

about his plans for Yom Hashoah and whether I could be of any help. "What's Yom Hashoah?" he replied.

Leaving home, I had moved from intense to attenuated group memory; from group memory divided along regional, ethnic, religious, and ideological lines to a zero-sum memory pool. I had moved from public remembering to public forgetting. At one end of the spectrum a culture of mourning was being incubated, with a separate calendar of memorial dates, a growing body of commemorative texts, a repertoire of songs, and competing historical narratives. At the other end, an invitation was extended to join the majority culture, where the slate of public memory was wiped clean every four years, on Election Day; where terrible wars were fought only abroad, and "we" were always on the winning side. From age fifteen to seventeen, in short, I had personally relived the jagged history of Holocaust literature.

DAVID G. ROSKIES

WHAT IS HOLOCAUST LITERATURE ?

WHAT IS HOLOCAUST LITERATURE? WHERE DOES IT BELONG, and how is it changing? Is it to be read as a genre of literature about death, war, atrocity, or trauma? Does this vast outpouring of writing invite comparisons with responses to other Jewish catastrophes or with other forms of Jewish resistance? Is it sui generis, to be measured against itself alone and demanding a unique interpretive lens? How may its verbal art be related to the other arts—plastic, graphic, photographic, cinematic, pornographic, acoustic? And finally, why should readers care about this catastrophe when there are already so many others to compete for their attention? Why read literature when the facts can be gleaned from other sources? Why read at all when one can see the movie or watch the video testimony?

Who speaks for the Holocaust? For some, Holocaust literature is everything written, and especially sung, in Yiddish—the *loshn-hakdoshim*, or language of

survivors, who speak in a language authentic to the Holocaust—Borowski speaking Polish, Celan speaking German, Delbo speaking French, Levi speaking Italian, Lustig speaking Czech—or those who speak a language that bears witness to the Holocaust—Appelfeld speaking Hebrew, Wiesel speaking English.

How shall they speak? We need this literature to be monumental, commensurate with its subject matter. "For I intend to write a great, immortal epic," Tadeusz Borowski resolved at the end of his first collection of concentration camp stories, "worthy of this unchanging, difficult world chiseled out of stone" (Borowski 1976, 180). "He told me his story," Primo Levi recalled, "and today I have forgotten it, but it was certainly a sorrowful, cruel and moving story; because so are all our stories, all different and all full of a tragic, disturbing necessity. We tell them to each other in the evening, and they take place in Norway, Italy, Algeria, the Ukraine and are simple and incomprehensible like the stories in the Bible. But are they not themselves stories of a new Bible?" (1985, 65–66). We, their readers, moreover, expect Borowski's great, immortal epic and Levi's stories of a new Bible to emerge, as they did, from the epicenter of evil, the locus of the crime—Auschwitz. Yet from the very beginning and increasingly in our own day, we are drawn to alternative landscapes—Anne Frank's Secret Annex, Momik's cellar in Jerusalem, the Landelman home in Rego Park, New York—that decenter the horror and play with our desire to domesticate it. There was a time when the heroes of the Holocaust were the fighters and resisters, each remembered by name and political affiliation. Today they are more likely to be Every survivors, whose very survival is heroism enough.

Enough questions for now. It is time to propose a working definition at once formal and flexible, true to the past and attentive to the present. And here it is, with its component parts discussed below: "Holocaust literature comprises all forms of writing, both documentary and discursive, and in any language, that have shaped the public memory of the Holocaust and been shaped by it."

All forms of writing, both documentary and discursive. Genre is the DNA of literature, so to view Holocaust writing through the lens of genre is anything but a dry, academic exercise. Diaries are universally acknowledged to be the core of wartime writing. By reading them in chronological order, we discover a specific type of diary that came into being when the confinement and enslavement of the Jews gave way to their mass extermination. It happened in year 4 of the war. By examining the corpus of wartime writing produced outside the war zone, we discover how literature was used to mobilize the public and then provided the same public with the means for mourning. Inside the war zone we discover reportage, second only to the diary in importance. By noting the

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recurrence of the coming-of-age story, the bildungsroman, in postwar writing, we recognize (and celebrate) the first such Holocaust story written in the collective voice. By starting from the beginning, we uncover the missing thread of fantasy and allegory. Certain genres rise to prominence, while others are consigned to oblivion. Then the chain may be broken beyond repair.

In any language. The multilingual scope of Holocaust writing makes maximal demands of its readers, none of whom could possibly read the entire corpus in the original. Works originally written in twelve languages are surveyed in this book. Each language is the bearer of religious symbolism, cultural memory and prejudice, national victory and defeat. Language is a mixture of high and low, declarative and cryptic, argot and dialect, doublespeak and "Jewspeak" (see below).

That have shaped the public memory of the Holocaust. Holocaust literature was born and bred in the habitat of public memory. Yet this did not come about all or everywhere at once. (My view of the Holocaust growing up in Yiddish-speaking Montreal was very different from the public perception of it among my cohort on American college campuses, just then engaged in a bitter protest against the war in Vietnam.) The growing public awareness of the Holocaust happened at the intersection of the private and public spheres: real and proxy witnesses began to write and publish, discovering new means of artistic expression and commemoration, but the public sphere was itself divided between Left and Right, East and West. When compiling the evidence of how *The World Reacts to the Holocaust* (Wyman 1996), the historian David Wyman proceeded country by country, and so do we.

