SOME LITERARY PERSPECTIVES ON THE HOLOCAUST

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SOME LITERARY PERSPECTIVES ON THE HOLOCAUST

by Bruce S. Block

The basic, underlying premise of the thesis is set forth in the introduction. It is that the imaginative literature of the Holocaust is the best source for interpretation of the unparalleled event of the shoah.

The first chapter investigates what it means to be a survivor of the Holocaust. A common thread running through much of the literature is the notion that survivors have been marked in some special way by the suffering endured in the camps, so that they can no longer be like others. Finally, the most inclusive definition of the survivor is shown to be that anyone who has been touched in some way by the Holocaust is a survivor.

The second chapter investigates the portrayal of the themes of guilt and atonement in the literature. It first explores the phenomenon known as survivor's guilt--a curious psychological condition in which the survivor feels guilty at having survived. Then, the question of the nature of German guilt is discussed. There seems to have been a dearth of German characters admitting personal culpability, until Robert Shaw's novel The Man in the Glass Booth, which was essentially a response to Hannah Arendt's Eichmann in Jerusalem. The curious fact is, the German in Shaw's novel is really a Jew--a fact which becomes significant when we turn to chapter four.

As regards the question of atonement, German attempts at reparations and restitution are discussed, with the underlying question remaining as to whether there can be any real Wiedergutmachung--making good again.

The third chapter explores theological implications and perspectives found in the literature. This chapter emphasizes the theological quest of Elie Wiesel, which provides the major thrust for his career as a writer. His theology is enigmatic. The basic point of the chapter, however, is to show how concepts of God and man are perpetually on trial in the literature. The only real resolve is in terms of man's role, not in terms of what he is. Also, though Auschwitz has destroyed traditional conceptions of God, man finds it difficult to reject God altogether. In the very denial is an implicit affirmation; in the very affirmation is implicit denial. In the end, man is left with more questions than answers--concerning both God and man.

The fourth chapter discusses the German and the Jew. The literature depicts the German as being unaffected, essentially, by the Holocaust. He is able to go about "business as usual." Yet, for the Jew, the Holocaust experience teaches a 614th mitzvah: not to forget! The chapter concludes with Romain Gary's notion that man is defined by the two extremities of his nature, which are personified by Jew and German.

The fifth chapter is a discussion of the dybbuk motif and its operation in the shoah literature. The dybbuk motif--or, the dead among the living theme--is that the memory of the six million operates much like a dybbuk, haunting the survivors and motivating much of their action. There are variants of the theme, but the basic theme is that the dead of the Holocaust are very much with us--with all who have been marked by the shoah in some way.

An epilogue forms the concluding section of the thesis. It reiterates the importance of using literature as a source for the study of the Holocaust, and concludes that it is essential to remember the Holocaust--not to allow a horror of such proportion to become a mere footnote to history.

To Janie, for her patience and understanding

and to Elie Wiesel, a teacher for our time.

PREFACE

In 1964, Rabbi Theodore Falcon--who was then a Hebrew Union College student--asked me to review Elie Wiesel's The Town Beyond the Wall for variant. I was unable to forget the name Elie Wiesel from that point on. It was my encounter with Wiesel's writings which stirred my interest in the Holocaust literature. I became intrigued with the idea that here--in the creative literature: fiction, poetry, drama--one might be able to find meaning, or, at the very least, come upon a hiddush. I was interested in the responses of those whose very art entails interpretation. It was my contention that, just as the emotional, psychological and theological reactions of the first-century hurban could be found in Midrash, so could these same implications be drawn from the literary media of our time. Indeed, in the twentieth century, Midrash is being written by novelists, dramatists and poets.

This is a preliminary study of the literature of the Holocaust. To my knowledge, it is the first detailed and extended study ever attempted. Anthologies, articles, and reviews have appeared, of course, but I am aware of no other study of this scope. It is an attempt to place the Holocaust in literary perspective, and to view it from that perspective. Surely, one needs the vantage point of perspective--which is afforded only by time--in order to begin to assess an occurrence of such magnitude. Literature provides such perspective.

I have attempted in this study to extract several perspectives from the literature. I have tried to treat only themes and ideas which emerge

from the works consulted rather than engage in critical discussion of their relative literary merits. Also, insofar as it has been possible, I have tried to keep my own personal emotional response to the Holocaust out of this study, and to let the literature speak for itself.

The sources for the present study are limited to the novel, primarily. The criterion of selection was that the novel either had to have survivors of the Holocaust as central figures, or had to be written by a survivor. Furthermore, it had to be written from the Jewish perspective, primarily. I had thought that in employing the above criterion I would be certain to encounter works which attempt to find meaning, or at the very least, to interpret the events in a meaningful way rather than provide a mere account of what transpired in the camps and ghettoes.

One will notice the heavy influence of Elie Wiesel's writings upon this study. It was not totally intentional, but it so happens that I have been influenced most profoundly by Elie Wiesel in my own thinking about the Holocaust.

Finally, I would hope that this study will prove to be of value to future students. At the very least, the extended bibliography of Holocaust literature included as an appendix to this thesis would be a beginning point. So far as I know, it is the most complete bibliography on the imaginative literature of the shoah, though even it is by no means exhaustive.

I hereby wish to acknowledge my deep appreciation to my adviser, Dr. Stanley F. Chyet, for his suggestions and direction in the preparation of this study, and, above all, for his patience and kind indulgence; also, my gratitude to Rabbi Herman Blumberg of Providence, Rhode Island, for his interest and encouragement; and finally, to my wife, Jane, for her patience and understanding.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The chimneys now sit like extinct volcanoes. Once they belched forth smoke, fire and ashes--the ashes to which Jews were reduced under the supervision of the Third Reich. Now the habitations of death are museums. The chronicled facts which allow us to catalogue and inventory what transpired in these places are so overwhelmingly vast as to be altogether numbing: six million is incomprehensible; one or ten or forty would seem more real. Six million! It staggers the imagination! How can one find any meaning in such figures? How, indeed, in dust and ashes? Where does one begin?

The facts are too chilling, too numbing. One is mute in the face of such testimony. We turn to the facts to find out what happened. To find the meaning of what happened, we must turn elsewhere. We are not interested in an inventory of what happened, but in an inventory of effects: what does it all mean? And so, we turn to literature.

Many theologians are mute before the factual testimony. It is not that they have nothing to say; it is rather that they have not found a medium of expression. The writer of imaginative literature--fiction, drama, poetry--has. What medium other than imaginative literature could take the reader inside an experience and allow him to relate to it personally, on a level evoking emotion and eliciting an intellectual response? Imaginative literature is also interpretive literature. The creative writer seeks out the meaning in events. His very art gives him freedom--license, if you will--to do so. For a

beginning, in seeking to find meaning in the Holocaust, we turn to the literature. We turn to the literature for some perspective on the events frozen into the collective memory of the Jewish people for all time.

"Some events do take place but are not true; others are--although they never occurred."[1] There is truth in the writer's art. In legend there is often philosophic, psychological and theological truth. Did not the ancient rabbis teach by means of the parable? The emotional and theological impact of the hurban is found expressed in the Midrash. The sermons contained in the Midrash were attempts to derive meaning from events. So it is with the imaginative literature of the Holocaust: the impact of the shoah is expressed in its pages. The events are indelibly recorded in the Jewish psyche; the meaning of the events has just begun to be probed.

"In the literature of the Holocaust, there is conveyed that which cannot be transmitted by a thousand facts and figures."[2] Meaning and interpretation is conveyed in this literature; emotional impact and theological implications abound. Facts and figures simply cannot express the horror of the experience. For us to experience the shoah in our own poor way, we need the impact which only our imagination can fathom through literature. And, for us to attempt to comprehend the meaning of the events, we must first attempt to experience the events and their impact in the aftermath of Auschwitz. Hopefully, this study is a beginning.

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[1]Elie Wiesel, Legends of Our Time, "Introduction," p. viii.
[2]Albert H. Friedlander (ed.), Out of the Whirlwind, p. 19.

I. THE MARK OF A SURVIVOR

"We who have come back," says Victor Frankl, "by the aid of many lucky chances or miracles -- whatever one may choose to call them -- we know: the best of us did not return."[1] Frankl maintains that only those who had lost all scruples in their fight for existence could keep alive, for, "they were prepared to use every means, honest and otherwise, even brutal force, theft, and betrayal of their friends, in order to save themselves."[2] The terrible price of survival amidst all that dehumanizing horror was, at best, reverting to animal-like amorality, or, at worst, sinking into the abyss of immorality. But, can one even apply the terms "amorality" and immorality"? In the context of Auschwitz is not the implication of morality an absurdity? Elie Wiesel writes that, after having been stripped, shorn, and shaved, shortly after arrival at Auschwitz, "within a few seconds, we had ceased to be men."[3] This dehumanization, so swiftly accomplished through being stripped, shorn, disinfected, showered and re-clothed in prison garb,[4] precluded the existence of any conventional notions of morality. There was, in short, a suspension of conventional morality, and, in its place came a Darwinian "surival of the fittest" to serve in its stead.

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[1]Victor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy, p. 7.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Elie Wiesel, Night, p. 46.

[4]Ibid., pp. 44-46.

Towards the end of Elie Wiesel's Night, the narrator -- who is Wiesel himself -- is told by the head of the block

> Listen to me boy. Don't forget that you're in a concentration camp. Here, every man has to fight for himself and not think of anyone else. Even of his father. Here, there are no fathers, no brothers, no friends. Everyone lives and dies for himself alone. I'll give you a sound piece of advice -- don't give your ration of bread and soup to your old father. There's nothing you can do for him. And you're killing yourself. Instead, you ought to be having his ration.[5]

The father is dying; there is nothing anyone can do for him. The so-called "law of the jungle" prevails. "He was right, I thought in the most secret region of my heart, but I dared not admit it."[6]

In a later novel, The Accident, Wiesel reflects on the suffering which was endured by his generation. The narrator is called a saint by his American girlfriend, Kathleen. She knows he has suffered, and it is her belief that suffering leads to saintliness. His reply to this notion is a reflection of Frankl's observation, and of Wiesel's own reportage in Night.

> Suffering brings out the lowest, the most cowardly in man. There is a phase of suffering you reach beyond which you become a brute: beyond it you sell your soul -- and worse, the souls of your friends -- for a piece of bread, for some warmth, for a moment of oblivion, of sleep. Saints are those who die before the end of the story. The others, those who live out their destiny, no longer dare look at themselves in the mirror, afraid they may see their inner image....[7]

Later in that same novel (The Accident) Wiesel describes the "tragic fate of those who came back, left over, living-dead."[8]

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[5]Ibid., p. 111.
[6]Ibid.
[7]Elie Wiesel, The Accident, p. 49.
[8]Ibid., p. 75.

> You must look at them carefully. Their appearance is deceptive. They are smugglers. They look like the others. They eat, they laugh, they love. They seek money, fame, love. Like the others. But it isn't true: they are playing, sometimes without even knowing it. Anyone who has seen what they have seen cannot be like the others, cannot laugh, love, pray, bargain, suffer, have fun, or forget. Like the others. You have to watch them carefully when they pass by an innocent looking smokestack, or when they lift a piece of bread to their mouths. Something in them shudders and makes you turn your eyes away. These people have been amputated; they haven't lost their legs or eyes but their will and their taste for life. The things they have seen will come to the surface again sooner or later.[9]

It is as if, in these few lines, Wiesel were writing a handbook for the perusal of anyone writing a novel about a Holocaust survivor, for one is confronted with this "amputee", this marked man, time and again in the Shoah literature. Sol Nazerman, in Edward Lewis Wallant's The Pawnbroker, comes to mind. Nazerman is a desensitized, passionless creature, indifferent to all the suffering borne by the broken remnants of humanity which enter into the sanctum of his pawnshop. He cannot laugh, cry, love, mourn. What he has seen does come to the surface again and again, in daydreams and nightmares.

"That man suffer!"[10] says Cecil Mapp of Sol Nazerman. But, Mapp, a Negro -- and a very minor figure in the novel -- seems to be the only one aware of it. The Pawnbroker's clientele merely see a merciless man with a heart of stone. "The shop creaked with the weight of other people's sorrows; he abided."[11] He was the pawnbroker "because that was what he wished to be: calm, inscrutable, giving nothing for nothing."[12] When confronted by a social worker, Marilyn Birchfield, Sol is asked how

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[9] Ibid. Cf. Nelly Sachs, "Chorus of the Rescued."

[10] Edward Lewis Wallant, The Pawnbroker (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961), p. 4.

[11] Ibid., p. 25.

[12] Ibid., p. 113.

the miserable plight of those who dwell in the Negro ghetto where the shop is situated affects him. The pawnbroker replies, "They do not affect me at all."[13] Suffering, Wiesel tells us, "pulls us farther away from other human beings."[14]

Later in the novel Sol expresses his manifesto on living. Tessie Rubin, herself a survivor of the camps and widow of one of Sol's friends who perished in the camps, provides relief for his sexual tensions. Like other corners of Sol's existence, this too is meaningless, for there is no love. As Tessie's father is dying, Sol briefly states his manifesto: "Don't think, don't feel. Get through things -- it is the only sense. Imagine yourself a cow in a fenced place with a million other cows. Don't suffer, don't fear. ...Don't pay attention, don't cry!"[15]

Sol Nazerman is untouchable -- or, so he thinks. He has armored himself with indifference. Having seen what he has seen, having endured what he has been through, he has walled out the joys and sorrows of all the creatures in whose midst he finds himself. Elie Wiesel has suggested that a man such as this should live alone.

> A man who has suffered more than others should live apart. Alone. Outside of any organized existence. He poisons the air. He makes it unfit for breathing. He takes away from joy its spontaneity and its justification. He kills hope and the will to live.[16]

And, in a sense, Sol Nazerman does live alone, apart from others. Though he lives in a house -- which he paid for -- with his sister and brother-in-law and their two children, he wishes to be left alone; the relationship is merely symbiotic. He refuses to involve himself even in family affairs.

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[13] Ibid., p. 103.
[14] Wiesel, The Accident, p. 105.
[15] Wallant, p. 229
[16] Wiesel, The Accident, p. 106.

> Do not bother me with your squabbles.... Eat each other up, for all I care, but do not bother me! I will go upstairs now. I will shower and turn on my fan and then read until I sleep. My door will be closed. For my part, you can do what you want....[17]

When the claim is made later by Bertha, Sol's sister, that they have made a home for him and given him a family, the pawnbroker drives the point further home.

> You will be still now.... No more talk at all until I am out of this room. Silence, Bertha, silence. When I am gone from here you may continue your cannibalism; I do not take sides or interfere with your miserable pleasure. But here what I say. I do not <u>need</u> you for a family -- that is <u>your</u> myth.[18]

Even in his pursuit of reading in his leisure hours, a pastime demanding no personal encounter with other human beings, Nazerman remains detached. "He appreciated the emotions evoked, but he was not involved emotionally himself because his invulnerability allowed for no exceptions."[19] Sol Nazerman is the personification and literary embodiment of Wiesel's emotional/spiritual amputee.[20]

This symptomatic behavior of the survivor described by Wiesel as "the tragic fate of those who came back"[21] and embodied by Wallant in the character of Nazerman is neatly wrapped into a psychological package termed "Post-KZ syndrome" by a psychiatrist in Hollis Alpert's <u>The Claimant</u>. Alfred Becker, an American Jewish attorney who represents claimants for reparations from the German government, is married to a survivor of the camps. Becker wants to understand the gulf between himself and his wife. He is told that there is hardly a survivor or the camps who has not shown symptoms of this syndrome.[22]

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[17]Wallant, p. 36.
[18]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 96.
[19]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 97.
[20]<u>Supra</u>, pp. 4-5.
[21]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 4.
[22]Hollis Alpert, <u>The Claimant</u>, p. 20.

