

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
NEW YORK SCHOOL

FINAL THESIS APPROVAL FORM

AUTHOR: Jennifer Ossakow Goldsmith

TITLE: Holocaust Youth Literature:

An Exploration of Works by Carol Matas and Uri Orlev

Stanley Nash
SIGNATURE OF ADVISOR(S)

1/28/07
Date

Dina Lusk
SIGNATURE OF REGISTRAR

2/5/07
Date

ALL SIGNATURES MUST BE OBTAINED BEFORE YOUR THESIS WILL BE
CONSIDERED ACCEPTED.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT ALL INFORMATION ON THIS FORM.

H OLOCAUST YOUTH LITERATURE:

AN EXPLORATION OF WORKS
BY CAROL MATAS AND URI ORLEV

JENNIFER OSSAKOW GOLDSMITH
RABBINIC AND EDUCATION THESIS 2007
HVC-JIR

SUMMARY PAGE

Thesis Title

Holocaust Youth Literature:
An Exploration of Works by Carol Matas and Uri Orlev

Author

Jennifer Ossakow Goldsmith

Number of Chapters

10 [+ An Educational Unit to be added in February to fulfill MARE requirement]

Contribution of this Thesis

The contribution of this thesis is in the field of Holocaust youth literature, which not much has been written. Though I do not attempt to expand the analytical genre as a whole, I have tried to share my understanding of various components that make up successful Holocaust youth literature.

Goal of Thesis

The goal of this thesis was an in depth analysis of two authors who write Holocaust youth literature, Carol Matas and Uri Orlev. This analysis included a comprehensive look at how the Holocaust has influenced each of their communities, background on the genre of Holocaust youth literature, the author's backgrounds and an analysis of three works each.

Divison of Thesis

Introduction
Americanization of the Holocaust
Israel and the Holocaust
Holocaust Youth Literature
Carol Matas: A North American Voice
Three Great Works of Carol Matas
Uri Orlev: An Israeli Voice
Three Great Works of Uri Orlev
A Translation of *The Sand Game* by Orlev
Conclusion
Bibliography

[+ An Educational Unit to be added in February to fulfill MARE Requirement]

Materials Used

I used a wide array of books for my thesis. I did extensive research in the areas of the Americanization of the Holocaust, Israel and the Holocaust as well as Holocaust youth literature. The bulk of my thesis is on six books three written two authors, Carol Matas and Uri Orlev. I concentrated on *Lisa's War*, *Greater than Angels*, and *In My Enemy's House* by Carol Matas. And, *The Island on Bird Street*, *The Man from the Other Side*, and *Run, Boy, Run* by Uri Orlev. In addition I translated from Hebrew the majority of *The Sand Game* and autobiography written by Orlev.

C HAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I have always been passionate about Holocaust literature. I have read a number of books in this genre, from memoirs to fiction, to works by former Nazi youth, to history books. I don't know why I am so drawn to it. Perhaps it is because I am trying to understand, in any way possible, how it could have happened, or because I am trying to learn as much as possible about the Holocaust so that I can transmit its import to our next generation? Somewhere along my journey this last point—figuring out the best possible way to transmit this information to today's youth—became my focus. As each new generation born is that much farther removed from the atrocities of World War II, we have a more and more difficult challenge ahead of us. Soon, the majority of survivors from World War II will be deceased. We will no longer have their voices before us to help teach our children. The stories they have left behind will have to suffice. But how do we weed

through those stories? How do we decide what is best for our youth? What are we even looking for in a piece of Holocaust youth literature? Using research I had done in the past while at HUC-JIR, I chose two prominent and prolific authors on which to do the bulk of my textual research—Carol Matas and Uri Orlev.

The only criteria I had when choosing books by these authors was that the story had to take place during World War II. With that in mind I chose three books written by Carol Matas, *Lisa's War*, *Greater than Angels* and *In My Enemy's House*. And, I chose three books written by Uri Orlev, *The Bird on Island Street*, *The Man from the Other Side* and *Run, Boy, Run*.

When I began this thesis, I anticipated researching a number of background chapters, analyzing the works by Matas and Orlev and then doing an extensive comparison between the two authors lives and works. I hoped to find a number of differences in the texts based on the fact that one author, Carol Matas, is from North America—with her closest connection to World War II being her husband's father, who was a survivor—whereas the other author, Uri Orlev, is from Israel and is himself a World War II survivor. Once I had finished reading the six books, I determined that those differences did not exist. The horrors of World War II can cross any boundary. It did not matter where the author was from or what was his or her direct connection to the War. Both Matas and Orlev wrote emotionally compelling stories whose main characters make a strong connection to the readers; whose themes are both real and challenging; and whose representation of World War II and the Holocaust has an appropriate level of shock value for its young readership.

The main characters, all of them middle-school age, are the heart and soul of these stories. They draw in the reader and open up a world otherwise unknown. Their heroic acts and accounts of bravery carry through most of these stories from their start to finish. The responsibility that lies on each of them is unimaginable. Uri Orlev talks of this responsibility in his book *The Bird on Island Street*. In that book, there is an early dialogue between the main character's father and his friend about the Holocaust.

"It would be better," father said once, "if it were simply erased from all the history books. As though he (Hitler) had never existed." "No, it wouldn't," said Boruch. "All this must be remembered so that other peoples will know what can happen when a madman is elected to be leader. And so they will realize that there are times when even children must be taught to bear arms."¹

The stories I read are the stories of children who were taught to bear arms. They did not necessarily use a gun, but they certainly were responsible for their lives in ways we hope children will never be. These are the stories of children who survived and did so in some of the most amazing ways. From their working for the resistance to their working as a Polish Christian in a Nazi home to their living alone in a bombed out building—the main characters we are introduced to are unforgettable.

I have often wondered how you teach a topic like World War II and the Holocaust to middle-school children appropriately. I believe that graphic movies or straight history books are not the best way at this age. What can bring home this topic to youngsters is literature, literature that is based in fact and truly represents a piece of what was going on

¹ Orlev, Uri. *The Bird on Island Street*, pg. 7

during the War. This type of book has the power to begin to inform today's youth of the atrocities of World War II. One book cannot do the job alone, but it certainly can open a door to this topic for a child and help him or her to grapple with how to internalize and remember this tragedy.

CHAPTER 2

THE AMERICANIZATION OF THE HOLOCAUST

The Americanization of the Holocaust has influenced how each American child comes in contact with this tragedy. Since the end of World War II, Americans have tried to put the Holocaust in terms they could understand. As Alvin Rosenfeld writes,

It is part of the American ethos to stress goodness, innocence, optimism, liberty, diversity, and equality. It is part of the same ethos to downplay or deny the dark and brutal sides of life and instead to place a preponderant emphasis on the saving power of individual moral conduct and collective deeds of redemption.²

Because of our beliefs as a country, the Holocaust, Holocaust survivors and a number of others who perished during the war have reached celebrity status, oftentimes allowing us

² Rosenfeld, Alvin. The Americanization of the Holocaust, pg. 8

to forget the horrors of the events and what the victims lived through. Below is a brief look at how the Holocaust has gradually intruded itself upon the American mainstream.