Holocaust literature, as we shall see, unfolds both backward and forward: backward, as previously unknown works are published, annotated, translated, catalogued, and promptly forgotten; and forward, as new works of ever greater subtlety or simplicity come into being. How Holocaust literature came to be given that name is a large part of our story.

And been shaped by it. Holocaust memory unfolded in fits and starts because much of its narrative violated the horizon of expectations of a specific public. Instances of scandalous memory are a way of measuring these gaps, as when an uncensored piece of the Holocaust invaded the protected space of a reader-ship that had made its peace with the past too eagerly and too soon. Fierce controversies over a Holocaust novel, a play, even a poem, moreover, tend to happen in nations that look to literature for self-definition: Russia, Poland, France, Italy, Mandatory Palestine (later the State of Israel), and Yiddishland (that is, the places where Yiddish is spoken). In these polities, the public looks to high culture and literary expression to bridge gaps between the general- tions. In Anglo-Saxon countries with a stronger and more unifying political culture, writers, poets, and playwrights are far less likely to shake things up or

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How This Book Is Different

Until now, Holocaust literature has been defined as belonging to a separate universe beyond normal beginning and end, and therefore demanding a unique interpretive lens. For some, this lens is transcendent, as everything—the *genizah* of fragments rescued from the ruins, the six million Jewish victims, the survivors, and their rescuers—has been rendered sacred. For others, the absolute extremity of the Holocaust has rendered obsolete, if not obscene, all accepted norms of beauty, human agency, and moral accountability.

This history and guide rejects all such essentialist claims. The push and pull between the sacred and profane, martyrdom and resistance, public memory and the unassimilable facts is the very story that cries out to be told. This being said, we limit our choice to works of secular literature. Be there no mistake about it: Chaim Grade, Jacob Glatstein, Uri Zvi Greenberg, Yitzhak Katzenelson, Zvi Kolitz, and Simkhe Bunem Shayeivish are secular writers, however much they employ “God talk.” The return to covenantal language is just that—a late return, a studied response, a chapter in literary history, of a piece with something that we shall call “Jewspeak,” the invention of a superidiomatic Jewish voice in an otherwise silent universe. Jewish theological responses to the Holocaust—both during and after it—have their own genealogy, chronology, and audience, demanding a separate curriculum (Katz 2007). Where anthologists have mixed literary and theological responses (Eliav 1965; A. Friedlander 1968; Roskies 1989), their agenda was explicitly restorative. The attempt to yoke the Good Book to the book is nothing less than utopian—itself a religiously inspired response to the Holocaust.

Cutting to the quick, cultural and literary critics in the West were driven by “a need to locate the epicenter of the earthquake.” They went in anxious search of “a geographical, verbal or symbolic locus of the crime” (Ezrahi 2003, 319–20). Thus it was that Auschwitz was placed at the heart of the epistemological darkness, serving as the axis of a new world order, a pan-European dystopia, and the birthplace of a new language—what Borowski called “crematorium Esperanto” (1976, 35). For Western intellectuals, Auschwitz became the *telos*, the sum and substance of the Holocaust, the ultimate and exclusive reference point. Once Auschwitz was adopted as a master metaphor, the Jews—crammed into cattle cars at one end of the journey and dragged from the gas chambers as a mass of blue bodies at the other—ceased to be bearers of a distinct cultural identity. They became the Unknown Victims of the Second World War. With the myriad points on the map of the Holocaust reduced to

one; with all personal effects plundered or destroyed on arrival at Auschwitz; and with all the inmates—men and women, Gypsies and Jews, the Kapos and *Muselmänner*—dressed in identical striped uniforms, there emerged a master narrative of absolute extremity and anonymity.

The named survivors of the camps were the ones who spoke for the nameless victims, and in the late 1970s, they in turn began to merge into a single composite identity. By that point, there were a sufficient number of survivors’ testimonies published, translated, and catalogued to invite a collective biographer to step forward. Based on English translations of eyewitness accounts from the Nazi and Soviet concentration camps, Terrence Des Pres drew a group portrait of *The Survivor* (1976), whose emaciated, brutalized body could withstand the “excremental assault,” survive nightmare and waking, survive “radical nakedness” (Des Pres 1976, chaps. 3, 7) through a kind of biological imperative. Countering this Darwinian scheme was Lawrence Langer, whose aesthetics of atrocity centered on the “choiceless choice,” the denial of all human initiative or volition in Auschwitz (1982, 46; see also 67–129). Either way, on arrival the inmate was severed from spouse and children and then stripped of clothes, personal belongings, and name, so that reading the testimony of the camp survivors, the cultural critic came away with a new set of universal principles that transcended or subverted the existing moral, religious, and rational order. The “postmodern” world began in Auschwitz.

