

tations of the Holocaust today, such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Imperial War Museum's Holocaust exhibition and Steven Spielberg's award-winning film *The Last Days* (1999). (In the process, by including *Jewish* evidence, the particularity of Nazi racism is illustrated, and in skilled hands, such as Friedländer's, the dilemmas facing the Jews are highlighted.<sup>95</sup>)

In more polemical works, such as Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, Jewish voices, either from sources or more often as imagined by the author, are there *purely* to show the full horror of German mass murder. In the process, integrity is lost and Goldhagen's work verges on the pornographic in its description of violence.<sup>96</sup> (In contrast, see the understated and unvoyeuristic account of the same action in Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men: Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, 1992.) But even with the exceptionally good, self-aware work of Saul Friedländer, there is no way that victim testimony is allowed to disrupt the harmony of the narrative flow. The testimony is tidy and coherent. It is rarely problematised.<sup>97</sup> Here, it must be argued that we have reached a real stumbling block, and its implications will be teased out in the remainder section of this chapter.

Approaches to the evidence collected through oral testimony have gone through several clear stages. In its first major wave in the 1960s there was an excitement that here was the way to reach parts of history, especially of the oppressed and marginalised, that other, 'traditional' sources could not reach. All that was needed was a sufficient number of testimonies to ensure a reliable sample to recover the experiences of the working classes, women, immigrants and so on.<sup>98</sup> In fact, this approach, privileging numbers over quality, typified many of those involved in the early stages of Holocaust survivor interviewing. Ball-Kaduri, working at Yad Vashem in the 1950s, reported a conversation between Dr Reichmann of the Wiener Library and Professor Koebner of the Hebrew University about witness testimony: 'If I find only one piece of evidence, it does not mean anything to me; if I have ten records that is good; but if I have a hundred, then the evidence is conclusive'. Ball-Kaduri queried whether one piece of evidence on its own was valueless, 'especially in the field of active Jewish life there are cases where only one witness has survived'. Such an account, however, was again only important as an illustration and

not because the individual was of significance in his/her own right. With the situation of the Jews in Germany in the years from 1933 to 1938, what happened was already 'known'. Writing in 1959, Ball-Kaduri argued that in this case '[w]hoever experienced the suffering there and escaped in time, can hardly add anything of importance, after the passing of so many years'.<sup>99</sup>

In the early years of oral history it was assumed that there was no need for an 'anthropological gap' – the self-doubt and awareness of what could not be grasped by a participant-observer which has typified the discipline of anthropology since 1945, in which the approach of life history has the longest pedigree.<sup>100</sup> Interviewers and interviewees spoke the same language and met as equals. Indeed, marginalised groups would be empowered by knowing their own history and could even undertake it themselves. Next came the easy critique, especially from those within academia who were always unhappy about the populist nature of the oral history bandwagon. Opponents argued that the testimonies gathered could not be relied upon for accuracy and were subject to biased questioning. More recently, however, and certainly in the last decade, the mythologies created within individual life stories, rather than being seen as an inherent weakness, have been celebrated as one of their great strengths. Using insights gained from psychology and literary and cultural studies, the construction of life story has become increasingly sophisticated.<sup>101</sup>

How individuals put together their lives in a coherent way tells us as much about their lives now as it does about their past experiences. All are bound together in creating the individual's identity. With this development in the approach to oral testimony, however, there is a potential tension between the users and the interviewed, an anthropological gap that would not necessarily have been recognised say in the 1960s had such work been carried out. In contrast, it is largely absent in survivors' responses to the work of Martin Gilbert, who, whilst selecting testimony to fit into a generally chronological framework, never intervenes in the text itself.

It is crucial for scholars and others to be sensitive in their use, or absence of use, of Holocaust testimony. They have to take it seriously, revealing its own internal dynamics, which might mean revealing its strong mythologies and contradictions – the real nature of any life story as has been shown even with the chronologically more specific ghetto diaries in the earlier part of this

chapter. For scholars and others to lose that critical perspective is ultimately not to honour the survivors, but to do them damage, as has become so apparent with the Wilkomirski *Fragments* affair.

In 1995 Benjamin Wilkomirski, a Swiss classical musician, published an account of a Polish Jewish childhood in the war. Translated into English the following year, it won literary prizes across the world and was praised for its bravery and authenticity in relating the child's experience of the Holocaust.<sup>102</sup> It later emerged that Wilkomirski had in fact been adopted as a child and raised in a Swiss orphanage (becoming Bruno Dosekker from Bruce Grosjean).<sup>103</sup> Read critically, and obviously now with the advantage of hindsight, the account cannot be that of the author's own childhood, but it is surely significant that many people wanted it to be true, both the general public and even more so the very young survivors of the Holocaust. The latter have been largely marginalised in writing on the Holocaust, and to many child survivors the stark beauty of Wilkomirski's prose managed to give much-needed status to their memories.<sup>104</sup> It is also important not to dismiss, simply out of the fear of providing ammunition to Holocaust deniers, other accounts which in part are deliberately distorted by their authors, such as the case in the early 1970s of Martin Gray's *For Those I Loved*.<sup>105</sup> Gray took his story from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka, which he had not experienced, with the death camp added to his narrative so that he (or his ghost-writer, Max Gallo, 'a writer of some notoriety'<sup>106</sup>) could tell the 'whole' story of the Holocaust. Gallo argued that the chapter on Treblinka was necessary 'because the book required something strong for pulling in readers'. Of much greater significance was Gray's response when confronted by the investigative journalist Gitta Sereny with the fact that 'he had manifestly never been to, nor escaped from Treblinka': 'But does it matter? Wasn't the only thing that Treblinka *did* happen, that it *should* be written about, and that some Jews should be shown to have been heroic?'<sup>107</sup> To Sereny, writing in 1979, it *did* matter: 'Every falsification, every error, every slick re-write job is an advantage to the neo-Nazis'. Gray, unwittingly, was assisting the so-called revisionists.<sup>108</sup>

Since then, Holocaust denial has become more organised, utilising the potential of the electronic media, but is still no less marginal both in terms of academic respectability and in popular acceptance of its message. To allow deniers, most of whom belong

to organised racist groupuscules, to determine the representation of the Holocaust is surely absurd, ultimately giving them power by default. In the case of Gray, the inclusion of the chapter on Treblinka does not invalidate the text as a whole but helps to problematise it. It reveals much about the author's identity and the context in which he and (unusually in this example) his ghost-writer were working – a time in which memoirs about the Holocaust and interest in the subject were at a low ebb. Whilst it is true that deniers continue to refer to the book on their websites, it is misleading and unnecessary to argue as Gary Mokotoff, a member of the Jewish Book Council in the United States, has done that it has been 'exposed as fiction'. Mokotoff, by linking *For Those I Loved* with *Fragments*, argues that '[t]hese kinds of pseudo-memoirs may do real damage to survivors, by rendering each Holocaust memoir suspect'. Alternatively, it must be suggested, they act as reminders to read and listen to such accounts critically, on one level for their veracity but more importantly to understand their internal dynamics.<sup>109</sup>