It was the Americans' unending search for goodness and heroics that led them to embrace the life of Anne Frank upon the first release of her *Diary* in America in 1952. Our love for her ultimately made her *Diary* the most widely read book about the Holocaust in America. The *Diary* sold over five million copies during the first two decades it was in print, and the play won the Pulitzer Prize, the New York Critics Circle Award, and the Tony Award for best play in 1955.³ In a survey conducted in 1996 by the University of Michigan, it was still named as the predominant source of Holocaust education; the text was required reading in high school for over half the students surveyed.⁴ The edited version enabled people to fall in love with this little girl who was hiding in an attic in Amsterdam. In one version, her deportation and eventual death were completely left out. According to Lawrence Langer, "There is little horror in the stage version; there is little in the *Diary* itself...They permit the imagination to cope with the idea of the Holocaust without forcing a confrontation with its grim details."⁵ The only thing that was important in the "Americanized" version was Anne's belief in the fundamental good in all human beings.

The Americanization of Anne Frank, further made it so the person that readers met in the 1950s edition of her diary is different from the one in the 1990s. And it has kept on changing. The *Diary* our parents read is different from ours and different from

³ Flanzbaum, Hilene. The Americanization of the Holocaust, pg. 2

⁴ Bischooping, Katherine. "Interpreting Social Influences on Holocaust Knowledge." Contemporary Jewry 17(1996), pp. 106-135

⁵ Langer, Lawrence. The Americanization of the Holocaust on Stage and Screen, in Admitting the Holocaust, (1995)

our children's. In 1996 four different versions of the *Diary* were released in book or on stage and each one represented the story differently. This shift, due to Americanization, is evident in the Anne Frank Foundation as well. It was first formed in the 1950s and its initial goals were to "use the name of Anne Frank as a symbol for hope and to further intergroup understanding in an atmosphere of freedom and hope." In the 1980s the Foundation changed their stated goals to the following: "To educate on World War II, particularly the Holocaust, and to make known the current prejudice and discrimination affecting Jews today."⁶ One can see Americanization at work through a survey of the Anne Frank phenomenon. It follows a trajectory from the specific, particularistic, emphases of the fifties to the more general, universalistic and inclusive emphases of the eighties.

The Americanization of Holocaust certainly did not stop with Anne Frank. America's obsession with the Holocaust continued. One manifestation was through television. The telecast of the *Holocaust* mini-series in 1978, which was watched by an estimated 120 million viewers, tends to be the main example raised by critics and historians, but other television shows in the 1960s were regularly using the Holocaust theme as well. The Holocaust made a "guest appearance"⁷ on a number of shows including, *The Defenders*, *Sam Benedict* and *Dragnet*, *The FBI*. Notes Jeffrey Shandler: "In these dramas the Holocaust sometimes served, for instance, as a test case in the limits of social justice, or as a study on the nature of evil."⁸ In addition to its appearance in drama television, the Holocaust also appeared in science fiction television. In 1961 two

⁶ Flanzbaum, Hilene. The Americanization of the Holocaust, pg. 2

⁷ Shandler, Jeffrey. "Aliens in the Wasteland," in The Americanization of the Holocaust, pg. 35

⁸ Ibid

The Twilight Zone episodes dealt with the topic and in the late sixties, *Star Trek* used it as a moral paradigm in "Patterns of Force." The trend, which began in the sixties, is still alive and well today. The Holocaust and all things that come from it have appeared on shows including, *Cannon*, *Columbo*, *Quincy*, *M.E.*, *Kojak*, *L.A. Law*, *Bodies of Evidence* and *Law and Order*. To cite Shandler again: "The growing roster of appearances has helped turn the Holocaust into what one critic termed a 'household' word in the United States, a subject with which many Americans now feel they are on familiar and intimate terms."⁹

The Americanization of the Holocaust was found in literature as well beginning in the 1960s. Since then, a large number of novels and short stories have been published each year.¹⁰ In 1990 there were over eighty books published on the subject and in 1995 the number had jumped to over one hundred. Countless scholarly articles and books have been written, a number of which have been on the *New York Times'* *Best Seller* lists.¹¹ Successful movies like *Sophie's Choice* and Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* have continued to expose Americans to the Holocaust in ways to which they can relate.

Schindler's List, released in 1993, has been a huge, successful participant in the Americanization of the Holocaust. It won seven Oscars and earned \$96 million dollars at the box office. It was a story about the Holocaust whose lead character was not Jewish and which celebrated the survivors. When Spielberg made this movie, he tapped into something that was beginning to surface in America: a feeling of necessity on the part of the survivors to tell their stories before they pass away. This was the only way they knew

⁹ Shandler, Jeffrey. "Aliens in the Wasteland," in The Americanization of the Holocaust, pg. 44

¹⁰ Flanzbaum, Hilene. The Americanization of the Holocaust, pg. 84

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 6-7

to guarantee that their children, their children's children and their children's children's children, would learn about this event and understand what it had done to those who lived through it. After this film was finished, Spielberg felt that he had not done enough to preserve the memories of those who survived the Holocaust, and so he created The Shoah Visual History Foundation, an organization that gathers the testimonies of survivors and does community outreach. Even though much good has come from the film, it is important to note that it presents an American version of the Holocaust. As Michael Bernstein points out insightfully, "Spielberg satisfies a characteristic American urge to find a redemptive meaning in every event."¹²

One of the largest undertakings in this time of Americanization has been the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, DC that opened in 1993 and saw over two million visitors its first year, more than any other national museum.¹³ In one of the early solicitation letters, the museum wrote about how a visitor would learn how the Nazis annihilated many groups of innocent people during World War II and at the end of the visit, he or she would emerge with a feeling of happiness for those who survived and those who have had a rebirth and renewal. Many believe that the museum has been successful with this. Hilene Flanzbaum ponders:

How many people actually emerge in this spirit of renewal from the trip to hell that a visit to the USHMM takes them through, I do not know. Americans are, for the most part, not a cynical people. Nor do they like to see themselves or anyone else as permanent losers, so I strongly suspect

¹² Bernstein, Michael. "The Schindler's List Effect," *The American Scholar* 63(1994), pp. 429-432

¹³ Flanzbaum, Hilene. *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, pg. 7

that many may wish to remember...by paying their respects to the victims of the European holocaust and also by reassuring themselves that they live in a land that extends to all its citizens the rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."¹⁴