Just as we propose to study Holocaust literature as literature, to follow its meandering course of development wherever it may lead, so we abandon the search for an epicenter of evil. Rather than look to literature to create an “enduring, compelling narrative of mythical dimensions” that can answer all our needs (S. Friedlander 1992, 346), we shall introduce a new term of art, the “Jew-Zone,” at the beginning of the next chapter. In this way we hope to redraw the boundaries of Holocaust literature in both time and space.

Then there is the matter of memory itself. “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 (see N. Levi and Rothberg 2003b, parts V and X). Before abdicating the field to psychoanalytic theory, we should like to take a long, hard look at the ongoing memory work of real and proxy witnesses who have tried since the very beginning to find the part that stands for the whole. The art of fearful metonymy and analogy—especially in its earliest iterations, before the full scale of the catastrophe was known—is another key to our story. We shall read Holocaust literature in the light of Jewish responses to catastrophe in ancient, medieval, and modern times (Ezrahi 1980, 96–148; Mintz 1984; Roskies 1984). That earlier research will inform our discussion of the art of countercommentary—the subtle, ironic, subversive, despairing, and defiant ways in which Scripture was

of analogies to the unprecedented terror, by Soviet Jewish writers trying to suture their wounds, or by survivors and witnesses as different as Anthony Hecht, Primo Levi, Dan Pagis, and Y. D. Sheinson, who wished to translate the spatial into the temporal, and death into life. Shayeivish's *Lehek-likho* has already introduced us to the personal dynamic of Scriptural countermemory.

Finally, we come to the question of the timeline. "There is now broad consensus amongst scholars," we read in a definitive anthology of theoretical readings on the Holocaust, "that public awareness of the Holocaust was low in the first decade and a half after the end of World War II, an interval that many think of as a kind of 'latency period' but which might also be thought of in terms of what Marxist cultural theory describes as the inevitable 'cultural lag' between the emergence of the new and the development of a vocabulary—be it conceptual or artistic—to describe it" (N. Levi and Rothberg 2003a, 6). The new story line reconstructs what was actually written, conceptualized, and artistically developed in the order in which this vast and variegated literature came into being, in lands and languages both large and small. The new periodization of Holocaust literature, the backbone of our book, challenges the broad scholarly consensus on every score. By the time we reach the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961, the supposed point of origin of public consciousness of the Holocaust in the Western world, our story is half over.

To tell one story well requires that one not try to tell every story. In *The Black Seasons* (2005), Michał Głowiński traced his recuperation from wartime trauma and postwar fixation with the annihilation of the Jews to his reading of a Polish encyclopedia. There was still an orderly, alphabetical world out there that could be described in meticulous, boring detail. S. Lillian Kremer's two-volume *Holocaust Literature: An Encyclopedia of Writers and their Work* (2003) was supposed to be that kind of disinterested summation. Instead, the selection of authors and the allocation of space to each were based on celebrity, current fashion, and political correctness. There was a four-page entry for "Carl Friedman," the pseudonym of a Jewish author who never existed, and no entry for Davidson Draenger, Gebirg, Glik, Gradowski, Gutfreund, Isacovici, Keilson, Kolitz, Kruk, Malaparte, Opoczynski, Orlev, Perle, Rochman, Rosenfeld, Zable, and Zelkowitz, to mention but a few letters in the alphabet. To set the record on a different course, this book starts from the beginning, giving artistic primacy and moral priority to what came first.

The encyclopedic approach to the Holocaust is based on the belief that more is better. As in certain of the Psalms or the Book of Lamentations, there is a deep belief that once one has covered all the letters of the alphabet, one has said it all. But no one reads a literature in alphabetical order. The uninitiated reader needs an annotated guide, and the guide needs a guiding hand—in

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our case, two. Adhering to the same chronology as the historical overview, we present a suggested reading list in our Guide to the First Hundred Books on an even playing field, with equal time given to all. Each book is there for a reason: it stands alone, surprising or dismaying us, as the case may be, and complicating the very notion of narrative history. Most writers, moreover, appear only once, requiring us to make a judgment call and select a writer's best or most representative work.

The story could have been told biographically, one writer at a time. It would have been easier for us to distinguish between those prose writers and poets who made the Holocaust their primary path—like Appelfeld, Auerbach, Borowski, Fink, Grynberg, Ka-Tzetnik, Kertész, Levi, Lustig, Rochman, Rosenfarb, Rudnicki, Semprún, Spiegel, and Wiesel—and those who, in Langer's phrase (1995), "admitted" the Holocaust into their literary and moral imagination, like Amichai, Bellow, Glatstein, Grade, Greenberg, Kiš, Orlev, Ozick, Pagis, Singer, Strigler, Sutzkever, Tournier, and many other writers on our list. Ruth Wisse (2003, 1234) has tackled the problem of biography by drawing a more useful distinction between those who became writers by virtue of their wartime experience and those whose approach to art, reality, and history determined their response to Hitler. There is a strong cultural bias nowadays to favor writers in the first category, since they alone are presumed to map the rupture in human values after Auschwitz. In contrast, in this book writers are prized for their ability to create their own space and establish their own precedent, regardless of where they belong on the Holocaust map or even if they do not belong there at all. Alone among the poets, prose writers, and purveyors of Holocaust memory, Abraham Sutzkever accompanies our story from start to finish.

