.[162]

As claimed by Trouillot, authenticity is mandatory for confirming that historical representations such as Holocaust literary narratives are directly linked to history, signifying a true account of events. If a historical representation is determined to be false or inauthentic, then it becomes a shameful and even an unethical portrayal of historical events. When a Holocaust survivor can only partially remember his/her story, then his/her reconstructed personal history is not deemed inauthentic; it may be viewed as farther from what actually took place during a given historical event.

Authenticity, Elie Wiesel's *Night*, & Narrative Conventions

In Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past: The Power and Production of History*, a salient commentary on the power of authenticity in connection with historical remembrance arises in "The Presence in the Past." Trouillot argues that "[t]he so-called legacies of past horrors—slavery, colonialism, or the Holocaust—are possible only because of that renewal [related to the 'historicity of the human condition . . . requires that practices of power and domination be renewed']."[164] The past historical horrors that Trouillot refers to can be reflected on in the present time through investigating how power and oppression operate within traumatic histories. Authenticity can be understood and recognized by gazing at the "struggles of our present [because] [o]nly in that present can we be true or false to the past we choose to acknowledge."[165] We must consider that present interpretations of the past change based on current social and historical contexts. In our efforts to obtain awareness about past historical struggles that hold considerable relevance today, especially since anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial exists in the United States and abroad, we must understand that historical remembrance of the Holocaust is increasingly important as well as the project of collective action against racism and hatred.

Elie Wiesel's *Night* is the most internationally well-known works of Holocaust literature "which continues to accepted as the ultimately canonical Holocaust memoir."[166] While *Night* is typically considered the foremost authentic Holocaust narrative and although it is based on Wiesel's actual experiences in Auschwitz, a major concentration camp in German-occupied Poland, narrative conventions are employed as (re)imagined events are concocted for dramatic literary purposes. According to Ruth Franklin, *Night*

belongs to the "best [Holocaust] literature" because it represents an ideal balance, referred to by renowned Holocaust literary scholar Lawrence L. Langer "between memory and imagination."[167] Ruth Franklin comments on concerns over authenticity in Holocaust Literature in "The Kabbalist in the Death Camp: Elie Wiesel," stating: "*Night* was immediately seized as the lodestar of authenticity" in direct contrast comparison to James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*, which contains a gamut of false testimony.[168]

Along with Ruth Franklin, Lawrence L. Langer speaks to the intrinsic problem of inauthentic memoirs when referring to Binjamin Wilkomirski's *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood*. Langer thereby asserts: "Wilkomirski's popularity in America, especially in critical and academic circles, remains one of the most puzzling episodes in recent Holocaust inquiry . . . "[169] To a great extent, the collective American enthusiasm for *Fragments* is due to the appealing story of an innocent Jewish child who lives through imprisonment in two concentration camps during the Holocaust. Lawrence L. Langer expresses a sense of perplexity as to why *Fragments* was initially positively regarded by American readers, commenting: "One is left to wonder how carefully readers had studied the text of his memoir, since, as we shall see, it is full of logical and historical flaws that anyone familiar with the techniques of literary narrative and history of the camps should have been instantly suspicious."[170] According to Langer, if paying attention to the factual, historical, and literary blemishes in *Fragments*, readers should have been aware of clues indicating the memoir's blatant falsities. If readers and critics were more educated about the concentration camps and fabricated memoirs that already exist, then the inauthentic nature of *Fragments* could have been detected earlier. Langer concedes that since readers of Holocaust literature are enthusiastic about reading survivor's

testimonies, they sometimes neglect to learn basic historically-based Holocaust facts. Thus the result is that general readers are unable to distinguish "remembered from invented reality."[171]

Children's Holocaust Literary scholar Andrea Reiter references *Fragments* in connection to the issue of authentic Holocaust representation regarding who has the "right to speak" in relaying certain historical truths. Reiter states: "Apart from the potential damage this affair [of *Fragments*' publication and discovery that the book was a fraud] has inflicted on the artistic representation of the Holocaust, it opened up the general discussion about the authenticity and textuality of camp testimonies."[172] The "right to speak" about the Holocaust is rapidly called into question when false narratives gain a stronghold with the Holocaust literary canon, sparking heated conversations on the definition of authentic narratives. In literary theory, textuality denotes the content of a narrative, which is focused on in the critical analysis of primary testimonies. Arguing that Holocaust narratives involve personal memories, historical context, and invented experiences, Reiter concludes that "the narrative devices that 'Wilkomirski' adopted and that had persuaded even experts to read the text as an authentic memoir have demonstrated that any text about the Holocaust, whoever wrote it and with whatever intention, can only mediate the facts."[173] As Ruth Frankin also attests, Holocaust narratives contain mediated or interpreted versions of past events; therefore, the controversy over the authenticity of *Fragments* teaches us that all Holocaust narratives should be subject to scholarly criticism. As previously discussed in this chapter, the subjectivity of Holocaust narratives is closely associated with the filtering of narrative content through the author's imagination.

Lawrence L. Langer focuses on issues of representation and authenticity regarding Holocaust memoirs by drawing attention to how individuals can become misguided in their quest to gain Holocaust information. Langer succinctly contends: "It appears that when the Holocaust is the subject, misdirected popular enthusiasms form easily, especially when they deflect us from the task of tackling the authenticity of unbearable truths."[174] Reflecting on the widespread interest in the Holocaust, Langer underscores a potential issue associated with only understanding the Holocaust from a singular disciplinary standpoint. Many readers are overly eager to learn about the Holocaust and thus fail to recognize inauthentic representations of Holocaust experiences since people are generally not focused on aligning historical facts within personal stories. If one is determined to understand the Holocaust from a multi-disciplinary perspective, then there is a moral obligation to confront the Holocaust's traumatic subject matter through comprehensive avenues, which involve critically reading and viewing historical documents, testimonies, photographs, films, museum exhibitions, and personal narratives. While it is important for national and transnational audiences to have a vested interested in the Holocaust, more nuanced education is necessary to prepare people for the journey into learning synthetically about such "unbearable truths."[175]

A New Stage of Nazi Destruction: The Murder of Women and Children

Authenticity looms large in Holocaust literature because the subject matter is uniquely sensitive, and since only select people have witnessed and experienced Holocaust horrors, their stories are uniquely compelling. In light of the devastating facts regarding child Holocaust victims, which are discussed below, it is evident that Binjamin Wilkomirski intentionally took advantage of readers who would be sympathetic to the

narrator, a vulnerable, suffering Jewish child narrator. Wilkomirski arguably exploited the tragic turn of events involving the murder of children during the Holocaust for the creation of *Fragments*. For Wilkomirski to fabricate events and misrepresent himself as a Holocaust survivor is a profound offense to readers and genuine survivors.

Survival rates for children in Nazi-occupied Europe were particularly grim, further underscoring the need to value child Holocaust survivor narratives. Marianne Hirsch provides crucial historical context relating to how Jewish children fared during World War II, stating: "Children, moreover, were particularly vulnerable in Hitler's Europe: in the entire Nazi-Occupied territory of Europe only 11 percent of Jewish children survived, and thus the faces of children signify the unforgiving ferocity of the Nazi death machine."[176] Since the survival rates of children were exceedingly low during the Holocaust, it is even more important that scholars focus on analyzing their personal narratives.

Laurence Rees emphasizes the magnitude of children's overall vulnerability to death, echoing the astonishingly low survival rates of children during the Holocaust. In his international bestseller, *Auschwitz: A New History*, Rees describes how "the policy of killing in the East [during 1941] was to be extended to include Jewish women and children. . . . This moment marks a turning point in the killing process. Once women and children were to be shot, the Nazi persecution of the Jews entered an entirely different conceptual phase."[177] In Auschwitz, children and babies were usually selected for death upon arrival since they were unable to partake in the Nazi's camp workforce. Physically deformed Jewish children "were considered 'unworthy of living' [and were subsequently] killed" in one of Hitler's murder programs.[178] Nazis became increasingly indiscriminate

in their murderous operations, even murdering mentally and physically disabled people.[179]

The new "conceptual phase" of the Nazi killing machine relating to the systematic and widespread practice of murdering women and children exemplifies a particularly tragic dimension of the Holocaust. In contrast to male-centered literary interest, Mark M. Anderson provides a reason as to why children's Holocaust narratives appeal to the general public, contending that children embody a symbol of defenselessness and innocence that "serves as a metaphor for the general plight of Holocaust victims[;]" therefore, they become a universal symbol of the survivor.[180] Women and children's narratives of the Holocaust share a special link because women, more often than men, include multi-dimensional depictions of children in their writings. As stated by S. Lillian Kremer: "Women's Holocaust narratives often individualize children, focusing closely on the plight of named and developed young characters rather than on an anonymous mass or a representative child."[181] The individualization of children within women's Holocaust narratives signifies the close connection between women and children. Kremer marks an important distinction between male and female Holocaust writing while revealing the importance of individual remembrance in regard to children of the Holocaust.

Companionship as a Survival Strategy

Group solidarity and companionship as a survival technique for women and children during the Holocaust is key to understanding the differences between how men, women, and children coped during the Holocaust. Companionship between siblings

proves essential as a survival strategy for Rena Kornreich Gelissen and her sister Danka as they work in tandem to survive Auschwitz's horrendous living conditions during the Holocaust. Rena witnesses "[a] teenage girl eat[ing] a lemon while her mother beg[ged] for a bite. Her eyes glare[d] at her mother angrily as she devour[ed] the already squeezed pulp like a wild animal. . . . She eats the whole thing without sharing it with her mother."[182] Greatly disturbed, Rena watches the desperate mother-daughter scene with disgust because she constantly strives to aid in Danka's survival. This particular scene speaks to how people often resorted to defensive individual actions to survive extreme experiences in which starvation was part of daily living. Weighing heavily on Rena is the awareness of camp inmates' selfish acts despite the knowledge that death is always waiting to snatch its next victim. Rena conscientiously asks, "how else can we survive if we do not care for one another?"[183] The bond of sisterhood for Rena and Danka is formidable as is the bond of friendship and brotherhood between Emil and Karl, which I shall soon examine. Maintaining a sense of solidarity and personal dignity in the camps was a significant challenge, but women who worked together after the loss of loved ones survived in greater numbers than men, who tended to act individually in the quest for survival.[184]

In contrast to collective female action, a poignant scene in *Speak You Also*, which aptly demonstrates the self-motivation of male inmates, occurs as Paul Steinberg reflects on the death of his friend, Phillippe. Claiming that he cannot remember his friend's voice or appearance, Steinberg regrettably states that Phillippe "has died again, forever" because his memories have vanished. Steinberg prods himself, asking: "Am I not the last being on this earth to have known him when he was alive and to have loved him, before

letting him leave without holding his hand?"[185] By making the choice not to be present when his friend is dying, Steinberg places his own needs before the needs of others. Speaking with grief and regret for his absence at Phillippe's death, Steinberg posthumously pays tribute to his friend by acknowledging their deep-rooted bond in his memoir. Paul and Phillippe did share in their suffering, often providing each other with human companionship while living among the dead at Auschwitz, yet Steinberg, along with other male camp inmates, mostly chose to act as individuals in the game of survival throughout much of their ordeals in Auschwitz.