More recently, Deli Strummer, a young Austrian Jew who survived Theresienstadt, Auschwitz and Mauthausen, was 'exposed' when it was found that in her memoir, published in 1988, and in a later educational video she falsely killed off her survivor husband whom she claimed had died in Dachau concentration camp. Strummer had also given her testimony to the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University. Reading the published account, and listening again to the Yale tape, Lawrence Langer, who has produced a monograph on the Fortunoff Video Archive, and Raul Hilberg, one of the great historians of the destruction process, pointed out other aspects of her war experiences that were factually inaccurate, such as gasings at Mauthausen in early May, a week after these had ceased to occur. In relation to invented reality within a testimony, Langer claimed that he had 'never encountered anything like this before'. In fact, according to Libby Copeland of the *Washington Post*, 'Deli Strummer is a Holocaust survivor who wittingly or not altered numerous elements of her story. Her account is clearly longer, more harrowing and more miraculous than what actually happened.'<sup>110</sup>

In such examples, the very desire of the authors to please their intended audiences, and to elicit their full respect and possibly sympathy, with narrative cohesion and Holocaust clichés, sug-

gests the essential need to contextualise such testimonies in time and place and not to regard them as *sui generis*, that is of their own kind and therefore beyond comparison. Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson have argued that '[a]ny life story, whether a written autobiography or an oral testimony, is shaped not only by the reworkings of experience through memory and re-evaluation but also always at least to some extent by art'. Although historians and literary critics, because of their elitist assumptions, have been slow to take them on board, there are genres within the autobiographies and testimonies of ordinary people which inevitably bring expectations: 'common assumptions between writer, speaker and audience of conventions, manner and tone, forms of delivery, timings, settings, shapes, motifs and characters'.<sup>111</sup>

It has been argued by those working on the Yale Fortunoff Video Archive that there are 'simplifications which can be described as metonymies'. Geoffrey Hartman observes how 'every Auschwitz survivor seems to have gone through a selection by Mengele, as if he manned his post 24 hours a day'. Yet Hartman argues that 'a remarkable degree of precision remains, because the memory of evil is first and last the memory of an offence, independent of the injustice suffered'.<sup>112</sup> Problematising the same material even less, Lawrence Langer dismisses the question of '[h]ow credible can a reawakened memory be that tries to revive events so many decades after they occurred'. He answers that '[t]here is no need to revive what has never died. Moreover, though slumbering memories may crave reawakening, nothing is clearer in these narratives than that Holocaust memory is an insomniac faculty, whose mental eyes have never slept.' Langer then proceeds to create the category of 'deep memory' to analyse the video testimonies he has examined.<sup>113</sup>

Similarly, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's literary and psychoanalytic analysis of the Yale testimonies argues that factual inaccuracies in the tapes are insignificant.<sup>114</sup> Langer, Felman and Laub provide a naive and ultimately patronising attitude to the survivor testimonies, failing to acknowledge how the interviewees often strive to fit into the genre expected of them. It is therefore not surprising that Langer was so astonished by the Delli Strummer controversy that he had to regard it as almost unique, refusing to recognise its wider significance,<sup>115</sup> or that Felman and Laub could write of the significance of Martin Gray being 'forced

to witness the destruction of his entire family in the flames of Warsaw and Treblinka' oblivious to the fact that he saw no such thing.<sup>116</sup>

Academics have been slow to recognise the importance of ordinary survivors' testimony. In the historical profession, the dismissive approach has still to go away. In 1992 David Bankier suggested in his study of German popular opinion during the Nazi era that such sources 'hardly constituted firm historical evidence' and could at best only 'be used simply to illustrate or add colour to an account based on less subjective sources', a statement that replicates almost exactly comments made by prosecutors at the Nuremberg trials.<sup>117</sup> More recently, the intellectual historian Peter Novick has suggested that survivors' memories 'are not a very useful historical source'. Further revealing Novick's inability to understand the nature of survivor testimony, he qualifies himself by suggesting 'some may be, but we don't know which ones'.<sup>118</sup> An elitist response has also typified literary studies in which the 'study of authentic first-hand accounts has by no means kept pace with the generally increased attention of historians to the Nazi period'. Andrea Reiter is one of the very few within that discipline who has examined the 'quite distinctive quality' of 'ordinary' concentration camp reports, asking questions such as 'which linguistic devices, which genres, do the survivors rely upon to communicate their experiences? How does literature in the broadest sense, and language and genre, more narrowly, become a means of coming to terms with life?'<sup>119</sup> If it is true that 'Holocaust testimony is not usually published because it possesses artistic merit', we still need to return to it bearing in mind Chamberlain and Thompson's maxim that any life story is to some extent always shaped by art.<sup>120</sup> In psychology, which has dominated the study of the survivor,<sup>121</sup> only Henry Greenspan, who has interviewed survivors in a much more informal way than the Yale project over a period of decades, has paid full justice to the process by which an individual's story is made and remade. For Greenspan, the stories of survivors are part of a dynamic process, they evolve and are ultimately influenced by their lives before and after the Holocaust as well as by the expectations of their listeners. In short, we are close here in such nuanced work to the concept of genre(s) in the testimony of ordinary survivors. Greenspan justifies his study by reversing the usual approach: 'In

the midst of contemporary claims about all we are supposed to "get out of" survivors' testimony – its uses and benefits – I have emphasised that it has not become less urgent to think about how we "get into" all that survivors have to retell. He concludes that 'to listen to survivors is to listen to survivors. No other purpose is required.'<sup>122</sup>

Historians, mirroring exactly those in the legal sphere, have a tendency to require survivor testimony to meet a factual accuracy in terms of dates and detail which they rarely if ever provide. Literary scholars have now begun to incorporate works such as those by Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel into the 'canon' but have done so at the expense of the accounts of ordinary survivors. Psychologists have tended to view survivors only with regard to the trauma of their memory, sometimes dismissing those who were very young and were deemed not to have any recall of their Holocaust childhoods. In terms of audience, it is therefore not surprising that very young survivors, largely written out of the history and memory of the Holocaust, should be so resistant even now to reject *Fragments*, the narrative cohesion of which gives their lives meaning and recognition.<sup>123</sup> Such deception is, of course, relatively rare, but it forces us to read and listen to testimonies with greater care, relishing their very messiness, and to take seriously why, in the less common cases of Gray and Strummer, the authors *deliberately* changed their endings – heroism in one case and pathos in the other.