Encyclopedia entries, despite the animus that provoked this project to begin with, have proved very useful when it came to fleshing out the relationships among writers. The fact that Edgar Hilsenrath met Yakov Lind while waiting in a long line of unemployed workers hoping for a day job in construction in Netanya, Israel (Klingenstein 2004), speaks volumes about the marginalization of German-language writers after the Holocaust, the politics of displacement, the formation of a new cohort, and the evolution of a new anti-aesthetic. Hilsenrath and Lind belong together, even though they subsequently moved far apart. Large as the cast of characters is, however, it is far from being exhaustive. The fact that some appear and reappear while others do not appear at all is both by design and by default. A good storyteller tries to keep the reader guessing. Every writer "creates" his own precursors, Jorge Luis Borges famously said in his essay on Franz Kafka. "A great work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future" (Borges 1957). Art Spiegelman ranks as such a creative force. The revelatory power of *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (1986) made

Kantor (1971), Y. D. Sheinson's 1946 *Passover Service* (reprinted in *A Survivor's Haggadah*, 2000), and Hana Volavková's anthology of children's drawings and poems from Terezin (1959) suggest a creative trajectory that at the very least underscores how each artistic medium determines the message.

Some works, however, have neither precursor nor sequel. Such a singular masterpiece is Wojdowski's 1971 *Bread for the Departed* (1997) and Głowiński's *The Black Seasons* (2005). They suggest that Poland might be a breeding ground for a highly individualized approach to the Holocaust and provoke one to ask why this might be so.

Besides the artificial cutoff at the first 100 titles—why not some more iconic number, like 150, the number of chapters in the Book of Psalms?—another constraint we faced was linguistic. To make this a usable guide for readers of English, the selection was limited to books available (somewhere, somehow, and with one exception) in English translation. The books are presented in order of creation and completion. The chronology of creation is very different from the chronology of reception, however. Wartime writings from inside the war zone had long to wait before they were discovered, deciphered, and delivered. That is one story. The time lag between publication in the original language and translation into English is another. Those who wish to follow them both are advised to look carefully at all the dates.

The Four Phases of Holocaust Memory

It did not take a generation for a literary response to the Holocaust to be born. But it took at least two generations for its history to acquire a shape. Literary history is the sum of many stories, and it has taken this long for the stories within the story to be told—by no means all, by no means well, and, until now, never from start to finish.

This is the first attempt at a periodization of Holocaust literature worldwide. Chapters 2 through 6 constitute a preliminary map of where this literature comes from, how it has changed, and where it stands now. Beginning at the beginning, this part of the book reveals the cumulative though erratic process of mobilizing and consolidating the public memory of the Holocaust through literary means. This happened in four distinct phases: wartime writing (1938–45), communal memory (1945–60), provisional memory (1960–85), and authorized memory (1985–present). The new road map challenges the accepted story line, introduces a whole new cast of characters, and throws open dozens of new and heretofore unexplored directions. It is a story, moreover, without an ending.

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A new literature of destruction emerged, both inside the war zone and without. The Holocaust became its own archetype—called *khurbn* in Yiddish and *shoah* in Hebrew—by the time of the Liberation.

COMMUNAL MEMORY

The first decade and a half after the end of the Second World War does indeed define a distinct phase in the history of Holocaust literature, second in importance only to the first. With astonishing speed, documentary and literary production resumed in the free memory zones carved out of Germany by the US and British armies and in parts of Poland. This new literature was born with full knowledge of Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek, and Ponar. When the survivors, veterans, and former POWs trickled back, a small but significant window opened onto what was then called the last catastrophe—on both sides of the Iron Curtain, in Jewish Palestine, and in North America. In Yiddishland, the window that opened in 1945 was never shut.

“Communal” is an apt name for this second phase because the scandals that played out in the public sphere were very much directed inward, at other members of the same community. Following the momentous meeting in 1952 of Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, a new scandalous term tore the Jewish community apart: *shilumim*, or reparations. Announcement of the plan for reparations was met with riots and mass rallies in Israel and spilled over to the Jewish street around the globe. In the Yiddish-language encyclopedia dealing with Jewish money, *shilumim-gelt* was defined as “the money that the Germans, may their name be blotted out, pay in recompense for the Nazi Holocaust and theft in the years 1938–1945 and their crime of Cain against the Jewish people” (Rivkin 1959, s.v. *shilumim-gelt*). To stand up and be counted among the naysayers, certain public figures refused inclusion in the *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Yiddish Literature*, one of many Yiddish cultural projects underwritten by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany. Among the most prominent were Isaac Bashevis Singer and Aaron Zeitlin. Yiddish—the language of the meek, the passive, and the pious—became in the wake of the Holocaust the repository of uncensored, unyielding, politically incorrect Jewish rage. The real conundrum, therefore, is to explain how and why the first two phases of Holocaust memory were so quickly forgotten and were replaced by the great scandal of all times: the presumed silence of those who could and should have responded to the Holocaust but failed to do so. The ultimate accusation levied against past generations is that the wartime and communal phases of Holocaust memory didn't exist at all.

Holocaust literature began to be called that during the communal phase.