The Power of Visual Memories within Holocaust Narratives

Strewn across each narrative, rearticulated visual memories become a focal point as imagistic details of the Holocaust's horrors become imprinted on the reader's minds. The inclusion of visual memories in literary Holocaust narratives work to enliven stories by encouraging readers to create their own visual projections of specific historical events. A memorable scene occurs in *Rena's Promise*, which provides evidence for the importance of visual memories in Holocaust memoirs. As Rena and her sister Danka depart from Poland for Slovakia, they must say goodbye to their parents for the last time. The separation of children from their parents is further discussed in Chapter Three. By way of Heather Dune Macadam, Rena literarily reconstructs the following scene in descriptive utterances:

> [My parents] stumble[d] through the deep December snow, waving good-bye. . . . 'Good-bye, Papa!' 'Good-bye, Mama!' Long after they have become tiny specks on the horizon we wave, hoping they can still see us. I know that they are waving too, hoping the same thing. Mama's and Papa's black shapes etched against the snow are engraved in my mind as if they are still waiting for us to return, as if they always will be there, waiting.[186]

Upon mentally digesting Rena's emotionally described scene, the reader inevitably senses sorrow as the parents and children are separated. We can imagine this scene in cinematic term because of its imagistic drama. The vision of Rena and Danka's parents in deep snow waiving farewell to their children while they recede into the distance, coupled with the knowledge that the family will likely never be reunited, is extremely distressing. Readers can easily imagine being in the place of the waiting parents or departing children; thus, they may feel a connection to Rena's traumatic experience. Separation scenes are common in Holocaust narratives in which survivors describe how they are continually haunted by an image of his/her family being taken to their deaths.

Additionally common in Holocaust narratives is the theme of constant love and deep bonds between parents and children. Rena's mental photograph provides hope that her parents are alive and waiting for her return, yet Rena's memory of her parent's waiving goodbye psychologically disturbs her during and after the specific event. Rena expresses sentiments that are tinged with melancholy: "Tears usually taste salty but mine are bitter, frozen to the sides of my cheeks, frozen in time."[187] Paul Steinberg comments overtly about the "difficulty [of] separating two time frames" while engaging in the narrative process.[188] The use of the word "frozen" implies that Rena's memories are stagnant in time, revealing that even decades after the Holocaust, the effects of her traumatic experiences are present. Rena's memory of separation from her parents is arguably the most distinct, scarring mental reflection of her wartime experience. As Rena and Danka starve in Auschwitz, Rena conjures up a final memory of her parents as motivation to stay alive while vigorously fighting against the ever presence of death in

the camp. In concentration camps such as Auschwitz, any behavior or action of the prisoners signified resistance, which could lead to abuse, punishment, or death.[189]

Mental photographs from the past do not vanish easily in survivor's minds, especially those images that denote a significant or tragic event often relating to loss of a loved one. In *Rena's Promise*, despite the probability that Rena's parents are dead, she perpetually resists death by clutching at the memory of her parents, explaining: "I frame this picture in my mind and hang it on a mental wall where I can gaze at it constantly. I know they are there. I work [in the camp] because they need me. I eat because they are waiting. I live because they are alive."[190] The imagined presence of Rena's parents and Danka's literal presence prevents Rena from willingly moving through death's door. By repeatedly resurrecting a specific troubling memory, one can engage in mentally self-destructive behavior caused by the fixation, but for Rena, attaching to this memory provides comfort and motivation. Although subconsciously aware of self-deception associated within holding onto the belief that her parents are alive, Rena's tactic of remembrance proves to be a successful coping strategy throughout her journey. After the war, Rena faces reality by definitively acknowledging that her parents have been killed. Against impossible odds, Rena maintains her promise to protect Danka in Auschwitz, and both sisters do ultimately survive the war. Rena's enduring sisterly love, paired with the imagined belief that her parents are alive, propel her to continue living through the terrifying conditions at Auschwitz.

"Beauty in the Midst of Tragedy"

The Journal of Hélène Berr provides a remarkable literary illustration of one woman's account of the Holocaust's prelude, which is filled with arresting visual memories. A young Jewish Parisian woman named Hélène Berr authors a journal about her experiences living as a Jew in Nazi-occupied Paris during World War II. A cultured student of the Sorbonne and accomplished violinist, Berr shares her innermost desires, hopes, and fears in an unbridled artistic literary style. Initially the journal was meant to remain private, but Hélène eventually writes for her lover Jean Morawiecki "to preserve memories of what will have to be told . . . "[191] Hélène's comment foreshadows her sense of duty to bear witness through sharing her first-hand experiences of the occupation. The journal begins chronologically with Hélène's insightful and descriptive language relating to her joyful experiences of youth in pre-war France. According to Lise Jaillant: "Hélène Berr's journal was marketed as the poignant daily writings of a young Jewish woman in occupied Paris. . . . As in the case of *Suite française*, the rediscovery of Berr's journal became the focus of sensationalized media coverage."[192] The popularity of *The Journal of Hélène Berr* and Irène Némirovsky's *Suite Française* showcases the interest people have in reading women's Holocaust-related accounts. Jaillant is skeptical of the inclusion of Berr's journal within Holocaust literature because the narrative is primarily about pre-war experiences, yet since the Hélène perishes during the Holocaust, the journal should be included in the literary canon.

Since Hélène's journal is an intimate collection of her Holocaust-related musings and due to the fact that the journal was rediscovered fairly recently, readers have shown keen enthusiasm for the text. Although Hélène's story does not directly take place within

a Holocaust setting such as an internment camp, it nonetheless echoes a deeply personal experience of life as a young Jewish woman in Paris during the Nazi occupation. Andrea Reiter affirms: "We do not read these diaries [or journals] primarily as historical documents, or as authentic records of the child's [or adolescent's] subjectivity, but rather as narratives which exhibit historical or even tragic irony."[193] *The Journal of Hélène Berr* cannot be categorized as strictly a historical document despite including specific historic events. Instead, Hélène's recorded personal narrative is literary in that it embodies a deep sense of irony, for the audience is aware of her tragic fate while she herself remains unaware of it.

In Hélène's journal, a stark contrast exists between reflections of life in pre-war France that exhibit contentment, which are juxtaposed with reflections of distress and fear during the Nazi occupation. In Hélène's story, the narrative explicitly marks a change in literary tone from tranquility to increasing chaos within wartime France. A transition occurs in the journal's latter portion as Hélène darkly describes her experiences as a persecuted Jew in Paris. For instance, during pre-war France, Hélène blissfully comments on a trip to her family's country home in Aubergenville: "The silence rustles with memories and images."[194] From the journal's first pages, it becomes evident that Hélène writes with sophistication and perceptive subtlety as she describes a memory of Aubergenville with inherent poetic sensibility:

> I tipped my head right over to see the world upside down, and I suddenly became aware of the magical harmony of the colors of the landscape around me, from the blue of the sky to the soft blue contours of the hills, the pink and dark and misty green fields, the calm browns and ochers of the rooftops, the peaceful gray of the bell tower, all of them steeped in luminous tranquility.[195]

The passage's imagistic, lyrical language reveals Hélène's sensitivity to her outdoor environment by conveying that natural beauty signifies serenity. The colors, natural light, and landscape reflect a vibrant quality of young Hélène's life prior to the German occupation of France. Precise memories and descriptive images from peaceful, calm Aubergenville become rooted in Hélène's mind, but soon all is disrupted as the Nazis descend on Paris.

A turning point in the journal occurs when Hélène is forced, along with all other Jews, to wear the Yellow Star of David. When Hélène must wear the star, she feels degraded, humiliated, and as if she is "living [in] a nightmare."[196] The love of friends and family give Hélène a sense of hope that "it [is] going to be all right," yet she understands that the changes brought about by war are potentially of great negative consequence.[197] Even though the Jews of Paris are constantly plagued by hardship due to persecution and frequent deportations, Hélène remarks: "There is beauty in the midst of tragedy. As if beauty were condensing in the heart of ugliness. It's very strange."[198] Recognizing life's paradox in that to be human is both wonderful and terrible, Hélène underscores the complications of life lived under extreme wartime duress in the heart of Europe. Hélène is astutely perceptive of the contradictions between her privileged life within one of the most beautiful cities in the world and new heavily imposed restrictions on her personal freedom. During this narrative stage, an abiding sense of hope exists despite the presence of hardship because Hélène's family is unaware of the tragedy that awaits them. In order to counter feelings of impending gravity, Hélène engages in violin practice, which provides a sense of normalcy during this increasingly difficult time.

Similar to Rena in her attachment to the memory of her parents as motivation to stay alive, Hélène clutches at her positive pre-war memories in order to maintain a sense of hope that life will return to normal. Yet, after Hélène's father is deported to Drancy, a concentration camp in a northeastern suburb of Paris in October 1943, Hélène witnesses increasing Nazi brutality in the streets of central Paris. Retrospectively contemplating the carefree previous year while feeling distraught and exasperated in the present, Hélène reacts to her uncertain situation: "How all my memories of last year haunt me, the small gate of the Tuileries, the leaves on the water! I live among these memories, and each corner of Paris awakens a new one."[199] Consciously allowing positive memories of a beautiful public garden to consume her, Hélène propels herself to endure adversity during the Nazi occupation of Paris.

Hélène's memories involving nature represent a secure time in her life that has since faded and passed away, yet recurring pleasant memories continually spark a sense of hopefulness for the future. Hope is a common theme in Holocaust Literature, as is evident in the narrative of Sala Garncarz, who survived a Nazi labor camp.[200] Sala's narrative, written by her daughter Ann Kirschner, is similar to Hélène's journal in that "[i]nstead of focusing on external events, these private papers create an emotional history of the war, a complex figure of fear, loneliness, and despair, always returning to the dominant theme of hope for tomorrow."[201] Sala and Hélène both write about their emotions, which vacillate between fear and hope, yet hope incessantly plays a more prominent role throughout their narratives. A strong sense of optimism persists throughout Hélène's narrative, yet a keen awareness of life's difficulties under occupation provoke Hélène to write: "I am not thinking of my own death, for I wish to

live; to live as much as I am able."[202] Hélène knows that the quality of her life is compromised by the occupation, but she attempts to live as fully as possible despite unfavorable circumstances. Although death often preoccupies Hélène's troubled mind, the will to survive always triumphs despite her experiences of oppression and persecution because of her Jewish heritage. An implicit sense of maturity is reflected in Hélène's selfless disregard for her own death.

In full force, light and life enter the narrative in relation to Hélène's affinity for children and children's stories, revealing an association between the compatible sensibilities of women and children. Employed at the Jewish organization *Entraide Temporaire*, Hélène works to save Jewish children from deportation to Nazi concentration and death camps.[203] On November 13th 1943 Hélène delights in reading *Winnie-the-Pooh*, commenting: "I smiled with all my heart and even laughed out loud. It's so completely that English children's world that I love . . . [C]hildren are infinitely superior to us [adults]. I was entranced."[204] The world of children's stories allows Hélène to momentarily escape the reality of war. Since Hélène is an imaginative, playful, and emotive young woman, she naturally gravitates toward children and children's literature. Through Hélène's interest in working closely with (Jewish) children, she is apparently captivated by their way of being in the world. In other words, Hélène expresses an ontological understanding of children as she writes about their unique sensibilities. As the reader of Hélène's journal begins to sense a light-hearted tone upon reading about Hélène's genuine joy, the tone and mood of the narrative abruptly shifts to uncertainty and darkness brought about by upcoming danger for Jews. After reading

Winnie-the-Pooh, Hélène's happiness is swiftly disrupted upon hearing the unsettling news of an imminent deportation.