> It has been observed ... that among some survivors, the world is regarded with mistrust. You see, a human being cannot be subjected to a life in a concentration camp without profound repercussions in his subsequent life. Hostility and suspicion develop, and in some cases psychosis, although I am not saying that about your wife. No, she's relatively normal, I'd say. And you can take it as normal that someone who's been through as much as she has would quite naturally display certain attitudes toward other people, and this would include you. To the stranger -- and if you weren't in a camp you are a stranger -- these attitudes would seem like bitterness, or envy, or cynicism and quarrelsomeness. But it's only to be expected.[23]

This behavior, then, is normal for one who has been through the camps; it is to be expected.

But what of this notion that anyone who was not in a camp is a stranger? For Becker's wife, Lottie, this notion is fully realized when she calls him to come to Isreal to ask him for a divorce, so that she might marry Simon, a fellow survivor of the camps.[24] Though Becker has been affected deeply by what he saw when, as an American Army officer, he helped liberate one of the camps, he is still a stranger in Lottie's eyes. Any yet, in another work -- Meyer Levin's The Fanatic -- we see a marriage which parallels that of Alfred and Lottie Becker, and the husband is not a total "stranger". Anika, a survivor of the camps, is married to Maury Finkelstein, who, as an Army chaplain, did relief work among the survivors. Maury, now a writer, is trying to have his adaptation of Leo Kahn's Good and Evil produced on broadway. Leo, who perished in the camps, was Anika's lover, and is now the dybbuk-narrator of the novel.[25] It is

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[23] Ibid., pp. 21-22.
[24] Ibid., pp. 337-350.
[25] This novel is actually a fictionalized account of Levin's own struggle to have his adaptation of The Diary of Anne Frank produced, though he writes a rather lengthy disclaimer as a prelude to the novel itself. Documentary material is available in the Nearprint file on Meyer Levin in the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Leo's ghost, the narrator of the novel, who counts Maury, too, among the survivors. He states that Anika has been marked by her experiences, but that

> Maury too has been marked, not in having passed through our fate with us but in having witnessed it, if even at the last. He has seen us. For those who saw our enclosures, those who saw our cordwood piles of dead, those who saw the pits are forever marked. And in this generation of the living, there will always be the division between them, the marked ones, and the remainder of humanity that does not quite know, does not and cannot quite understand. Those who have seen us in the intimacy of our degraded death have in a sense been admitted amongst us.[26]

What this leads us to at this point is the notion that, to be termed a survivor of the Holocaust, one need not have endured personally the horrors of the camps. Those who witnessed the stark reality of the hell that was Auschwitz have been marked, too. Perhaps they may be regarded as strangers by those who remained alive amidst the dust of Dachau and ashes of Auschwitz, for who could possibly comprehend the horror of crimes so vast and so heinous they beggar the imagination.[27] Nevertheless, Maury Finkelstein and Alfred Becker are survivors too. To be a survivor, perhaps, is a state of mind. To be a survivor is to bear a mark!

Another characteristic marking the survivor is the propensity for conjuring up waking nightmares. A fence is seen, or a pair of striped pajamas, the "innocent looking smokestack" cited by Wiesel,[28] and suddenly, the past returns to haunt the victim. Much of the literature is peppered with this element. Abramowitz, one of the central figures

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[26]Meyer Levin, The Fanatic (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1965), pp. 62-63.

[27]This is taken from a line spoken by Spencer Tracy in the motion picture, Judgement at Nuremburg.

[28]Supra, p. 5.

in Jerrold Morgulas's The Accused, is continually plagued with this malady. While pursuing a "face", which he thinks belongs to a former German officer whom he once saw in a concentration camp, he steps into a doorway, where he sees a light bulb swinging on the end of a frayed wire.

> His eyes fastened on the wire, followed it along the cracked ceiling to a patch of falling plaster. He shuddered, feeling a violent tremor run through his body, increasing in an instant the chill which had taken hold of him and turning it into something far more penetrating.[29]

This evokes an incident in the camps, an incident in which another inmate suggests holding onto the electrified wire -- suicide by electrocution -- as a way out.[30]

Following the man still further, Abramowitz comes before a store window. He pauses, and is able to see the man's reflection in the glass, but the display catches his eye.

> One of the dummies had on a loose, ill-fitting pair of pajamas. The stripes were wide and blue, the material white, and again as he looked he felt uneasy. He glanced furtively at his own clothing, as though expecting to see a filthy prison shirt, striped like the pajamas in front of him, reeking of sweat and excrement. He blinked. The dummy did not move, but smiled blandly, unaware of the vision it had recalled. 'How can he sell such a thing?' Abramowitz thought angrily. 'Doesn't he realize ...?'[31]

As for the "face," there are characters in other works who are haunted by faces.[32] Abramowitz, perhaps, speaks for all of them in his thoughts when he muses that

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[29]Jerrold Morgulas, The Accused, p. 42.
[30]Ibid.
[31]Ibid., p.43
[32]Antek Prinz, in Louis Falstein's Sole Survivor; Bodo Cohen, in Christopher Davis's The Shamir of Dachau; Arthur Goldman, in Robert Shaw's The Man in the Glass Booth; and Michael, in Elie Wiesel's The Town Beyond The Wall.

> ...it was not simply the "face" nor even the presence of the man himself. It was the face, but it was far greater than the face; it was everything that the face brought back to him, the memories, the torn shreds of years, still raw and lacerated.[33]

Within each character sho is haunted by "the face" there lurks a desire for confrontation. Antek Prinz, the hero of Louis Falstein's Sole Survivor, and Bodo Cohen, in Christopher Davis's The Shamir of Dachau, wish to exact revenge by killing the characters who wear these faces; Abramowitz wishes to ask why this man seemed to show some emotion while witnessing punishment; Michael, in Wiesel's The Town Beyond the Wall, wants to confront a face which symbolizes all those who stood by, passive, indifferent, while Jews were being led away to the slaughter. Such a prominent literary device is, then, perhaps symbolic of still another characteristic of the survivor. Here, we are speaking of the survivor as writer.

It is obvious, of course, that the writer is marked by the Holocaust. If it were otherwise, why would he write on such a theme. "I am a storyteller," writes Elie Wiesel. "My legends can only be told at dusk. Whoever listens questions his life."[34] Indeed, whoever tells a tale of the Holocaust asks a question. He asks questions of God and man, about guilt and suffering, good and evil. He asks questions out of agony: questions which cannot be answered. He questions belief in God; he questions the concept of man; he wishes to confront guilt: his own, that of the German, that of the Jews, that of the world. He inquires into atonement for that guilt. And he is haunted: by ghosts, and by questions he cannot answer. He seeks a confrontation, that there might be some

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[33]Morgulas, p. 243.
[34]Wiesel, The Accident, p. 73.

resolution to the essential problem. The face represents something unresolved, which the writer wishes to resolve. He wishes to resolve the question, perhaps, for his own peace of mind. He is a marked man; he cannot forget. He is not like the others.

The face is a symbol for the writer, hence, for the reader, too. The face is a question mark. The survivor -- and "we are all survivors"[35] -- is characterized by a question mark (HOW? WHY?). "The essence of man is to be a question, and the essence of the question is to be without answer. ...The depth, the meaning, the very salt of man is in his constant desire to ask the question ever deeper within himself, to feel ever more intimately the existence of an unknowable answer."[36]

The survivor is marked: by his past -- by the memories that haunt him -- and by his question. He cannot forget. He is not like the others.

Let us turn now to some of the questions.

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[35]Elie Wiesel, "On Being a Jew," Jewish Heritage, Summer, 1967 (This was the text of a commencement address delivered at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, June 4, 1967).

[36]Wiesel, Town, p. 176.

II. GUILT AND ATONEMENT

"I am alive, therefore I am guilty. If I am still here, it is because a friend, a comrade, a stranger, died in my place."[1] This statement by Elie Wiesel finds its expression -- both implicitly and explicitly -- in much of his work; it also finds expression in the writings of others. It is the curious phenomenon known as "survivor's guilt."[2] Wiesel finds it "a strange irony of fate that the only ones who were, who still are, fully conscious of their share of responsibility for the dead are those who were saved..."[3] Indeed, it is not too difficult to understand that there would naturally be some guilt feelings on the part of those who survived the concentration camps, especially in light of the documentary evidence presented by Victor Frankl[4] and Elie Wiesel.[5] This is not the so-called normal "ontal guilt" which patients bring with them into the psychiatrist's office. This guilt stems from the fact that the world, for the survivor, once became a nightmarish hell in which the concept of God was destroyed, hence, all things were permitted.[6] No ethical system whatever -- save a survival-at-any-price ethic -- could be applied to Auschwitz. Not

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[1]Elie Wiesel, "The Guilt We Share," Legends of Our Time, p. 171.

[2]I first came across this phrase in Meyer Levin's The Fanatic, p. 231.

[3]Wiesel, "Guilt," p. 170.

[4]Supra, p. 3.

[5]Supra, p. 4.

[6]For a fuller treatment of this notion, see Richard Rubenstein, "Religion and the Origins of the Death Camps: a Psychoanalytic Interpretation," After Auschwitz, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966).

relativism, not "situation ethics," not any! The world of the camp was a world of amorality, while the world into which the survivor emerged upon his release was a world which abhorred the amoral one of the camps. The phenomenon of "survivor's guilt," as it finds its expression in literature, is a by-product of the camps, surfacing in the aftermath of Auschwitz, in a world which attempted to establish a sense of moral equilibrium. It is only in retrospect that one attempts to establish guilt: his own; that of others. This is how we encounter the phenomenon of "survivor's guilt" in the shoah literature: in retrospect, as the sheer horror of it all is confronted from the perspective of time.

It seems absurd that the survivor should be the only one who is still fully conscious of his share of the responsibility for his dead.[7] What about the Germans, the Americans, the Pope, the British? They have their spokesmen -- both the accusing and the absolving. What of the individuals: the murderers themselves, and the indifferent spectators -- those who merely stood by, watching the victims and executioners act out their roles? Wherein lies their share of the burden? Is it that the individual wishes to blame governments ("I was only following orders!"), while the governments wish to accuse individuals? It is this tendency in the literature which Jack Spiro terms the "Scapegoat Stratagem."[8] Spiro maintains that this theme does not require any sense of identification on the part of the reader; on the contrary, it enables the reader to transform guilt into accusation and condemnation

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[7] Supra, p. 13.

[8] Jack D. Spiro, "A Partial Survey of Holocaust Literature," CCAR Journal, Vol. XVI, no. 1, January, 1969, p. 85.

directed towards the Pope, governments, even God.[9] It is his contention that the next phase of the shoah literature must confront the culpability of the individual.[10] He is unaware that we are already well into that phase!

In this chapter, we shall begin with an examination of "survivor's guilt" as it occurs in the literature, after which we shall move to an enquiry into the nature of German guilt -- both individual and collective. We shall then proceed to the organically related theme of atonement as it is treated in the literature examined here. We shall see that there is a movement in the recent literature of the Holocaust from the tendency to scapegoat -- to project guilt onto governments, organizations, symbolic personalities -- towards a confrontation of individual responsibility.

"I am responsible. He who is not among the victims is with the executioners."[11] It is Gregor speaking -- the hero of Elie Wiesel's The Gates of the Forest. Leib, his friend, the leader of a band of Jewish partisans operating out of the forest, has been arrested. Gregor blames himself. They have sought to rescue Gavriel, a mysterious, enigmatic, symbolic figure. Gregor has alerted a prison guard to be on the lookout for a certain Jew thought to be in the area. Gregor has posed as a gentile, together with Clara, Leib's girlfriend. Leib is captured while walking through the former Jewish ghetto. Gregor must tell the tale again and again, until, finally, he assumes the responsibility for Leib's capture. The one whom they call Zeide interrogates

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[9] Ibid., p. 87.
[10] Ibid., p. 88.
[11] Elie Wiesel, The Gates of the Forest, p. 168

Gregor. "What do you reproach yourself for?" asks Zeide. "For not being in Leib's place. Or Gavriel's," answers Gregor. "What do you regret?" inquires Zeide. Gregor replies, "That I'm not Leib or Gavriel."[12] But Gregor finally admits that it is only as an afterthought that he takes the responsibility. "You want to know why I betrayed Leib? Simple. It was by mistake, unconsciously. Only afterwards did I take responsibility."[13] Gregor maintains that he betrayed Leib, but

> He was speaking for the future. Later on he would never deny the essential truth of what he was now saying. To live is to betray the dead. We hasten to bury and forget them because we are ashamed; we feel guilty towards them.[14]

Wiesel is writing from the vantagepoint of the perspective afforded by time. The truth of the guilt felt by a survivor is valid only for the post-Holocaust future. "Guilt is defined in relation to the immediate present..."[15]

In that immediate present, which, here, for us, is the literature, we encounter several characters who bear the mark of "survivor's guilt." Abramowitz, in Jerrold Morgulas' The Accused, is a former professor of law from Vienna, now employed as a shammes in an obscure schul in New York City. Abramowitz lives in a barren little room in the basement of the schul. Zimmerman, the rabbi of the schul, who is also a survivor of the camps, is curious as to why Abramowitz is content with such a menial job and such meager quarters. "You're hiding here, Abramowitz. All this time, you're hiding."[16] What is Abramowitz

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[12] Ibid., p. 170.
[13] Ibid., p. 174.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., p. 218.
[16] Jerrold Morgulas, The Accused, p. 78.

hiding? From what or whom is he hiding? What awful guilt does he bear?

Grunwald, a leading character in Lionel Davidson's Making Good Again, wonders about such people. Grunwald, a survivor now practicing law in Israel, has come to Germany to put in a claim for restitution on behalf of a Jewish relief agency. The funds claimed had been on deposit to the account of a certain Herr Bamberger, thought to have perished in the Holocaust. At this point in the novel, it is reported that Bamberger may still be alive.

> What had he done, Bamberger? What shameful things? Grunwald had heard stories before, of souls sick of themselves, of life. There was a man in Frankfurt, found there not so long ago, the janitor in the large residential block that he had owned. What had made this man bury himself so, shunning surviving relatives, shunning mankind? He had been found there, stoking the boiler, doing the most menial jobs in the large property he had once owned, ...sick of his life, but frightened to take it. What shameful things was this man expiating? How many lives had gone to save his own that was now so hateful to him?[17]

What shameful thing was Abramowitz expiating? Had Abramowitz, like Goberman, a minor character in Wallant's The Pawnbroker, co-operated with the SS?

Goberman is a professional schnorrer, playing on the guilt feelings of others as a tactic to collect money, ostensibly for Jewish causes. Sol Nazerman confronts Goberman with his guilt when the latter appears at Tessie Rubin's apartment. Sol recognizes him, maintaining that Goberman had a method for getting food, that he co-operated with the Nazis, that he even informed on members of his own family.[18] Goberman protests, proclaiming Sol's accusations lies, but the pawnbroker

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[17]Lionel Davidson, Making Good Again, p. 65.
[18]Edward Lewis Wallant, The Pawnbroker, p. 123.

assesses him as a "Professional sufferer, a practicing refugee."[19] Sol maintains that Goberman is an opportunist who puts his suffering to profit. "But you feel guilty about some of your crimes, you cannot sleep too well. So you run around with that brief case and try to make everyone else feel as guilty as you, meantime turning a pretty penny."[20] Is this the guilt Abramowitz hides: having been a collaborator?