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the returning refugees and exiles, demobilized soldiers, former prisoners and partisans, and those who had somehow managed to survive in hiding was the poet and resistance fighter Michał Borwicz. Borwicz was the first anthologizer of Holocaust poetry (1947) and the first to map out the treacherous terrain of Jews in hiding (1954–55). He earned a doctorate at the Sorbonne in 1954 based on his study of wartime writing in occupied Europe (1973). Among those who remained in Poland after the Kielce pogrom of 1946 and the Communist seizure of power in 1948 was Ber Mark. Mark was responsible for publishing and promoting major works from the Warsaw ghetto and Auschwitz, but in doing so he had to negotiate the ups and downs of late Stalinism.

“Communal” also denotes a postwar landscape fiercely divided between East and West, Left and Right. Whoever tried to stake out a space for themselves on the memory map for the future was forced to take sides. The main purveyors of Holocaust memory in the immediate postwar period, as we shall see, were publishers and intellectuals on the Left, then at the height of its moral suasion both in Europe and abroad. All across Europe, in fact, from France and the Netherlands to the Communist-bloc countries, nations were “caught awkwardly between past and future,” and the trauma of national identity was being forged through ignoring and forgetting (Gordon 1999, 51). The same, in large measure, was true in the nascent State of Israel. Holocaust memory had to negotiate between these narrow straits. The “communal” space was small, claustrophobic, and often inhospitable.

PROVISIONAL MEMORY

The next two phases were defined, not merely punctuated, by Holocaust-specific scandals. The third phase began with the Eichmann trial, which aroused fierce international debate before, during, and after it took place. Hannah Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963) raised the stakes on Jewish self-blame by defining collaboration down. In the same year, a previously unknown playwright named Rolf Hochhuth shook the entire Catholic world, from Basle to Brooklyn, with *The Deputy* (1964). Daring to place the extermination of European Jewry center stage, Hochhuth proceeded to draw everyone into the limelight: Eichmann and Josef Mengele; the giants of German industry; staff sergeants and mere secretaries; abbots, cardinals, and Pope Pius XII. Appended to the published version of the play was a fifty-page historical exposition. *The Deputy* was banned and picketed, and performances of it were routinely interrupted (Whitfield 2010).

Provisional memory coincided with the 1960s, and Hochhuth’s was very much the protest of the young, as was Jean-François Steiner’s 1966 documentary novel, translated as *Treblinka: The Revolt of an Extermination Camp* (1967).

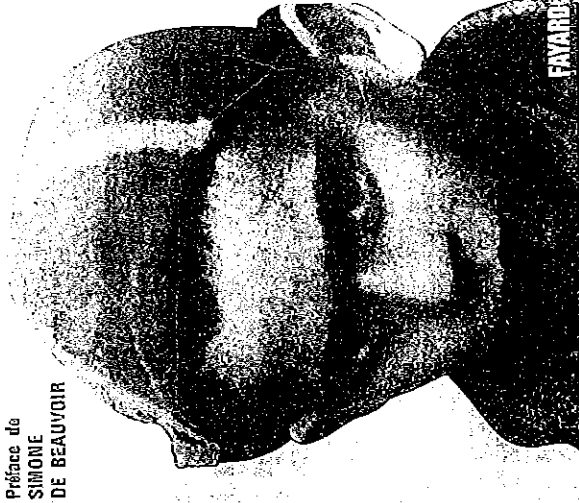
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JEAN-FRANÇOIS STEINER

TREBLINKA

la révolte d'un camp d'extermination

Préface de
SIMONE
DE BEAUVOIR



FAYARD

Jean-François Steiner.
*Treblinka: la révolte d'un
camp d'extermination.*
Paris: Fayard, 1966.

Challenging the master narrative of the Resistance, with its scheme of one universalist model fits all, Steiner insisted on the particular fate—and heroism—of the Jews. Arrogating to himself true knowledge of what happened in Treblinka, he displaced the primary witnesses, those who had survived the camp or had first testified about the crimes perpetrated there, with his own agenda, angst, and addressee. The witnesses too rose up in protest. All of his informants demanded that their names be suppressed from all future editions of the book. Rachel Auerbach, who had given unstintingly of her time and expertise, launched a ferocious one-woman campaign aimed specifically at the American edition (Moyn 2005, 122–40). On the advice of his lawyers, Steiner added this disingenuous note to subsequent editions: “The events described in this book are so extraordinary in their nature that the author has chosen to change the names of the survivors in order to protect the privacy of these heroes and martyrs” (quoted in *ibid.*, 132). But that was only to make his elders happy. “I do not regret anything,” he boasted in the heat of the controversy, “because I am right,” and he was right; he insisted, “because I am twenty-eight years old” (quoted in *ibid.*, 93).

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Rosenfeld, Young, and the first author of this book—Des Pres, Langer, Ezrahi, fiercely defended a separate turf. Each tried to create a different base line, be it the choiceless choice, the experience of displacement, or the death and rehabilitation of the idea of the human. It seemed as if the only way to convince the reader that the Holocaust mattered was by making some exclusive claim for its moral, existential, and otherwise subversive meaning.