The reaffirmation of life in the midst of tragedy and death is a common theme in Holocaust survivor's literature, which is a testament to the human spirit's resiliency. In the pages of Hélène's journal, a sense of a life well lived abounds, proving the power of women's agency during traumatic situations. Hélène's last known communication consists of a letter to her sister, which underscores Hélène's seemingly limitless capacity for hope as she affectionately expresses the following sentiments: "All is well, darling. See you soon. Love and kisses."[205] Contributing to the bittersweet textual content and overall tragic story of Hélène Berr is the fact that she exudes warmth, love, and hope even near the end of her young life. Hélène perishes in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in northwest Germany where Anne Frank also died. Those who read Hélène's journal remember her insightful writing and generosity toward children because of the work she accomplished during the war. Although 500 children were saved through the organization Hélène worked for *Entraide Temporaire*, 11,000 children were deported from France and a total of one million Jewish children were murdered during the Holocaust.[206]

Musical Expression as Resistance & Adult Self-Sacrifice for Children

A harrowing scene occurs displaying the power of sensory storytelling in the well-known memoir, *The Pianist*, by Polish Holocaust survivor Wladyslaw Szpilman involving a group of children who are being led to their death. Szpilman, as a young man, observes the author of children's books, doctor, and caretaker of orphans, Janusz

Korczak, leading a group of orphans out of the Warsaw ghetto. Szpilman explains that Korczak chose to accompany "his orphans" to the death chambers instead of preserving his own life.[207] Remarking on how Korczak entertains and comforts the children until the end, because of his love of children, Szpilman asserts the following narrative image: "When I [Szpilman] met them [Korczak and the orphans] in Gesia Street the smiling children were singing in chorus, the little violinist was playing for them and Korczak was carrying two of the smallest infants, who were beaming too, and telling them some amusing story."[208] This scene reflects harmony between Korczak and the children, expressed through a sense of joyful lightness derived from playing music and storytelling. Since Korczak has immense love for the orphans, he tries to protect them by averting their awareness away from their terrible fate. The narrative image of the smiling, happy children walking to their untimely deaths is dense with dramatic irony, and the violin music is eerie because of its tragic musical undertone. Yet, on the other hand, music (whether choral or orchestral) can be interpreted as a symbol of comfort, beauty, and resilience. Hélène's engagement with violin practice parallels this scene in music's representation of normality and comfort. Music as an artistic expression is capable of simultaneously embodying the beauty and tragedy of life while also symbolizing resistance to oppression.

Janusz Korczak heroically sacrifices himself in order for the children to feel a measure of comfort as they literary and figuratively move toward death. Wladyslaw Szpilman attests that Korczak deeply loves the children, declaring: "I am sure that even in the gas chamber, as the Cyclon B gas was stifling childish throats and striking terror instead of hope into the orphans' hearts, the Old Doctor must have whispered with one

last effort, 'It's all right, children, it will be all right,' so that at least he could spare his little charges the fear of passing from life to death."[209] Instead of focusing on the meaning of his own death, Janusz Korczak primarily considers implications related to the childrens' death as he attempts to ease their suffering. Although Szpilman imaginatively constructs this scene, revealing his inclusion of intertwining memory and imagination within this narrative, to complete the unknown ending of Korczak's life, the emotional impact on the reader is nonetheless significant. While Szpilman imagines that Korzcak is able to protect the children's innocence, it is sobering to accept that Holocaust child victims and survivors, even hidden children who did not directly experience the horrors of concentration camps, but who did experience emotional trauma, lost their innocence prematurely in life and in death.

A common theme in Holocaust narratives involves the act of self-sacrifice on behalf of adults for the welfare of children. In *Emil and Karl,* one of the first works of Holocaust literature for young Yiddish readers, Yankev Glatschteyn creates a resistance worker who sacrifices his life for a Jewish boy named Emil, and Karl, a Gentile boy. Through the medium of historical fiction, *Emil and Karl* urges young American Jewish readers during the early 1940s to "imagine what it would be like to face the challenges of life under Nazi occupation, on the eve of the war that had just begin and whose terrible course was then unforeseeable."[210] Glatschteyn asks us to insert ourselves into his characters' immediate realities by provoking us to face moral and ethical challenges of pre-war Europe in connection with questions about anti-Semitism, hatred, complicity, and anti-Jewish Nazi policies and laws. Glatschteyn encourages readers to feel empathy for those who individually and collectively suffered during and after the Holocaust. *Emil*

and Karl is accessible to both children and adult readers as it aims to educate its young audience about how the beginnings of World War II impacted Jews. Holocaust literary scholars are interested in the novel since it encompasses important themes of Children's Holocaust Literature, and it continues to be utilized for Holocaust education today.

Emil and Karl, a story about two young boys living in Austria during the Holocaust's early stages, emphasizes universal themes of friendship, loyalty, compassion, and understanding. Emil and Karl's mothers are abruptly separated from the boys, which reflects the previously stated theme in Holocaust narratives of parent-child separation. The traumatic event of parent-child separation causes Emil and Karl to form a substantive bond based on shared experience, and thus the boys act interdependently throughout their arduous journey to escape the crushing grip of Nazi rule. Although Karl is a Gentile, he chooses to stay with Emil indefinitely despite the precarious position Karl must inhabit thereafter. Throughout the narrative, the Emil and Karl motivate each other to survive each harrowing ordeal. Gentiles Hans and "Aunt Matilda" are resistance group members who take substantial risks to save Emil and Karl from Nazi perpetrators. In order to protect his own identity as an active resistance worker, Hans only pretends to accept Nazi orders but intuitively knows that he will eventually be caught and murdered for being a sympathizer of Jews.

A Train in the Night

During the Holocaust, deportation trains were centrally important in the systematic operation to deport Jews to ghettos, work camps, concentration camps, and death camps. Without the ability to relocate people *via* train *en masse*, the Nazi's "final

solution"[211] would not have been carried out to nearly the same effect. Trains are a dominant symbol in many Holocaust literary narratives as well as in Holocaust films. In literature more broadly, trains also figure dominantly as they tend to represent movement and freedom. Within Holocaust Literature, however, trains typically represent negative forces of death and doom. A train becomes an omen of imminent trouble for Emil, Karl, Matilda, and Hans as the omniscient narrator describes it, the "train with small, dimly lit windows stopped for a while, then it began slowly chugging away. When the train was no longer in sight, they heard the whistle blasts again, as if the train were bidding farewell to the silent darkness."[212] In *Emil and Karl* the train figuratively foreshadows the difficult times ahead for the family; thus, the train's "farewell" signals the impending separation of Hans, Matilda, and the children as it disappears into the distance. "The silent darkness" represents the approaching unavoidable doom that will imminently befall the makeshift family.

A train image also appears in *The Pianist* as Wladyslaw Szpilman's family are forced into a boxcar which is bound toward a concentration camp; therefore, in *Emil and Karl* and in *The Pianist*, the train symbolizes movement toward death, darkness, and doom. Szpilman states that "the train was starting off, slowly and laboriously. I turned away and staggered down the empty street, weeping out loud, pursued by the fading cries of people shut up in those trucks [cattle train cars]. It sounded like the twittering of caged birds in deadly peril."[213] The slow departure of the train creates a prolonged emotional experience for Spilzman as he witnesses his family being locked away with masses of helpless people. Spilzman hears his own weeping intensify while the noise of crying people slowly dissipates as the train moves further from him, emphasizing a crescendo

and decrescendo of sound. The separation of Szpilman from his family is similar to the separation of Emil, Karl, Hans, and Matilda, except Szpilman's narrative scene is based on an actual experience. To great effect, Szpilman utilizes the simile of trapped people as caged birds in order to make vivid the image of enclosed, suffering people who are fated to perish.[214]

Contrary to the perception that trains within Holocaust accounts are a negative symbol, is that of Kindertransport trains, which saved thousands of children from death in Nazi-occupied Europe. In order to secure the children's safety in *Emil and Karl*, Matilda dictates that Emil and Karl must be sent *via* train on a Kindertransport to England. A multitude of testimonies detailing individual children's Kindertransport experiences exist, comprising a distinct area of Children's Holocaust Literature. Andrea Hammel describes the meaning of Kindertransport, stating: "The term Kindertransport is usually applied to the rescue of nearly 10,000 unaccompanied minors with Jewish backgrounds from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and the border area between Germany and Poland to Britain between December 1938 and the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939."[215] The subject of the Kindertransport gives rise to issues of parent-child separation, images of innocence, identity, public sympathy for children, trauma after the transports to the United Kingdom, implications of refugee status, and public memorialization.

The power of selfless and loving action on behalf parents, whether surrogate or biological, towards children during difficult times, is centrally evident in *Emil and Karl*. As masses of children board the train, Matilda risks her life to say goodbye to Emil and Karl on the platform; hence she sacrifices her own safety for the children. Karl replies to

Emil: "Yes, she's so brave! She gave me a piece of paper. I have it here."[216] Emil and Karl both recognize the depth of Matilda's care even though she is their surrogate rather than biological mother. Women often formed non-biological families consisting of camp inmates in order to help each other survive. According to S. Lillian Kremer: "Group solidarity worked as an effective mechanism in the concentrationary universe. . . . Groups organized according to political, national and religious affiliation; small biological and surrogate families, even the commonplace two-person friendship, provided inmates with information, advice, and protection."[217] In *Emil and Karl*, positive interactions between makeshift family members demonstrate their willingness to engage in collaborative survival strategies during times of danger. A gripping moment occurs when Emil and Karl read handwritten notes from their surrogate father, Hans, as they move their eyes over the following words: "I will die so that Emil and Karl might be able to live together in peace."[218] The narrative technique of allowing the reader to absorb the note creates a sense that we are directly experiencing this particular moment in the narrative; therefore, the readers effectively become active agents in the storytelling process. From the reader's perspective, the action occurs in the present-time as we eagerly discover how the story will unfold.

The majority of Holocaust narratives involve an unresolved, tragic conclusion; thus the endings of both *Emil and Karl* and *The Pianist* are left undetermined. When Emil and Karl become separated during the Kindertransport, the reader is unsure whether they will reunite and travel together to England. Yankev Glatshteyn intentionally inserts an unresolved conclusion in *Emil and Karl*, leaving many unanswered questions, thus provoking the reader to research about children's post-Kindertransport experiences.

During the time young people read *Emil and Karl* (circa 1940), the major Holocaust events had not yet occurred; therefore, it would have been impossible to accurately know how children such as Emil and Karl would have fared in reality. Reading *Emil and Karl* nowadays, while possessing retrospective knowledge about the Holocaust's events, gives us a deeper understanding of Emil and Karl's dangerous living circumstances.

Within this chapter, a critical discussion aids in revealing how the utilization of narrative conventions such as the interplay of memory and imagination within both male and female Holocaust narratives assist in translating traumatic Holocaust experiences into understandable language for readers. The primary focus of this chapter demonstrates the need for a more overt incorporation of women and children's Holocaust narratives into the Holocaust literary canon. Proving that the use of metaphors and visual descriptions within female-centered Holocaust Literature is key to creating memorable and impactful stories, this chapter also demonstrates how a critical conversation on the inclusion of narrators' self-reflexive commentaries within literary narratives is necessary for understanding the writing process. Authenticity within Holocaust Literature as related to how texts are mediated through various channels—as interviews of survivors, translations, and the eventual publication of literary narratives—is shown to be an important subject of analysis. The resiliency of women and children, who often provide each other with comfort through a sense of mutual support during difficult Holocaust experiences, is of considerable importance within the study of Holocaust Literature.

Chapter Three

Transcendent Voices of Children in *Auschwitz*, *Kristallnacht*, and *Night*

When reflecting on the horrors of Kristallnacht, or the 1938 "Night of Broken Glass," the Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups of 1942 in Paris, and the ensuing Jewish Holocaust from a twenty-first century perspective, the emotional and physical trauma inflicted upon Jewish children and the narratives that derive from such extreme experiences tend to strike readers with a sense of utmost intensity and horror. As readers learn more about these tragic historic events, they engage in feeling the greatest degree of compassion toward the children who suffered before and perished during World War II as a result of crimes committed by Nazi perpetrators both within and outside of Germany.