"I cried out, Rabbi. I cried out to God to put an end to my suffering. And I was saved."[21] The rabbi pretends not to understand. "'And so,' said Abramowitz, 'my guilt is more than I can bear.[22] My debt to the dead, to those who did not cry out, is too great, too heavy for me.'"[23] Abramowitz feels guilty for having merely survived; he is guilty, perhaps, for not having been chosen for martyrdom. The fictional Abramowitz parallels to some extent the feelings of the real-life Elie Wiesel, who says, "I saw them die and if I feel the need to speak of guilt, it is always of my own that I speak. I saw them go away and I remained behind. Often I do not forgive myself for that."[24] Is this, perhaps, guilt arising out of feelings of having been unworthy of martyrdom? For Abramowitz, this is certainly the case. Guilt, then, no matter for what reason, is one of the conditions of being a survivor. And it is always defined in relation to the immediate present.[25]

We also encounter the guilt of American Jews in some of the works. Mr. Nathan, the bakery owner in Louis Falstein's Sole Survivor,

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[19] Ibid., p. 124.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Morgulas, p. 152.
[22] Cf. Gen. 4:13.
[23] Morgulas, pp. 152-3.
[24] Elie Wiesel, "A Plea for the Dead," Legends, p. 191.
[25] Supra, p. 16.

employs the refugee Antek Prinz; Nathan takes "a quick, melancholy inventory of his own activities on Second Avenue near Fourteenth Street in New York during the period when people were being cremated in Tiranka."[26]

> As against the mounds of corpses, Mr. Nathan envisioned mounds of rolls baked by his efficient aluminum oven. Even then it had troubled him that others were getting killed while he was getting rich. But whose fault was that?
> ...He wondered how startled the refugee would be if he said to him, 'Frankly, I'd change places with you any day.' It was an absurd thought; the refugee would probably laugh at him. And even if he wanted to, there was no such thing as changing places. As for his activities during the war, he had nothing to be ashamed of. He had given a great deal of money to more relief causes than he could remember. His wallet had always been and still was open. Then why did he feel so guilty in the presence of this man or others who had come out alive from the land of the crematoria? Why did he feel that they had suffered martyrdom for him too? A damn-fool notion, but he couldn't get it out of his head.[27]

It is curious that in Falstein's novel, Nathan is the only character to even think of guilt. Antek, the hero of the novel, is driven by the desire to revenge his dead brother, killed by Hornbostel, a sadistic camp guard, on the day before liberation.[28] Hornbostel turns up in New York as a respectable citizen. Antek pursues him and, in a struggle, kills him.[29] Antek, then, once again, becomes a fugitive. The whole question then becomes one of whether Antek is <u>legally</u> guilty of murder, or <u>morally</u> innocent because he has attempted to balance the scales of justice. But Antek is not plagued by <u>guilt</u>; he is driven by the desire for revenge and, ultimately, for justice. It is not until Wallant's <u>The Pawnbroker</u>, depicting events of some ten years later than

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[26]Louis Falstein, <u>Sole Survivor</u>, p. 26.
[27]<u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 26-27.
[28]<u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 47-51.
[29]<u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 61-71.

the events depicted in Falstein's Sole Survivor (Sole Survivor, published in 1954, is set in 1949-1950; The Pawnbroker, published in 1961, is set in 1958), that we encounter, possibly, the first literary instance of "survivor's guilt." Perhaps Falstein is saying that the survivor of the camps need feel no guilt, but that the American who participated only vicariously in the winning of the war should feel some guilt, particularly if he is a Jew. Here the martyrdom theme comes into play. He, too -- Falstein's Mr. Nathan -- was unworthy of martyrdom.

The guilt of the survivor stems from either genuine moral turpitude, determined by the perspective of the present, or from a feeling of having been unworthy of martyrdom, also determined by the perspective of the present. The question is: "Why was I spared, when six million died?"

Turning now to the question of German guilt,[30] we find responses ranging from Hornbostel's plea (in Sole Survivor) that he was only following orders,[31] to Breitkopf's conception (in The Accused) of his own personal culpability.[32] The world is weary of hearing the "cog-in-the-wheel, only-following-orders" plea for absolution on the part of the Germans. In the literature of the shoah, we expect to be confronted with those who would excuse their culpability by pleading the "cog-in-the-wheel" syndrome. We also would expect to meet Germans who feel no shame whatever and are sick of hearing the past being dredged up. Pay the Jews their "blood money" and let us be done with it! We

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[30]For a closer examination of the question of German guilt by contemporary German writers, one should read Hans Habe's Christopher and His Father, Gunter Grass's The Tin Drum, and Christian Giessler's The Sins of the Fathers.

[31]Falstein, p. 69.

[32]Morgulas, pp. 118-21.

had no idea what was going on. We were only following orders. I was only a tool in the hands of the real murderers. All these disclaimers have been heard before; the literary woods are full of them.

Geist, a German journalist who appears briefly in Alpert's The Claimant, states that no responsible German has any thought of ever forgetting the "magnitude of the crimes committed by a criminal segment led by a maniacal dictator," but, he continues, it is neither possible nor desirable "for the present generation to brood constantly on the past."[33] The proverbial buck is passed. The guilt is projected onto a "criminal segment." Individual Germans are not culpable; only the vague "criminal segment." Rarely do we meet a German who admits that "the buck stops here!"[34] Where American writers on the Holocaust are concerned, we had to wait until 1967 to find one who presented us with just such a character. Breitkopf, in Morgulas' The Accused, is one of the first literary German "cogs-in-the-wheel" to admit personal culpability.

At war's end, Breitkopf is interrogated by an American officer and is cleared of any responsibility. "You didn't do anything. You're not your brother's keeper after all. You didn't run a concentration camp, you didn't shoot prisioners ... you didn't do a God-damn thing, do you understand? Nobody wants supply clerks."[35] But Breitkopf is plagued by guilt. His brother Franz is an inmate in a mental hospital, having been interned since 1944. Franz cracked up while witnessing the execution of Jewish prisoners. Breitkopf sees this as Franz's punishment, suffered

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[33]Alpert, p. 39.

[34]This saying is attributed to former President Harry S. Truman -- though in a context unrelated to the shoah.

[35]Morgulas, p. 86.

for the sins of both of them. "Franz, it seemed, had taken the world's wrath on his shoulders alone, for both of them."[36] Breitkopf, outraged at this prospect, thinks "They should never have let me go."[37] He suffers at times from "a deep unbearable chill," that had "come slowly, growing like a hidden malignancy, devouring his blood."[38] He tries to trace its origin, unable to remember when the pains actually began.

> Had it been at the time of Franz's commitment? Or the day he had first gone to the camps and had seen what he had rejected as impossible before? Was it when he had realized that he had known all along what had been happening and that he too had wished it to be ... had it been the moment when he had understood that a man might participate from a distance in the murder of millions yet retch to see one man beaten in front of him?[39]

He remembers that, at the time of Franz's commitment, his brother's behavior had been regarded as somewhat treasonous. "Yet, Breitkopf remembered wondering, if that were so, why all the shipments of whiskey to the Special Divisions in the east? He had refused to guess at what was going on, refused to raise inferences from the routing orders and invoices for 'special supplies,' odd chemicals and unusual equipment that crossed his desk with such increasing frequency."[40] Martin Breitkopf is not so willing to retreat into the "cog-in-the-wheel" syndrome.

> How can a man be held responsible for what he cannot alter, what he has not wished nor imagined, what -- even -- he hates. Obviously it is no answer to say, 'I followed orders.' It is no answer to say, 'I could not do otherwise or I would have died too.' No excuse: better to have died, say the living. You ask, 'But someone must be responsible. Men are not hurricanes.'[41]

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[36] Ibid., p. 115.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., pp. 115-16.
[40] Ibid., p. 68.
[41] Ibid., pp. 118-19.

Breitkopf resolves that there simply are no answers; and so, he decides to put the concept of man on trial.[42]

Perhaps this need on the part of Holocaust writers to depict a German who admits his culpability is rooted in the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann. Implicit in their need to depict such a character, also, is the supposition that their audience needs to hear it. Elie Wiesel focusses on the Eichmann trial in his essay, "The Guilt We Share." He does not doubt the personal guilt of Eichmann, but does maintain that the focus of the trial was too narrow. "The accused should have constituted the point of departure -- he was, instead, the end in sight."[43] He maintains that there was a false equation implicit in the proceedings -- proceedings which "got stuck inside the rules of the legal game."[44] The false equation is that "if, before the law, the Eichmanns are guilty, the others, therefore, are innocent. But the truth leads to a different conclusion: the others are guilty, too."[45] Wiesel, of course, has his own particular axe to grind, which is, that nobody is off the hook. But he misses a point which another writer, Robert Shaw, picks up. The point is that Eichmann pleaded "not guilty in the sense of the indictment."[46] Eichmann saw himself as a law-abiding citizen of the Reich, doing his duty to the Fatherland.[47] "No one ever doubted Eichmann's guilt; everyone was convinced of it from the start, and no trial was needed for proof."[48] Everyone was convinced;

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[42] Ibid., p. 119.
[43] Wiesel, "Guilt," p. 163.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil (New York: The Viking Press, 1963), p. 18.
[47] Ibid., p. 120.
[48] Wiesel, "Guilt," p. 163.

everyone but Eichmann! Shaw depicts an Eichmann who admits his culpability, but this Eichmann is really a Jew, a survivor of the camps who has achieved financial success in the United States.[49]

The Man in the Glass Booth, currently on Broadway as a stage play, first appeared as a novel in 1967. The novel is essentially a response to Hannah Arendt's Eichmann in Jerusalem. The plot is basically this. Arthur Goldman, a highly successful businessman in the United States and a former concentration camp inmate, has two primary fixations: (1) Jesus, of whose death the Pope has absolved the Jews, and (2) Adolf Karl Dorff -- the Eichmann of the story -- whom he thinks he sees one day on the streets of New York. Goldman decides to resolve the two fixations through a synthetic process whereby, through posing a Dorff -- who was, in reality, Goldman's cousin -- he becomes Jesus.

The details in the novel concerning the abduction and interrogation of Dorff parallel almost exactly the facts of the Eichmann case as Hannah Arendt presents them. Shaw even cleverly acknowledges his indebtedness to Miss Arendt by having Goldman -- as Dorff -- remark upon seeing the newsmen at his trial, "Didn't see my friend Hannah."[50] And, again, there is a reference to "reading the Princess Hannah -- to whom I must pay constant tribute for her excellent observations concerning the Clerk[51] -- ...and rereading the Princess Hannah and therefore being further enlightened..."[52] Shaw, then, responds to Hannah Arendt by

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[49] Robert Shaw, The Man in the Glass Booth.
[50] Shaw, p. 146.
[51] Goldman's term for Eichmann (see Shaw, p. 133).
[52] Shaw, p. 151. Cf. the statement, "that Princess Hannah -- got a few points from her, very bright, very bright!" on p. 113.

presenting her, and us, too, with an Eichmann-like figure who admits his guilt. But this is only one of Goldman's motives in assuming the identity of Dorff. The other motive is, through becoming Dorff, to be hanged, thus atoning for the sins of the Germans. Goldman aspires to become a latter-day Jesus. If, by being crucified, Jesus atoned for the sins of mankind, then Goldman must be hanged to atone for the sins of the Germans, thus giving them still another Jew who died for their sins. Only, since the death of the first seems to have had so little redemptive effect on the Germans, he will give them a Jew all their very own, whom they will not have to share with the rest of mankind.

As Goldman is abducted by Israeli agents, he asks, "Do you suppose I could outdo Jesus?"[53] He then proceeds to the matter of establishing himself as an Eichmann-like figure who will be the first honest man on the dock.[54] The purpose of Goldman's masquerade is thus quite clear: to present before a tribunal a man who admits his own personal culpability, who will undoubtedly be sentenced to death, thereby effecting atonement for the sins of the Germans with an odd twist: that a Jew will be their personal redeemer. As a side effect, the Jews themselves will be relieved to find that a German was represented as having admitted personal culpability.

"I was no clerk. No jumped-up bureaucrat. I had a past. I had a background. I issued my own orders, plotted my own plots. ...I knew what was what. I had a ball! You follow? I'd got initiative."[55] This

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[53] Ibid., p. 110.
[54] Ibid., p. 114.
[55] Ibid., p. 112.

is Dorff/Goldman's statement upon initial interrogation by an Israeli officer. He follows up with, "you must understand that most were cogs ... but not I. You follow? I had initiative. I'm not pleading I took orders."[56] And, with a psychiatrist, Dorff/Goldman states,

> I'm not pleading the crimes were only in retrospect. I'm not pleading I was just a law abider because the Fuehrer's orders possessed the force of law in the Third Reich. I'm not pleading that it was just the command of the Fuehrer ... the absolute center of the legal order. I'm not pleading I couldn't have acted different, because I'm telling you I was always for it.[57]

And, finally, in court, he states

> I save you the trouble -- and the expense -- yes expense of calling witnesses -- I admit to being a murderer -- many times over -- the indictment, that's a matter of details. I killed Jews. I killed thousands. Turn back the clock and I'd do it again. I had a ball, your Honor. I am a living testament of the health-giving powers of sin![58]

But Goldman is discovered to be an imposter. A woman testifies that she was in the camp with Goldman -- the very camp of which Dorff was commandant. Dorff was Goldman's cousin and singled Goldman out for special privileges. But the real Dorff was killed by the Russians shortly after the liberation of the camp.[59]

In the concluding chapter we are left with more questions than answers. Was Goldman attempting to atone for German guilt alone? Was he attempting to atone for his own guilt as well? Or, was he attempting to atone for all guilt -- German, Jewish, and his own personal guilt -- thereby becoming, like Jesus, a figure who, by his dying, effects a

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[56] Ibid., p. 114.
[57] Ibid., p. 123.
[58] Ibid., p. 152.
[59] Ibid., pp. 172-75.

universal atonement? The Jewish reader may cringe at the suggestion; nevertheless, like it or not, the suggestion is there. "I understand your need to put a case. I understand your concern for Justice. I understand your own guilt -- I have that myself -- but did you not see the pain you would cause your people?"[60] remarks the Presiding Judge.

> "I understand," said the Presiding Judge, "your need to put a German in the dock -- a true German -- a Nazi who would state and not excuse -- who would say what it was necessary to say ... say what no German has ever said in the dock -- I understand that ... But, Mr. Goldman ...Mr. Goldman, it is with you I am concerned ... Mr. Goldman, did you not become here more German than Jewish?"[61]

Indeed, there is an indication that Goldman is schizophrenic, that he does suffer from what is popularly termed "split personality." This schizophrenia in Goldman's personality we shall examine more closely in the fourth chapter, "German and Jew." The suggestion is that, by being schizophrenic, at once both German and Jew, Goldman takes on more of a universal quality. This enables him to become even more of a Christ-figure, much to the chagrin, perhaps, of the Jewish reader.

"So are we all so guilty, Mr. Goldman?" asks the Presiding Judge.[62] "'all!' said the old man."[63] Following this, Goldman strips himself and cries out, "Take me to Calvary. Get out the nails. Take me, crucify me, part my raiment, cast your lots. I am Christ, the chosen of God; offer me vinegar. I am the King of the Jews. THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS, YOU GOD-DAMNED IDIOTS."[64]

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[60] Ibid., p. 176.
[61] Ibid., pp. 176-77.
[62] Ibid., p. 177.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., p. 179.

Of all the characters we encounter in the literature of the Shoah, Goldman is perhaps the most enigmatic, and certainly the most disturbing. One can only wonder whether Robert Shaw, too, was left with more questions than answers when he finished writing the novel.