More generally, it is often what is *not* said as well as what is included and emphasised that is significant. Indeed, it has been argued that silence in testimony and autobiography forms a genre in itself.<sup>124</sup> This is illustrated by the remarkable investigative work carried out by the historian Mark Roseman in relation to German Jewish survivor Marianne Ellenbogen, in which oral and written testimony have been placed alongside a range of contemporary and legal sources (diaries, letters, memoirs, records from the resistance and the Nazis, and post-war restitution documents) to reveal the complex layers of memories in the construction of her life story for the Nazi era. What is revealing, argues Roseman,

is often not the contrast between the *written* and the *spoken* but rather that between perceptions and memories 'fixed' or recorded at different points of distance from the events which they describe, that is, in reports and letters *then*, in interviews and conversations

<sup>120</sup> In any case, when the content of Marianne's interviews was compared with sources from the Nazi and post-war periods, a number of important differences and discrepancies emerged. So much so, that the process by which Marianne's past life regained shape in the present sometimes felt like a detective story (albeit a harrowing and tragic one) as a chain of clues and witnesses forced consecutive reappraisals of the events of more than fifty years ago.<sup>125</sup>

Used freely and fully, oral and other forms of Holocaust testimony are likely to be disruptive and difficult. Donald Niewyk has said that 'close attention to survivors' accounts [might buy] texture and historicity at the expense of coherence' but he adds that 'it is a risk we need to take if we are to grasp the complexity of the process and approach an understanding of what happened to the victims'.<sup>126</sup> At present the dominant usage of survivor accounts is distorted – they are ironed out and re-arranged so as to provide narrative cohesion. For example, tens of thousands of video interviews have been carried out by the Spielberg Foundation, producing hundreds of thousands of hours of testimony. By a massive indexing operation it is possible that this archive could be used highly effectively to trace the Holocaust at particular places if not at exact times. But how these video tapes are to be used beyond the merely illustrative seems to have been a question left unexplored.<sup>127</sup>

If such representation of testimony is to do justice to the depth and wealth of material, the answer is not in the Spielberg film directed by James Moll, *The Last Days* (1999).<sup>128</sup> This achieves cohesion by focusing on one place in what was (even given the warning implicit in the next chapter about seeing any part of the 'final solution' as its essence) a rather unrepresentative part of the Holocaust – namely the sudden and intensive murder of Hungarian Jews in the summer of 1944 – and further by reinterviewing the survivors or rearranging their testimony to produce an account made up of soundbites where both survivor and liberator are part of a clear storyline. Indeed, on only one occasion in the film did the testimony of a survivor last for more than forty-five seconds. Significantly it came from Dario Gabbai, a Greek member of the Sonderkommando. It was included within the film to illustrate the functioning of the gas chambers working at their full capacity in Auschwitz rather than to explain how Gabbai came to

be in the camp in the first place. Likewise, the only other slightly extended testimony came from a former Nazi doctor to show how the final solution was implemented in its most systematic form.<sup>129</sup>

It is not surprising that film-makers, museum curators and publishers like neat, packageable narrative structures. The Imperial War Museum's Holocaust Gallery, following Washington, follows a strict chronology led by the Nazi rise to power. At the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum its first director, Jeshajahu Weinberg, stated that '[p]ersonal narrative is woven into the text so history is made incarnate through the experience of men, women, and children who went through the event'. At the Imperial War Museum, the victims are certainly not silenced – oral testimony is more prominent than in Washington – and visitors hear briefly about their lives before and after as well as during the years of persecution. Yet the use of this testimony is not central to the display as a whole: just as documentary evidence was deemed as 'proof positive' in the post-war trials, so artefacts, most relating to the process of extermination, are central to the huge national museum displays in the capitals of the two leading former Allied nations. Survivor testimony is yet again marginalised and used to illustrate the impact of what the Nazis did rather than being part of an intensive study of survivors' lives as a whole. As the director of the Imperial War Museum, Robert Crawford, puts it: the survivor-witnesses 'provide a poignant, intimate enhancement to the main historical narrative'. In both museums, enormous attention has been paid to making sure that all exhibits have, in Weinberg's words, 'proven provenance' in order '[t]o preclude definitively revisionist declarations'.<sup>130</sup>

Ironically, such attitudes have led to the exclusion of Holocaust-related memoirs as when in September 2000 the Washington Museum refused to host a book-signing because the author had referred to the unproven manufacture of soap from human remains at Auschwitz. A spokeswoman for the museum defended the action, arguing that '[s]igning out a memoir for a book-signing implies a level of endorsement of its contents' and in this particular case would risk providing fodder to the revisionists.<sup>131</sup> David Cesarani has written that at a time of Holocaust denial, we 'want the survivors to remember it all and be able to articulate it, to prove by virtue of their very existence that it happened'. But, as

he adds, 'these expectations place too great a burden on the survivor-writer'. It does not follow, however, that when testimony is published with 'inaccuracies' in detail, it 'is a hostage to fortune, a gift to Holocaust deniers'.<sup>132</sup> As two publishers of such accounts wrote in response: 'we are not concerned to joust with Holocaust deniers and revisionists. They will always find some little detail to damn a book.'<sup>133</sup>

Survivor testimony, whether in written, oral or video form, has to be taken seriously on its own terms as life history of ordinary people before, during and after persecution. It becomes distorted or manipulated if used crudely as a weapon against denial or as simply a provider of 'colour' or texture to educational, museum or artistic representations of the Holocaust. If slowly we have started to listen to survivors, we should also respect the desire of some to keep their silence. As Novick suggests, 'it's clear that for many survivors all the attention paid to the Holocaust has been gratifying, and helped scars to heal; for others it has reopened old wounds and given rise to nightmares once quiescent'.<sup>134</sup> Claude Lanzmann's bullying of Treblinka survivor Abraham Bomba in his film *Shoah* (1985) – 'You have to do it', when asking him to describe preparing friends for the gas chamber – can have no ethical justification, historical or artistic.<sup>135</sup> Lanzmann's *Shoah* was subtitled 'An Oral History', but in the process of providing a counter-myth to attempts at earlier representations of the Holocaust through history and chronology, he is interested in showing only the violence of the destruction process, in which there is absolutely no place for the life story of the survivors, whom he largely represents as having died in all but body.<sup>136</sup> Forcing survivors to give testimony, or ignoring their lives before and after, is to add another form of abuse that began with their persecution, continued after the war in neglect and marginalisation, and now expects too much from them at the same time as ignoring the very complexity of their accounts.<sup>137</sup>

The Holocaust testimony collected in the 1940s through to the 1970s by David Boder and institutions such as Yad Vashem focused almost solely on the years of destruction. For example, the questionnaire designed by Yad Vashem had less than 1 per cent of its questions relating to the pre-war period.<sup>138</sup> In the 1980s projects such as those at Yale University and the National Sound Archive in London moved towards a life story approach, mirroring the

dominant trend in oral history as a whole.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, as we have seen, it is extremely rare in almost all manifestations of Holocaust representation, whether academic or artistic, for this life story material to be used other than in brief, fragmented form. As a result, the totality of the individual concerned is at best obscured and at worst utterly subsumed. But is an alternative approach to Holocaust testimony a realistic possibility, given commercial and other practical realities?