The numerous mistreatments perpetrated by Nazis, including persecution and genocide, directly affected the lives of young Jewish children and the lives of their family and friends in Jewish communities across Europe. Young people who experience extraordinary wartime situations often provide accounts that reveal vivid visual memories, which channel honest and direct impressions of traumatic events. Eyewitness accounts of children and adolescents often convey a sense of innocence and naivety, which reflects their young ages and limited experiences in the world. For the children who experienced Kristallnacht, the Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups and other events related to the Holocaust, visual images, sounds, and scents shape lasting memories, often punctuating their descriptive stories. The expression of sensory memories in literary Holocaust narratives are utilized as compelling storytelling devices, which evoke the power of childhood experiences via dramatic images for readers.

This chapter primarily focuses on Jewish children's experiences of Kristallnacht in Germany and the Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups in Paris by analyzing retrospective narrative accounts of how children negotiate trauma. The complicated intersections of history, memory, and trauma are ever-present within the analysis featured here. Since Kristallnacht in 1938 and the 1942 Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups took place over a short duration of time, these historical events allow for a focused investigation into children's descriptions of their reactions to specific war-related trauma. Retrospective, rather than immediate post-war accounts of child Holocaust survivors are chosen for explication because they provide layered interpretations of traumatic events that are both historical and literary. Understanding historical facts regarding Kristallnacht and the complicit role of French authorities in the Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-up provides historical context for children Holocaust survivor's literary accounts, which is necessary for comprehensive analysis.

As discussed in Chapter Two, it is important to recognize that all Holocaust narratives are mediated since they incorporate a blending of memory and imagination, and are shaped by historical and social contexts. The limitations of retrospective accounts surround the distance between the survivor's recollections of certain past events and their current memories, which are often less than clear. Adding to the layered quality of survivor's narratives explored in Martin Gilbert's *Kristallnacht* is the inclusion of a multiple generation storytelling approach through the use of commentary by survivor's children and grandchildren. The transfer of psychological trauma between generations of Holocaust survivors is referenced within a discussion pertaining to Children's Holocaust Literature.

This chapter additionally explores the differences in adult versus child perceptions of traumatic World War II events as well as disturbing visual images associated with parent-child separations within literary narratives; therefore this chapter actively engages in a historical-literary analysis of how children's Holocaust narratives exemplify emotive historical narratives by making vivid sensory memories. Further areas of analysis within this chapter include the creation of makeshift families after biological families are dismantled, and game-playing as a survival strategy for children within women and children's Holocaust literature. This chapter also examines the recurrent theme within Holocaust testimonies and narrative accounts of children: the transition from childhood to adulthood. A conversation on remembering the Holocaust's children and a look to further research on Romany children's Holocaust narratives occurs as the chapter concludes.

Children's immediately recorded post-war testimonies of the Holocaust provide descriptive personal recollections and riveting evidence of a wide variety of Nazi perpetrated horrors throughout Europe during World War II. While retrospective accounts of child survivors are more literary in nature, both immediate post-war and retrospective child Holocaust survivor accounts, which detail how survivors have coped with trauma long after the Holocaust's end, are essential in obtaining thorough insights into the Holocaust's horrors. Boaz Cohen and Rita Horváth attest to the importance of child narratives recorded across a range of time spans, stating: "The hundreds of child survivor testimonies collected after the war are a yet untapped resource for the understanding of the Holocaust, as well as children's experiences of it and its aftermath."[219] Cohen and Horváth's statement regarding children's testimonies speaks

directly to the relative lack of attention paid to these documents by Holocaust scholars despite them being a key resource for gaining nuanced understandings of the Jewish Holocaust.

Since children, along with women, were among the most vulnerable subjects of persecution and genocide within Nazi Europe, their voices must be more readily recognized, studied, and remembered. In his interdisciplinary monogram on the Holocaust and decolonization, Michael Rothberg attests that children symbolize what he terms "multidirectional memory" since they embody a bridge between past generations and a sense of hope for future generations. Explaining that children represent an intergenerational transfer of memory, Rothberg states: "[T]he figure of the child has taken center stage as a site of uneasy, multidirectional memory. This chapter reflects on the possible ethical and political significance of the child as a bearer of memory and postmemory in a moment of violent global transformation."[220] Evoking Marianna Hirsch's term *postmemory*, which is referenced in Chapter Two of the thesis, Rothberg revealingly comments on how children, especially within the context of war, carry history and memory into changing present and future political global environments.

Retrospective child Holocaust survivors' eyewitness accounts provide perceptive renderings of traumatic testimonies in British Historian Martin Gilbert's emotive historical text entitled *Kristallnacht*. In a sense, all Holocaust survivors' accounts are retrospective since they consist of memories of events, but within *Kristallnacht*, older adults tell their childhood survival stories in distant retrospect. Gilbert's work involves historical information surrounding the "Night of Broken Glass," personal testimonies of child survivors, and perspectives from the survivor's children or grandchildren, creating a

multi-generational storytelling approach. Martin Gilbert initially describes Kristallnacht in terms of historical facts, which relay details of the mass pogrom, thus acknowledging that contextual information is required for understanding the full impact of children's testimonies. After describing details of November 9th and 10th of 1938, Gilbert transitions to personal, literary recollections of those who directly experienced the two fateful nights of Kristallnacht. According to Gilbert, Nazi SA Stormtroopers perpetrated a wide range of violent acts during Kristallnacht, including destroying more than one thousand synagogues and thousands of Jewish-owned shops in riots.[221] In Germany and Austria, ninety-one Jews were murdered and approximately 30,000 Jewish men from age sixteen to sixty were arrested and deported to concentration camps.[222] Elderly Holocaust survivors, who were children during Kristallnacht, retrospectively recollect descriptions from Kristallnacht, creating a r(e)imagined version of events experienced by their younger selves.

In *Kristallnacht*, adult narrators retrospectively renew childhood perspectives in order to share their experiences of Holocaust horror. Child Holocaust literary scholar Andrea Reiter acknowledges adult narrators who reconstruct their childhood experiences by overtly making use of literary devices, stating: "The former child victims thus resort to imagination to recreate the atmosphere and emotions that, according to Freud, cannot be part of memory."[223] Although adult narrators certainly partake in reconstructing their own past narrative histories through imagination, perhaps including embellished memories and exaggerated emotions for dramatic purposes, revived original memories are also undeniably contained within their narratives.

Depending on the genre of Holocaust literature, scope of the project, and an author's intention for writing a particular text, recorded testimonies and literary narrations can include one generation or multiple generations of Holocaust survivors. The voices of Martin Gilbert's narrators are multigenerational, signifying both individual and collective remembrance, as adult narrators and their children retrospectively capture experiences of Kristallnacht. Within Children's Holocaust Literature, a compelling area of study exists regarding the intergenerational transfer of Holocaust trauma to survivors' children and grandchildren. Sue Vice explains the transfer of trauma between second and third generations or the "trans-generational transmission of trauma": "It soon became apparent to psychologists that the horrors which survivors had experienced were often too overwhelming to be resolved within the survivor's lifetime. [Thus, the trauma] could somehow be passed on to their children."[224] Through stories, images, silences, and visits to sites of trauma, Holocaust survivors pass on their lived experiences and unresolved emotional pain to their children, sometimes deeply embedding or transmitting a sense of trauma to their kin, which is evident in Martin Gilbert's *Kristallnacht*.

Since the late 1970s, researchers within and outside Holocaust Studies have increasingly studied the transfer of intergenerational trauma by Holocaust survivors.[225] The concept of blood memory would likely emerge while examining the transfer of Holocaust trauma between generations, perhaps opening possibilities for further research into the representations of memory and trauma. Blood memory entails the subconscious recognition by family members of genealogical remembering of important personal, societal, and cultural traumas. According to Andrea Reiter: "In recent years, not only psychologists but also novelists have begun to take an interest in the effect of the

Holocaust on the children of survivors."[226] Second and third generation Holocaust survivors are steadily producing narratives about their own coping experiences regarding the inheritance of disturbing mental experiences.

Child Versus Adult Perceptions of Traumatic Situations

Through considering narrative voices in *Kristallnacht,* children's experiences have the propensity to differ greatly from adult's experiences in that initial impressions of traumatic events by children mainly center on sensory observations. Andrea Reiter distinguishes between a child's voice and viewpoint in Holocaust narratives: "Representing a child's voice means that his or her own language would have to be present in a text. On the other hand, representing a child's viewpoint usually means that an adult narrator describes how events seemed to his or her younger self."[227] In present-time Holocaust narratives such as *The Diary of a Young Girl* or *The Journal of Hélène Berr*, the child or adolescent's voice is dominant because each narrator speaks through her own words, channeling direct impressions while utilizing an adolescent's vocabulary, whereas in *Kristallnacht*'s retrospective child survivor accounts, adult narrators recreate their own child-like viewpoints to literarily explain past historical events.[228]

Adult narrators of Holocaust experiences typically exhibit more expansive perspectives than child narrators, thus children tend to focus on immediate physical reactions rather than consciously working to contextualize their observations. In "Young Witnesses in the DP Camps: Children's Holocaust Testimony in Context" Boaz Cohen and Rita Horváth explain: "Testimonies collected from young Holocaust survivors when they were still children or teenagers, usually display more readily discernable signs of being responsive to the immediate surroundings during which they were given than do

the majority of adult testimonies.[1,,229] Since adult survivor testimonies are linked to social, historical, and political contexts, child survivor testimonies lack such adult-orientated perspectives; therefore, child's narratives primarily focus on sensory and perceptual observations. Due to adult survivors testimonies in *Kristallnacht* being retrospective childhood reflections rather than immediately recorded postwar testimonies, they may be considered a few degrees farther from a given historical event. Immediate post-war children's testimonies, although usually extracted from structured, adult-led interviews, are considered less mediated than reconstructed childhood experiences when the survivors are adults. As noted in Chapter Two and the introduction to this chapter, it is important to remember, however, that all literary accounts of the Holocaust are mediated.

While adult observations can certainly involve a keen sense of images, sounds, and scents, impressions of adults tend to be less sensory in nature than children's perceptions of traumatic experiences. Articulated differently, adults tend to contextualize their experiences, developing a sense of judgment and rationale regarding traumatic events whereas children are intellectually less developed and therefore not as able to have logically rooted perspectives on traumatic situations. Conversely, since children lack the ability to critically reason about serious consequences of current circumstances, they may be better protected from psychological harm than adults who more completely understand their grim situations. Since children primarily react to trauma through physical senses rather than mental faculties, their reactions are more viscerally based.

Parent-Child Separations Within Nazi-Occupied France

During the Holocaust, chances of survival were greater if children and parents remained together in order for protection, advice, and mutual moral support to be possible, thus separation trauma is a necessary site for discussion within Children's Holocaust Literature. During the World War II Nazi occupation of France, the separation of children from their parents occurred far too frequently. French Jewish children suffered, according to Laurence Rees in *Auschwitz*, after France was divided into "occupied" and "unoccupied" in June 1940. Jews living in both zones of France, a total of 350,000 in 1940, became particularly vulnerable to Nazi authority.[230] After the 1942 train deportations from France to the concentration camp of Auschwitz in Poland, ninety eight percent of the deportees were murdered.[231]

Children's recollections of separation from their parents prior to deportation remain among their strongest wartime memories, as discussed in Chapter Two. As a result of separation trauma, a policy change to allow Jewish families to stay together was enforced in France.[232] Soon after widespread deportations occurred, an evacuation of Jewish families from the southern, supposedly protected, "unoccupied" zone took place.[233] Within the Vichy regime, a French authority figure named Pierre Laval pronounced that during the evacuation of the "unoccupied zone," children under sixteen years of age could be taken away along with their families.[234] Despite the seemingly positive systematic move to allow families to remain united, the allowance had an extremely negative impact since entire families were deported from French camps and eventually murdered, usually at Auschwitz.