The Man in the Glass Booth is a good point of departure for making the transition from a discussion of guilt to a discussion of the concomitant notion of atonement -- concomitant, because atonement is related to guilt as antidote is to poison. We have already seen some examples of attempts to effect personal atonement for personal guilt (e.g., Abramowitz and Goldman). We now turn to a consideration of the attempt by the West German government to effect communal atonement for the blood guilt of an entire generation.

Wiedergutmachung -- literally "making good again" -- is a catch-all term encompassing the West German government's effort to atone for the national guilt incurred during the period of National Socialism. It is two-fold in nature, consisting of restitution and reparations, and of prosecution of individuals. Geist, a German journalist who makes a brief appearance in Alpert's The Claimant, is asked, "Does Herr Geist feel that Germany is doing all in its power to amend the past by rooting out all those criminals of the Nazi bureaucracy from the social and political fabric of Germany?"[65] Geist cites the Auschwitz trials as an example of the good faith of the government of the Federal Republic.[66] Indeed, Becker, the central figure of The Claimant, comments earlier in the novel that he "had developed a grudging respect for the

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[65]Alpert, p. 39.

[66]Ibid., p. 40. For a dramatic treatment of the Auschwitz trials, see Peter Weiss's play, The Investigation.

new government's evident desire to do something about past evils through legal restitution. No government ...had ever before assumed that much responsibility for a previous government's actions."[67] These two passages are essential for our understanding of the surface view of Wiedergutmachung in the literature. On the one hand, one wonders whether the Germans are doing everything in their power to purge the guilt of the Nazi era, while, on the other hand, there are indications of an evident desire to do so. There is some respect for this unprecendented action, yet it is begrudged the Germans. Thus, there are feelings lurking beneath the surface that the Germans themselves are going about the enterprise of Wiedergutmachung only half-heartedly. Implicit in the question of whether the German government is doing everything in its power is the thought that they are obviously not. Carried to a further extreme, one might conclude that the questioner means to say that the Germans do not even want to do anything to effect Wiedergutmachung. Yet, there are such attempts in actual fact. The question remaining is how sincere the Germans are in their apparent desire. We must now probe beneath the surface and view the German and Jewish reactions to Wiedergutmachung as depicted in the literature. Does the Jew really feel there can be any atonement for the collective guilt of the German people? How earnest is the German, and to what degree is he sincere? Even more fundamental is the question of why the Jew may feel there can be no real Wiedergutmachung, and why the German may feel there must be.

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[67] Ibid., p. 12.

Mittelman, Geist's questioner, approaches Becker after Geist's speech and inquires about the current restitution case. When told that Becker is leaving for Berlin to work on the case, he asks, "You expect to extract the blood money, then?"[68] Becker responds that there is both a legal and a moral reason to claim restitution. "Such as that murder can be compensated by payment of cast?"[69] ask Mittelman. Mittelman is the only member of his family to have survived.[70] For him, it might be expected that there could never be any Wiedergutmachung. The general attitude toward Becker's restitution work is one of mild surprise that he is still thus engaged. "People seemed surprised when they learned that I still had a lot of restitution work; they had thought the thing was finished, that the Germans had paid up, and that the books had been balanced, however lopsidedly. Wasn't it time to let them [the Germans] off the hook?"[71] Though people in general may have such thoughts, this is never the case for the Jew. An echo of what is heard in Mittelman's rhetorical question on the compensation of murder is Grunwald's comment in Davidson's Making Good Again. Grunwald, an attorney working on a restitution case, has just concluded a tour of Dachau. He is speaking with Raison, an English colleague. "You see," Grunwald says, "repentance needs guilt -- and they feel no guilt. For this generation there can't be any Wiedergutmachung. How is it possible for them to make good again? The dead they can't repay. The dead family without an heir they can't repay. If they'd managed to kill every member of

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., p. 41.
[71] Ibid., p. 13.

every family, they'd have nothing to repay."[72] Repentance is the means to atonement in the traditional Jewish schema. Where there is no repentance, there can be no true atonement; but there can be no repentance without guilt. Because there is no sense of guilt on the part of the German people, Grunwald maintains there can be no Wiedergutmachung.

In an earlier discussion with Raison, Grunwald is quite explicit as to why there is no guilt among the German people.

> It's a special quality of the Germans that they could believe that people were rabbits. Even after the war, when they could see that the survivors were not in fact rabbits but people, they still felt in their hearts that the dead ones had been rabbits. It was nothing more or less than the greatest rabbit hunt of all time, the sort of thing the authorities have to order for the health of the community, about which the citizen is not competent to express an opinion, and for which therefore he doesn't feel compelled to have conscience qualms, then or now.[73]

Grunwald believes there can be no making good again, for there is no sense of guilt on the part of the German people. Yet Becker, who also works on restitution claims, is not so sure.

> I can't honestly remember another nation in history that has done as much to make up for the past. ...But what do they feel? Remorse? Guilt? Ten years ago I would have said they didn't feel a damn thing. Today, I'm not so sure.[74]

Perhaps we should turn to the Germans depicted in the literature examined here.

Haffner, a German attorney in Davidson's Making Good Again, has helped prosecute war criminals and is currently involved in the same case as Grunwald and Raison. What was Haffner's rationale for having

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[72]Davidson, p. 206.
[73]Ibid., p. 116.
[74]Alpert, p. 137.

prosecuted war criminals? "The slate had to be wiped clean!"[75] In retrospect, however, "he saw now with beautiful clarity that the whole thing was totally symbolic. Justice was being symbolically done to culprits who were themselves symbolic."[76]

> After all, decency survived! The urge to wipe clean the slate, to make recompense. And, by God, they were doing it, the decent millions, in every factory, every shop, every home in the land, shouldering the burden of the past, paying and paying for what had been done -- even those who had been babes in arms, even those who had not been born, through their work and their taxes making this massive act of expiation, unexampled in history. What a giant sweeping of the slate this was![77]

Decency survived, Haffner maintains. The slate was to be wiped clean; justice was to be meted out. Through prosecution and restitution, atonement was to be effected by the German people -- for the German people!

We meet another German involved in the prosecution of war criminals in S. L. Stebel's The Collaborator. Schenke has a notion quite different from Haffner's. "By prosecuting the obvious criminals, Germans could feel they were doing their duty."[78] He tells Kohn, an Israeli hunter of war criminals, that the "government and a few, a very few, of the intelligentsia, want me to root out the evil that may still be among us. But the majority of our people are made uncomfortable by each new arrest and prosecution; they feel that we have done enough, they want to forget their guilt, and they are growing exceedingly restless."[79] Weisse, a former Nazi, argues along a line which corroborates this sentiment in The Claimant. Weisse is still employed by the firm

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[75]Davidson, p. 43.
[76]Ibid.
[77]Ibid., p. 44.
[78]Stebel, p. 133.
[79]Ibid., p. 131.

for which he worked during the war, a firm against which Becker is trying to settle a claim for restitution on behalf of former slave laborers. Weisse tells Becker that, if he brings up Weisse's past associations, "the majority of the German press will protest the attack against the integrity of our industry. More of the same, they will say. It is enough already; it is too much. Germans are tired of the smell of dead cats being dug up. They turn their noses away."[80] There are similar statements scattered throughout the literature: Bodo Cohen (in The Shamir of Dachau) comments that the second Auchwitz trial "is being handled quietly since people are a little bored with it all by now..."[81] Romain Gary's Nazi officer Schatz tells his Jewish Dybbuk, Genghis Cohn, "You're out of date. You're old fashioned. We've seen enough of you. ...Your yellow stars, your ovens, your gas chambers, nobody wants to hear about them anymore."[82] Comments such as these are so numerous, in fact, that it would be redundant to list them. One could easily heap up such quotations ad infinitum.

The general question still remains with us: whether the Germans are doing everything in their power toward Wiedergutmachung, or whether they are merely putting forth a token effort. A corollary to this is the question of German sincerity and desire. Moreover, there is still the more basic question of whether there can be any Wiedergutmachung at all. Each of these questions is organically related, in that one emerges from the other, and cannot be considered separately without raising the others. There are some individuals who admit personal culpability; there

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[80] Alpert, p. 107.
[81] Davis, p. 148.
[82] Gary, p. 74.

are others who plead the "cog-in-the-wheel" syndrome. There are those who seek scapegoats. There are those who take pride in the West German government's efforts to wipe the slate clean; there are others who feel that enough is enough. Geist's statement[83] is, therefore, representative of the prevalent German attitude: that the magnitude of the crimes cannot be forgotten, but that it is wrong to dwell on the past. The statement is a composite of the German attitudes confronted in the literature. The implication is that the German would rather remove himself as far as possible from any hint of personal guilt; that the crimes of the Nazi era were committed by somebody else in some other place. In short, there is an air of unreality about it. Maybe it didn't even happen! It's all very boring now. We've done our duty to you Jews, now leave us alone! We have made recompense, thank you, and now we'd like to go back to leading normal lives.

But the Jew cannot forget. He even doubts whether Wiedergutmachung is possible. In Alpert's The Claimant, Geist is asked, "was this time enough for the Jewish survivors, for Jewish communities everywhere, to forget and forgive?"[84] His questioner is of the opinion that it is much too soon, "if not for himself altogether, then for the six million dead who would not wish to be forgotten so quickly."[85]

Once again we are left with more questions than answers. The German would like to be left alone now, and the Jew cannot forget. For many Jews there can be no Wiedergutmachung because for many Germans there can be no admission of guilt. No matter what the government has

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[83] Supra, p. 21.
[84] Alpert, p. 38.
[85] Ibid., p. 39.

done, some survivors feel it can never do enough. The literature, which attempts to tender answers, instead poses more questions. In all cases, the reader, and perhaps the writer, too, is left more unsettled: implicit in each answer is yet another question. Perhaps Elie Wiesel is right.[86] Perhaps there are no answers; perhaps one is incapable of understanding.

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[86]Wiesel, Town, p. 176; also, "Plea", Legends, pp. 180-182.

III. GOD AND MAN ON TRIAL

Rosh Hashanah in Auschwitz: a Day of Judgment. The witness: Elie Wiesel.

> I was the accuser, God the accused. My eyes were open and I was alone -- terribly alone in a world without God and without man. I had ceased to be anything but ashes, yet I felt myself to be stronger than the Almighty, to whom my life had been tied for so long.[1]

This feeling of alienation from God and man is the terminus a quo for the spiritual journey of the writer in search of God and man, both of whom are perpetually on trial. Among the writers of the imaginative literature of the shoah, Wiesel is the most extensive in his treatment of theological themes. Thus, our main focus in this chapter will be on his works, though we shall scrutinize the thoughts of some of the other writers in contrast to and comparision with Wiesel's enigmatic theology.

One wonders how God could permit Auschwitz; one wonders how man could permit Auschwitz! In asking such ultimate questions, we find ourselves in the realm of theology. We are really placing concepts of God and man on trial as much as God himself and man himself. Emergent from these questions is the question of the nature of good and evil, as well as the question of free will. We might consider all questions of theology to be organically related: such that we do not consider each problem as if it were in a vacuum, but as it emerges in relation to yet another problem. Thus, God and man cannot be seen as separate theological

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[1]Wiesel, Night, pp. 73-74.

issues, but must be seen in relation to each other. From the question of the relationship of God and man there emerge questions of providence, good and evil, free will. Each concept must be seen as it relates to one or more of the other theological concepts. But it is from the concepts of God and man that the other theological concepts emerge as corollaries to basic propositions. Thus, we are primarily concerned with the quest for God and man in the literature examined in this chapter.

Richard Rubenstein -- who is not a writer of imaginative literature but a theological writer -- writes somewhat paraphrastically that we "have learned in the crisis that we were totally and nakedly alone, that we could expect neither support nor succor from God or from our fellow creatures."[2] That which, for Wiesel, is a terminus a quo, is a terminus ad quem for Rubenstein. The latter feels he has found an answer: we are alone and that is that: we have reached the end of any meaningful theological search. But this does not seem to satisfy the imaginative writer, particularly Wiesel. Wiesel writes with the premise that there is no final answer. Any answer is tenuous at best, and from it there emerge only more questions. But, we must continue to ask, to search, for there is value in that very search itself.[3] The beginning point of that search is the sense of alienation from God and man.

If one were to consider all the imaginative works of Wiesel as being of a piece, that piece would have many elements in common with the literary genre known as the Bildungsroman. The Bildungsroman is the novel of education or development: it traces the emergence from childhood into manhood. There are often picaresque elements in the Bildungsroman: this

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[2]Rubenstein, p. 128.
[3]See Wiesel, Town, p. 176.

is the literal journey of a somewhat amoral, roguish character, which parallels a spiritual journey or quest symbolized and suggested by the literal journey as narrated in the novel. We shall see that Wiesel's works, considered as a whole, partake of aspects of the Bildungsroman, especially the Bildungsroman with picaresque elements. This is most clear in a discussion of the theological themes which he treats. There is a progressive personal growth and development, indeed, by means of a spiritual and intellectual journey.

That journey, for Wiesel and others, begins with Auschwitz. It begins with the loss of childhood, the loss of innocence. In his novelistic memoir Night, Wiesel states a brief manifesto which concludes "Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust."[4] He is speaking of his first night in Auschwitz, for it was in that first night in camp that the lasting impression was made, the stark impact of a hell which blotted out the hope brought by dreams in the cattle cars. The phrase "murdered my God" is somewhat curious. It is a statement written in retrospect. The curiosity is over interpretation. Does it mean that the concept of God was destroyed -- the concept which the young writer heretofore had held, or does it mean that God himself was literally murdered as far as the writer is concerned, or is it perhaps a subtle synthesis of both notions? A good case might be presented for either interpretation: (1) that the concept of God was destroyed, or (2) that God himself was murdered. It could also be argued in favor of the subtle synthesis notion. As we shall see, Wiesel's theology is steeped in a Hassidic

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[4]Wiesel, Night, pp. 43-44.

mystical tradition. For Wiesel, God is within man, and yet is transcendent in relation to the universe. God, then, is enigma. The God who transcends the universe stands perpetually on trial, perpetually accused; the God who dwells within man -- shekhinah-like -- is murdered daily. In His immanence, God needs man; in His transcendence, God is indifferent to man. It is a theology of enigma.

Wiesel works under the assumption that there is something known as God; but, the concept of God which he held before Auschwitz has been destroyed for him. "...I had ceased to pray. How I sympathized with Job! I did not deny God's existence, but I doubted His absolute justice."[5] God is seen here as external to man, his relationship being that of the judge to the defendant and plaintiff. We see here doubt cast on the attribute termed by the rabbis middat ha-din. On that Rosh Hashanah Eve in Auschwitz the author asks, "Why, but why should I bless Him? In every fiber I rebelled. Because He had had thousands of children burned in His pits? Because He kept six crematories working night and day...?"[6] God is accused; God is on trial. How could God have let this happen? The God who is transcendent in relation to man is on trial.

God as over and above man stands accused; adjudged guilty. But there is yet another aspect to the Godhead for Wiesel. A young boy is hanged one day at Auschwitz. He dies slowly, strangling in agony. An inmate asks where God is. "Where is He? Here He is--He is hanging here on this gallows..."[7] Is God dead? Is the concept of God dead? Should

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[5]Ibid., p. 53.
[6]Ibid., p. 73.
[7]Ibid., p. 71.

one paraphrase Buber and say God has been eclipsed? How can God be both immanent and transcendent simultaneously? That is the enigma which the ancient rabbis accepted -- that He is both at once. As makom He is transcendent; as shekhinah He is immanent. If the shekhinah is interpreted as the indwelling presence of God in the world, then it is the shekhinah which is hanging on the gallows; it is the shekhinah which is murdered daily. The divine in man is destroyed; God and man are alienated This is the terminus a quo; the spiritual quest is begun.