For survivor oral testimony to be interpreted according to its strengths would require a shift towards a life story approach and for the strands of history and memory to be woven together to show the full complexity of survivor identity. For the curator, the film-maker and the historian, focusing on the victims creates immense practical problems, not least where and when to start and finish. As Lawrence Langer puts it, trying to make sense of the Yale Holocaust video collection, 'the Holocaust has a different beginning for each witness'. Returning to Martin Gilbert's *The Holocaust*, a lead is given in providing a victim-centred account. It is, however, a misleadingly deceptive one through the use of a strict and straightforward chronology that ultimately makes a non-sense of the life story of each individual introduced. If Gilbert attempts to provide a diary of the Holocaust, it is never that of any one person. In this respect his attempt to humanise the Holocaust is to an extent counter-productive.<sup>140</sup> The chaos and the rupture in the lives of the victims are obscured in the desire to achieve smoothness. But can popular representations, including within the writing of history, deal with the full complexity of the ordinary life as well as letting the visitor or reader tease out the mythologies entangled in such stories?

If the answer is to be yes, it will require an acknowledgement from all concerned that it will not be easy – but then should any representation or commemoration of the Holocaust accept a simplistic idea of closure, a story with a neat beginning, middle and happy ending (whether in the form of concentration camp liberation or the creation of the state of Israel)? The museum/memorial work of Daniel Libeskind in Berlin shows that Jewish history incorporating the Holocaust, and confronting individual testimony in its entirety, can be represented in a complex way, allowing for disjunction and confusion, but still able to make itself accessible to the public.<sup>141</sup> There is an equal danger, as with such famous writ-

ers as Elie Wiesel or Anne Frank, of 'privileging a particular story or in assuming that there is a single story to be told'. Mary Lagerwey, in particular, has queried the notion of a representative Holocaust story: 'Perhaps Auschwitz engulfed individual differences, whether of gender, nationality, or intellect. Perhaps ...'.<sup>142</sup> Terrence des Pres, in his *The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps* (1976), suggests that a 'vast body of literature has ... come into being – diaries, novels, documentary reports, simple lists and fragments ... which all tell one story'. Yet even his simplistic analysis and attempt to provide 'a medium through which these scattered voices might issue one statement' breaks down within the text as the authors chosen by des Pres stamp their own individuality on the experiences they describe.<sup>143</sup>

Testimony forces us to think qualitatively and we have to face the fact that to do it justice may require working with smaller rather than larger numbers of individuals; this allows, however, through the greater self-reflectivity of those collecting and utilising the material, for the richness of testimony to come to the fore, including its contradictions and mythologies.<sup>144</sup> It is a radical vision, but in the end choosing confusion over smoothness in the representation of life story testimony, whether contemporary or post-war, is to do greater justice to the way the Holocaust was actually experienced on an everyday level. Primo Levi wrote and re-wrote his Holocaust testimony with obsessive care. Indeed, it has been suggested that no other survivor 'has written down and reflected on his memories of the camps over such a long period of time – from 1944/5, when he wrote scraps of notes in the Buna lab at Monowitz, until his death in 1987'.<sup>145</sup> *The Drowned and the Saved* (1986), his last attempt to confront the past and its relationship to the present, was, in Levi's words, 'drenched in memory ... it draws from a suspect source, and must be protected against itself ... it contains more considerations than memories, lingers more willingly on the state of affairs such as it is now than on the retro-active chronicle'.<sup>146</sup> Levi, as Robert Gordon suggests, had wrestled 'with the processes and representation of memory' from his first published account of his experiences in Auschwitz, *If This Is a Man* (1947). This book itself became 'an object of memory for Levi over the course of decades to come, blocking at times his access to the direct memories of his experiences themselves'.<sup>147</sup>

Levi's concerns about the memory process parallel those of

Janusz Korczak in his contemporary Warsaw diary. Korczak, however, was far less concerned about any distortion caused in constructing his testimony. He wrote in May 1942 that he did not

know how much of this autobiographical stuff I've already scribbled down. I cannot bring myself to read it and examine the overload. And I'm increasingly in danger of repeating myself. What's even worse, the facts and experiences may be, must be and will be told differently each time as regards the details. But never mind. It only proves that the moments to which I constantly return were experienced deeply.<sup>148</sup>

If the complex and often contradictory nature of Holocaust testimony, including its intricate relationship with memory, is not accepted, we are in danger of fast settling, especially in the commercial world in which an increasing amount of Holocaust commemoration is located, for representation that reduces the subject matter to a simplistic morality tale – one shorn of its specific historic context in which is explored when, where and *who* was affected. In this respect, the failure to realise the Shoah Centre in Manchester, designed by Libeskind (see frontispiece), does not bode well for the future.<sup>149</sup> The project, finally abandoned in the early 2000s, was to have focused on the life story testimony of survivors as its major form of Holocaust representation.

The Manchester Shoah Centre faltered partly through a lack of financial will and partly through its radical vision. Nevertheless, its apparent non-success can be reinterpreted if it is regarded as a form of what in Germany has developed as Holocaust counter-monuments. They include the work of Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz in Hamburg, a 12m pillar that literally disappeared into the landscape. As James Young states: 'How better to remember forever a vanished people than by the perpetually unfinished, ever-vanishing monument?'.<sup>150</sup> In these works the very absence of presence reflects the vacuum created by the destruction process, removing the clear categories of 'then' and 'now' and thereby recognising the necessity of ongoing Holocaust memory work.

The Shoah Centre was to have been located opposite the Imperial War Museum North (IWMN) in reclaimed land around the Manchester Ship Canal. The IWMN, also designed by Libeskind, *was* built, and opened in 2002. Its narrative of the Second World War, whilst containing a local slant, is generally universal, and the story of the Holocaust fits within and does not disrupt its overall

approach. The Shoah Centre would have complemented the ideological framework adopted by Libeskind for the IWMN with its desire to show the fundamental dislocation caused by twentieth-century world conflict: 'I have imagined the globe broken into fragments and taken the pieces to form the building – three shards – together they represent conflict on land, in the air and on water'.<sup>151</sup> At the same time, the Shoah Centre would have challenged the IWMN through its more particularistic slant – focusing largely on Jewish victims. The testimony would have come largely from survivors who settled in the Manchester region after the war.