One of the most distressing aspects of the Nazi's domination of Europe involves the French Police's active complicity in the Nazi occupation, which impacted the lives of Jewish children. The French Police's active participation in the round-up of Jews for detainment at the Vélôdrome d'Hiver in 1942 is still a source of national shame for France. According to Richard Vinen: "This round-up involved an important novelty. Until then, arrests had involved adult men, but Laval now suggested that the Germans should take children too."[235] The detainment of children in the Vélodrôme and deportations to transit, then concentration camps, marks a particularly disturbing episode in France's history. Referencing the egregious maltreatment of children by French officials in the transit camp of Beaune-la-Rolande, Laurence Rees contends, "[w]hat marks this episode [of the children's experience with sickness and hunger in the camp] out as one of particular poignancy in a history that is full of atrocity is not so much the snatching of the children from their parents as the treatment of the children by the French authorities once they were left in their 'care.'"[236] Through focusing on the intentional oversight in the French officials' camp operations involving Jewish children, Rees demonstrates disdain for the French police because of their overt compliance with Nazi orders. It was not until 1995 that French President Jacques Chirac publically apologized for France's role in the Nazi occupation of France during World War II.

One of most traumatic events for Jews in Paris during World War II was the forced relocation to and detainment in the Vélodrôme d'Hiver. As was the case for most Jews in Paris, the French police forcefully transported the Muller family by bus to the Vélodrôme, an indoor cycling arena, which became a holding place for Jews on their way to concentration camps within and outside France.[237] A total of 12,884 people, including

4,115 children (mostly consisting of foreign Jews living in Paris), were forced into the Vélodrôme d'Hiver as a result of a two-night police raid conducted in central Paris for the purpose of purging Jews from Nazi-occupied Paris.[238] In France today, more interest on behalf of the general public is evident regarding the French police's complicity in the round-up of Jews during World War II. The recent French feature films *La Rafle* and *Sarah's Key* reflect the public's willingness to confront France's role in the "Final Solution."[239] A deeper exploration into children's testimonial accounts of round-ups in Paris would allow for a reconsidering of France's history, thereby offering a necessary contemporary interpretation of past events.

As discussed previously, the separation of children from their parents is a common theme in documentary oral testimonies and Holocaust Literature more broadly. In *Auschwitz*, the Muller family is taken to the French countryside transit camp of Beaune-la-Rolande. For most Jewish deportees Beaune-la-Rolande was a temporary holding place on their way to death in Auschwitz. As Rees explains: "The French police entered the camp and gathered everyone together. Once they announced that children were to be separated from their parents, there was mayhem[,]" the reader immediately feels a gut-wrenching sense of horror imagining the children being taken from their mothers.[240] Although families experienced emotionally and physically difficult conditions at the Vélodrôme, their mutual moral support aided in making the ordeal less stressful. Michel comments on his time prior to parental separation, stating that "'[a]t the beginning I wasn't worried. I wasn't worried because we were with out mother and that reassured me. And I'd play with my friends."[241] When parents were present with their

children, an immeasurable sense of comfort and relief was provided, especially for young children who had their mothers in close contact.

In order to maintain a sense of normalcy for both children and adults during the uncertain times of war, it was necessary to focus on daily routines. However, adults understand that it was not feasible to live normal lives under Nazi occupation. Betraying his child-like perspective, Michel states that his only concern was whether he would able to attend school in the near future.[242] Michel's admission as he recounts his thoughts and emotions regarding Beaune-la-Rolande confirms how appropriately innocent and naïve he is at age seven. For Michel, being concerned about school takes precedence over considering the reality of separation from his parents and facing death in a concentration camp. Even though only an older child, a teenager, or an adult would be able to completely understand that their lives were at risk, children often intuited danger during the Holocaust even whilst hiding.[243]

A Final Image

A common theme of Holocaust narrative accounts involves enduring images of a survivor's family departing on the path toward death, which is also examined in Chapter Two relating to *Rena's Promise* and *The Pianist*. In *Auschwitz*, as "mayhem" breaks loose at the separation of children from their parents, Michel's sister Annette remembers the scene in which their mother leaves the children forever. A final image is burned into Annette's memory when her mother must leave on a train for an unknown destination. Annette attests: "My mother was in the front row and she made a sign with her eyes and we watched her. I had the impression that her eyes smiled at us, as if she wanted to say that she was going to come back. Michel cried. . . ."[244] Her mother's smiling eyes

remains the last image Annette holds locked in her mind's eye, signifying a strong emotional connection between the mother and her children. Separation from their parents marks the first, but not the last, emotional trauma that the Muller children would experience during the Holocaust.

The creation of makeshift families for camp inmates without close family members present, such as children without parents, works as a survival technique. According to S. Lillian Kremer: "The last view of children as they are marched away with mothers at the camp railroad ramps is a recurrent scene or memory in male writing."[245] Since men were immediately separated from women and children upon arriving at concentration camps, scenes in which men observe the separation of mothers from their children become prominent within male Holocaust narratives. The experiences of women and children are more closely linked within Holocaust, and Kremer attests to the differences in male and female Holocaust narratives regarding this subject. As Kremer states: "Women develop the ramifications of separation of parent and child at considerable length and in depth, from the occupation period through the final loss and mourning.[246] While male Holocaust authors focus on parent-child separations, women expand upon the subject in greater detail while providing commentary on the stages of trauma they experience when a child is lost to death. Due to the absence of mothers or proper caretakers in the countryside transit camp of Beaune-la-Rolande in France, Annette and Michel become the sole caretakers of one another, thus their makeshift family consists of only two siblings. Annette and Michel Muller's experience of assuming adult responsibility for one another hastens their personal maturity. Through

Michel becoming the primary caregiver of his ailing sister Annette, at the tender age of seven, he prematurely begins his journey into adulthood.

A Child's Eyewitness Account of the Vélodrôme d'Hiver Round-Ups

Children survivors of the Holocaust often specifically remember and retrospectively contextualize their parents' reactions to the violent events they lived through together. Annette Muller, a girl of nine, provides a rich account of police barging into her family home as they made arrests of foreign Jews on July 16th 1942 in "occupied" Paris.[247] Similar to the majority of children's recollections in *Kristallnacht*, Annette's account in *Auschwitz* begins with an abrupt, terrifying knock on the family home's front door. Decades after Kristallnacht Annette remembers:

> We were violently woken by knocks at the door [when] the police came in. My mother begged them to leave us. And the police inspector pushed her back saying, 'Hurry up! Hurry up! Don't make us waste our time!' And that struck me. For years and years I had nightmares because all of the sudden my mother who I had placed on a pedestal [behaved like that] . . . [248]

In Annette's recollections from July 16th 1942, she recalls the sound of the "violent" knocks, and recounts how her mother embarrasses her for begging the police to peacefully leave their family. Reflecting a child's perspective, Annette is primarily concerned with the appearance of her mother's behavior instead of how the disturbing situation would affect her family. It is not until after Annette's initial concern about her mother's change in behavior that she worries about her family's precarious fate.

In extreme situations, such as during round-ups, a common focus for children relates to their attachment to beloved material possessions, thus for Annette Muller her doll is of great significance. Only after Annette's unease about being separated from her doll does she become aware of the impending gravity related to her family's situation.

Relaying her descriptive impressions of being in the apartment with her family and the police, Annette declares: "Everything was upside down—and I [also] wanted to take my doll with me, to bring my doll . . . and they grabbed my doll from me, they took it out of my arms and threw it violently on the unmade bed. And then I understood that it certainly wasn't going to be something good that was going to happen."[249] Annette's doll represents the love, comfort, and familiarity of family members and home life. The building commotion that affects her doll as it is "violently" thrown by Nazi intruders is symbolic of the chaotic disturbances caused by the French police's unwelcome intrusion into the family home. Annette identifies with her doll and therefore, when the doll is aggressively handled; it reflects a sense of danger that is directed toward her by the police. In *Kristallnacht*, Annette's testimonial descriptions represent a significant shift away from normal family life.

France's Hidden Children

Hidden children within France during World War II experienced the trauma of separation from parents and the difficulties associated with being isolated and alienated for long periods of time. A substantial number of French Jewish children did not survive the Holocaust, but those who did were usually hidden in chateaus, orphanages, or private homes during the war in order to escape persecution and death. Although the Muller children eventually endured profound suffering within Beaune-la-Rolande, through remarkable efforts by their parents, the young siblings survived by being hidden in a Catholic Orphanage for the war's remainder.[250] A vast difference in the way children were treated by people who hid them reveals a wide variety of hidden children's

experiences. After the war, some children reunited with their parents while others become orphans of the Holocaust.

As a Jewish child living in Paris, France during the war, Jacques Saurel was deported to Drancy and Bergen-Belsen, recording his testimony fifty-five years after his Holocaust experience. Saurel's adulthood pilgrimage to the Bergen-Belsen monument motivates him to tell his childhood story, subsequently explaining through first-person narration that his journey "provoked in [him] an awakening, a new awareness, and smashed the lock on my silence. Since 2000, I have found the will and strength to express myself, to speak."[251] Many Holocaust survivors choose to remain silent, but Jacques Saurel fulfills his duty to speak, aiming to educate others about these hidden histories.[252] Self-reflexively Saurel asks: "Could the images, the memories be forgotten, could they disappear? Of course not. . . . These moments of my life came flooding back, I saw them again, they were my own personal experiences and not something just springing from my imagination."[253] Saurel's perspective on memory lies in direct contrast to Paul Steinberg's statements on memory, which are discussed in Chapter Two, in that the former has confidence in accurately recalling experiences whereas the latter admits that his memories are either fragmented or lost.

In children's Holocaust testimonies, a point of recognition occurs when a child realizes that he/she is different from other children based on his/her Jewishness. A sense of "otherness" recurrently comes forth in Holocaust Literature as Jewish survivors strive to describe experiences of being ostracized, while trying to assert and maintain their Jewish customs, lifeways, and identities. In Jacques Saurel's narrative, the point of recognition related to his identity occurs when the French Police force Jacques, his

mother, and siblings onto a deportation bus headed for Drancy.[254] At eleven years old, Jacques understands that "[he] was one of the many Jews arrested with no knowledge of [their] future fate and destination."[255] The moment Jacques is transported to Drancy he is aware that a life change is imminent, thus he is forever robbed of his childhood.[256] According to Saurel, throughout his journey, his mother becomes the primary reason that he survives. In December 1944, Saurel writes about how his self-sacrificing mother persuades him to stay alive, stating: "Maman never stopped telling us, shaking us, reprimanding us: 'To let yourself go is death.'"[257] In *Rena's Promise*, to succumb to death is not an option since Rena is committed to living for her parents and sister. Out of love for her children, Jacques Saurel's mother incessantly coaches them on how to survive in the camp. Saurel is fortunate because his mother remains with him throughout internment in Drancy and Bergen-Belsen.

As discussed in Chapter Two, self-sacrifice on behalf of adults for children is a prominent theme in Holocaust Literature. Jacques Saurel repeatedly praises the women who comfort and encourage the children in Bergen-Belsen, even when they were directly confronting their own suffering. Through the everyday sacrifices of women, children were able to survive despite horrible living conditions. As a means to console the camp children, women would often engage in storytelling.[258] In Chapter Two of the thesis, emphasis is placed on Janusz Korzak regarding how he engages in storytelling in order to comfort orphaned children who will soon be murdered. Similar to the women in Jacques Saurel's story, Korczak is also regarded as a heroic figure in *The Pianist*.