Dawn, Wiesel's second work, takes up the journey begun in Night. The hero, Elisha, reflects on his past.

> The study of philosophy attracted me because I wanted to understand the meaning of the events of which I had been the victim. In the concentration camp I had cried out in sorrow and anger against God and also against man....
>
> So many questions obsessed me. Where is God to be found? In suffering or in rebellion? When is a man most truly a man? When he submits or when he refuses? Where does suffering lead him?[8]

He elaborates this same thought by stating that eighteen years of searching and suffering add up to this: "I wanted to understand the pure unadulterated essence of human nature, the path to the understanding of man. I had sought after the truth..."[9] The alienation of man from God, of God from man, and of man from man is not the end of the quest, but the beginning; even more, it is the continuation!

In The Town Beyond the Wall the narrator speaks of Michael, the novel's hero.

> He was seeking his God, tracking Him down. He would find Him yet. And then He won't get off as lightly as He did with Job.

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[8]Wiesel, Dawn, p. 18.
[9]Ibid., p. 26.

> He won't win out so quickly. I'll be a match for Him. I'm not afraid of Him, not intimidated.[10]

Again, we find a continuation of the search for God. Indeed, in this fourth major work by Wiesel we see one of the major motivations driving the writer: to seek his God, to track Him down.

> Michael spent the whole year pursuing God grimly. He spent sleepless nights questioning himself, listening to the wisdom of the ancients; perhaps they knew. I'll follow Him, he thought. I'll follow Him everywhere, in time and in the universe. He won't get away; I'll stay on his trail whatever happens, whether He likes it or not. He took my childhood; I have a right to ask Him what He did with it.[11]

In both of the above statements about the hero Michael, we see the writer reflecting on the purpose of his literary career: the pursuit of God.

With The Accident, Wiesel's third published work, the author's theological speculation takes off in several directions at once, each of them pursued in this and two subsequent novels -- The Town Beyond the Wall and The Gates of the Forest. The author treats of God's need of man, messianic expectations, and the divine-human encounter. We shall see these themes emerge presently, as we weave the pattern from novel to novel, embroidering from time to time with threads from other authors.

God needs man. Kalman the cabalist, the narrator/hero's former teacher in The Accident, is asked what need God has of man. Kalman answers that "man carries within him a role which transcends him."[12]

> God needs him to be ONE. The Messiah, called to liberate man, can only be liverated by him. We know that not only man and the universe

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[10]Wiesel, Town, p. 52
[11]Ibid., p. 53.
[12]Wiesel, Accident, p. 41.

> will be freed, but also the one who established their laws and their relations. It follows that man--who is nothing but a handful of earth--is capable of reuniting time and its source, and of giving back to God his own image.[13]

The narrator/hero states that at the time he heard these words he was too young to understand them. "The idea that God's existence could be bound to mine had filled me with a miserable pride as well as a deep pity."[14] From Kalman's words there emerges a patchwork of notions throughout Wiesel's imaginative writings: that God's existence is bound to man's; that God is not free; that the Messiah is liberated by man; that God is met in encounter with men, through love.

God needs man to be one. Towards the conclusion of The Gates of the Forest there is a gathering of Hasidim which Gregor attends. It is shortly after the end of the war; Gregor has survived. The narrative contends that "once God and man were one, then their unity was broken; ever since they have sought each other, pursued each other..."[15] The writer appears to be saying that with the Holocaust there is alienation; in the aftermath God and man seek reconciliation. Corollary to this is the notion that the liberation of God, man, and Messiah are inextricably bound together. In a legend cited as an epilogue to The Town Beyond the Wall, we are told that God and man once changed places, but that man refused to revert back to being man. "So neither God nor man was ever again what he seemed to be."[16] The legend concludes, "As the liberation of the one was bound to the liberation of the other, they renewed the ancient dialogue whose echoes come to us in the night, charged with

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[13]Ibid., pp. 41-42.
[14]Ibid., p. 42.
[15]Wiesel, Gates, p. 187.
[16]Wiesel, Town, p. 179.

hatred, with remorse, and most of all, with infinite yearning."[17] God needs man to be one; God needs man to be free. Both God and man seek reconciliation. It is like the classic rabbinic concept of teshuvah: man becomes reconciled to God; God, in turn, becomes reconciled to man. The above passages would seem to indicate a reworking of the classic notion of teshuvah--in the sense of reconciliation--in post-Holocaust dress. Just as sin in the classic rabbinic notion brought about alienation between God and man, so did the Holocaust effect an alienation between God and man; and, just as teshuvah served as a means for effecting reconciliation between God and man in the classic rabbinic system, there must be an effecting of reconciliation between God and man in the post-Holocaust era.

But God in the post-Holocaust period is not the same: the concept of God is not the same. Indeed, it cannot be! The narrator/hero of The Accident encounters Sarah, a prostitute who was given to a concentration camp commandant as a "birthday present" when she was twelve. Upon learning of her background, he says, "Whoever listens to Sarah and doesn't change, whoever enters Sarah's world and doesn't invent new gods and new religions, deserves death and destruction."[18] In order for there to be a reconciliation after Auschwitz, man must seek a new concept of God. This is the thrust of Lionel Davidson's poem of 1966, "Requiem", which reappears in the novel Making Good Again. In the novel there is an explication of the poem, which is presented as the work of a Hungarian Jew who was befriended by Elke Haffner, the German attorney's daughter. She explains to Raison.

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[17] Ibid.
[18] Wiesel, Accident, p. 91.

> He started off hating God and then realized he was hating himself. So he turned it into a requiem for the conception of God we've had so far, and he forgave him.
> ...He said we couldn't ever know God. He said it was a question of having blind faith in an unknown force. He said all we could do was make representations of what we wanted it to be, and out of our own goodness and mercy we'd made it good and merciful, and out of our own sense of justice and love we'd made it just and loving, but it was time now to make a new one, because the last incredible years had taken all credibility from the old, like a chewed-up Teddy bear with only holes and flaps where its eyes and ears should be. He said it was never more than a one-way game, anyway. We could call but Teddy'd never answer. Still, he thought we had to do it, because in saying what we wanted it to be, we said what we wanted to be, and when we failed there was always the chance of making good again...[19]

Davidson takes a Feuerbachian attitude toward the concept of God: that God is what He is to me; that God is nothing without man.[20] Thus, if God is what he is to me, then I must remake Him after Auschwitz, for He will appear to be something different after a shoah.

Yet, there are some who do not need to rethink their concept of God, even after having been confronted with the facts--facts which are a part of their very lives. God, as conceived by Wiesel prior to Auschwitz, is guilty. In the Gates of the Forest, Gregor asks a Hassidic rebbe, "What do you make of Auschwitz?"[21] The rebbe answers, "Auschwitz proves that nothing has changed, that the primeval war goes on. Man is capable of love and hate, murder and sacrifice. He is Abraham and Isaac together. God himself hasn't changed."[22] Gregor angrily queries, "After what happened to us, how can you believe in God?"[23] The rebbe answers, "How can you not believe in God after what

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[19]Davidson, p. 292.
[20]See the treatment of Ludwig Feuerbach in Charles Hartshorne & William Reese (eds.), Philosophers Speak of God (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1963), pp. 448-466.
[21]Wiesel, Gates, p. 192.
[22]Ibid.
[23]Ibid.

has happened?"[24] Some cannot conceive of a Holocaust without a God traditionally conceived; others cannot conceive of God in the traditional sense after Auschwitz.

Is there a theological impasse, then? Let us say rather, there can be no consensus as to a viable God concept among writers on the Holocaust. One might hold to a traditional notion of God in order to accuse Him, adjudge Him guilty or pronounce Him dead. Another might simply find that the traditional concept of God is no longer viable. For example, if God is as the traditional concept would have Him be, then Wiesel tries Him and finds Him guilty: responsible for the Holocaust. But, Wiesel cannot accept the traditional concept of God; it was destroyed for him at Auschwitz.[25] Thus, he must seek a new concept of God. It is difficult to believe in God after what has happened, yet Wiesel does believe there is something called God. He may revert to a traditional notion at times and shout accusingly; at other times he finds God within man. Michael tells Pedro, "I want to blaspheme, and I can't quite manage it. I go up against Him, I shake my fist, I froth with rage, but it's still a way of telling Him that He's there, that He exists, that He's never the same twice, that denial itself is an offering to His grandeur."[26] Similarly, Gavriel tells Gregor how he learned that man is unable to reject God.

> You think you're cursing Him, but your curse is praise; you think you're fighting Him, but all you do is open yourself to Him: you think you're crying out your hatred and rebellion, but all you're doing is telling Him how much you need His support and forgiveness.[27]

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Supra, pp. 36, 38.
[26] Wiesel, Town, pp. 114-15.
[27] Wiesel, Gates, p. 42.

Or, as Michael concludes, "The shout becomes a prayer in spite of me."[28]

In Meyer Levin's The Fanatic, Maury finds it difficult to believe in God, yet difficult to reject God as well.

> Maury is among those who still allow themselves to feel the need of God, of an explanation of God, the need that so many of the living have suppressed or destroyed. And he struggles in his drama to create a Job, in the conditions of the modern world, who can after all his torments still seek an acceptable conception of God, bereft of the horrible element of punishment and reward to which even the modern man, in almost every action of every day, is tempted to revert, the habit in which Maury has a thousand times caught himself...[29]

Maury has been bothered by the biblical story of Job, by the conception of God within it. He has decided to construct a play: Job in modern dress. He compares the literary events of the book of Job with actual events of the twentieth century. "Like the sons and daughters of Job, a whole Jewish civilization in Europe is destroyed."[30]

> Suppose, following the parable of Job on a vaster scale, that ... the entire Jewish civilization of Europe is destroyed by the hand of God as a test of faith. And, behold, a Jewish faith nevertheless remains. There are still Jews in many lands in the world who continue their prayers to this same conception of God, there are even survivors from the cinder-beds who pray their faithful prayers. And this remnant is rewarded, and Israel is reborn. And just as for Job, a new good life for the Jewish people is to begin.
>
> It is this monstrous equation that stares Maury in the face, and will not let him turn aside. ...He cannot and does not even want to attempt to reconcile a God indifferent to the extinction of millions of innocent souls with the el elohim rachamim, the compassionate God who is sensitive to the fall of a starling, the prayer of a child. ...To this stark impasse, every human mind has come. It is hopeless to seek an answer, and in order to live, people turn away from the question. But the question must be shouted, even if the sounds are snuffed out in the thunder of the heavens.[31]

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[28]Wiesel, Town, p. 115.
[29]Levin, p. 275.
[30]Ibid., p. 274.
[31]Ibid., pp. 274-75.

Maury is stuck at this impasse. In discussing prayer with Maury, his friend Shep speaks of Maury's theological impasse. He states that Maury has rejected God because of the shoah, yet has absolved God because He could not intervene or even be responsible, having endowed man with free will. But, when asked where the will itself comes from, Maury must concede that God is the source. "So you make God guilty after all."[32] Maury replies, "That's where I'm stuck."[33] Maury is stuck, yet feels the need of God, of an explanation of God. God needs man. Does man also need God? Are we then back to the classic formula, God needs man/man needs God? Like a character out of Wiesel's writings, Maury is unable to reject totally or accept totally a concept of God. Even a finite God, ignorant of or indifferent to Auschwitz, can ultimately be made culpable. Perhaps we must conclude with Wiesel that man is unable to reject God.

Corollary to the notion that God needs man--to be ONE; to be free--is the notion that the Messiah can only be liberated by man. It is in The Gates of the Forest that we see the full scheme of Wiesel's messianic speculation blossom forth. Gavriel, a mysterious character representing God, Elijah, Messiah, and man simultaneously, tells Gregor that he has spoken with Elijah. He has presented Elijah with the urgency of the situation of the Jewish people. "If the Messiah doesn't hurry, he may be too late; there will be no one left to save."[34] Elijah tells Gavriel that he knows. "I am condemned to live, to watch, to observe and to witness the unfolding of the holocaust!"[35] Gavriel learns

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[32] Ibid., p. 328.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Wiesel, Gates, p. 41.
[35] Ibid., p. 42.

a secret from Elijah: "The Messiah is not coming. He's not coming because he has already come. ...The Messiah is everywhere."[36]

> Ever present, he gives each passing moment its taste of drunkenness, desolation and ashes. He has a name, a face, and a destiny. On the day when his name and face and destiny are one, all masks will fall, time will be freed ot its chains, and he will link it to God, as he will link to God drunkenness, desolation and ashes.[37]

When Gavriel seeks to know when that day will be, he is told that God himself prefers not to know. Pressing Elijah, Gavriel is told he is blaspheming, and that it is not right to blaspheme one who shares his suffering.

> Later, you'll understand the importance of the mystery; you'll see the light and perhaps it will pervade you. For the present let it suffice you to know that the Messiah is already among men. The rest, after all, is less important.[38]

Gavriel eventually discloses to Gregor that he encountered the Messiah. He was an eccentric beadle who married and went into his father-in-law's business. He shirked his responsibility to mankind. Gavriel had pleaded with him as the human carnage mounted day by day, but the erstwhile Messiah went about his business as usual. Gavriel had begun to think that he was waiting for the worst of all possible moments in which to reveal himself, so that all the horror preceding his emergence as Messiah could be considered hevlay ha-mashiah. When the fatal day came for his town to be captured and the Jews to be rounded up, Moshe, the former beadle, looked on and did nothing. Gavriel again pleaded with him and again he did nothing. Finally, his tongue was cut out, and all that was left of the Messiah was silence.[39] "He who had started

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., p. 132.
[38] Ibid.
[39] See Ibid., pp. 53-58 for the full account.

out to overturn the laws now submitted to them. The earth-shaking had been called off."[40]

> I've seen the man who was to incarnate salvation and give it wings. ...But instead of saving men he ... let them contaminate and corrupt him. Because he ... waited too long, he who was to bring men their freedom finally resembled them; he has become their equal. Having given up his own destiny he lowered himself to accepting theirs. ...The Messiah came, and nothing changed.[41]

Later, Gregor comments on Gavriel's tales of the Messiah. "Gavriel's story teaches us that the Messiah has come too late, that he's killed anew every day by men and by God. God, too, is killed every day. Who'll dare speak tomorrow of divine grace and mercy or of man as a savior?"[42] The implication is, of course, that there is a messianic spark of the divine within each of us. Indeed, the very implication comes to full bloom at the end of the novel, on a note of hope.

> Whether or not the Messiah comes doesn't matter; we'll manage without him. It is because it is too late that we are commanded to hope. We shall be honest and humble and strong, and then he will come, he will come every day, thousands of times every day. He will have no face, because he will have a thousand faces. The Messiah isn't one man, ... he's all men. As long as there are men there will be a Messiah. One day you'll sing, and he will sing in you.[43]

The messianic hope--the dream, the vision--lies within man. If the Messiah is within man as species, is it to man that we must also turn to find God?

> Within ourselves we begin to find God.
>
> Michael realized that silence was not an emptiness but a presence. The presence of God when one is alone against the world. God: I feel my own breath and know that it is not lost, that something hears it; I feel that I am at the core of something, which is perhaps Time, whose existence is proved by the beating of my heart.[44]

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[40] Ibid., p. 56.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., p. 132.
[43] Ibid., p. 223.
[44] Wiesel, Town, p. 115.