The Shoah Centre intended to connect the city of Manchester to the destruction process on the continent at various levels: first, and most straightforwardly, through local responses and reactions, positive and otherwise, to the persecution of Jews and others from the rise of Nazism to its defeat in 1945; second, and with more complexity, to show the impossibility of separating out the local from the national and global through the testimony of the survivors. By taking their life stories seriously, the proposed museum would have highlighted the importance of place identity to these individuals – before, during and after the Holocaust. Manchester would then have been linked to the villages, towns and cities of the continent in which these people grew up, as well as to the everyday sites of destruction. Concentrating on a small number of testimonies would have enabled those visiting the Shoah Centre not just to humanise the victims but to begin to understand the complexity as well as the ordinariness of the worlds that were destroyed and the ordinary places that became killing fields. The process of 'bringing home' the Holocaust would have been extended to make connections, though far from simplistic comparisons, with the forms of racism and intolerance that are part of the everyday life of England's second city, no matter how strong its liberal reputation.

Although questions of representativeness would not have been totally avoided, such as the sex and forms of Jewish identities of those whose life stories were chosen, the Shoah Centre would have acknowledged the impossibility of telling *all* the stories of the Holocaust. Indeed, it would have seen the qualitative aspects of its representation as a virtue rather than an inherent weakness. The Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in Lon-

don, which arguably has the most extensive use of testimony in any equivalent display, is still driven by the (relatively) clear chronology provided by the Nazi destruction process. In contrast, the Shoah Centre in Manchester would have relished the messiness created by embracing the life stories of ordinary people to whom something extraordinary happened. Most importantly, the visitor would have been forced to confront the actual process of providing testimony: what it means to those giving and receiving it. Its exhibition would have lacked a simplistic form of story telling, but it would have forced the visitor to confront the fact that the Holocaust was not experienced by its victims as the coherent narrative in which it is now increasingly packaged.

The Shoah Centre is thus absent from the memorial landscape of post-industrial Manchester, birthplace of an industrial modernity that in its most destructive form manifested itself through the Holocaust. It can, however, like the countermonuments of Germany, still play a vital role in Holocaust memory work. To quote James Young again: '[The] countermonument recognizes and affirms that the life of memory exists primarily in historical time: in the activity that brings monuments into being, into the ongoing exchange between people and their historical markers, and finally, in the concrete actions we take in light of a memorialized past'.<sup>152</sup> At present, victim testimony is almost exclusively, if well-meaningly, used to provide supplementary forms of Holocaust representation that serve the purpose of either giving a human face to the millions murdered or to show the vileness of what was done to them. The challenge now is to confront the testimony of the victims both qualitatively (dealing with less in terms of the life stories represented can, in this case, mean much more in relation to the engagement with the material) and reflectively (acknowledging context and genre, even in the most apparently simple accounts). Ultimately, it is important to accept that how we remember the Holocaust, including through the various genres of victim testimony, 'is not against history but part of a process of inserting memory into history'.<sup>153</sup> There would be a tragic irony if Holocaust testimony, with all its potential nuances, became integral to the telling of a story so polished that we actually lost sight of the individual in any meaningful sense.

Holocaust testimony should be studied seriously through critical engagement because the lives of ordinary people, and their

ways of telling their life stories, matter. That said, we should not expect the impossible from Holocaust testimony. It will rarely, for example, contribute knowledge to our understanding of the politics of implementation, which is located, as will become clear in the following two chapters, in an obviously related but nevertheless discrete (if complex and fast evolving) historiography.

### Notes

- 1 By 1999, the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, founded by Steven Spielberg in 1994, had gathered some 50,000 testimonies. See Michael Berenbaum, 'Prologue', in *The Last Days* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), p. 9. Yad Vashem in Jerusalem has tens of thousands of written testimonies.
- 2 Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (London, Michael Joseph, 1988), pp. 1–2.
- 3 Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1994), ch. 7.
- 4 Henry Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History* (Westport, Ct., Praeger, 1998), pp. 169–70.
- 5 Raul Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis* (Chicago, Ivan R. Dee, 2001), p. 49.
- 6 Raul Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory: The Journey of a Holocaust Historian* (Chicago, Ivan R. Dee, 1996), p. 133.
- 7 Raul Hilberg and Stanislaw Staron, 'Introduction', in Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron and Josef Kermisz (eds), *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow* (New York, Stein and Day, 1979), p. 25.
- 8 Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1945* (New York, HarperCollins, 1992).
- 9 Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1961), p. v.
- 10 Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, orig. in Italian, 1986, pp. 63–4.
- 11 Elie Wiesel, 'Trivializing Memory', in idem, *From the Kingdom of Memory: Reminiscences* (New York, Schocken, 1990), pp. 165–6.
- 12 Yehuda Bauer, 'Against Mystification', in idem, *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective* (London, Sheldon Press, 1978), p. 44.
- 13 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in G. Nelson (ed.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1988), pp. 271–313, esp. pp. 294, 308.
- 14 John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 325 covers twenty accounts written by slaves unannounced by their masters and a further twenty-six written by fugitive slaves. In the 1930s interviews

- with former slaves were carried out. The overall number is still tiny.
- 15 Posen speech, 4 October 1943, reproduced in Lucy Davidowicz (ed.), *A Holocaust Reader* (New York, Behrman House, 1976), pp. 132-4.
  - 16 Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy* (Glasgow, Collins, 1986), pp. 229-30.
  - 17 See, for example, the comments made by Ruth Wisse in Robert Moses Shapiro (ed.), *Holocaust Chronicles: Individualizing the Holocaust Through Diaries and Other Contemporaneous Personal Accounts* (Hoboken, N.J., Ktav, 1999), pp. xvii-iii on the need for special treatment of ghetto diaries 'perhaps as moral compensation for the indignity visited on these people when they lived'.
  - 18 Nathan Cohen, 'Diaries of the *Sonderkommandos* in Auschwitz: Coping with Fate and Reality', *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 20 (1990), pp. 273-312.
  - 19 *Ibid.*, p. 287.
  - 20 Emanuel Ringelblum, 'O.S.', written late December 1942 and reproduced in Joseph Kermish (ed.), *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor* (Jerusalem, Yad Vashem, 1986), pp. 7-8.
  - 21 Aharon Appelfeld, 'Individualization of the Holocaust', in Shapiro (ed.), *Holocaust Chronicles*, p. 5.
  - 22 Abraham Katsh (ed.), *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1966), p. 318.
  - 23 Ruth Wisse, 'Introduction', in Shapiro (ed.), *Holocaust Chronicles*, p. xv.
  - 24 Ringelblum, 'O.S.', p. 9.
  - 25 Jeshajahu Weinberg and Rina Elieli, *The Holocaust Museum in Washington* (New York, Rizzoli, 1995), pp. 17, 106-7; Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York, Viking, 1995), pp. 108, 158; Michael Berenbaum, *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1993), pp. 92-4.
  - 26 Katsh, 'Introduction', *Scroll of Agony*, p. xiii.
  - 27 *Scroll of Agony*, pp. 22-3, diary entry for 1 October 1939.
  - 28 *Ibid.*, p. 103, entry for 20 February 1940.
  - 29 *Ibid.*, p. 206, entry for 26 November 1940.
  - 30 *Ibid.*, pp. 302-3, entry for 26 July 1942.
  - 31 *Ibid.*, p. 313, entry for 31 July 1942.
  - 32 *Ibid.*, p. 213, entry for 16 December 1940.
  - 33 *Ibid.*, p. 278, entry for 13 November 1941.
  - 34 Katsh, 'Introduction', *Scroll of Agony*, p. xiii.
  - 35 *Scroll of Agony*, pp. 281-2, entry for 27 June 1942.
  - 36 Antony Polonsky (ed.), *A Cup of Tears: A Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1988), p. 193, entry for 30 October 1942.