As distinct from the communal phase, which was inward-looking and internecine, the provisional phase was marked by the first aggressive, albeit scattershot, attempts to reach beyond the borders of country, language, religion, political affiliation, and genealogy. As the survivor witnesses made the transition from refugee to landed immigrant, they became "writers in search of language" (Wisse 2000, 204), counting among their cohort the likes of Appelfeld, Kosinski, Rawicz and Wiesel. The children of Holocaust survivors made a tentative appearance on the scene.

AUTHORIZED MEMORY

Ushering in the fourth and last phase of public memory was a different kind of scandal. The Bitburg affair, as we shall see, marked the precise moment when the Holocaust entered the realm of "authorized memory"; it was unacceptable, even for a president of the United States, to equate fallen soldiers with the victims of Nazi genocide, let alone Germans and Jews. The Second World War and the Holocaust were coterminous but not morally equivalent.

Leading the charge was Elie Wiesel—who, like other members of his cohort, had by this time become a naturalized us citizen, his language loyalty now firmly established. Authorized, or sanctioned, to speak in the name of the Holocaust, survivors carried that name with pride; but it came at a price, for they were now subject to scrutiny. In 1987, both Jerzy Kosinski's life story and authorship were called into question, which sent him into psychological free fall. Equally precipitous was the fall from grace of Benjamin Wilkomirski's *Fragments* (1995). When it was revealed that both the author and his horrific tale had been invented out of whole cloth, the publisher and the critics were left with egg on their face, and the book was promptly taken out of circulation. When a work or author considered mainstream or cutting edge in Holocaust memory was revealed to be fabricated, it was as if a sacred trust had been broken. "Authorized memory" captures that sense of sacred trust.

Authorization finally came even to that part of the world where the memory of the Holocaust had been driven underground. Just when we might expect Holocaust memory to be moving inexorably from East to West, rendering Eastern Europe invisible and irrelevant once the memory found a per-

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what President Ronald Reagan called the evil empire, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Romania, and Russia became places where the past had to be reckoned with and could no longer be falsified and manipulated. The Soviet archives were opened. Ukraine and Belorussia became subject to scrutiny. Amid the upheaval, a new loanword, *Kho-lo-kost*, entered public and political discourse. The ever more global reach of Holocaust memory did not erase the distinctions between nations, religions, and ethnicities. Rather, it gave Holocaust literature a new lease on land, a renewed sense of being rooted in a specific territory.

After a long dry spell, seminal works of Holocaust writing in Polish, French, Italian, German, Dutch, Hungarian, and Serbo-Croatian began to appear in fluent English translations, many of them with critical introductions. The synergy between Holocaust literature and film became especially strong. The second generation claimed the mantle of moral authority from their survivor parents, spawning a whole new area of study. Gender as a category for analysis of the Holocaust became more accepted. Suddenly there was talk about the Americanization of the Holocaust, which also meant that the United States, for all its global power, was competing in an open market.

No sooner did the Iron Curtain fall, however, than it was replaced by a new and fearsome division. Cutting through the phase of Holocaust memory in which we live today is the geopolitical and religious divide between the Middle East and the West. In much of the Islamic world, the Jew has once again been classified as an infidel. Absent a threshold of shame, genocide too is a live option. In the world of radical Islam, Holocaust denial has become an article of faith, and everything in this book, from the epigraphs to the index, is anathema.

Classified Writing

Those who speak of a cultural or time lag between the emergence of the new and the development of a vocabulary to describe it are not completely misguided. In this case, they are pointing to the moment when the Holocaust was given that name, and when communal memory provisionally became the province of the whole world. Could anyone have known that the United States—so far removed from the landscapes and languages of the war, the fierce debates, and bloody divisions—would become the central repository and classifier of Holocaust writing? So great, in fact, was the volume of books and brochures deposited in the us Library of Congress that by 1968 librarians had to make a new entry in its subject catalog. A new rubric was needed to rationalize and organize the publications that were streaming in.

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new entry: "Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)." Three years later, to facilitate geographic subdivision, the heading was slightly revised. However, so many questions arose regarding both the specific time span of the Holocaust and the use of the qualifier "Jewish" that in October 1995, the library's Cataloguing Policy and Support Office conducted a survey on subject headings and classification numbers relating to the Holocaust. Among the respondents to the survey was the recently established US Holocaust Memorial Museum, which convened a miniconference to deliberate on the eight choices allowable under Library of Congress cataloguing guidelines. These were:

1. Holocaust, Jewish (1939-45)
2. Holocaust, 1939-45
3. Holocaust, 1933-45
4. Holocaust
5. Holocaust (Nazi genocide)
6. Jewish Holocaust, 1939-45
7. Jewish Holocaust, 1933-45
8. Jewish Holocaust

The first question debated was the accuracy and even necessity of the dates. Although historians have argued that the Holocaust began with the Nazi seizure of power on January 30, 1933, when Adolf Hitler was sworn in as chancellor of the German Republic, some respondents to the survey challenged headings 3 and 7 because the events of the period 1933-39 were antecedents of the Holocaust, not part of the Holocaust itself. Appending any dates, one respondent objected, implied that there could be other "Jewish holocausts." Did not the very qualifier "Jewish" obviate the need for a chronology? No, it did not, others argued, for insofar as "Holocaust, Jewish" was an "event" heading and a subset of the broader term "World War," it required that dates be provided; it followed, therefore, that the corresponding dates of the Second World War were the most logical choice (Bell 1996).