Prior to this, Michael's father has told him that God is a bond.

> If the soul is the link between you and God, the body is the same between you and your fellows. ...God is God because he is a bond between things and beings, between heart and soul, between the past and the future. To resemble God means to make perfect our own bond... Who does not live for man--for the man of today, for him who walks beside you and whom you can see, touch, love and hate--creates for himself a false image of God.[45]

God, then, is met in encounter: between past and future, good and evil, man and man. Thus, the emphasis in our search for God shifts: in order to find God, we must first find man. "For man the infinite is God; for God the infinite is man."[46]

But, just as Auschwitz caused the concept of God to be put on trial, so did the shoah cause us to place the concept of man in the dock as well. If God is met in the encounter between man and man, then we must try him in absentia, and try a concept of man which seemed to be in absentia during the twelve years of the thousand-year Reich. The idea of man on trial is a major theme of Morgulas's The Accused.

Breitkopf contemplates confronting Zerlinski with what he considers to be the real crime against humanity: that of elevating man beyond his humanity.

> Are we so sure of what man is that we can judge as these people, these Zerlinskis, have judged? That is the crime of crimes ... for it strikes man down precisely by elevating him beyond his humanity. Such a crime strikes at God as well.[47]

He concludes it would have been better to say simply that we cannot live with such creatures as these Nazis, and that we must kill them, rather than to spin a tortured web of law, morality and ethics. "That is to outdo all those who claimed there was no law at all."[48]

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[45] Ibid., p. 43.
[46] Wiesel, Gates, p. 188.
[47] Morgulas, p. 119.
[48] Ibid., p. 120.

Grunwald tells Raison in Making Good Again:

> This was the worst, the worst that happened to the human species in the history of the planet. It happened in the twentieth century, in the middle of the enlightened continent, at the hands of the advanced people. It was a demonstration that the animal is only just beneath. In the end, if man's to survive here he has to be judged on his ethical standards, not his intellectual achievements.[49]

The animal is only just beneath! Yet, Grunwald concludes that man must be judged on his standards of ethics and morality, whereas Breitkopf maintains we cannot even apply such standards because of the very animal in our nature. "Perhaps if one could look into each man's heart and open his soul like the trembling wound it is, we would all see the bloody savages inside."[50] He is suggesting that man is scarcely more than an animal; Grunwald is suggesting that the animal in us is only just beneath. There is a vast difference in the two suggestions!

Ironically, Judge Zerlinski has come to a similar conclusion: that he had no right to judge. "We set ourselves up and presumed to see deep into man's soul. In the absence of law we attempted to find a substitute..."[51] He remembers not being able to believe that men were capable of such things as he saw at war's end. The judges had all said "that the acts which we were called upon to judge were so monstrous that all men must have known they were criminal."[52] But Zerlinski's conclusion is that man called out for revenge; not God's justice, but man's.[53]

Finally, at the novel's end, Breitkopf has abducted Zerlinski--on Yom Kippur Eve--and taken him to the courtroom which he has constructed

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[49]Davidson, p. 204.
[50]Morgulas, p. 120.
[51]Ibid., p. 292.
[52]Ibid.
[53]Ibid.

for the purpose of conducting a trial for "crimes against the natural law and the true nature of man."[54]

> To whit, the promulgation of the unsupported and unsupportable doctrine that mankind is fundamentally possessed of a character tending to the doing of good rather than of evil and, in particular, the willful condemnation of any person or persons on the ground that they have transgressed against such a false "natural law" by the doing of acts which are considered by his accusers "basically and obviously evil." We declare as a crime the willful condemnation of murder, genocide, enslavement, deportation, and any other such acts committed against any population, civil or military, however expedient or proper such a condemnation may otherwise be on political or other grounds, when the justification given for the verdict is that such acts are against the law of nations and of men. For they are not. We declare it a crime to condemn persecutions for political, racial or religious reasons on the ground that such acts are opposed to the "true nature of man." For they are not.[55]

The indictment is then read; Zerlinski is accused of having violated the above "statute." The prosecution intends to show that the basic assumptions of the war crimes tribunals were false, that it is a dangerous delusion to assume that man is fundamentally good. Man must know himself for what he really is.[56]

Abramowitz and Rabbi Zimmerman appear on the scene, and, while they wait for the police they all grimly act out the trial, with Breitkopf - the former SS officer - as judge, Zerlinski as defendant, Abromowitz as prosecutor and Zimmerman as counsel for the defense. Abramowitz calls witness upon witness from among the spectators--members of the rabbi's congregation--while the rabbi calls but one: Abramowitz. In the end, the Rabbi concludes that Abramowitz has proven nothing: "only that there is good in this world and also evil, which any fool knows."[57]

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[54] Ibid., p. 308.
[55] Ibid., pp. 308-9.
[56] Ibid, pp. 310-11.
[57] Ibid., p. 332.

In the classic rabbinic theological scheme of things, man is neither good nor evil but contains within himself the yetzer tov and the yetzer ha-rah--the inclination to do good and the inclination to do evil. Neither inclination is good or evil in itself, but rather responds to stimuli from without.[58] According to the teachings of rabbinic Judaism, Breitkopf is as wrong as the judges he is condemning. There is both good and evil in the world, and man must choose between them; inteed, he is free to choose, though he was advised to choose the good as early as biblical times.[59] The dybbuk/narrator of Levin's The Fanatic cites the presence of Auschwitz as the evidence that man was endowed with free will: the freedom to choose. "This very evil is the final proof that God has given man freedom of will, to choose between good and evil."[60] The choice is man's. He responds to stimuli from without and chooses good or evil. The animal may be just beneath, yet it is beneath! If one accepts the classic rabbinic notion of man, then Auschwitz indeed proves nothing: only that there is good and there is evil. How--on the level of man--could Auschwitz have happened? The answer proposed here is so simple as to be unsettling. In this complex world in which the nature of man is investigated by psychology and sociology, such an answer is unsettling. And yet, one wonders whether the empirical investigations conducted by the men of the behavioral sciences are any more satisfying!

What is man, asks Elie Wiesel in The Gates of the Forest. "Hope turned to dust."[61] Yet, "the opposite is equally true. What is man? Dust turned to hope."[62] The messianic hope was turned to dust at

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[58]See George F. Moore's Judaism, Vol. I, pp. 587-93.
[59]Dt. 11:26-28; also, 30:15-19.
[60]Levin, p. 66.
[61]Wiesel, Gates, p. 94.
[62]Ibid.

Auschwitz; yet, out of that dust and ashes has sprung new hope. We may not know how or why Auschwitz happened; it may not tell us any more than we already know about the nature of our species. But the experience can help us more clearly define our role on earth. "Suffering must open us to others. It must not cause us to reject them."[63] This is told to Gregor, but, until he comes to this position himself it is meaningless. In his confrontation with the Hassidic Rebbe, Gregor is asked what he expects of himself.

> Very little. Almost nothing. I have only one purpose: not to cause others to suffer. ...I'm no longer intent upon measuring myself against fate and saving humanity. I'm content with little; to help a single human being is enough for me.[64]

This is precisely what Michael has been told by Pedro.

> Try to help others. Many others. Obviously it isn't the number that matters. But then again, how can you help one man and not another? ...at least let no man reject the chance. In rejecting, a man rejects himself; he isolates us all, and himself too.[65]

This was what had attracted Alfred Becker to Lottie in Alpert's The Claimant. "Imagine having the strength to go through all that and to survive, and hope, and help others. That's what being a human being is all about."[66] Even the pawnbroker of Wallant's novel is eventually opened to others. At the end of the novel there is a catharsis, and Sol Nazerman goes to Tillie's house, "to help her mourn."[67] Suffering must open us to others. A man must not remain indifferent.

The crux of The Town Beyond the Wall is contained in the confrontation between Michael and "the face," the symbol of all those who

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[63] Ibid., p. 180.
[64] Ibid., p. 194.
[65] Wiesel, Town, p. 123.
[66] Alpert, pp. 79-80.
[67] Wallant, p. 279.

stood by and watched, indifferently, as the Jews were carted off to the slaughter. That there were those who knew what was happening and yet remained indifferent is well established. Wiesel's novelistic memoir Night cites the German workers and villagers who saw the inmates on their way to forced labor projects.[68] Now the writer seeks to answer why men are indifferent.

> The spectator is entirely beyond us. He sees without being seen. He is there by unnoticed. The footlights hide him. He neither applauds nor hisses; his presence is evasive, and commits him less than his absence might. He says neither yes nor no, and not even maybe. He says nothing. He is there, but he acts as if he were not. Worse: he acts as if the rest of us were not.[69]

The spectator had watched and felt nothing. His wife had been crying in the kitchen, but he had felt nothing. For Wiesel, this indifference is not living at all. "The spectator has nothing of the human in him... He...reduces himself to the level of an object. He is no longer he, you, or I: he is 'it.'"[70] Yet, when the man is surprised that Michael does not hate him, and he says that he must, Michael sees him as human once again. "Deep down, I thought, man is not only an executioner, not only a victim, not only a spectator: he is all three at once."[71]

Later, Michael reaches a conclusion about the nature of man, based upon his confrontation with indifference. "To be indifferent ... is to deny not only the validity of existence, but also its beauty."[72]

The essence of man is to be a question, and the essence of the question is to be without answer.

> But to say, "What is God? What is the world? What is my friend?" is to say that I have someone to talk to, someone to

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[68] Wiesel, Night, pp. 54, 101.
[69] Wiesel, Town, p. 151.
[70] Ibid., p. 160.
[71] Ibid., p. 163.
[72] Ibid., p. 177.

> ask a direction of. The depth, the meaning, the very salt of man is his constant desire to ask the question ever deeper within himself, to feel ever more intimately the existence of an unknowable answer.
>
> Man ... does not need to submerge himself in destiny in order to maintain his deep significance. He must risk, he can risk, a confrontation with destiny, he must try to seize what he demands, to ask the great question and ask them again....
>
> It's in humanity itself that we find both our questions and the strength to keep it within limits--or on the contrary to make it universal. To flee to a sort of Nirvana--whether through a considered indifference or through a sick apathy--is to oppose humanity.... A man is a man only when he is among men. It's harder to remain human than to try to leap beyond humanity.[73]

If you should be told that all the world's a stage and the people merely players, "So what? Jump onto the stage...!"[74] What we are confronted with is more than the existentialist commitment to action; it is a commitment not to be indifferent.

There is no one lesson of the Holocaust; there are lessons. One of these lessons is not to be indifferent. Wiesel emphasizes that "the victims suffered more, and more profoundly, from the indifference of the onlookers than from the brutality of the executioner."[75] It was "the silence of those he believed to be his friends ... which broke his heart."[76] To be a man means not to be indifferent to life, which includes cruelty, pain and suffering, but also compassion, companionship, and love.

"Perhaps some day someone will explain how, on the level of man, Auschwitz was possible; but on the level of God, it will forever remain the most disturbing of mysteries."[77] At best, for Elie Wiesel, the problem of God remains insoluble. Even man remains somewhat enigmatic,

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[73] Ibid., pp. 176-77
[74] Ibid., p. 177.
[75] Wiesel, Legends, p. 189.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., p. 6.

for he maintains that at Auschwitz, "not only man died, but also the idea of man. It was its own heart the world incinerated at Auschwitz."[78] Perhaps he means the idea that man is essentially good at heart. For the most part, though, the following best sums up Wiesel's stance.

> To me, the whole event remains a question mark. I still don't know how man could have chosen cruelty. I still don't know how God could have allowed him such a choice. I still don't know why Jews kept silent. In fact, I know nothing.[79]

"...I was there. And I still do not understand."[80]

Perhaps we are left once again with questions only. Unless one can accept a traditional rabbinic notion of man put in modern dress by Meyer Levin. But then we are left with Maury's impasse in The Fanatic: that God is guilty after all, having endowed man with free will. As the source of that will, He is ultimately guilty. But the concomitant of a traditional rabbinic notion of man is a traditional rabbinic notion of God. Can one accept this? Perhaps the concepts of God and man are indeed to be perpetually on trial: constantly subject to scrutiny, rejection, reworking; forever tendered on a trial basis. If so, what else is new? If so, Auschwitz changes nothing for contemporary man. Our conceptions of God are constantly subject to intellectual scrutiny and reworking, as are our conceptions of man and his world, in the light of each new discovery. Yet Auschwitz is unique, unparalleled.

Auschwitz changes much. For some, it is the discovery that conceptions of God and man are subject to scrutiny; for others, who

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78 Ibid., p. 190.
79 Wiesel, "Jewish Values in the Post-Holocaust future," Judaism, XVI (1967), p. 298.
80 Wiesel, Legends, p. 194.

have already learned this, it is that such concepts are subject to rejection and reworking. Many have rejected--some permanently. Many others are in the process of reworking. The very literature itself is evidence of this. But, a most disturbing question remains: Why is God absent from much of the literature?

IV. THE JEW AS GERMAN: THE GERMAN AS JEW

Can we speak of a German national character? If we can, has it remained unchanged by Auschwitz? When we speak of man, if the animal is only just beneath, is it the German who gives evidence of this, while the Jew bears witness to the belief that man is created in God's image, "but little lower than the angles"? Are both peoples chosen--the one to act out bestiality and barbarism, the other for suffering and martyrdom? If so, does the one need the other to fulfill its destiny? How representative of man as species is each? Are both so deeply ingrained in the species that man has the potential to play either role assigned these two peoples by the Holocaust: victims or executioners? Can the Jew become the German, and the German the Jew? Are the two so inextricably bound in the mind of man that whenever one hears the name of the one, he automatically associates the other?

From the question of man emerges the question of German and Jew. Which is most fully human? Or, is it that humanity embodies within it the best and worst of both peoples? Must we look to the Jew and the German to find a definition of man after Auschwitz?

We were concerned in the preceding chapter with what it means to be a man. Let us consider now what it means to be a Jew and what it means to be a German. Perhaps in such a consideration lies a clue to what it means to be a man after Auschwitz.

Are the Germans the same people? Are they the same people now that they were before and during the period of National Socialism? How

have they been affected by Auschwitz?

Not all Germans we encounter in the literature are depicted like Breitkopf's brother Franz (in The Accused). Franz has written to his brother that he can live with his own sense of guilt, even if he does not fully understand it.[1]

> But it is the smiling, uncaring faces around me, the faces of men who once looked on the same horrors that I saw and yet did not go mad. In a word, they have either forgotten or they never understood to begin with. I do not know...which would be more terrible.[2]

Franz continues reflecting on the National Socialist period. He comments that the German people accepted National Socialism with joy, or at the very least, with impassivity. He writes that what happened is not the problem, "but that it happened within a framework that allowed my butcher and my streetcar conductor to return to their trades with a shrug when the slaughtering of babies and the gas chambers had come to an end."[3]

> And because of this, I walk. I do not ride the streetcars, and I do not eat meat. ...I am surrounded by abundance... A cornucopia turned upside down over this land of ours. Perhaps we are meant to smother in it. Perhaps that is to be heaven's vengence.
>
> It would seem to me that the least such men could do would be to cut their throats. How can they tend flowers, raise children, marry and say that they love their wives?[4]

Franz--an individual-- has been affected by that which he witnessed and was party to, while it is his contention that the German people as a whole is--and was then--content with "business as usual." It is this which Elie Wiesel found particularly disturbing on a recent visit to

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[1]Morgulas, p. 278.
[2]Ibid., pp. 278-79.
[3]Ibid., p. 279.
[4]Ibid.