- 37 See, for example, his *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1984).
- 38 David Roskies, 'The Library of Jewish Catastrophe', in Geoffrey Hartman (ed.), *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1994), p. 41.
- 39 Sara Horowitz, 'Voices from the Killing Ground', in Hartman (ed.), *Holocaust Remembrance*, p. 44.
- 40 Lucjan Dobroszycki, 'YIVO in Interwar Poland: Work in the Historical Sciences', in Yisrael Gutman et al. (eds), *The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars* (Hanover, University Press of New England, 1989), pp. 494-518; Samuel David Kassow, 'Vilna and Warsaw, Two Ghetto Diaries: Herman Kruk and Emanuel Ringelblum', in Shapiro (ed.), *Holocaust Chronicles*, pp. 176-8.
- 41 Kassow, 'Vilna and Warsaw', p. 176; Zelig Kalmanowitsch [Kalmanovitch], 'A Diary of the Nazi Ghetto in Vilna', *YIVO Annual*, vol. 8 (1955), pp. 9-81.
- 42 Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Coming of Age in the Thirties: Max Weinreich, Edward Sapir and Jewish Social Science', *YIVO Annual*, vol. 23 (1996), pp. 1-103; Martın Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984), ch. 4.
- 43 Liz Bloom, 'The Diary as Popular History', *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 9 (Spring 1976), pp. 794-5.
- 44 Steven Kagle, 'The Diary as Art: A New Assessment', *Genre*, vol. 6 (1973), pp. 416-27, esp. p. 425.
- 45 James Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 37.
- 46 Felicity Nussbaum, 'Toward Conceptualizing Diary', in James Olney (ed.), *Studies in Autobiography* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 132, 137.
- 47 Aaron Zeitlin, 'The Last Walk of Janusz Korczak', in Janusz Korczak, *Ghetto Diary* (New York, Holocaust Library, 1978), p. 72.
- 48 Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl* (London, Penguin Books, 2000), pp. 332-4.
- 49 Philip Boehm, 'Introduction', in Michal Grynberg (ed.), *Words to Outlive Us: Eyewitness Accounts from the Warsaw Ghetto* (London, Granta Books, 2003), p. 3.
- 50 *Ibid.*
- 51 *Ibid.*, pp. 374, 376.
- 52 Benjamin Harshav (ed.), *Herman Kruk: The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939-1944* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2002), p. xviii.
- 53 Harshav, 'Introduction', in *ibid.*, pp. xxvi-xxviii.

- 54 Ibid., p. xxix.
- 55 Ibid., pp. v–vi.
- 56 Raul Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research* (Chicago, Ivan R. Dee, 2001), p. 20; see also Lawrence Langer, *Admitting the Holocaust* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 41–2.
- 57 See Hyman Enzer and Sandra Solotaroff-Enzer (eds), *Anne Frank: Reflections on Her Life and Legacy* (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2000), part 2: 'Writer and Rewriter'.
- 58 This is the approach, for example, of the National Life Story Collection at the British Library, London, in response to an industry closing down – workers and those associated with the industry are located to provide an archive of lives in danger of oblivion. See, for example, Alan Dein and Rob Perks, *Lives in Steel* (CD Rom, National Sound Archives, London, 1993), carried out when the steel industry in Britain was being decimated – the background to the film *The Full Monty*, set in Sheffield, 'steel city'.
- 59 Robert Rozett, 'The Scribes of Memory', *Yad Vashem Magazine*, vol. 10 (Summer 1998), pp. 6–7.
- 60 Andrzej Szpilman, 'Foreword', in Wladyslaw Szpilman, *The Pianist* (London, Phoenix, 2002), p. 8.
- 61 Wolf Biermann, 'Epilogue', in Szpilman, *The Pianist*, p. 211.
- 62 It was published by Victor Gollancz in 1999. Roman Polanski directed the film which won the Palme D'Or at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival.
- 63 Szpilman, *The Pianist*, pp. 126, 137; Bierman, 'Epilogue', pp. 213–14.
- 64 Ian Thomson, *Primo Levi* (London, Hutchinson, 2002), p. 240.
- 65 Robert Gordon, *Primo Levi's Ordinary Virtues: From Testimony to Ethics* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 56; Thomson, *Primo Levi*, pp. 242–4, 253.
- 66 Donald Kennick and Grattan Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* (London, Heinemann, 1972); Guenter Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000).
- 67 Reproduced in Thomas Acton and Ilona Klimova, 'The International Romani Union', in Will Guy (ed.), *Between Past and Present: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe* (Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001), p. 216.
- 68 David Roskies, 'The Library of Jewish Catastrophe', in Hartman (ed.), *Holocaust Remembrance*, pp. 33–41; Annette Wiewiorka and Ithok Niborski, *Les Livres du Souvenir Mémoires juifs de Pologne* (Paris, Editions Gallimard, 1983); Deborah Dwork, paper at 'Lessons and Legacies VI: The Presence of the Holocaust' International Conference, Northwestern University, November 2000; Rosemary Horowitz, 'Reading and Writing

- During the Holocaust as Described in Yisker Books', in Jonathan Rose (ed.), *The Holocaust and the Book: Destruction and Preservation* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), p. 129.
- 69 For example, *The Black Book* was material collected by the Soviet Jews Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman from 1943 onwards to gather material for war crimes trials and to document the fate of the Jews through all forms of autobiographical material. Its publication after the war was suppressed by the Soviet Union. See Joseph Kermish, 'The History of the Manuscript', in *The Black Book* (New York, Holocaust Library, 1980), pp. xix–xxvi.
- 70 Some of the Wiener Library interviews have recently been reproduced in microfilm form: *Archives of the Wiener Library – Testaments to the Holocaust* Section 2 *Eyewitness Accounts* (Woodbridge, Primary Source Media, 1998). On the problems facing those involved in the early stage of testimony collection, see K. Ball-Kaduri, 'Evidence of Witnesses, its Value and Limitations', *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 3 (1959), p. 88.
- 71 Some of the results were published by Boder under the title *I Did Not Interview the Dead* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1949). Thirty-four of the interviews are reproduced in Donald Niewyk (ed.), *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill and London, University of North Carolina Press, 1998). See Niewyk's introduction, pp. 1–6, for the background to Boder's work.
- 72 See especially Donald Bloxham, *The Holocaust on Trial: The War Crimes Trials in the Formation of History and Memory* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001).
- 73 Leon Poliakov, *Harvest of Hate* (London, Elek Books, 1956), p. xiv.
- 74 Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, ch. 7.
- 75 Gerald Reitinger, *The Final Solution: The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe 1939–1945* (London, Vallentine, Mitchell, 1953), p. 531.
- 76 See *The Times*, 21 March 1978.
- 77 Daniel Bertaux, 'Preface', in idem (ed.), *Biography and Society: The Life Story Approach in the Social Sciences* (Beverly Hills, Calif., Sage, 1981), p. 1.
- 78 Ben Zion Dinur, 'Problems Confronting "Yad Vashem" in its Work of Research', *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 1 (1957), p. 21.
- 79 Zvi Bar-On and Dov Levin, 'Problems Relating to a Questionnaire on the Holocaust', *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 3 (1959), pp. 91–117.
- 80 Gilbert, *The Holocaust*.
- 81 Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life* (London, Heinemann, 1991), which synthesises the multi-volume biography which Gilbert produced from 1971 through to 1988.
- 82 Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, p. 18.
- 83 Gilbert has stated that 'chronology is the key to understanding