The USHMM took into account these American morals, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, when creating the museum. The creators felt they could make the Holocaust a national tragedy and in turn make a visit to the museum meaningful for the whole nation. The museum's project director, Michael Berenbaum coined what the museum was trying to do as the "Americanization of the Holocaust." He felt that the museum's story would have to be

told in such a way that it would resonate not only with the survivor in New York and his children in Houston or San Francisco, but with a black leader from Atlanta, a Midwestern farmer, or a Northeastern industrialist. Millions of Americans make pilgrimages to Washington; the Holocaust Museum must take them back in time, transport them to another continent, and inform their current reality. The Americanization of the Holocaust is an honorable task provided that the story told is faithful to the historical event.¹⁵

The USHMM has tried to live up to this quotation. Since it opened its doors in 1993 changes have been made in a continued attempt to create a certain type of experience for the museum-goer. Its goals have been: to remind visitors of the past, to affect them in the

¹⁴ Flanzbaum, Hilene. The Americanization of the Holocaust, pp. 13-14

¹⁵ Young, James. "Memory and the Politics of Identity," in The Americanization of the Holocaust, pp. 73-4

present and to encourage them to try to stop genocide in the future. As a foremost authority, James Young, writes, "By remembering crimes of another people in another land, [the Holocaust museum] encourages Americans to recall their nation's own idealized reason for being."¹⁶

Yom HaShoah, the international Holocaust day of remembrance, has also been influenced by the American psyche in the last decades. Jewish Americans have taken on this day as a way to creatively express their views on the Holocaust and ensure that their communities continue to remember those lost. Three of the more significant Yom HaShoah projects include the *Megillat haShoah* (The Shoah Scroll) put out by the Conservative movement. This volume is written in the form of a Torah text, and it is meant to be read during a Yom HaShoah service. The second major creative piece is *The Six Days of Destruction* by Elie Wiesel and Rabbi Albert Friedlander. This book is filled with short vignettes mixed in with the creation story. The third is the *Holocaust Seder Haggadah* that was put out by the World Zionist Organization. This is a seder that could be held at home or in the synagogue. These are just a few examples. Other ways in which the Holocaust is remembered on this day throughout the United States include: civic ceremonies, lectures, student essays, film series, library displays, special prayers, discussions, reading of the 6 million names, and communal vigils. Creative and meaningful ways to remember those who perished in the Holocaust will continue to be created. Especially as those who did survive this horror pass away and all that is left is an attempt to connect by a generation that is at least once removed.

¹⁶ Young, James. "Memory and the Politics of Identity," in The Americanization of the Holocaust, pg. 72

The Americanization of the Holocaust has certainly influenced American Holocaust youth literature authors. An author has to take into account what his or her young audience is familiar with, what their threshold level is, how they might interpret their words, and so forth. All of our American children's sensibilities have been shaped by the society around them. Americans have taken the Holocaust tragedy and made it part of their national identity. In so doing, they have accepted the challenge of forever remembering the horror that was experienced in Europe. As survivors of the war continue to pass away, we are left with the responsibility and the challenge to figure out ways to re-imagine this tragedy that will continue to speak to the average American of all ages in a meaningful, emotional and historically authentic way.

C HAPTER 3

ISRAEL AND THE HOLOCAUST

The background of how the Holocaust, the survivors and victims have been treated in Israel helps to flesh out a portrait of the society in which Uri Orlev wrote and continues to write his works. Unlike the case of the Americanization of the Holocaust, where America's love for pop culture has brought the Holocaust into unexpected venues in unexpected ways, Israel's response to the Holocaust begins with its creation as a State and continues today with the country's evolving attitudes towards and views of the Holocaust.

After World War II a number of factors directly influenced the creation of the State of Israel. At the core of these factors was the need to deal with and respond to the European Jews who had survived the Holocaust. Yehuda Bauer estimates "that at the end of World War II about 200,000 Jews emerged from the Nazi concentration and slave

labor camps and had survived the death marches.”¹⁷ Though Jewish *aliyah* was always seen as central to the Zionist plan before the War, its necessity increased ten-fold after the Nazi persecution due to the need to help deal with the refugee problem. By 1947 there were 250,000 Jews, who had either been interned in Nazi concentration camps or in hiding, who were in DP camps in Germany, Austria and Italy; about 50,000 Jews were in France. There was, in the words of one authority, an “obvious need to find a permanent home for Jewish survivors of Nazi persecution, persons who could not or would not return to their homes in Eastern Europe.”¹⁸ Many articles indicate that these Jews were overwhelmingly Zionist. As Tom Segev put it somewhat ironically, “If the (Jewish) soldiers (from Palestine) had told them to walk into the sea they would have gone, with the certainty that the water would part before them.”¹⁹

These refugees came together with the help of the *Brichah*, the largest organized illegal mass migration of the 20th century. Right after the war in Europe, inspired by the possibility of making it to Palestine, members of prewar Zionist youth movements set up this highly organized movement, which helped bring a quarter of a million Jews who had been scattered all over Europe to the DP camps and other central locations. Their goal was to move Jews from Eastern Europe and the shores of the Mediterranean to Palestine. They wanted “to make the world aware that the future of the Jewish DPs was inseparably bound up with the future of Palestine—and that the two problems had a single solution: an independent state for the Jews.”²⁰ By September 1945 *Brichah* had come under the

¹⁷ Bauer, Yehuda. *Rethinking the Holocaust*, pg. 246

¹⁸ Edelheit, Abraham J. *The Holocaust and the Rise of Israel: a Reassessment Reassessed*, pg. 102

¹⁹ Segev, Tom. *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, pg. 115

²⁰ Segev, Tom. *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, pg. 124

control of Zionist leaders in Palestine, and at one time employed up to four hundred workers.

These Jewish refugees largely influenced the United States' policies with regards to the Jews. In 1945, the Americans agreed not to close the borders of the American Zones in Europe to the Jews. This increased the number of Jewish refugees within those zones, allowing them, at the same time, to become a strong political force. President Truman also supported sending one hundred thousand immigrants to Palestine as soon as possible after the war. That said, he never took a vocal stance on partition, and perhaps as a result, his demand for mass immigration was rejected by the British. This in turn caused the United States to withdraw its support of the British Mandate. Once the United States pulled back on its support, the worldwide attitude towards the British occupation of Palestine became less favorable.²¹

The illegal immigration of the Jewish refugees to Palestine was another factor leading to the creation of the State. The Haganah established this illegal immigration. Since the British limited legal immigration, the Jews needed to search for other options. Many boats loaded with illegal immigrants tried to make it through the British naval blockade of Palestine. One such ship was the *Exodus 1947*. The British caught the ship just before it landed in Palestine, and the passengers were required to return to their port of origin in France. Once back in France, the passengers refused to disembark and Britain was forced to send the ship to the British Zone in Germany. This was a huge public

²¹ Cohen, Michael. *Why Britain Left: the End of the Mandate*, pp. 74-76

relations mistake, leading to increased support for the Zionist cause from both Europe and the United States.²²

The mass illegal immigration increased the existing tensions between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine. When the Mandate realized that they could not get the Jews and the Arabs to reach an agreement on the future of Palestine, they turned to the United Nations. In 1947 the United Nations, at Britain's request, set up a special committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) and eventually recommended "a three-fold partition of the country, the creation of two states, the idea of an economic union between both, and the fact of their mutual dependence in matter of security, due to the peculiar form of the frontiers suggested,"²³ to the United Nations. Documents suggest that historical and economic factors were the primary influences on their recommendation, and not the Holocaust. That said, there was still the problem of the Jewish refugees in Europe and the belief that the Palestinian problem was heading towards war. The United Nations voted in favor of partition.