The second point of contention was the use of a qualifier. There was general consensus among the respondents that to define the Holocaust as "Nazi genocide" (heading 5) was both confusing and offensive, for it could be read as suggesting that Nazis, not Jews, were the victims. There were compelling arguments, however, in favor of retaining the qualifier "Jewish." It was likely that, in the future, "holocaust," whether capitalized or not, would be applied more broadly to describe atrocities against other ethnic groups. "Jewish" clearly identified the heading for the general public. In the final analysis, the seven alternative headings were rejected and the original subject heading,

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945), was upheld as being at once the most inclusive, because universally recognized, and the most exclusive.

The inverted structure had the added advantage of retaining "Holocaust" as the key term. Just as the volume of published works on the Holocaust had grown exponentially in the twenty-seven years since the subject heading was first adopted, so too had the number of works of Holocaust denial. Asked whether the current heading, "Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)—Errors, inventions, etc.," ought to be retained, the respondents were unanimous in selecting a new analytic breakdown with the following three headings:

- Literature: Holocaust denial literature, D804.35
- Phenomenon: Holocaust denial, D804.355
- Criticism of the literature: Holocaust denial literature—History and criticism, D804.355

Was Holocaust writing to be found only under the letter D, which in the Library of Congress classification covers the broad rubric of history? Certainly it was the place to begin. Those who went in search of antecedents in centuries past could start with D802 ("1. Jews—Persecution—History; 2. Jewish Literature; 3. Holocaust, Jewish"). Alternatively, those who wished to consult the documentary sources at the bedrock of Holocaust memory might begin with D835, which contained, for instance, rescued diaries and the oversized *yizkor* (memorial) books about the destruction of individual communities. The fastest-growing branch of Holocaust writing, personal narratives of Holocaust survivors and the growing body of literary analysis of them, were assembled in D804.3, while D810 was reserved for books with a focus on survival in the concentration camps. The event and its antecedents; history and memory; the individual and the collective; testimony and critical theory—all were contained within a single, capacious rubric. Yet the search for Holocaust literature led in many other directions as well.

Adhering to long-established practice, imaginative works pertaining to the Holocaust were assigned a completely different classification: "Holocaust Literature," PN56H.55, is housed alongside PN56.D4 ("Death and Literature") and PN.W3 ("War and Literature"). This by no means exhausted the relevant categories, for "Human Liberty in Extremis" was catalogued under HM271; "Passive Resistance" could be found under HM278; and "Art of the Holocaust" was classified in various places under the letter N. Overtly theological responses to the Holocaust were catalogued in BM645.H6, among the classics of rabbinic literature. Children's literature, a reader's first exposure to the meaning of history, was catalogued in D804.34 for nonfiction or in PZ for fiction.

Despite the best efforts of the Library of Congress to classify, segregate,

and rationalize major works of Holocaust literature, like major works in any discipline, they defy easy categorization, either as literature or as history. This is because, from its very inception, Holocaust literature defied genre boundaries and crossed disciplines.

By housing "Holocaust Literature" alongside "Death and Literature" and not too far from "War and Literature," the Library of Congress has created a level playing field where one is encouraged to follow a comparative, cross-cultural, and transhistorical path. Shelved so close by, just a few decimals away, the literature and scholarship of the First World War, for example, has much to teach us about the literature of the Holocaust. It can teach us about the autonomy of great art, the evolution of generational consciousness, habits of reading, history as refracted through a cultural lens, and the difference a decade can make. It can teach us about the changing status of the eyewitness, the survivor, and the ex-soldier turned poet, playwright, or novelist. It can teach us how public memory pushes hard on private memory. It can teach us how a cataclysm of universal proportions, an unremitting disaster, can shape what it means to live in the modern world. This comparative work cries out to be undertaken.

How to Read Holocaust Literature

Most of this book's readers, like its authors, were born into a world in which the Holocaust had already happened and there existed a body of writing on the subject, if not a separate category in the Library of Congress cataloging system. Most readers will probably remember their first exposure to this awesome subject, as young readers, perhaps, or as high-school students. For some, it will have been part of a compulsory curriculum, mediated by a certified teacher teaching in a prescribed manner. For others, learning about the Holocaust will have been like discovering some dirty secret about the depths of human depravity, a species of pornography. Still others might have come across the word in some contemporary setting, where it punctuated a rally against nuclear proliferation, described an atrocity perpetrated elsewhere in the world, or was otherwise marshaled as an inappropriate comparison to some current injustice. The Holocaust is so embedded in our psyche that it is hard to imagine living in the world as we know it without the counterknowledge of the ghettos, the killing fields, the trains, the gas chambers, the mounds of human hair. Some readers will have gone on pilgrimage to the death camps and will be left forever wondering how that reality and their own can possibly coexist.