Germany: "the people's complacency--a self-satisfaction unhaunted by the past."[5]

In The Collaborator, Eichler is bothered by the same phenomenon. His wife states that he has been bitter ever since the war "because he believes his countrymen are despicable. They feel no shame, he says. They deny their history, or say they had no knowledge of it."[6] No shame. Self-satisfied. Complacent. Unhaunted by the past. As if there never had been a Holocaust.

"People were not the same. Identity did not continue. What was true of one time was not true of another."[7] It is Haffner in Davidson's Making Good Again, reflecting on the prosecution of war criminals.

> People who acted in a certain way at one time could no longer be said to be the same people in another time. Everything had changed. The context in which they had acted had changed. ... They were no longer the same people who had performed the actions.
>
> ...It explained the underlying contradiction of how one could reconcile the good decent people who were around with the horrifying things they had...
>
> Well, it was a fact, terrible things had been done, barbarous things. The mind reeled at some of the things that had been done. It was totally impossible sometimes in a courtroom to accept that the ordinary decent-looking fellow in the dock had actually...
>
> And of course he hadn't. He hadn't. Not that ordinary-looking fellow. His former self, of Former Times, had done them. This was the explanation--so blindingly clear suddenly.[8]

Grunwald would disagree. "They only deal with one thing at a time... It's a singleminded people. It's a people that lacks perspective, and hence a sense of shame. I suppose if you're singleminded and do as you're told, there's no point in having a sense of shame."[9] Where

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[5]Wiesel, "Appointment with Hate," Legends, p. 133.
[6]S. L. Stebel, The Collaborator, p. 200.
[7]Davidson, p. 43.
[8]Ibid.
[9]Ibid., p. 115.

Haffner would maintain that people are never the same, Grunwald would argue that the German is! One might infer from Haffner's thoughts that the German people were changed after Auschwitz, though not particularly changed by Auschwitz. Grunwald would disagree that they have been changed; he would say that they merely adapt well.

> It's a people capable of enormous endurance, if they're told they have to endure. ...When...the new policy became to Win the Heart and Mind of the German and turn him into a self-respecting democrat, which was a new order, ...they set about carrying it out. They did it incredibly thoroughly. It was an order! Even the political parties, when they came about, were all democratic. There weren't any people but democrats anymore. There were the Christian Democrats, the Social Democrats, the Free Democrats. Even the new fascists now, what do they call themselves? the National Democrats. This is the way they are.[10]

Alfred Becker (in The Claimant) would seem to concur with Grunwald that there is a German national character typified by the single-minded sense of obedience.

> They're a maddening people. They can be so damned correct, the soul of honesty, they love dogs and flowers, they cry at the movies, and if someone tells them to smash a baby's head against the wall they smash it.[11]

However, Becker deals in sterotypes, whereas Grunwald finds a characteristic adaptiveness to be typical. But, the notion that the German does what he is told to do underlies the statements of both. Obedience is typical. If the German is resourceful and adaptive, Grunwald would maintain that it is because that is what is expected of him. It is his duty to be so.

If there is a tendency in some of the literature to portray the German as essentially unaffected by Auschwitz, perhaps due in large

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[10] Ibid.
[11] Alpert, p. 137.

part to some national character traits, this is not the case with the treatment of Jews in the literature, as preceding chapters of this study will bear witness. Like Alfred Becker in The Claimant, some Jews find in the Holocaust a context in which to seek their own identity as Jews. In a letter to his father written in the third person, Becker--heretofore somewhat assimilated--describes how he found the context in which to discover his Jewishness.

> Alfred Becker became a Jew on April 12th, 1945. Up until that time this young American, a first lieutenant in the Army, had had, probably, less than the normal amount of consciousness of himself as a Jew... Suffice it to say that Alfred Becker, upon being asked his religion for the Army records, put down the word 'None.' But on April 12th, Alfred Becker came across his first concentration camp, and he saw the blood-spattered bodies of eighty-three Jews--some of whome may not have considered themselves Jews either--and he came to the conclusion that a Jew, no matter how little he identified himself as such, must claim his Jewish identity. For there is no other way to combat the evil which is anti-Jewish.[12]

Becker is deeply affected; changed even. Yet, what a horrible price! Out of so negative a context he brings forth affirmation of his Jewishness. He is the claimant of the title; he claims his Jewish identity. The cost of tuition for Alfred Becker was outrageously high--six million! But at least there was a lesson; at least there was, at last, an affirmation!

Albert Weitz--a minor character in The Fanatic--has not even learned this. "without admitting it even to himself, Albert Weitz has always felt that being a Jew is for him a matter of mistaken identity."[13] He "secretly feels sorrowful over the great mistake that

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[12] Ibid., pp. 85-86.
[13] Levin, p. 118.

the better Germans allowed to be made in their name, in rejecting him and Jews like him, who could have helped create a great nation."[14]

> Weitz is avowedly an assimilationist, and he now regards our entire tragedy as proof of the rightness of his way. If all Jews had long ago assimilated and ceased completely to be Jews, there would have been no trouble.[15]

According to Weitz, the tragedy befell the Jews because they stubbornly refused to be anything but Jews!

Perhaps then there is something in being Jewish--in the Jew's refusal to simply be "one of the gang." In affirming Jewishness, perhaps, one is denying the animal that is just beneath; in affirming Jewishness, one affirms his humanity. This then was one of the things the Nazis saw in the Jew and resented in him: the affirmation of human dignity.

> It must be that they sense in the Jew the antithesis to their philosophy. The Jew remained the witness and the active symbol of the finality of the individual, of the single conscience. For him, not the conscience of the state, but the individual conscience remained supreme. He was forever the prophet Nathan, standing before the king in accusation: "Thou art the man."
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> Even when his individual conscience agreed in perfect loyalty with the conscience of the state, the Jew had to be destroyed because he still represented the principle that if there should one day be disharmony, his individual conscience must be the final authority.[16]

Indeed, a key theme of Romain Gary's allegory of mythic proportion, The Dance of Genghis Cohn is that the Jew has never joined the rest of humanity; he has refused to become "one of the boys." For Gary, the rest of humanity is barbarous. The Jew steadfastly refuses to join the rest of humanity in its pursuit of barbarism in the name of Kultur. The Jew is forever Nathan, as Levin has expressed it. Finally, Cohn

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[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid., pp. 209-210.

is asked to join --"Come along, Cohn, be one of us."[17] --and his response is that the rest of the human race is "trying to lure me... onto their bloody historical tapestry, where no Jew has ever been admitted before."[18]

After Auschwitz, what can a Jew do? Simply remain a Jew! What must he do? Be a Jew! "As a Jew you can contribute just by living as a Jew."[19] Grunwald (in Davidson's Making Good Again) is speaking with his friend Ansbach, who has expressed a desire to live in Israel, though, for the present, Ansbach feels he can contribute more as a Jew by staying in Germany to help effect Wiedergutmachung. Grunwald's response is that one doesn't necessarily have to live in Israel. One can contribute much simply by maintaining his identity as a Jew.

> The land is holy for me not only because God said so and for what happened in it, but for the view of life it represents, the particular vision, the standards. But standards exist without places. God made all places. We carried the standards around for two thousand years, after all. They exist wherever Jews exist--at least there's a chance. It's all there. It isn't to say that every Jew abides by every small part of them... But at least in acknowledging that he's a Jew--and who forces him?--he acknowledges the standards. They're there. It's a line. He can measure by it. It's a question of how to live in the world, a question, fundamentally, of a state of mind.[20]

Davidson--through his character Grunwald--is supportive of a position held by both Emil Fackenheim and Elie Wiesel. Fackenheim adds a six hundred and fourteenth mitzvah to the established taryag mitzvot: "Jews are forbidden to grant posthumous victories to

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[17] Gary, p. 209.
[18] Ibid., p. 215.
[19] Davidson, p. 246.
[20] Ibid., pp. 246-247

Hitler."[21] And, as with every mitzvah, there is an accompanying commentary.

> They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. They are commanded to remember the victims of Auschwitz, lest their memory perish. They are forbidden to despair of man and his world, and to escape into either cynicism or otherworldliness, lest they cooperate in delivering the world over into the forces of Auschwitz. Finally, they are forbidden to despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish. A secularist Jew cannot make himself believe by a mere act of will, nor can he be commanded to do so; yet he can perform the commandment of Auschwitz. And a religious Jew who has stayed with his God may be forced into new, possibly revolutionary, relationships with Him. One possibility, however, is wholly unthinkable. A Jew may not respond to Hitler's attempt to destroy Judaism by himself cooperating in its destruction. In ancient times, the unthinkable Jewish sin was idolatry. Today, it is to respond to Hitler by doing his work.[22]

In his 1967 address, "On Being a Jew," delivered at the commencement exercises of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Elie Wiesel presented an idea which parallels that of Fackenheim.

> We are all witnesses. We all embody the intense destiny of our people--a destiny which resents being divided into sections and selected periods. Each Jew represents all Jews and is Jewish history; he who denies his Jewishness involves more than his own person; he is denying Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He who remains faithful reflects the secret which makes of us a living community, obstinate and different from others. Each of us is therefore responsible for the past and the future of Israel, because each of us carries within himself the vision of Sinai and the flames of the Khourban.[23]

Both indicate that every time a Jew affirms his Jewishness, Hitler posthumously fails; but every time a Jew denies his Jewishness, Hitler

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21 Emil Fackenheim, "Jewish Faith and the Holocaust: A Fragment," Commentary, August, 1968, p. 32. This article appeared later (October, 1968) as the introduction to Quest for Past and Future.

22 Ibid., pp. 32-33.

23 Wiesel, "On Being a Jew," Jewish Heritage, Summer, 1967, pp. 53-54. It is difficult to determine which of these two--Wiesel or Fackenheim--influenced the other. Both appeared on a panel for a symposium entitled "Jewish Values in the Post-Holocaust Future," conducted in March, 1967 (Judaism, XVI, 1967, pp. 266-99). At this time they both expressed kindered thoughts on the Holocaust. And, in Fackenheim's essays, he often cites passages from Wiesel's writings.

posthumously succeeds. This also seems to be the thrust of Grunwald's statement in Making Good Again.[24] Being a Jew is a value to be affirmed.

> But then, being a Jew becomes a privilege, since our existence inplies burning wonders known to those who attract the lightning and the laughter of the gods. We are--we have always been--at the center of mankind's greatest convulsions, at the crossroads where interminable caravans meet in thirst of blood, expiation or ecstasy.
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> ...Often it seems as if the world considered our existence incompatible with its own.[25]

Why the Jew? It is a theme as old as Cain and Abel. A German student in The Claimant explains why he thinks the German people were so willing to believe in an international Jewish conspiracy. "Because they saw in this the mirror of their own nature. They transposed the German into the Jew, and felt themselves cleansed thereby--a simple and satisfying act of transference."[26] Or, as Richard Rubenstein has expressed it,

> Undoubtedly we seek to destroy in others what we fear in ourselves. Those who accused the Jews of demonic intent and power created the most demonic environment ever known to man, the death camp, an environment in which God was dead and all things permissible to the masters. Some who called the Jews Christ-killers did so out of envy.[27]

It is Rubenstein's contention that the German attempted to deny his own wish/fantasy by ascribing it to the Jews. The German secretly wished to negate the concept of God as represented in Judaeo-Christian thought, and so he projected this fantasy onto the Jew, who then assumed mythic proportions. The German feared the demonic in himself; he sought to destroy it by destroying the Jew to whom he transferred it. The German

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[24] Supra, p. 61.
[25] Wiesel, "On Being a Jew," p. 54.
[26] Alpert, p. 183.
[27] Rubenstein, p. 31.

secretly wished to rid himself of the Judaeo-Christian God; therefore, he secretly envied the Jew, who--according to the accusation of deicide--had done just that: had killed God.

Jewry is at once God's chosen people and the murderer of God. The Cain and Abel motif is more obvious in the consideration of Jews as the chosen people than in their consideration as Christ-killers. But if Rubenstein's analysis is plausible--that the mythical, demonic Christ-killing Jew accomplished that which the German secretly wished to do--then there is another aspect to the Cain and Abel motif which is far more subtle.[28]

And, finally, one must ask whether Cain has within him the potential to become Abel and vice versa. S. L. Stebel's The Collaborator and Robert Shaw's The Man in the Glass Booth deal explicitly with this possibility, and Roman Gary's The Dance of Genghis Cohn synthesizes it into a key thematic refrain.

In The Collaborator we encounter the Jew Ernst Gottliebsohn, who in reality is the Nazi Karl Brunner. Brunner killed the real Gottliebsohn --a fact which is not revealed until the concluding chapters of this suspenseful novel--and, out of guilt and remorse, became Gottliebsohn. He totally assumed a Jewish identity without realizing that he had ever been Karl Brunner, a German! Thus, with respect to his past as Gottliebsohn, he suffered amnesia, which was in reality a repression of his real identity. In short, he has no memory of ever having been anyone but Ernst Gottliebsohn, though that memory goes back only to 1939.

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[28]For the full development of Rubenstein's thesis, see "Religion and the Origins of the Death Camps," in After Auschwitz, pp. 1-44.

In The Man in the Glass Booth there is the Jew Arthur Goldman, who transfigures himself into the Nazi Adolf Karl Dorff, a former concentration camp commandant.[29] In pretending to be Dorff, Goldman actually becomes Dorff. In this novel Shaw seems to be asking a question posed by Judge Zerlinski in Morgulas' The Accused.

> Can we be so sure that, had we been they, raised as children on the same milk, fattened with the same legends and defeats, that we might not have acted the butcher as well? Our own innocence is not a fact of our being but only an accident of history.[30]

The converse of this notion--the German becoming the Jew--is expressed by Hortsky in The Collaborator. Hortsky tells his own version of the fable about the "legendary wolf who come among the flock disguised as a lamb and who, when accepted as a lamb by others, found that his base heart has been transformed..."[31] Upon learning that Gottliebsohn is really Brunner, Hortsky remarks, "With this man we can prove that it is possible for the wolf to become a lamb! The fable can be made real!"[32]

Perhaps Genghis Cohn has synthesized it for us best. "There are moments when I begin to feel that both of us are merely humans," he says of himself and Schatz, the former SS officer whom he haunts, "and thus the Nazi is capable of turning up in the Jew and the Jew in the Nazi: we are both part of the very semen of the species."[33] Or, as Elie Wiesel has expressed it regarding the roles of victim and executioner, "The two roles are the extremities of the estate of man."[34]

29Supra, pp. 23-27.
30Morgulas, pp. 292-293.
31Stebel, p. 140.
32Ibid., p. 291
33Gary, p. 65.

At the conclusion of The Collaborator, Kohn and Glass are chasing Gottliebsohn/Brunner, who at this point is not sure whether he is Jew or German,

> Kohn fired, and that superb marksman, who fired perhaps out of pity or of anger, or of frustration, of of all three, and with the silent concurrence of his horrified companion, who was at once himself gentile and Jew, anguished and angry, victim and murderer, hit his mark for the final and most perfect shot of his bloody career, each thinking perhaps to destroy ambiguity, but Glass at least left with the sudden appalling knowledge that there are no simple identifications, knowing that for the rest of his life he had to be all things to all men, for all men are all things.[35]

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[35]Stebel, p. 310.