While the United Nations voted for partition, it was the Yishuv and its military arm that ensured the Jewish state in the War of Independence against the Arabs. As one historian notes:

The relentless Zionist battle for free immigration and statehood depended on tens of thousands of Jews who willingly risked their lives. That willingness ought not be ascribed to the Holocaust, but to the heroism repeatedly elicited by the struggles for national liberation. To suggest that only after the Holocaust were Jews willing to die for the sake of Jewish

²² Segev, Tom. *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, pp. 128-139

²³ Friesel, Evyatar. *The Holocaust: Factor in the Birth of Israel?* pg. 12

independence is to ignore the prewar history of Jewish settlement in Palestine.²⁴

There was no reason why the Jews should have won their war for independence. They were certainly the weaker party in numbers and equipment in the beginning. However, a supply of arms from Czechoslovakia turned the bleak situation around. And thus the Jews were able to win the war and secure the State of Israel.

Though the Holocaust did not cause the State of Israel to be created, it was the final catalyst. The Holocaust was such a horrific event in Jewish history that it just had to have had influenced the creation of the Jewish state in a meaningful way. What better way could there have been? The survivors of the horror were the ones who acted as a catalyst for the final redemption, the creation of a Jewish homeland. By the end of 1949 there were close to 350,000 Holocaust survivors living in Israel. That constituted almost one out of every three Israelis.²⁵ Such a sizable European refugee population guaranteed in large measure that the influence of the Holocaust did not end with the establishment of the State of Israel. The survivors who immigrated there helped to shape the State into what it is today. They carried with them the horror of what they had been through, but also the hope of what could come in their future.

It took until April 12, 1951 for the Knesset to select a date, the 27th of Nissan, to remember the Holocaust victims. Yom HaShoah v'haGevurah, The Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and the Heroism, became official on August 19, 1953 in the Knesset. This date falls in either April or May, a week after Passover and a week before Yom

²⁴ Arnow, David. *The Holocaust and the Birth of Israel: Reassessing the Casual Relationship*, pg. 271

²⁵ Segev, Tom. *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, pg. 154

HaZikaron, Day of Remembrance for fallen Israeli soldiers. The date was chosen to draw a distinction between the era of the Holocaust and the era of the State, and it is also around the time of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

Holocaust survivors presented a challenge to the new State. The members of the Yishuv, those living in pre-State Israel, had propagated this image of a strong young Jew who would help settle the land, and the Holocaust survivor did not fit that description. Consequently, many Israelis have chosen to celebrate the heroism—rather than the victimization—associated with the Holocaust. One of the reasons that the word “*Gevurah*,” “Heroism,” was integrated into the name of the Shoah remembrance day is to help shift the feeling that European Jewry were “led like sheep for slaughter.” The Israeli educational curriculum, further helping to shift the paradigm, started to celebrate both the “passive resistance” of those who retained their human dignity and the “active resistance” of those who fought the Nazis.²⁶

Israelis are still struggling with how to treat the Holocaust, the survivors and the victims. In 1953 Yad V'Shem, Israel's Holocaust Memorial Museum, opened its doors with a clear slant towards those who resisted and participated in acts of heroism during the War. A couple of years ago the museum's exhibits and building were redone and now many more victims and survivors are appropriately represented. No longer is it just the resisters and heroes who did grand things; now each and every person is celebrated and memorialized as having lived and resisted even in the smallest way.

The feel of Yom HaShoah in Israel is very different from that in the United States. Here, the whole country is in mourning. Since the early 1960's a siren blows throughout

²⁶ [www.myjewishlearning.com-Yom HaShoah Overview](http://www.myjewishlearning.com-Yom-HaShoah-Overview)

the State stopping pedestrians and cars for two minutes of silence. This happens once at sundown on the eve of the day of remembrance and then again at 11 a.m. the next morning on the day itself—such a simple act and yet such a powerful statement. In addition, all radio and television programs are dedicated to the Jewish destiny in WWII including interviews with survivors. All music that is played on the radio is adapted to the mood of Yom HaShoah. And, there is no public entertainment. All theatres, cinemas, and pubs are closed. Many communities come together to tell their family histories, their opinions on the Holocaust and discuss how to prevent the genocide from happening again.²⁷

As we explore the themes and moods reflected in Orlev's children's literature of the Holocaust, this background information will be shown to be most significant.

²⁷ [www.myjewishlearning.com-Yom HaShoah Overview](http://www.myjewishlearning.com-Yom-HaShoah-Overview)

CHAPTER 4

HOLOCAUST YOUTH LITERATURE

Elie Wiesel once wrote in reference to Holocaust literature, "If the Greeks invented tragedy, the Romans the epistle, and the Renaissance the sonnet, our generation invented a new literature, that of testimony." Holocaust literature surfaced beginning in the late 1940s, although it *was not* really accepted until the 1960s. For those who chose to write, it was a way to make sure, for all intents and purposes, that those not directly affected by it knew what had happened. Many would argue that Holocaust literature was the first international literature ever created. And this literature was not considered typical in relation to other categories of literature. Alvin Rosenfeld in his essay, *The Problematics of Holocaust Literature*, talks about how most literature fits into topical groups. They tend to focus on a subject and are loosely associated. "By contrast... Holocaust literature occupies another sphere of study, one that is not only topical in interest but that extends so far as to force us to contemplate what may be fundamental changes in our modes of

perception and expression, our altered way of being-in-the world.”²⁸ Holocaust literature is there to create a “chronicle of the human spirit's most turbulent strivings with an immense historical and metaphysical weight.”²⁹ Holocaust youth literature is one sub-category of the various manifestations of this larger genre.