For young readers, the Holocaust comes in small doses, sometimes cloaked in fantasy. It's mostly a story of personal loss and dislocation. Diaries and last

letters are the preferred reading among adolescents because these are familiar, domesticated forms, which literally bring the wartime experience "home." This was true for the world at large, whose first exposure to the subject of the Holocaust was Anne Frank's 1947 *Het achterhuis* (The secret annex), better known as *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1952). To this day, many young girls identify with Anne and thrill at Peter's first kiss. Why, then, did the young lovers grow apart?

The Diary of a Young Girl is also the ideal point of entry to a curriculum on how to read Holocaust literature. To read ethically is to read in time. Our insistence on chronology rests on an ethic of unfolding, recovering, provoking, and revoking. Reading in time reveals the receding of narrative into past experience and history, the vertigo of the past recuperated or reinforced by language even as we continue to read fresh, as if from that time and place, and into this time and place.

How did Anne Frank become Everychild—and Everywoman? The canonical status she was accorded certainly had to do with the fact she was a nice, middle-class, Western European girl. Her closest confidante, the addressee of her diary, was "Kitty," a nonjudgmental, nonresponsive, and non-Jewish listener—a silent gentile to the Mistress Chatterbox Jewess. Kitty was an amalgam of her favorite heroine from an adolescent adventure story and the Dutch Christian classmates whom she had just begun to befriend before being forced to enroll in the Jewish Lyceum. Already a refugee from Germany and writing in a new language, Anne was the vulnerable heroine in a story of her own fashioning, her daily life rendered with its essential details and dramas. She conjured her fears away into the alluring Secret Annex. She described her three birthdays, her young womanhood unfolding as she recorded her thoughts, inspired by her reading, about the differences between women and men: "It's easy for men to talk—they don't and never will have to bear the woes that women do!" (Frank 1995, 320). This kind of reading and line of questioning have been made possible by the publication in 1995 of the so-called "definitive edition" of the work, by the rise of feminism and gender theory, and by the evolution of Holocaust memory itself.

In the United States, the nation's revered First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, wrote a brief introduction to the 1952 edition, which has been republished many times since. Like François Mauriac's introduction to Elie Wiesel's *Night* (1960), the First Lady's introduction to *The Diary of a Young Girl* is the authorizing voice that proclaims: This work has universal significance! Roosevelt, it should be recalled, was instrumental in creating the human rights declaration of the United Nations. Her introduction advanced the communal agenda of Holocaust memory in the immediate postwar period, which was the consistent and self-conscious campaign to downplay the Jewishness of Anne Frank,

ica was happening throughout Europe and, for different reasons, throughout the Communist bloc countries as well. To understand Anne Frank's reclamation as a symbol of ethnic pride and much more, we turn to her most critical reader, Philip Roth.

There is much controversy about the place of the Holocaust in American life. The historian Peter Novick (1999) attributes changes in the public memory of the Holocaust to the influence of Zionist leaders in particular and of the Jewish, pro-Israel establishment in general. Until recently, few have challenged the consensus view that awareness of the Holocaust began only in the wake of the Eichmann trial. An early dissenter was Roth, in the persona of Nathan Zuckerman. In *The Ghost Writer* (1979), Roth turns the clock back to the 1955 stage play of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and describes "the weeping and inconsolable audience" at the famous Cort Theater production of the play in New York City. Already then, according to Roth, the memory of the Holocaust had become sacralized, and attending the Broadway production had been turned into a communal rite of purification. "If you have not yet seen the Broadway production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*," Judge Leopold Wapner sternly counsels the rebellious Zuckerman, "I strongly advise that you do so" (Roth 1979, 102). At the same time as Roth satirizes the older generation for its soppy sentimentalism and naïve literalism, he uses Nathan's love affair with the reincarnated Anne Frank to expose another facet of her postwar image. The Anne of stage and screen is the eroticized female victim. Who wouldn't want to marry her if, in the same conjugal act, he could prove his loyalty to the tribe? Either as sacred icon or sex symbol, Anne Frank has become thoroughly domesticated.

With uncanny prescience, Roth's fantasy revealed a truth about the "real" Anne Frank that did not come to light until the publication of the definitive edition of her diary. Here the author was revealed to be an aspiring writer who, as early as September 21, 1942, began adding comments to her earlier diary entries, in advance of a thoroughgoing (unfinished) attempt to prepare the manuscript for postwar publication, not to mention the action-adventure story called "The Secret Annex" that she was planning to write. Conscious of her new role, she began signing her entries with her full name, "Anne Mary Frank," finally settling on "Anne M. Frank" as her official signature.

In the last acts of her many lives, Anne Frank appears in two mutually exclusive guises. One is Judith Goldstein's presentation of her as utterly exceptional, with her fate and that of her family differing radically from that of Dutch Jewry as a whole (Goldstein 2003). The other is the interpretation of Nelson Mandela, who read the *Diary* while in prison and saw Frank's "militant activism" as a model for the ongoing struggle for human rights (Mandela

2009). Not only are there many lives from which the reader is now invited to choose, there are also many points indicated by the compass of Holocaust memory where the reader may choose to tarry.

How to read Holocaust literature? In all languages. From the beginning: before time, in time, and against time.