everything' in the *Observer*, 28 December 1986; Martin Gilbert, 'The Witnesses of the Holocaust', *Sunday Times*, 12 January 1986.

84 For survivor responses, see Hugo Gryn's review in *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 February 1986. It was at the prompting of survivors in Britain that Gilbert began work on the project, which took ten years to complete.

85 George Steiner reviewing *The Holocaust* in the *Sunday Times*, 9 February 1986.

86 See, for example, quotes from reviewers reproduced in the paperback edition.

87 But see Gustavo Corni, *Hitler's Chettos: Voices from a Beleaguered Society 1939-1944* (London, Arnold, 2002), who does so for a specific aspect of the Holocaust. On pp. 3-4 Corni rejects the use of oral testimony, however, as lacking any sense of narrative. Such a dismissal runs against the life history approach to oral history which has become dominant since the 1980s.

88 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

89 Martin Gilbert, *Holocaust Journey: Travelling in Search of the Past* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997). Laurence Rees, *The Nazis: A Warning from History*, BBC2, screened in six parts from 10 September to 15 October 1997. Amongst other awards it won a BAFTA Best Factual Film and a George Foster Peabody Award in 1997. The fifth programme, 'The Road to Treblinka', was broadcast on 8 October. The lack of depth in the testimony is exposed more blatantly when it is reproduced in the printed version of the series with the same title and also written by Laurence Rees, published by BBC Worldwide, London, 1997. It should be added that this quality series is in a category of its own, having benefited from the input of its historical advisor, Ian Kershaw. Its pale imitators on both sides of the Atlantic, most recently in the German television series *Holocaust* (2000), become merely sensationalist.

90 Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and The Jews: The Years of Persecution 1933-39* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997).

91 See, for example, his collected essays, *Memory, History and the Extinction of the Jews of Europe* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1993).

92 Burleigh quoted on the cover *Nazi Germany and the Jews*.

93 Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, p. 2.

94 *Ibid.*

95 The relatively marginal status of Jewish testimony is revealed in chapters 9 and 10 relating to Kristallnacht and its aftermath.

96 Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1996). See, for example, Goldhagen's approach to the initial killing operation of police battalion 101 in Jozefow: 'they chose to walk into a hospital, a house of

healing, and to shoot the sick, who must have been cowering, begging and screaming for mercy. They killed babies ... In all probability, a killer either shot a baby in its mother's arms [or] held it at arm's length by the leg ... Perhaps the mother looked on in horror. The tiny corpse was then dropped like so much trash and left to rot' (pp. 215-16).

97 This is true of Friedländer's use of the exceptionally rich and powerful testimony of Victor Klempner. See *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, pp. 58-9, 126, 324. These diaries were published in Germany in extensive form in 1995.

98 The approach is best summarised in the first edition of Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978), ch. 4 'Evidence'.

99 Ball-Kaduri, 'Evidence of Witnesses', p. 89.

100 Judith Okely and Helen Calloway (eds), *Anthropology and Autobiography* (London, Routledge, 1992), and for one of the leading post-war practitioners and its implementation see Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge* (London, Fontana, 1993).

101 For a summary of approaches, see Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, 'Introduction', in *idem* (eds), *The Myths We Live By* (London, Routledge, 1990), pp. 1-22. See also the second edition of Thompson's *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988). In the preface Thompson wrote that '[i]n the ten years since I first wrote this book much has happened'. In chapter 4, on 'Evidence', he introduced a new section on subjectivity, and he added a totally new chapter on 'memory and the self'.

102 Benjamin Wilkomirski, *Fragments* (Basingstoke, Picador, 1996). For a sensitive account of the 'affair', see Elena Lappin, 'The Man With Two Heads', *Granta*, no. 66 (Summer 1999), pp. 9-65.

103 Blake Eskin, *A Life in Pieces* (London, Aurum Press, 2002) for an insightful overview.

104 Christopher Oligiati's documentary on the affair, *Child of the Death Camps: Truth and Lies* (BBC1, 3 November 1999), included child survivor groups supporting Wilkomirski. See also Eskin, *A Life in Pieces*, passim.

105 Originally published in France in 1971, it had a wide circulation in English in its translation by Anthony White, published in the United States by Little, Brown & Co. and in Britain by Book Club Associates.

106 The description is by Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 195.

107 Gitta Sereny, 'The Men who Whitewash Hitler', *New Statesman*, 2 November 1979.

108 *Ibid.*

109 According to the figures produced by Yad Vashem, 1971 saw a

particularly low number of survivor accounts published across the world – just twenty. See Robert Rozett, 'The Scribes of Memory', *Yad Vashem Magazine*, vol. 10 (Summer 1998), pp. 6–7. For Mokotoff, see Lappin, 'The Man with Two Heads', p. 49.