Holocaust youth literature is a unique breed. It is not a canon of British male authors or young men and women trying to push the envelope. Rather, it is a canon composed of Holocaust survivors, former Hitler Youths, relatives of those lost in this tragedy and lastly authors with an interest in the subject. With all of these individuals contributing, “there is so much information and knowledge available about Nazism and the Holocaust that “the problem is no longer ‘never to forget’: it is *how* to remember.”³⁰ And if the focus has been shifted to how to remember the Holocaust, what do we do with that concept for children? Do we want them to read detailed descriptions of the crematoriums or learn to what depths one had to sink in order to be able survive in a camp? It is these hard-to-swallow images that are missing from the youth novels. The novels teach about Nazism, suffering, and evil— each one with a different emphasis depending on the author’s history— but none shedding true light on the subject. But how could an author even begin to approach this subject? Adults, who have also been charged with the task of remembering the Holocaust, have trouble “imagining” what the Holocaust must have been like, imagining the total picture of a place like Auschwitz, so it must be even more difficult for a child to comprehend. Hamida Bosmajian in her book *Sparing the Child* discusses what she believes will be the result of this type of literature:

²⁸ Rosenfeld, Alvin. *A Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature*, pp. 12-13

²⁹ Ibid, pp. 13

³⁰ Bosmajian, Hamida. *Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust*, pg. xv

The young reader who is to acquire memory through reading in order to become a witness will, finally, know very little of disastrous history, for the facticity of that history and the grief of the author are concealed by a delimiting rhetoric that ensures the impossibility of representing that history and that grief.³¹

Furthermore, as time passes between World War II and today,

the living memory of the Holocaust will pass, the surfaces of written records or photographic images and the site of the concentration camp itself will rigidify, will become historical scar tissue impervious to the memory of pain.³²

One of the problems with this genre is that children tend to be required to read a single book in school that serves as the sole representation of the Holocaust. It is impossible to understand and know a history from only one text. "At best, a story may spark the interest to read further."³³ What has happened is that one text is chosen to represent everyone's story. No matter how strong a voice this is, that simply cannot be sufficient. What are teachers to do? They are required to teach a part of history they are not familiar with and on top of that, because this is such a difficult topic, they do not necessarily feel comfortable doing it. Today, there are strong, rich Holocaust curriculums for both secular and Jewish schools³⁴, but they take a lot of time and often World War II , and the Holocaust specifically, is limited to a unit a couple of weeks in duration.

³¹ Bosmajian, Hamida. *Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust*, pg. xvii

³² Bosmajian, Hamida. *Metaphors of Evil*, pg. 222

³³ Bosmajian, Hamida. *Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust*, pg. xx

³⁴ *Facing History and Ourselves* is the best example

Bosmajian writes, "The struggle to know about Nazism and the Holocaust demands the reading of many texts, demands the patient wisdom of a Scheherazade who cured through a thousand and one tales her bridegroom's violent misogyny."³⁵ For our youth to get any kind of grasp on this topic, there needs to be a strong educational plan.

Another issue writers of Holocaust youth literature face, is the language. How can one speak the language of the Holocaust without having experienced it firsthand? How can one give voice to such horror? Primo Levi writes that when "we say 'hunger,' we say 'tiredness,' 'fear,' 'pain,' we say 'winter'...[we use] free words, created and used by free men who live in comfort and suffering in their homes."³⁶ Levi has memories that we cannot possibly comprehend, having not been there. The challenge for the author is to make sure they don't stop trying to give voice simply because they are writing for a young audience. Naomi Sokoloff writes in *Childhood Lost: Children's Voices in Holocaust Literature*: "A child's partial understanding helps alleviate the adult narrator's struggle with language and artistic expression...The child serves as a way to sidestep trying to formulate an interpretation of evil that defies understanding."³⁷ But there needs to be a way to get across the atrocities somehow. The language in Holocaust youth fiction needs to go as far as it can, and then the students need to be educated on how to fill in the gaps.

³⁵ Bosmajian, Hamida. *Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust*, pg. xx

³⁶ Ibid, pp. 125

³⁷ Sokoloff, Naomi. *Childhood Lost: Children's Voices in Holocaust Literature in Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust* by Hamida Bosmajian, pg. 126

Children's novels tend to have happy endings—the main character is triumphant, the evil character is squashed. But how do we create happy endings in Holocaust youth fiction and do we really need to? Bosmajian believes that:

Closure in children's literature transfers adult desire to what a child reader supposedly needs; it denies the child the chance to imagine and rehearse through ambivalent, even tragic narrative life situations that are indeed possible. Adult desire for a future where life is good and meaningful is always generated retrospectively from a past or present that is found wanting and, because the child is perceived as holding the potential for that future, the child is charged with finding or making a better world.³⁸

The authors of Holocaust youth literature have a challenge. It would seem absurd to write a story where after 200 pages, the main character is murdered two sentences before the end of the novel. But it is also absurd to paint a rosy picture and not delve into the seriousness and horrors of World War II. Both need to be in balance.

Part of what determines the type of story written is the connection the author has to the Holocaust. Is he a survivor, the child of a survivor, a Nazi Youth, or a family member of a survivor? Each of these attributes play into how the author's story is created. Carol Matas' husband is the child of Holocaust survivors. Therefore when he conveyed the stories of his family to her, the stories were in a certain context. He had created a narrative of his family that had probably been pieced together from stories he had heard from his parents. The stories were then influenced by whatever coping mechanisms he put in place. If the author is a survivor, like Uri Orlev, that comes with another set of

³⁸ Bosmajian, Hamida. *Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust*, pg. 135

complications. The author tends to be both reluctant and impelled to tell his story. What ultimately happens depends largely on the society that surrounds the author. People did not want to talk about the Holocaust after it happened, so it took until the 1960s before Holocaust literature began to be written. Now society wants to hear people's stories, so more survivors are willing to write them down or speak publicly.³⁹

There is the possibility that a lot could go wrong while trying to write for this genre but it is important to continue developing it. Bosmajian writes, "We need to find ways to tell children that Auschwitz did happen, but we must do so in ways that somehow manage to include the complexities discussed." She continues,

That means that narratives ought to communicate an awareness of the difference between narrative truth, the truth of memory, and the truth of experience. (It) must acknowledge in complex and subtle ways the problem of representation of a disastrous reality.⁴⁰

Authors have to continue to strive to present depth in Holocaust youth literature. The best way for youth to learn about what happened and really have it permeate who they are is for them to read books that incorporate accurate history; have characters that the students can identify with; have material that has not been simplified and allows for some of the horror to come out; and collaterally, that sends a message that enables the students to strive towards activism against prejudice today.

³⁹ Bosmajian, Hamida. *Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust*, pp. 139-141

⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 146-147

C HAPTER 5

CAROL MATAS: A NORTH AMERICAN VOICE

Carol Matas is one of the two authors I have chosen to concentrate on in this thesis. I originally chose her because, compared to most North American authors, she is very prolific in the genre of Holocaust Youth Fiction having written nine novels thus far. As a child growing up in Canada, Matas did not expect to become an author. Although reading was her favorite pastime, she always had her heart set on becoming an actor. She graduated from college with a degree in English, but chose to pursue an acting career. She eventually found herself amongst actors who also wrote in their spare time. They would write stories on their own and share them and give each other feedback. With each story, Matas' fictional work became longer and more developed, until finally in 1977 she wrote her first full-length book. Matas began writing fiction with young people as the lead characters. However, it was not until she submitted her book to the National Film Board of Canada and they wrote her back encouraging her to continue to write fiction for

children, that she realized she had come upon a genre she loved. Since then she has written many books of fantasy, science fiction, and historical fiction for youth.