The compassionate acts of women are described not only in primary Holocaust literary texts, but are also acknowledged in secondary scholarly literature such as

Women's Holocaust Writing: Memory and Imagination by S. Lillian Kremer. In his testimony, Jacques Saurel declares: "Thanks to the dedication of these women, in a camp where starvation, filth and disease were rife and typhus began to have its devastating effect, we children were able, at least for a certain time, to hold on to a relic of childhood and adolescence."[259] In his statement, Saurel implicitly describes women in terms of heroism, which draws attention to the absence of men as caretakers in the camps. Despite being aware of his own premature transition into adulthood, Saurel preserves his innocence longer due to the selflessness of women. Largely due to their mother's actions, all three Saurel children survive Bergen-Belsen and the subsequent death march.

An additional example of reinvented remembering of a Holocaust experience for the purpose of recording his oral testimony, is that of Jewish child survivor Arnold Rochfield. When Rochfield is prompted by an interviewer about his memories of the French liberation at the end of World War II, he replies: "[Remembering is] more a case of capturing family memories than of direct memories. So we hitchhiked. Apparently we returned to Paris in an American truck. . . . I remember it snowed [during the liberation] but I don't have ant memories that connect the two. It is really very fragmented."[260] Since Rochfield was only a child during hiding in France, his memories must be supplemented by his mother's research of war events. According to Rochfield, after his Holocaust experience, he needs the assistance of his family members to revive past recollections because his memories are fragmented and difficult to logically reassemble because of his young age during the war.

Clarifying muddled Holocaust experiences can be especially frustrating to child Holocaust survivors, but with historical documents and collaborative accounts, survivors

are able to amass necessary information in an attempt to remember the past. Lawrence L. Langer states: "One of the unfortunate results of the Holocaust is that numerous child survivors are still haunted by uncertainty about their past."[261] Many child Holocaust survivors reinvent aspects of their missing past while simultaneously living with ghosts of the past because "there is no escape into the imagination from the Holocaust."[262] Consciously or unconsciously, survivors may repress memories, but they still exist and eventually resurface when triggered by certain experiences. Paul Steinberg remarks on the negative impact time has on the mind's capacity to recall events: "[A]fter fifty years, memory is more fragile than moth-eaten lace."[263] The metaphor of lace as fragile memory is reminiscent of Steinberg's comparison of memory to islands. According to Steinberg, with the passage of time, memories become disjointed and difficult to logically fuse together. In one section of his memoir, Steinberg purposefully recalls a letter he received from a friend, thus he belatedly speaks about his memories after witnessing horror and death in Auschwitz.[264]

Recalling Sensory Memories for Narrative Purposes

Sensory memories prove to be the strongest individual memories for child Holocaust survivors who describe their experiences through narrative accounts. In *Auschwitz*, hardships for the Muller family associated with their experience at the Vélodrôme d'Hiver mark the beginning of their continuing troubles related to persecution and forced relocation. According to Laurence Rees, Annette's seven-year-old brother Michel has vivid recollections or "a strong series of [a] 'flash' or memories" of the Vélôdrome d'Hiver.[265] Michel's account offers powerful sensory memories involving visual images, physical feelings, and scents as he recalls the following nightmarish scene: "The lights

were lit day and night and there were huge skylights and it was very hot—we scarcely saw the cops any more. There were one or two sources of water, and toilets—perhaps two. And what's stayed with me are the smells—after two days the odor became horrible. The children played [anyway]."[266] By reimaging and capturing, by description through language, the horrible living conditions in the Vélodrôme, Michel emotively conveys a sense of intense misery through expressions of sight and smell. Since scent is strongly associated with memory, it is not surprising that Michel particularly remembers strong odors from within the Vélodrôme d'Hiver. Through reading Michel's detailed narrative, the reader can imagine being locked in a perpetually brightly lit, stiflingly hot arena without proper sanitation facilities. If those held inside the Vélodrôme were previously unaccustomed to poor sanitary conditions, then witnessing and living in the filthy atmosphere came as a significant shock to them. Fear gradually intensifies for those detained, such as the Muller children, especially since they are unaware of events to come.

Michel acknowledges that the Vélodrôme d'Hiver children play despite being immersed in unfortunate conditions from which they cannot escape, signifying the resilience of children in the face of adversity. Instead of becoming depressed and apathetic as adults might, children engage in play since participating in games aids them in feeing normal even within abnormal situations. Despite being immersed in distressing circumstances, children's engagement in play within the Vélodrôme d'Hiver reveals their tendency to express youthful exuberance. Perhaps not completely conscious of their surroundings, children in the Vélodrôme outwardly express innocence and naïvety as they amuse themselves for the purpose of enjoyment. During traumatic situations and

within the midst of suffering in the Vélodrôme d'Hiver, playing also acted as a distraction or escape from the present reality. Ironically, children will play in nightmare-like situations only until they become aware of the gravity associated with their current circumstances. When children approach this point of recognition, which can involve imminent horror as they are permanently separated from their families, they cease to play.

Many of the detained Jewish children at the Vélôdrome were transported to transit and concentration camps in France such as Drancy, Beaune-la-Rolande, and Pithiviers.[267] Eventually children were moved into camps within Nazi-occupied Poland where they were indiscriminately murdered since they were largely without practical value to the Nazis. According to Laurence Rees, all 4,000 children who were transported without their parents from France to Auschwitz, Poland were killed in the summer of 1942.[268] Adult survivors who were children during World War II speak on behalf of the thousands of voiceless children who were killed during the Holocaust.

Game-Playing as a Survival Strategy for Children & Child-Adult Role Reversals

A theme of children's Holocaust testimonies and narratives involves children playing games while hiding from Nazis, thus in some instances, pretending to play a game worked as a survival strategy for children. For example, four-year-old Felix Seiler believes that when his family is hiding from the Nazis, they are acting out a game. Felix embodies innocence when he recollects the following memory: "'I remember my mother, grandfather, and several others [hiding]. I thought the whole thing was a game and behaved accordingly . . . As I now recall in hindsight everyone was very gaunt and

tense.'"[269] Only with adult hindsight does Felix realize that which he thought was a game was actually an attempt by his family to hide during Kristallnacht. Children often relate to playing games instead of understanding the true reality of dangerous circumstances. Since children often engage their imaginations during play, a sense of escape from traumatic situations is possible to some extent. In some cases, the act of children pretending to play games allowed them to survive in moments of great adversity during the Holocaust.

In a recent feature film about the Nazi occupation of France, filmmakers focus on a story relating to children's participation in games the Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups of 1942. The contemporary French feature film *Sarah's Key* provides a specific example of a Jewish child's engagement in playing a hiding game after the French police storm the family apartment in Le Marais, the Jewish quarter of Paris. The fictional storyline hinges on a ten-year-old Jewish child named Sarah Starzinsky and her family's forced deportation to the Vélodrôme d'Hiver in 1942. Additionally central to the film's narrative is Sarah Starzinsky's deportation to Beaune-la-Rolande, the same French countryside camp where Annette and Michel Muller are imprisoned in *Auschwitz.* Examining how Sarah copes with post-war reality, including the devastating discovery of finding out that her parents have perished in Auschwitz, are also crucial to understanding the wide breadth of Sarah's Holocaust experience.

Sarah Starzinsky's struggle and outward show of fear within the film is representative of the thousands of other children who cannot escape their fate and whose countless stories remain obscured if their testimonies are not documented. Similar to other accounts of the Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups in Paris, Sarah's story begins with an

abrupt pounding on the family's apartment door, which immediately instills fear in the Starzinsky family. When French police burst into the Starzinsky apartment, Sarah's mother is afraid for her children's lives. Knowing that her mother is frightened for the children and in an effort to protect her four-year-old brother Michel, Sarah quickly informs him that they are playing a game. Asking Michel to hide in the closet to avoid being taken away with the family, Sarah knows that her brother will obey. Indeed, Michel readily complies with Sarah's command to hide and thus she locks him into the closet, hoping that a neighbor will eventually free him. Throughout the family's harrowing interment in the Vélodrôme d'Hiver, Michel remains in the closet as Sarah frantically tries to escape and return to the apartment to release him.

The bleak tale of Sarah's feverish fight to free Michel and his subsequent death while in hiding demonstrates how young children are willing to participate in games even during times of danger. *Sarah's Key*'s narrative core concerns Sarah's attempt to return, from the Vélôdrome, which is realistically recreated in the film, and then Beaune-la-Rolande, to her family's apartment in order to free Michel. Sarah hopes that a neighbor has freed Michel, but her uncertainty is evident as her father desperately reacts to the situation. After eventually escaping from Beaune-la-Rolande, where she is dramatically separated from her mother, like Annette and Michel were in the same camp, she returns to her family's apartment more than a week later only to find that another family has moved in and Michel has perished while waiting patiently for the "game" to end. Sarah's tragic discovery heightens the filmic drama while exposing the harsh reality of the Holocaust's horrors in specific connection to a pair of loving siblings. *Sarah's Key* reveals Sarah's persistent love and effort towards her young, innocent brother in her

attempt to save his life. Sarah is only a child, like other child Holocaust survivors mentioned here, but she often acts with the bravery of an adult during her escape from Beaune-la-Rolande and throughout her arduous journey home.

Felix in *Kristallnacht* and Michel in *Sarah's Key* are depicted as representations of childhood innocence and naivety, showing that a lack of awareness about immediate danger can sometimes aid in survival. For Felix, his participation in what he believes is a hiding game works to save his life, whereas Michel's participation in the "game" of hiding becomes a death sentence. In *Sarah's Key*, Sarah becomes consumed by guilt for inadvertently killing her beloved brother while also grieving deeply for her dead parents. Even though Sarah was only child when the Holocaust occurred, she witnesses multiple traumas first-hand, thus shouldering the responsibility that would only be expected of an adult under normal circumstances. Sarah cannot bear the psychological effects of the Holocaust's extreme circumstances; therefore, she ends her own life while still only a young woman. Akin to most Holocaust films and literary narratives, the ending of *Sarah's Key* is tragic and left largely unresolved.

A Child's Eyewitness Account of Kristallnacht

In a testimonial reminiscent of Annette Muller's account of Nazis bursting into her family's home in Paris, fifteen year old Marianne David retrospectively recounts Nazis barging into her house in Bad Kreuznach, Germany during Kristallnacht in 1938. Marianne comments on how she was awoken by the intrusion of Nazis, stating: "'I was woken in the middle of the night by shouting and banging, then men in Nazi uniforms burst into the room screaming . . . On the table was my new alto recorder, of which I was very proud . . . One of the men picked it up and broke it by hitting it on the table's

edge."[270] Memories of violent terror, both verbal and physical, remain in Marianne's mind as Nazi stormtroopers continue to break material objects, including her instrument, Marianne claims that "an SS man [was] going along [the room] with a club, systematically smashing the glass on each pretty nursery picture on the wall. Frightened as I was, it still struck me as such a pointless thing to do."[271] Both Annette Muller and Marianne David, although involved in different events during the reign of the Third Reich, experienced a similar sense of terror as the Nazis violently knock on their doors. Annette and Marianne are similarly concerned with their precious material objects. The disturbance of the doll and the recorder foreshadow significant disturbances in the lives of these Jewish children. Marianne, a teenager at the time, possesses the sense to realize that the breaking of material objects by Nazis was unnecessary. Although the destruction of such objects is "pointless" according to Marianne, the violent acts were nevertheless meant to cause intimidation while terrorizing young Jewish victims of Nazi aggression.[272]

Most children did not experience *Kristallnacht* in hiding, but instead directly observed Nazi's devastating actions from neighborhood streets, inside synagogues, or inside their own homes, thereby creating a more intimate sense of trauma. A young schoolboy named Lassar Brueckheimer of Marktbreit-on-Main, Germany witnesses the destruction of a 224-year-old synagogue and all of its contents.[273]

Throughout the day of terror, Lassar witnesses first-hand destruction of his small town and by

> eight o'clock that evening, [he] recollected . . . 'we heard the sound of splintering wood and crashes and rushed downstairs, when the stout wooden door to the street just caved inwards. . . . five or six louts armed with long-handled axes rushed towards us . . . [and] they smashed every panel in all wardrobes, cupboards, and doors throughout the house. Within five minutes the entire contents of the house were destroyed . . . [274]

Within a short time span, Lassar witnesses the destruction of his family home, which creates a lasting impact for him. Lassar's account involves astonishingly precise details such as the auditory memory of "splintering wood."[275] Even with every possession in Lassar's family home destroyed, Lassar is nonetheless able to defiantly endure the tremendous hardships caused by the mass pogrom.