- 110 Libby Copeland, 'Survivor', *Washington Post*, 24 September 2000.
- 111 Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson, 'Introduction: Genre and Narrative in Life Stories', in idem (eds), *Narrative and Genre* (Routledge, London, 1998), pp. 1, 4.
- 112 Geoffrey Hartman, 'Learning from Survivors: The Yale Testimony Project', in idem, *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1996), pp. 136, 141. The article was originally published in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* in Autumn 1995.
- 113 Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1991), p. xv and ch. 1.
- 114 Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (New York and London, Routledge, 1992), esp. ch. 2.
- 115 Langer, quoted in *Washington Post*, 24 September 2000.
- 116 Felman and Laub, *Testimony*, p. 65.
- 117 David Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution: Public Opinion under Nazism* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1992), pp. 118, 124.
- 118 Peter Novick, *The Holocaust and Collective Memory* (London, Pimmsbury, 2000), p. 275.
- 119 Andrea Reiter, *Narrating the Holocaust* (London, Continuum, 2000), pp. 1–2, 3.
- 120 David Cesarani, 'Shadows of Doubt', *Jewish Quarterly*, no. 164 (Winter 1996/97), p. 61; Chamberlain and Thompson (eds), *Narrative and Genre*, p. 1.
- 121 Thus in the entry in Israel Gutman and Geoffrey Wigoder (eds), *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, vol. 4 (New York, Macmillan, 1990), pp. 1426–8, survivors are dealt with under the sub-title 'Psychology of'.
- 122 Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors*, pp. 169–72.
- 123 Thus at the international Holocaust conference, 'Remembering for the Future 2000', held at Oxford in July 2000, well after the author had been 'exposed', many child survivors present were still deeply sympathetic towards Wilkomorski and his book. For a brief but thoughtful discussion of accounts written by those who were children during the Holocaust see the epilogue to Reiter, *Narrating the Holocaust*, pp. 230–40, which includes discussion of Wilkomirski.
- 124 Diana Gittens, 'Silences', in Chamberlain and Thompson (eds), *Narrative and Genre*, pp. 46–62.
- 125 Mark Roseman, 'Surviving Memory: Truth and Inaccuracy in

Holocaust Testimony', *Journal of Holocaust Education*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Summer 1999), p. 2; idem, *The Past in Hiding* (London, Allen Lane, 2000).

- 126 Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds*, p. 1.
- 127 In 1999 the Foundation had gathered over 115,000 hours of testimony and had claimed to have developed 'an in-depth indexing system capable of cataloguing the wide range of historical, biographical and geographical data offered by each witness'.
- 128 *The Last Days* (James Moll, 1999, October Films).
- 129 The testimony of Gabbai is reproduced in *The Last Days*, pp. 157–9.
- 130 Berenbaum, *The World Must Know*, pp. xv, 3; *The Holocaust: The Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum* (London, Imperial War Museum, 2000), p. 3. For critical overviews, see Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, and for the Imperial War Museum see Donald Bloxham and Tony Kushner, 'Exhibiting Racism: Cultural Imperialism, Genocide and Representation', *Rethinking History*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1998), pp. 349–58 and Tony Kushner, 'Oral History at the Extremes of Human Experience: Holocaust Testimony in a Museum Setting', *Oral History*, vol. 29, no. 2 (Autumn 2001), pp. 83–94.
- 131 Details from *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 September 2000.
- 132 Cesarani, 'Shadows of Doubt', pp. 61–2.
- 133 Anthony Rudoff of Menard Books and Monika Bucheli of Chronos, letter to the *Jewish Quarterly*, no. 165 (Spring 1997), p. 4. See also Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Assassins of Memory: Essays on the Denial of the Holocaust* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1992).
- 134 Novick, *The Holocaust and Collective Memory*, p. 273. Felman and Laub, *Testimony*, passim, assume that giving testimony is automatically liberating for survivors, enabling them to become alive once again.
- 135 Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah* (1995) and as text *Shoah: An Oral History of the Holocaust* (New York, Pantheon Books, 1985), p. 117. Annette Wieviorka, 'On Testimony', in Hartman (ed.), *Holocaust Remembrance*, p. 23, comments that little of the testimony of the survivors is unfamiliar from trials and written accounts.
- 136 Claude Lanzmann, 'Shoah as Counter-myth', *Jewish Quarterly*, no. 121 (Spring 1986), pp. 11–12.
- 137 Vera Karoly, a Hungarian/Czech Jew who survived the Holocaust and came to live in Britain, was bullied into giving her testimony to the Spielberg Foundation. For an account of her experiences, given to the author, see *Kesher*, the magazine of the South Hampshire Jewish Community, September/October 1997 and her obituary in *Jewish Chronicle*, 13 June 2003. In terms of life history, whilst Roseman's *The Past in Hiding* is superb in confronting the various genres which he utilises in his account of Marianne, the account in essence deals only up to the end

of the war and deals relatively briefly with her childhood.

- 138 Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds*, p. 4; Bar-On and Levin, 'Problems Relating to a Questionnaire', p. 103.
- 139 Paul Thompson, 'Sharing and Reshaping Life Stories', in Chamberlain and Thompson (eds), *Narrative and Genre*, pp. 167-81.
- 140 Gilbert in *Sunday Times*, 12 January 1986.
- 141 Helene Binet, *Jewish Museum Berlin: Architect Daniel Libeskind* (Berlin, G + B Arts International, 1999).
- 142 Mary Lagerwey, *Reading Auschwitz* (London, Sage, 1998), p. 63.
- 143 Terrence des Pres, *The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. vi, 30. For a critique of his universalism see Lagerwey, *Reading Auschwitz*, p. 39.
- 144 In this respect Geoffrey Hartman's self-criticism of the Yale project is a useful way forward. See his 'Memory.com: Tele-Suffering and Testimony in the Dot Com Era', *Raritan*, vol. 29, no. 3 (Winter 2000), pp. 1-18.
- 145 Gordon, *Primo Levi's Ordinary Virtues*, p. 55.
- 146 Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, p. 21.
- 147 Gordon, *Primo Levi's Ordinary Virtues*, pp. 55-8.
- 148 Korczak, *Ghetto Diary*, pp. 113-14.
- 149 The project was led by Bill Williams, a pioneer of oral history in Britain and the major force behind the 'Living Memory of the Jewish People' project, part of the National Life Story Collection of the British Library.
- 150 James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993), ch. 1, esp. p. 31.
- 151 Imperial War Museum, *Imperial War Museum North* (London, Imperial War Museum, 2000), p. 45.
- 152 Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 48.
- 153 Gordon, *Primo Levi's Ordinary Virtues*, p. 58.

## Perpetrators and perpetration part I: ideology and interpretation

One of the greatest challenges facing historians of the Holocaust is explaining how women and predominantly men were induced to murder or to contribute to murder. By one estimate, 100,000 Germans and tens of thousands of non-Germans were closely involved with the process that culminated in Jews being shot, gassed, starved, worked or beaten to death. 'Process' is the key word here, because the Holocaust was a culmination of pre-existing developments, if not an inevitable one. This chapter and the following one build towards the final point of addressing involvement, in all its different guises, in the act of murder. Given, however, that the situation was never a straightforward choice out of a clear blue sky, and in a neutral situation, as to whether or not to kill, or help to kill, and given also that perpetrators' motivations differed from case to case, we must first work towards understanding how various groups and individuals from Germany and beyond found themselves in the position of participant.

The most immediately evident contributory factor to the murder of the Jews is antisemitism. Whatever the precise course of development of the 'final solution of the Jewish question', Jews were slated to suffer because of anti-Jewishness. Despite the differences between earlier religious anti-Judaism and modern race-based antisemitism, the latter owed a debt to the former because it could feed into pre-existing stereotypes that were peculiar to Christian civilisation. Thus it was no accident that from the later decades of the nineteenth century onwards the popularisation of racial thought and 'social Darwinism' amongst the educated