Her interest in writing World War II stories was piqued by her husband, Per. At one point he ran the theater in a Jewish community center. While he worked there, an exhibit on the Holocaust opened, and he started to share all these stories of his parents' time as Jews in Denmark when Germany invaded in 1942. Matas had never heard any of these stories before, but all of a sudden her husband began recalling such vivid details as told by his parents, who were twelve when the Nazis invaded Denmark. The stories she heard were incredible. For example, her father-in-law had put sugar in Germans' gas tanks so their cars wouldn't run.

When he was fifteen years old he was officially a member of the resistance movement. Matas also recalls her husband telling her that his father's biggest fear concerned his mother:

His mother had been making his bed one morning when she felt something lumpy under the mattress. She picked up the mattress only to find two handguns and a machine gun. Apparently she almost killed him. He was certainly more afraid of *her* than he was of the Germans.⁴¹

Matas adds that what was so ironic, was that her father-in-law's dad was also in the resistance, but that the cells were so small that the two men did not know that the other had been part of it. Each night his father would lie about leaving the house to see friends, and her husband's dad would do the same as well. After hearing all these stories, Matas

⁴¹ <http://carol.carolmatas.com/writer.htm>

decided to write a book on the Danish resistance entitled *Lisa's War*. She took the premise from all her other books—namely, that one person can make a difference— and applied this to the Holocaust youth literature genre. For additional research she spent time in Winnipeg interviewing a number of Holocaust survivors from the Danish Club. Many of their stories are also woven into *Lisa's War*.

The idea for *Greater Than Angels*, a book written by Matas in 1998, came about while she was lecturing in St. Paul, Minnesota on *Lisa's War* and the heroism of the Danish people. There she saw a film, *Weapons of the Spirit*, about a man whose parents were saved by the people of Le Chambon, France, a small farming village. This story struck a cord with Matas, because like *Lisa's War* it was a story about people who risked their lives to save others. First she wrote *Daniel's Story* for the United States Holocaust Museum. During her visit to the museum she was reminded of the heroism in Le Chambon through an exhibit. So moved by the story, Matas decided to write a novel. She interviewed a number of survivors who had been hidden in Le Chambon during the war and heard many inspiring stories including those of Pastor Trocmé who was the pastor of Le Chambon and a pacifist. He was opposed to fighting the Germans and refused to cooperate after they invaded France. France might have broken its promise to protect its Jews, but Le Chambon did not. Pastor Trocmé and the people of Le Chambon hid as many Jews, and others fleeing the Nazis, as they could.

While Matas was doing research she came across a number of stories of Jewish families who lived in Germany during the war and managed to hide by using false papers or by constantly moving. These stories led her to write *In My Enemy's House*, a book that tries to answers questions like what it was like to live in Nazi Germany and what did

ordinary German people believe and think at the time. Matas expected the story to be about German Jews. To find people to interview, Matas put out a general advertisement asking for those who survived the war living in Germany. German Jews did not respond, but Polish Jews who had been disguised as Polish Christians sure did. Matas interviewed a number of Polish Jews who had all hidden their identities in order to survive. Each of them told his or her unique story about living in the Lion's Den itself. The information Matas gathered enabled her to tackle the difficult question of what humans are capable of in the book.

I often wonder how someone could constantly be writing on such heavy topics, especially for children. Matas is totally unapologetic about it. "Many of my books are considered controversial because I deal with topics I think young people are concerned about, even if they are things adults don't like to deal with."⁴² Matas' goal is to write good, interesting, untold stories that the youth of today would not want to put down and to encourage them to keep reading even when it is time for lights out.

⁴² <http://carol.carolmatas.com/writer.htm>

C HAPTER 6

THREE WORKS OF CAROL MATAS: LISA'S WAR, GREATER THAN ANGELS AND IN MY ENEMY'S HOUSE

I have always found it difficult to analyze Holocaust literature, and in this I am apparently not alone. Alvin Rosenfeld in his essay, *The Problematics of Holocaust Literature* points out that:

We lack a phenomenology of reading Holocaust literature, a series of maps that may guide us on our way... We are yet to develop the kind of practical criticism that will allow us to record, interpret, and evaluate Holocaust literature with any precision or confidence . . . It would seem a radical misapplication of method and intention to search through literary accounts of Auschwitz and the Warsaw Ghetto for covert Oedipal

symbols, class struggle, revealing patterns of imagery and symbolism, mythic analogies or deep grammatical structures.⁴³

And yet, I am going to try to analyze the works that I have read. In doing so, I plan on concentrating on main character of the novel, what was the driving force behind the book, the messages and themes of the book, the possible underlying "theology" and other Jewish components, and whether or not this is a "good" representation of the Holocaust.

Though Carol Matas admits she wants young readers to pick up one of her books and not put it down until he or she is finished because it is so enthralling, she has managed to develop a way to bring to light difficult topics. By taking on World War II, Matas has opened herself up for criticism. This is not a topic easy for anyone to write on, let alone to take this topic and make it youth-accessible. By having her books rooted in survivor testimony and historical research, she has a breadth of knowledge and realism to bring to her writing. With that said, there is a clear development in her writing evident in the three books I read: *Lisa's War*, *Greater than Angels*, and *In My Enemy's House*. Her older stories lack a sense of realism while her new ones are careful to bring to light horror and tragedy.

Lisa's War was written in 1987 by Matas. It was her first attempt at Holocaust Youth Literature. Her premise, taken from previous fiction she had written, was that one person can make a difference. This concept seems so simple. Clearly there is some truth in it—this idea that one can make a difference and effect change is something to encourage in our youth. However, in relation to the horrors of World War II, it can come

⁴³Rosenfeld, Alvin. "The Problematics of Holocaust Literature." *Literature of the Holocaust*, pg. 28

across as trite. With that said, this book did not fail. Matas did a good job in taking a historical fact, that the Danish people saved the majority of their Jewish citizens from the Nazis, and in creating a rich and entertaining story to exemplify that heroic action.