In his cross-disciplinary book, Martin Gilbert names Kristallnacht or the "night of terror" a "Prelude of Destruction" because its traumatic events in Germany in 1938 foreshadowed the Holocaust. Kristallnacht, and the previously discussed Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups, would emotionally test many Jewish children as they experienced a sense of previously unknown shock and disruption of familiar family life. *Kristallnacht* provides a traditional historic account of events preceding World War II, yet weaves together personal testimonies, thus creating a uniquely layered and multi-angled interpretation of history and memory. In their study of Jewish children's experiences in Displaced Persons camps post-World War II, Boaz Cohen and Rita Horváth highlight the value of interdisciplinary analysis of personal Holocaust testimonies, declaring: "By employing literary analytic techniques together with historical research methods, we analysed two child survivors' testimonies . . . [and thus] analyzing testimonies together with the contemporaneous circumstances of their rendition not only deepens our understandings of the testimonies . . . "[276] In combination, literary and historical analysis of Holocaust testimonies builds a rich and nuanced understanding of the Holocaust while analyzing current-day retrospective survivor commentary adds another layer of depth to survivors' war accounts.

The Shattering of Glass: A Metaphor for Jewish Destruction

Another extraordinary retrospective account from a child during Kristallnacht derives from the narrative of Manfred van Son, which relates to the sound of broken glass as a metaphor for Jewish destruction. In Fulda, Germany, Manfred van Son calls to mind the night of Kristallnacht, commenting that "'my mother and I were alone in the flat when we heard the sound of heavy army boots on the stairs. The footsteps stopped outside our door, and I waited in the dark on the other side, knowing and fearing what was about to happen. To my amazement, however, the expected knock on the door never came."[277] Hearing the heaviness of Nazi boots near their apartment door dramatically heightened the tension that Manfred and his mother felt as they waited for an intrusion. Manfred's narrative crescendos in anticipation, yet as the Nazis fail to confront the mother and son, the reader feels a considerable sense of relief. The van Sons were not intruded upon because Nazis believed that their surname was "aristocratic" and therefore could not be Jewish.[278] The next day, however, more terror was struck into the van Sons as their synagogue is destroyed by fire and the streets of Fulda are strewn with shattered glass. Manfred van Son comments: " I still remember the sound of broken glass being swept up."[279] Broken glass in Kristallnacht narratives becomes a symbol of the destruction of Jewish lives before the Holocaust. In Chapter Two of this thesis, the image of Rena's mother shattering like broken glass is reminiscent of Manfred's auditory remembrance of glass pieces being swept after the riots ended. Manfred's powerful, sound-related memory echoes the sensory memories of many children who also remember the sound of breakage as their homes, synagogues, and neighborhood businesses were destroyed on Kristallnacht.

One of the most visually impacting narratives in Martin Gilbert's emotive literary-history *Kristallnacht* is that of nine-year-old Oskar Prager who was living in the town of Furth, Germany during "the night of broken glass."[280] Oskar, similarly to Annette Muller and Marianne David in *Auschwitz*, is awoken suddenly by Nazis in his family home, and abruptly forced to leave with his parents and three sisters. Oskar lucidly remembers the following scene: "On leaving the apartment I saw that the glass front door was smashed and broken glass was all over the floor and corridor . . . Outside in the street it was 'very cold and foggy. The air smelled of burning and I could see that the sky was reddish. . . . we were marched by four SA men . . . my mother was pushing the pram where the twins [his sisters] were crying or screaming."[281] Shattered glass punctuates Oskar's narrative, as it does Manfred van Son's testimony, and the details of inclement weather including the red color of the sky eerily represent impending doom as Nazis force the shaken Jewish family toward the train station. The sharp cries of Oskar's infant twin sisters being forced to evacuate their home with their family only intensifies the distressing scene.

Martin Gilbert's *Kristallnacht* and Eli Wiesel's *Night* both incorporate intense sensory memories, which speak to the significance of children's harsh realities during harrowing Holocaust-related events. In *Night* as Wiesel's family is rounded up in Transylvania for deportations, a last image of his youngest sister Tzipora, who is later killed upon arrival at Auschwitz, becomes indelibly etched into his memory. Tzipora embodies innocence, as Wiesel narrates: "I looked at my little sister, Tzipora, her blond hair neatly combed, her red coat over her arm: a little girl of seven. On her back a bag too heavy for her. She was clenching her teeth; she already knew it was useless to

complain."[282] Wiesel describes Tzipora as sweet and helpless, thus her character is symbolic of the thousands of innocent children who perished in the Holocaust. Although Tzipora does not possess much agency due to her young age, still she is aware of her lack of power to affect change regarding her family's situation. Tzipora's red coat in *Night* can be interpreted as a symbol of blood as well as a sign of vitality. Tzipora, full of life and the natural vigor of a child, is moved during a selection, along with Wiesel's mother and sisters, "to the right" or toward death in the gas chambers when the family arrives at Birkenau. Elie Wiesel, his father, and brother never see the women in their family again, hence in his narrative, the presence of a final lasting image indicates an enduring sense of visual trauma.[283]

An Abrupt Transition from Childhood to Adulthood

Children lost their innocence during the Holocaust as they were forced to experience extreme situations at young ages, thus loss of innocence is a recurrent theme in Holocaust children's literature. Child Holocaust survivor Danièle Menès describes how her father acts distant and remote during the war and throughout Menès's life: "My father was like one of the living dead; nothing seems more difficult to me than burying a ghost."[284] The absence of Menès's father during much of her life causes great psychological suffering, which rapidly speeds up her process of maturing into adulthood. Many hidden children of the Holocaust were deprived of parents and adult caretakers during the war, becoming psychologically damaged from acute and prolonged isolation. Child Holocaust survivors prematurely took on adult roles while they were still in the midst of their childhood years. A symbolic event occurs when Wiesel becomes a camp prisoner, which signals the abrupt transference from childhood to adulthood within

Auschwitz. A fellow inmate with senior status asks the young Wiesel his age, thus Wiesel replies, "fifteen [but the prisoner insists] No. You're eighteen."[285] Wiesel does not initially understand why he should lie about his age, but Wiesel quickly realizes that in order to appear fit for work, rather than fit for instant death, he must claim that he is an adult. Through Wiesel assuming the age of eighteen, he symbolically begins the transformation from childhood to adulthood, thus the beginning of Wiesel's process of losing his innocence has begun. During the Holocaust, Wiesel is forced to grow up faster than adolescents living under normal circumstances.

Within Auschwitz, when Wiesel must take on the responsibilities of an adult in regard to his father, a dramatic role reversal of father and son, caretaker and child, occurs. Near the conclusion of *Night*, Wiesel's sick and dying father Shlomo becomes child-like as he cries out helplessly. Wiesel comments: "I did all I could to give him hope."[286] Though Wiesel tries to help his father, he eventually ignores his father's dying call.[287] Although it seems that Wiesel, in his current state of suffering, cannot bear the responsibility of taking care of both of them he nevertheless acts as adult-like when he faces the reality of his father's death. Midway through the narrative, after Wiesel states that he witnesses "children thrown into the flames[,]"a concrete loss of innocence exists. Wiesel dramatically asserts that "[he] had been consumed by the flames. All that was left was a shape that resembled me. My soul had been invaded—and devoured—by a black flame."[288] At only fifteen years of age, Elie Wiesel directly witnesses and experiences unimaginable horrors at Auschwitz-Birkenau yet he remains resilient despite being forever marked by trauma.

Remembering the Holocaust's Children

As an adult survivor, Wiesel retrospectively considers his experiences as an adolescent, understanding that it is "his duty to bear witness for the dead *and* for the living. . . . The witness [Wiesel] has forced himself to testify. For the youth of today, for the children who will be born tomorrow. He does not want his past to become their future."[289] Wiesel's sense of responsibility in "bearing witness" underscores the importance of remembering survivor's stories for posterity. Wiesel movingly asserts: "Never shall I forget the small face of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under the silent sky."[290] Through the works of Laurence Rees, Martin Gilbert, and Elie Wiesel, children's voices come alive and their survival narratives becoming ingrained in the reader's minds as vivid descriptions punctuate these stories. Hopefully these texts will propel readers to perform research about children's Holocaust survivor narratives and testimonies, perhaps even becoming life-long learners about the Holocaust.

Although this chapter explores a variety of Children's Holocaust Literature, we must acknowledge that additional subject material must be considered. This chapter primarily focuses on analyzing Jewish child survivors' narratives of the Vélodrôme d'Hiver and Kristallnacht, yet we must also recognize that "[t]here are many accounts of children of the Holocaust, but very few of Romany children."[291] One reason for the absence of Romany children's narratives is due to Romani being a spoken rather than written language.[292] Through recognizing the absence of Romany Holocaust accounts, especially those of women and children, a space becomes available for further research on this important topic.

Especially through the narratives of Elie Wiesel, we are able to remember the transcendent voices of children who tell their stories and accept responsibility in working towards preventing persecution and genocide. *Night*, Elie Wiesel's timeless narrative about his adolescent experiences in Auschwitz, contains stunning visual imagery and important reminders about not forgetting the suffering of children during the Holocaust. François Mauriac, author of *Night*'s Foreword, describes an impactful meeting with Wiesel, recalling: "I confided to his young visitor [Elie Wiesel] that nothing I had witnessed during that dark period [of the Holocaust] had marked me as deeply as the images of cattle cars filled with Jewish children at the Austerlitz train station . . ."[293] Mauriac continues to reveal that he himself does not see this image, rather it is described to him but it nonetheless affects him tremendously. Mauriac is truly moved when Wiesel admits that "[he] was one of [those children in the cattle cars]."[294] The literary examples provided in this chapter are indicative of the immense power of images in relaying specific, sensory-related traumatic events.

Through critical discussions on child versus adult perceptions of traumatic events, the separation of children from parents, the recalling of sensory memories for narrative purposes, game-playing as a strategy for survival, the loss of innocence of children, and remembering the Holocausts children, we are able to move closer to a fuller, more nuanced understanding of Children's Holocaust narratives. Now it is more evident than ever that Children's Holocaust Literature is a dynamic field of study, which should be studied more centrally by Holocaust scholars. Child Holocaust testimonies of Kristallnacht in 1938 and the Paris Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups in 1942 bring to life traumatic experiences that manifest in different ways for each individual, yet

commonalities in their sensory descriptions abound, revealing a sense of collective remembrance within Holocaust Studies, which must be acknowledged, shared, and remembered.