V. THE DEAD AMONG THE LIVING: THE DYBBUK MOTIF

> Yes, at times one's heart could break in sorrow. But often, too, preferably in the evening, I can't help thinking that Ernie Levy, dead six million times, is still alive somewhere, I don't know where.... Yesterday, as I stood in the street trembling in despair, rooted to the spot, a drop of pity fell from above upon my face. But there was no breeze in the air, no cloud in the sky.... There was only a presence.[1]

In these closing lines of André Schwartz-Bart's monumental novel, The Last of the Just, we catch a brief glimpse of something which in other and later Holocaust novels, becomes a dominant motif: namely, a dybbuk motif, in which the dead continue to play a major role in the world of the living. The theme is more blatant in novels like The Fanatic, which has a dybbuk as its narrator, and The Dance of Genghis Cohn, whose protagonist is a dybbuk, as well as The Accused, which allows the brief appearance of a dybbuk. The motif operates more subtly in other works.

Perhaps the earliest operation of the theme occurs in Falstein's Sole Survivor (published in 1954). Antek Prinz is accused of the murder of Hornbostel, the former SS guard at Tiranka. Antek had killed Hornbostel, but it was not murder. He had only wished to bring him to justice--to have him prosecuted for war crimes--but, in a life-or-death struggle, Antek had killed him. Now, accused of the murder of the man who murdered countless Jews, Antek wonders how he can demonstrate his

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[1]André Schwartz-Bart, The Last of the Just, p. 422.

innocence. His wife recalls a private joke they were going to play on the world when released from the camps. "We were going to remain a pair of skeletons, relics on exhibition. ...We wanted to show the world what the living dead looked like."[2]

> Too bad you didn't find Hornbostel then to settle accounts. Nobody would dare commit you then, after a look at you. You wouldn't have needed lawyers then. Too bad the time cannot be turned back.[3]

Thus it is Antek's wife Lisa who germinates the seed of an idea for Antek. He says, "A recital of grievances at the trial will not be enough... And you can't dig up the corpses and make the sky yield the smoke from the crematoria. But a witness from the past--that would be something!"[4]

It is not as if there are no antecedents to this thought in the novel. Earlier, when Antek first tells Mr. Ellis that he has seen Hornbostel in New York and that he wants him turned over to the authorities, Ellis tells him he needs witnesses. Antek replies, "Must six million Jews rise from their graves to testify?"[5] Ellis gives Antek the names of the only other survivors of Tiranka living in New York--two to be exact, and there weren't many others anywhere else. When Antek tries to convince one of them to sign an affidavit, the man says, "You would have to call together the skeletons, reactivate the death ovens, bring back the screams, the stench, the dying--"[6]

Antek decides to become that witness from the past. He decides to stage a hunger strike, in order to regain the appearance he had on the day of his liberation from Tiranka.

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[2]Falstein, p. 163.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Ibid., p. 164.
[5]Ibid., p. 55.
[6]Ibid., p. 100.

> [He] saw himself as the last skeleton. And if he died now, before the trial, a vast silence would descend upon the earth and never again, he felt, would anyone prick the conscience of the human race with tales of a bloody and shameful past it was determined to forget. He was the last messenger, the final skeleton who had by some miracle escaped the crematoria and grave, to stand briefly as the conscience of mankind.[7]

As Antek continues to starve himself, he takes on more of the appearance of an apparition out of the past. Confronted with the ghostly skeleton-like appearance of Antek, the prosecutor becomes furious. To add to his outrage, Ellis has secretly photographed Antek, and the picture appears in all the newspapers. The prosecutor realizes he could never get a conviction. The papers report "that it's as though a ghost has come among the living."[8] Antek has succeeded in becoming his own dybbuk! He is "a lone skeleton who has survived the death camps and has come to plague the conscience of the world."[9]

There are two prominent motifs in Sole Survivor. One is more obvious, and is suggested by the very title itself: the sole survivor motif. There are reflections of this in other works, to be sure. Many survivors are the last of their family, the only one to have survived; therefore, each feels as if he is the sole survivor of the Holocaust. The motif is as old as the biblical literature,[10] and finds its expression in other literary works such as Melville's Moby Dick. The dybbuk motif--or, the dead among the living--is much more subtle here. However, when we recall that a dybbuk is the spirit of a deceased person which acts through the living, it becomes clear that this motif is quite prominent both here and in other works. In Antek's case it is the spirit of six

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[7] Ibid., p. 174.
[8] Ibid., p. 190.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Job 1: 13-19.

million murdered Jews acting through him to stir the conscience of the living. In other novels there might be slight variations, but in each, it is the spirit of the dead acting through living persons who are in turn affected by the spirit of these dead, and motivated to act because of it.

The dybbuk motif is quite prominent in the writings of Elie Wiesel. "Know ...that all of us have our ghosts... They come and go at will, breaking open doors, never shutting them tight..."[11] Such is Gregor's notion at the conclusion of The Gates of the Forest. And in The Accident, the narrator/hero describes himself as "just a messenger of the dead among the living...."[12] Moreover, he feels he had "become a grave for the unburied dead."[13] This thought has its antecedent in Dawn, with Elisha saying that "sometimes I thought of myself as a living graveyard."[14]

We all have our ghosts...and these particular ghosts, having been transformed into dust and ashes more rapidly than those who were buried, have no graves other than the memories of the living. And many of these living write, so as to serve as spokesmen for the Jews who ascended--as smoke and soot--to the sky and stars in an instant. The dead among the living!

In Dawn, Elisha is visited by the dead from his past. He must execute a British officer held hostage by his group if the British hang David ben Moshe at Acre. In a dreamlike fantasy, Elisha learns that

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[11]Wiesel, Gates, p. 223.
[12]Wiesel, The Accident, p. 45.
[13]Ibid., p. 49.
[14]Wiesel, Dawn, p. 37.

the dead have come to watch the former victim become an executioner. He fears they have come to judge him.

> In their frozen world the dead have nothing to do but judge, and because they have no sense of past or future they judge without pity. They condemn not with words or gestures but with their very existence.[15]

The ghost of his father informs him to the contrary.

> We're not here to sit in judgement. We're here simply because you're here. We're present wherever you go; we are what you do. ...Why are we silent? Because silence is not only our dwellingplace but our very being as well. We <u>are</u> silence. And your silence is us. You carry us with you. ...Your silence is your judge.[16]

Genghis Cohn comments that "It has been my fate to add a new dimension to the legend of the Wandering Jew: that of the immanent Jew, omnipresent, entirely assimilated, forever part of each atom of the German earth, air, and conscience."[17] Cohn later elaborates this thought.

> There are some dead who never die. ...Take Germany. Today it's a country entirely inhabited by Jews. Of course, you can't see them, they don't have any physical presence, but...how shall I put it? They make themselves <u>felt</u>. Walk around in German cities, as well as in Warsaw and other places rich in German history, and you feel a strange, heavy, Jewish presence in the air. It's a terrible thing we have done to them and it causes a lot or resentment and anti-Semitism. They won't be able to get rid of us unless they destroy themselves, God forbid.[18]

Elie Wiesel has parallel expressions of this notion.

> It had rained the day before and, because they felt at ease there, the clouds refused to leave the patch of sky above the houses huddled together in the town below. Later Gregor understood why: they were not clouds, properly speaking, but Jews driven from their homes and transformed into clouds. In this disquise they were able to return to their homes where strangers now lived.[19]

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[15] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 65.
[16] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 68-69.
[17] <u>Gary</u>, p. 7.
[18] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 21.
[19] Wiesel, <u>Gates</u>, p. 13.

> Suddenly the clouds seemed thicker--undoubtedly a transport of Jews coming back from far away to light the fires in their homes.[20]

And not only in clouds, but in names as well we find similar expression of a variant of this dybbuk motif.

> A dying man takes his soul with him but leaves his name to the survivors. The Germans don't know to what extent they are branded by their stupidity: they kill off Jews but they can't find a way of erasing their names.[21]

> Everywhere there are names without bodies, nowhere Jews. ...They forgot to deport the names of their Jewish neighbors whose homes and furniture and bedclothes they have inherited. The names are still hovering, like memories, overheard, and they will return to haunt their dreams and add blood to their wine.[22]

Underlying each of the variant expressions of it is the very theme itself: the dybbuk motif: the dead among the living. It is perhaps expressive of what motivates one to write a novel or poem about the Holocaust, or study the shoah, or read about it, or just remember it: six million dead wihin the recent memory of the living. It is this which marks a survivor: he is haunted by a dybbuk which will not let him rest.

This motif is certainly one of the keys to understanding Yehuda Amichai's novel, Not of This Time, Not of This Place. Joel is haunted by his past, particularly by the memory of little Ruth, a childhood friend lost in the whirlwind. This is one stratum of the novel. In this stratum he returns to Weinburg, his native town in Germany. Joel wonders why he has decided to return. "What would I do there? Perhaps I'll avenge little Ruth..."[23] Later, in Zurich, Joel reflects.

> And for what purpose am I returning to Weinburg? It began with a dream and grew with a great longing for a lost childhood. Now

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[20] Ibid., p. 17.
[21] Ibid., p. 25.
[22] Ibid., p. 26
[23] Yehuda Amichai, Not of This Time, Not of This Place, p. 13.

> all these feelings have merged into a passion to avenge what they have done to little Ruth.[24]

It is above all the memory of little Ruth, of childhood lost, which hauntingly spurs Joel on.

> It is in the nature of a show window to reflect the image of the person looking into it.
>
> ...In a window I saw Ruth's face as it was when she turned towards me when we both lay on the ground, the boys of the Hitler Jugend holding me fast, and I heard one of them kicking her and her artificial leg gave out the dead sounds of wood and metal. When Ruth was burned, revenge was burned, too, and the country remained empty of mercy and of vengence and of man. Her face is the eternal light for my actions and, like all eternal lights, her face is exerting a calming effect on me and fills me with melody and happiness and sadness, instead of driving me to acts of vengeance.[25]

But, he comes to the realization that others have taken their revenge for him when he meets Melvin, an American who had been an officer in the Army which destroyed Weinburg. "I had killed nobody and the ghosts were still within me."[26] Thus, the only resolve in the novel is that Joel learns to live with the ghosts which haunt his memory, knowing he cannot avenge them, but neither can he forget them. And so it is, perhaps, with us, too: we can only remember.

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[24] Ibid., p. 36.
[25] Ibid., pp. 112-113.
[26] Ibid., p. 204.

EPILOGUE

Like the documentary historical evidence, the imaginative literature of the shoah is becoming a vast sea of literary works. Some are of great literary merit; others, thought not exceptional works from a literary standpoint, are of interest from theological perspectives, or psychological perspectives. All are of value. Literary reactions to any historical event--let alone one of such unprecedented magnitude in Jewish and world history--are of great significance to the historian, particularly to the intellectual and social historian.

We know what happened. We are beginning to learn how it happened. We do not know--we may never know--why it happened. If one's Weltanschauung is essentially teleological, he would expect--at least in due time--to find meaning. If so, upon being asked if it had to happen at all, he might answer with Grunwald (in Davidson's Making Good Again).

> Were six million people murdered, over some years, with the world looking on, many of them helping, as part of some accident? Perhaps. Perhaps everything is an accident. Perhaps, God forbid, God doesn't exist. Perhaps he exists and he's tired of his work. Even if it were so, what would it mean? Only that we would have to do the work for him. ...We would have to act as if carrying out the original purpose, and if there were no purpose, we would have to make a purpose. The world, at least, exists! ...There has got to be some sanction for the activities in it. But I believe he does exist, and I believe the Creation didn't end on the sixth day, or whichever period you prefer, and that we have a role, and that there's meaning here.[1]

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[1]Davidson, p. 205. Note the subtlety contained in the passage: that if the teleological argument will not hold up, he will shift to an als ob (as though) philosophy.

"The Creation didn't end on the sixth day...there's meaning here." So Grunwald has faith that one day we'll see meaning in these events.[2] But for many, it is difficult to find meaning, or even to be convinced that meaning can be found.

One can only hope that Joel's Indian friend (in Not of This Time, Not of This Place) will be proven wrong.

> Our memory tells us that the Nazis had murdered so-and-so many Jews and that the city was destroyed by the American army. Crime and punishment. History will describe the events otherwise. It will say: 'So-and-so many Jews and Germans were killed in the great war.' Here will be a balancing and equalizing of oppressed and oppressors. More distant history, which has to embrace many generations and wars, will say: 'In the middle of the twentieth century a great war raged and so-and-so many people perished in it.' Archeology of times to come will define the event as follows: 'It appears that toward the end of the second millenium of the Christian era a great catastrophe occurred marked by many conflagrations. This is proved by a black, fire-scorched layer and numerous broken iron objects that have been uncovered. The city appears to have been rebuilt.'[3]

For at least two millenia we Jews have been known as a literate people. Our literature preserves material of a documentary nature, as well as the responses of imaginative writers to the events chronicled in documentary accounts. At least among our own people our history has remained more than a footnote. And so, lest the Indian's ironic prediction be realized, we have at least one lesson to learn from the shoah. That is, not to forget.

Grunwald and Raison are touring Dachau. As they complete their tour of the grim museum, they enter a garden.

> It was a small garden, screened by hedges, with a narrow entrance--a private place, very quiet in the heat of the afternoon. A few

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[2] Ibid., p. 296. For the complete development of this teleological approach, see the following pages in sequence: 103, 205, 295, 296, 297.

[3] Amichai, p. 295.

begonias grew in a circular bed in the middle of it. A candelabrum of granite stood on a granite Shield of David, which in turn stood on a single tombstone. There were no records and no explanations. A single line of lettering cut in the stone carried a simple message: VERGISS NICHT, it said in German; LOH TISHKACH, it said in Hebrew; DO NOT FORGET, it said in English.[4]

It is the very least one can do.

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[4]Davidson, pp. 205-6.

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APPENDIX

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Shaw, Robert. The Man in the Glass Booth. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967. The novel from which the author adapted his Broadway play of the same name. A Jew poses as an Eichmann-like figure to place a man in the dock who admits personal culpability for Nazi crimes. Hannah Arendt's Eichmann in Jerusalem is suggested as collateral reading.

Silbermann, Lena Kuchler. One Hundred Children. Adapted by David C. Gross. Garden City: Doubleday, 1961.

Silberstang, Edwin. Nightmare of the Dark. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967.

Stebel, S. L. The Collaborator. New York: Random House, 1968. A German lives as a Jew for thirty years and is unaware that he is a German due to a traumatic experience: he killed the man he thinks he is.

Steiner, Jean-Francois. Treblinka. Translated by Helen Weaver. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967. A documentary novel dealing with the revolt at Treblinka.

Stern, Daniel. Who Shall Live, Who Shall Die. New York: Crown Publishers, 1963.

Uris, Leon. Exodus. Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1958. The treatment of Dov Landau--a former inmate of a concentration camp--is most relevant.

_____. Mila 18. Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1961. Leon Uris's treatment of the Warsaw Ghetto.

Wallant, Edward Lewis. The Pawnbroker. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961. The classic novel of a survivor who leads a desensitized, passionless existence in New York until finally touched by the senseless death of his Puerto Rican assistant.

Weiss, David. The Guilt Makers. New York: Rinehart and Co., 1953.

Wiesel, Elie. Night. Translated by Stella Rodway. New York: Hill and Wang, 1960. Novelistic memoir of Auschwitz.

_____. Dawn. Translated by Frances Frenaye. New York: Hill and Wang, 1961. A former victim becomes an executioner.

_____. The Accident. Translated by Anne Borchardt. New York: Hill and Wang, 1962. The third part of a trilogy begun with Night and continued with Dawn.

_____. The Town Beyond the Wall. Translated by Stephen Becker. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964. Investigates the problem of indifference. The author asks how anyone could have been indifferent to and unaffected by what was happening to the Jews.

_____. The Gates of the Forest. Translated by Frances Frenaye. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966. A novel in the classic Bildungsroman tradition with picaresque elements. It is a tale of survival, and the spiritual growth of a young man in search of God.

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