Lisa is the heroine in this story. She embodies so many characteristics that middle-schoolers might believe they have too. She is brave, courageous, at times nervous, in love, and afraid. She is excited when school is closed. She sometimes lies to her parents when she wants to do something she is forbidden to do. She wants the boy she likes at her birthday party to ask her to dance the whole night away. Even though her setting is decades ago and a world away, the reader can relate to her. It isn't just who she is that is possible to relate to, but it is her actions and thoughts as well. She and her brother, Stefan, have a very typical sibling relationship. As she writes, "My brother Stephan is staggering into the room. Well, it takes an enemy invasion to get him up in the morning. I decided to keep that crack to myself."⁴⁴ There is definitely not a shortage of sibling rivalry in this story. Another attribute of Lisa the reader can easily identify with is her funny stomach. When she is nervous her stomach gets queasy. "My stomach starts to feel funny. I have a pretty ridiculous stomach. If I get sick, I always get it in my stomach, nowhere else. The number of colds I've had I could count on my two hands, but stomach aches and upsets I couldn't count at all."⁴⁵ Everyone can think of a time when their stomach was tied in knots.

Lisa's character is the driving force throughout the book. The reader follows the development of Lisa's bravery and courage as she did what she needed to sabotage the Nazis' plans and save herself and those around her. Lisa's sense of mission is palpable to

⁴⁴ Matas, Carol. *Lisa's War*, pp. 3

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 27

the reader. Her choice to join the resistance, the completion of her resistance missions, her sneaking around behind her parents' backs to help the Danish hold off the Germans, her warning every Jew she could find that there was going to be a roundup, and finally her aid in getting the Danish Jews across the water to Sweden where they would be safe. She regularly interacted with the world in a way that was well beyond her years. It isn't until the very end of the book that she turns to outside help: "Dear God, don't let anything happen to Jesper (her boyfriend). But why should He listen? It's silly to pray like that. He hasn't listened for all the others who've been captured, who've died. I make myself stop."⁴⁶ Only two pages shy of the completion of the story we truly see Lisa and are let into a part of her world that is seldom discussed in this story. Not only is Lisa scared, she is unsure of her faith, and angry with what is going on around her.

The novel ends with Lisa and her family making it safely into Swedish territorial waters. It certainly is a nice ending to a good story. But I finished reading it and believed a lot was missing. This story fails to describe what happened during the Holocaust. It barely references the horrific events or the Nazis being mean and brutal to every Jew they came across. It also paints the picture of the resistance as fun and exciting and doesn't do enough to convince the reader it was really scary and that each and every day those who chose to resist were risking their lives and those of their loved ones. I know this is a book for youth, but so much is missing. In a way it sugarcoated the World War II. Lisa is painted as a strong Jewish girl who wants to take on all the evil in the world and except for a few hiccups, does so and never gets caught. Though, there are tense moments and some challenging scenes, as for example, when Lisa has to kill a German soldier and

⁴⁶ Matas, Carol. *Lisa's War*, pp. 106

when her best friend's parents and workplace are bombed. But overall, the reader isn't given the too-hard-to-handle details. We allow ourselves to be wrapped up in her first love, her funny stomach, her cool missions, and her girly relationship with her best friend. This is not the first story for youth on how the Jews of Denmark survived World War II, nor will it be the last. It does a great job bringing the reader in and forging a relationship with the reader. It is a wonderful way for youth to learn about such an important triumph in our recent history. But does it do the horrors of the Holocaust and World War II justice? I am not sure it does.

Greater than Angels written in 1998 by Matas is another historical story, this one based in Le Chambon, France. Matas wrote *Greater than Angels* just over a decade after writing *Lisa's War*. This novel is richer and exposes the hardships and horror of the Holocaust to its readers in a real way while still having a lovable heroine. The main character of this novel is Anna. Anna's family is from Mannheim, Germany. In 1940 the Nazis rounded up the German Jews from that area to send them to Southern France. Anna is sent away with her mother, aunt and grandmother. Her brother and sister had already fled Germany—one living in England, the other in America.

Throughout the story we see different facets of Anna's personality reveal themselves, thereby giving the reader a chance to really connect with her. One of her most important personality assets is her ability entertain. Anna loved the theater and the cabaret in Germany. Her introduction to it came from her grandmother who worked in theater when she was younger. Anna loved it so much that she would sneak into the theater even after Jews were no longer allowed and watch. Or, if they needed someone to fill in a part for a night, she would volunteer. This passion of hers helped her to stay alive

throughout the book. It kept a train car of nervous, scared Jews from breaking down, it brought happiness to the Jewish prisoners in Gurs (a refugee camp) and it ultimately gave her the confidence she needed in scary situations. Like Lisa, Anna embodied many traits that a reader can relate to. She was brave, courageous, smart, talented, and thoughtful—all good traits. But she also had a spunky side of her. She loved to be the center of attention, she liked to flirt, and she was opinionated.

Greater than Angels unlike *Lisa's War* delved into some very heavy topics. In *Lisa's War* Lisa and her best friend Suzanne were on solid ground throughout the whole story. In *Greater than Angels* Anna talks openly about how she dropped her best friend, Klara. Her love of the theater was taking up all her time and she was a teenager and didn't realize she was hurting a dear friend. They make up early in the book, but it shows the real fragility of teenage friendships.

Another weighty topic that is discussed in this story is Judaism and personal theology. In *Lisa's War*, God is only mentioned once at the end of the book, whereas in *Greater than Angels*, God and Jewish texts play a huge role throughout. While in Gurs a text study group for the teenagers is formed. Anna, Klara, Klara's brother Rudi (Anna's love interest) and a few others study Jewish texts together. For the first meeting, the professor suggested that the group begin with Genesis. This set off a flurry of comments on Eve. One boy said, "if Eve hadn't eaten from the forbidden fruit, which God warned her not to eat, wouldn't the world still be a perfect place?" Anna, angry that the female was at fault, shot back, "If God knows everything, don't you think he knew Eve would eat the apple? So He must have planned it that way...it wasn't her fault at all." To which the young man responded, "If she hadn't eaten that apple, that day, we wouldn't be *here*,

right now.”⁴⁷ This is just one example of the tough conversations that youth are having in this story. I think Anna really sums up the role of Judaism in this novel when she says, “I hadn’t been much of a Jew before the Nazis. Now I was learning all about it. And instead of hating my Jewishness for landing me in all that trouble, I began to discover so much to think about.”⁴⁸

The weightiness of this story is also evident in the horrors of World War II that Matas describes in this book. Contrary to *Lisa’s War*, this book doesn’t hide the reader from the atrocities of the War. Anna’s family is threatened with going to Dachau if they don’t sign over their apartment and its contents to the German government. A Gestapo guard warns he will throw Anna’s grandmother off the train if she isn’t silent, because her babbling is bothering him. Once they get to Gurs, we are regularly given descriptions of the inhuman conditions they had to live in: “When we reached the facility (bathroom) it made me gag. It was revolting—a huge long plank with holes in the wood and movable containers on tracks underneath. It was raised six feet in the air, so the only way to get to it was up a thin ladder.”⁴⁹ In the story an old woman is found frozen in the morning after an attempted struggle to go to the bathroom.