Conclusion

The initial impetus for this Master's Thesis surrounds my participation in Professor Gerald Vizenor's American Studies graduate seminar at the University of New Mexico in 2011 entitled "Narratives of Atrocity and Genocide." Through this course and an independent study guided by Professor Vizenor, I became interested in researching the use of metaphors in Jewish women and children's Holocaust survivor stories in connection with "survivance." I subsequently amassed knowledge of select narratives while taking an acute interest in studying the portrayals of women and children in contemporary Holocaust films. Previous to my independent study course, upon the suggestion of Gerald Vizenor, I was fortunate enough to extend my studies of the Vélodrôme d'Hiver children's experiences by actually visiting the Vélodrôme d'Hiver monument, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme and the Mémorial de la Shoah in Le Marais, Paris, France during the summer of 2012.

While in Paris, I personally experienced museum collections and exhibits, including a European Cinema exhibit at the Mémorial de la Shoah on the 1942 Paris Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups, returning home with specialty books such as *From Paris to Bergen Belsen, 1944-1945* by child survivor Jacques Saurel and *Sans Fluers Ni Couronnes: Auschwitz 1944-1945* by Odette Elina. Traveling to major Holocaust museums in Europe, as well as in the United States, has enhanced my awareness of the need for exposure to a combination of visual, auditory, and textual educational Holocaust displays. Learning about the Jewish Holocaust in the U.S. and abroad, allows for newfound transnational intellectual experiences, which work in tandem with information derived from coursework.

Before I became a graduate student at the University of New Mexico in American Studies, I participated in an undergraduate class on American Jewish History at Arizona State University taught by Rabbi Barton G. Lee. This particular course marked the beginning of my interest in studying Jewish history and religion within a formal university setting. At UNM, Dr. Janet Gaines's class on American Jewish Literature and Culture further sparked my interest in Jewish Studies, especially in relation to reading narratives by Holocaust survivors and their children. During this UNM English course, a classmate divulged that her grandparents were Polish Holocaust survivors, therefore revealing her family's personal connection to the Holocaust. While in this class, I learned to appreciate the Holocaust's relevance while becoming fascinated by how survivors relay traumatic experiences through symbols and metaphors. While an undergraduate at UNM, I had the pleasure of attending a book reading by Eva Schloss, the stepsister of Anne Frank, which initiated my interest in women's Holocaust survivor's literature. During this point in my academic career, as an English major interested in Ethnic Literature, I had read African American Literature, Chicano Literature, and Asian American Literature, yet the discovery of Jewish American Literature, and later the broader realm of Holocaust Literature, further excited my intellectual curiosities.

Multiple approaches to studying the Holocaust's horrors are essential for continually renewing our perspectives of trauma, otherwise the disturbing subject matter can become too difficult to bear. For example, while I understand the necessity of gaining Jewish Holocaust historical knowledge, in Paris I was able to further realize the importance of literary sources since they tell vital personal stories that would otherwise

remain buried if we only studied facts surrounding the mass murders. Literature, whether poetry or prose, embodies creativity and beauty even if the content is that of the Holocaust. For this project, literary theory is imperative for methodically framing and understanding how Holocaust survivors transmit their stories through language.

Literature is of special interest because it involves artistic renderings of narratives or stories that include centralized characters, rich, imagistic language and scenery, complicated plots, and an overall creative vision that is intended to draw the reader into the unfolding literary world via the written word. The *highest quality* literature has the ability to convincingly and movingly relay human emotion, insightful knowledge about life experiences, and philosophies that can teach us valuable life lessons. Written narratives have the potential to create imaginative or alternative realities and fascinating possibilities for the reader, which provide a psychological means to escape daily life.

Engaging in literary theory to provide a scholarly exploration of the narrative process aids in specifically focusing on the interplay of visual memory and imagination within select Holocaust narratives. Since memory and imagination are employed in narrative constructions, we must understand that each Holocaust text is mediated, therefore no truly "authentic" narrative exists. The primary narrative accounts utilized for analysis within this thesis provide lyrical, imagistic passages that reveal evidence for the argument that visual memory is a key component for writing impactful Holocaust narratives.

In order for worldwide audiences to grasp the breadth and depth of the Jewish Holocaust, storytellers have created vivid images and compelling literary narratives of the

traumatic, unimaginable experiences that survivors endured. These haunting visual images and impactful stories raise issues of representation and authenticity, while challenging us to think critically about complex issues of history, memory, and trauma that continue to resonate today. This Master's Thesis provides a scholarly analysis of Holocaust narratives by framing them within a transnational American Studies perspective, which illuminates the ways that survivors utilize narrative conventions, express a sense of self-reflexivity, and use memory and imagination to reconstruct their experiences.

The more overt incorporation of women and children's Holocaust narratives into the Holocaust literary archive is imperative since their written works have largely been marginalized, decentered, and excluded because male-authored narratives have held a dominant place within the canon. Representations of children's experiences of Kristallnacht in 1938 and the 1942 Vélodrôme d'Hiver round-ups in Paris, and game-playing as a survival strategy are examined in order to show the use of children's imagination as a means to resist persecution, cope with fear, and avoid death. The thesis investigates the myriad ways that Holocaust survivors have constructed their stories to tell memorable yet disturbing truths, therefore bringing uncovered stories of genocide and human degradation to light. That these memories matter today is a testament to the power of stories to generate shared recognition of our global shame and a collective opposition to genocidal acts that undermine the value of human dignity.

By focusing attention on *Rena's Promise, The Journal of Hélène Berr, Kristallnacht*, *Emil and Karl,* and *The Hidden Children of France*, the thesis contends that a gender and age-based analysis is crucial in studying Holocaust narratives since a

lack of attention is paid in Holocaust Studies and Genocide Studies to works which feature stories by and about women and children. This thesis therefore underscores the importance of shifting critical focus from male Holocaust narratives to female Holocaust narratives. An examination of children's voices and visual memory is also critical for understanding and appreciating their unique survival experiences. Extending my research into contemporary French and American Holocaust Cinema would compliment my interests in literary visual memory. Analyzing John Boyne's novel *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* and its screen adaptation, would allow for a cross-disciplinary, historical-fiction perspective on the Holocaust as told by children. By studying on-screen portrayals of Jewish children as Holocaust victims and survivors, I would hope to understand how and why, according to Mark M. Anderson, filmmakers choose to represent children as innocent, universal symbols of Holocaust survivors.[295]

Politically, historically, and educationally the stakes remain high in regard to this thesis project because we must work to make certain that events of the Holocaust are known and genocide must cease to occur in the future. We must carefully and seriously study Holocaust narratives of women and children that involve stories about some of the most vulnerable groups of people who survived the Holocaust. Within literary counternarratives, uncovering and analyzing expressions of "survivance" is important for drawing attention to the power of Jewish resistance within the Jewish Holocaust. Through reading this thesis, readers will achieve insight into specific Holocaust survivors' experiences survivors as their echoing, vibrant stories are heard, recognized, and remembered.

Epilogue

After returning from visiting the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. during the spring of 2012, I spoke to my friend Andrew Wojdyla about the impact of seeing the museum's exhibits, especially the thousands of Holocaust victims' shoes, which were piled high behind a glass wall. Casually my friend revealed that his deceased mother was of Jewish heritage and that her paternal grandfather and all of his family members were murdered in Poland during the Holocaust. Knowing my friend for more than ten years, I was astonished to discover his Jewish heritage and direct link to the Holocaust, especially since I had been studying the Holocaust for several years. In 2005, on our travels together in Poland, Andrew spoke about the close proximity of Auschwitz to where we were visiting his family in Zakopane, which is located along Poland's southern border. At this time, however, I never knew that his Jewish family had perished during the Holocaust. Andrew, who now possesses his mother's Polish passport, hopes to uncover the story of his mother's emigration from Poland to Israel while a young woman. As a third-generation Holocaust survivor, Andrew's sense of resilience, which he exhibits in his overall strength of spirit, continues to inspire my work in Holocaust Studies.

My friend since childhood, Theodora Ulmer, who is now an elementary school teacher, also has direct personal connections to the Holocaust through her father's side of the family. I would like to engage in researching her family history since the Ulmer's are interested in learning about details of that currently unknown history. In particular, I wish to uncover stories related to the children's experiences during the Holocaust. Theodora's interest in child psychology, especially haven written her Master's Thesis on

art as therapy for children with disabilities, could lead us to a project to discover her family's European past during World War II. Theodora's paternal grandmother Magdelena Klein from Mishkotlz, Hungary, lost all of her aunts, uncles, and cousins in the Holocaust. Her great-grandfather, Bertalen Klein's relatives were taken from Hungary, but everyone escaped. Theodore Ulmer, Theodora Ulmer's paternal grandfather, lost his father's cousin in Auschwitz. Beyond her great-grandparents, in both the Klein and Ulmer families, everyone was lost. This thesis honors the Wojdyla, Ulmer, and Klein family members who perished during the Shoah. Although they did not live to relay their stories, their memories live on through their descendents, Andrew Wojdyla and Theodora Ulmer.

On my father's side of the family, we recently discovered our own Jewish heritage, which has contributed to the personal meaning behind this project. Although already aware of our Indo-Hispano heritage, my uncle's DNA test revealed that our ancestors emigrated from the Basque region of Spain in the early 1600s, eventually settling in what is now southern Colorado to continue a deep-rooted ranching tradition in the San Luis Valley. My father, a retired philosophy professor, now lives full-time on the family ranch on el Rio de los Conejos outside Antonito. Through research within the Latin American Studies program at UNM after retiring from ranching, my paternal uncle as an elderly student learned that our family is of Sephardic Jewish heritage. According to Isaac Jack Lévy in his book on Sephardic Jewish poetry about the Holocaust, "the Sephardim are the direct descendants of Jews of the Iberian Peninsula."[296] I would like to learn more about the Sephardic Jews who survived the Holocaust by reading Sephardic poetry and narratives. Within in a doctoral program, I plan on researching our ancestral

and genealogical roots within the Center for Southwest Research at Zimmerman Library in connection to the history of crypto-Jews of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. I also intend to conduct research at the University of Colorado at Boulder in the new Post-Holocaust American Judaism Archive.

I look forward to studying Henry J. Tobias's *A History of the Jews in New Mexico* and Stanley M. Hordes's *To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico* in order to learn about crypto-Jewish culture, history, and religious practices within New Mexico. In the near future I intend on traveling to the Basque region of Spain with my father and sister to obtain more knowledge about Sephardic Jewish history. While studying at the doctoral level, I hope to perform archival research, perhaps studying abroad in Spain and France, to extend my project through dissertation work, focusing on the Holocaust experiences of Sephardic Jewish children.

Comparative analysis on how African child survivors of genocide and Jewish Holocaust child survivors overcame trauma through music, art, and literary narrative forms in differing national, social, and cultural contexts could likely be another project to pursue. Women and children's artistic expressions to resist oppression and genocide during the Jewish Holocaust and the Rwandan Genocide would undoubtedly be a compelling area of study. Such a project would lie within a transnational framework that would entail tracing the Jewish and African diasporas in an effort to shed light on shared experiences and histories. Books such as *Multidirectional Memory: The Holocaust in the Age of Decolonziation* would aid in understanding the associations between memory, genocide, and post-colonialism within differing national contexts. Finally, the cross-culture and comparative literary study of "survivance" relating to experiences of the

"Stolen Generations" of Australian Aboriqginal children and Jewish Holocaust children within colonial, postcolonial, and transnational contexts would be worth pursuing as a future project.

ENDNOTES

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