Greater than Angels is a good example of Holocaust Youth Fiction. It melds history with fiction in a way that is appropriate for youth. There are characters and circumstances in the story that the reader can identify with. Yet Matas made sure this novel was not too light. The reader cannot forget the World War II setting. Matas balances the atrocities of the Germans with the heroics of the people of Le Chambon. The

⁴⁷ Matas, Carol. *Greater than Angels*, pp. 60-61

⁴⁸ Ibid, pg. 63

⁴⁹ Ibid, pg. 34

reader gets to see both worlds—the way the Nazis simply wanted to get rid of the Jews and the way the villagers of Le Chambon risked everything to help them.

In *In My Enemy's House* Matas keeps the familiar female heroine, but really changes who she is and what she goes through, as contrasted with *Lisa's War* and *Greater than Angels*. Those two stories concentrated on a teenage girl who was active in the resistance movement, who was surrounded by a support system, and who was responsible for doing her part to save a number of lives. *In My Enemy's House* is the story of Marisa, a girl who comes from a traditional Jewish family. They lived in Poland until the Germans came in. Part of her family was killed and two of her siblings decided to join the resistance. At that point, Marisa and her love interest, Shmuel, with their blond hair and blue eyes decided that their best chance for survival was to go into Germany with false papers passing as Polish Christian workers. Marisa spends the rest of the war as a Polish Christian servant in Germany. She first works for a horrible family, but is blessed with a German female worker who teaches her fluent German. After begging for a transfer from that horrible family, she was placed with a loving, rich, high-up Nazi family. She spent a lengthy period of time with them, then went to work as a translator in the factories and after the bombings of Berlin began, went back to work for the family until the end of the War. Matas had the difficult task of striking a balance between good and evil and portraying what it means to live in the devil's den.

Marisa is the strongest of the female heroines in these three books. Immediately the reader is thrown into a chaotic world where Jewish tradition is clashing with the world that surrounds the characters. In the very beginning of the story Marisa declares to

her father, "But Papa, if everything is God's will, then this must be a punishment."⁵⁰ It is Marisa's mother who gives a response, "We will say our prayers but we will also do what we have to so we can survive. That's how we will operate from now on."⁵¹ From then on, Marisa adopts this practical attitude that permeates almost every action she takes throughout the story. Like all of Matas's heroines, Marisa is brave yet scared; surrounded by evil yet in love; smart yet forced to hide all her knowledge in order to stay alive. She spends the majority of the book keeping a huge secret, something we can all relate to. It eats her up inside but in this case she knows she needs to, for otherwise she would be turned in to the authorities or killed.

Like with *Greater than Angels*, there are a number of rich, heavy components to the storyline. One of these is Marisa's struggle with self-forgiveness. Marisa was caught holding hands with Shmuel who wasn't a religious Jew. Her father was so angry at her that he demanded she never see him again and went over to his brother's house (Shmuel's step-father) to discuss it with him. While he was there, he was picked up by the Ukrainian police and put on the trains. It takes a long time for Marisa to stop blaming herself for her father's deportation. Finally she realizes that she loves Shmuel and he can be her support.

Another difficult topic that Marisa struggles with is how to let go of her younger siblings, Yehuda and Fanny. At one point in the story they are hiding in a shack in the middle of farming land. Each day Shmuel and Marisa, both who do not look Jewish, went to nearby farms to try to collect food. And each time they returned, Yehuda and Fanny, talked desperately about wanting to escape into the forest and be part of the Jewish

⁵⁰ Matas, Carol. *In My Enemy's House*, pg. 5

⁵¹ Ibid

resistance. They argued that Shmuel and Marisa could pass as Polish Christians, but they could not with their dark hair and eyes. One night Fanny and Yehuda run away into the forest. That morning, Marisa is left to deal with the meaning of their flight. Their departure for the purpose of aiding her survival is a feeling of guilt she carries with her.

Matas continues to reveal the horrors of World War II in this book in a number of different scenes. In one scene Marisa and Fanny are about to be killed in a mass graveside slaughter when it starts to rain so the Nazis abandon the site. Another time their mother pushes small Yehuda out the tiny window of the cattle car as they are being deported. He is shot at as he rolls down the hill to safety. The physical brutality of the Nazis might stop when Marisa arrives as a Polish Christian worker in Germany, but she is constantly listening to verbal abuses of the Jewish people and at times needs to agree in order to keep her cover. The first evening she is staying with the "nice" Nazi family, the daughter asks if she would like to watch them play a game, and of course Marisa agrees. "Jews Out," Charlotte told her the game was called. "You see the first one to get the most Jews out of town wins."⁵² Marisa barely responds but Christian, their other child, continues and begins to boast about his uncle who has killed thousands of Jews and asks Marisa if she would like to see pictures.

I wondered what the pictures would be. Perhaps his uncle standing proudly in front of bombed Polish ruins. I really didn't want to look but I couldn't refuse. Still, I never expected what I saw. At first, I couldn't even understand what I was looking at: German soldiers, their guns aimed at naked men, women, and children, standing over a large pit; a naked

⁵² Matas, Carol. *In My Enemy's House*, pg. 91

woman, holding a small child against her chest, a soldier aiming at her; a long shot of a deep pit full of dead bodies—I stopped looking.⁵³

This was only the first night. Not only was Marisa being talked down to at times because she was Polish; she had to simply listen to all the children's and adult's comments about Jews and keep her anger inside.

Matas really tries to engage the reader in wrestling with the duality of good and evil. For all the horrible things that this German family says about Polish and Jewish people, Marisa finds herself in situations where she actually likes the family. For example, the mother took care of her when she was sick instead of sending her back to the agency. Marisa reflected on that time, "Maybe she had been genuinely concerned. Maybe she was simply a good person. *But how could that be? She was a Nazi!* That meant she was evil through and through. Didn't it? I pushed my hands against my head because I felt like my head was going to split."⁵⁴ Marisa was stuck in the world she lived in. She knew what was good and what was bad, but the lines blurred much more than she ever expected. When the War was over, Marisa decided to return to Poland to search for her loved ones. Even during her goodbyes to the family she didn't know what to think. "When I said my good-byes I felt awful. Charlotte had become like my litter sister, I had taken care of Hans for so long, Christian doted on me...How could I have become attached to them like this? And yet, how could I not?"⁵⁵

Matas does an excellent job exploring the difficult historical topic of Polish Jews who survived World War II as Polish Christian workers in Germany in this novel. She

⁵³ Matas, Carol. *In My Enemy's House*, pp. 91-92

⁵⁴ Ibid, pg. 120

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 165-166

does so in a way that allows the reader to really feel the difficulties they might have had being caught between good and evil. In this story, rather than having one main character survive all odds in the resistance movement to remain alive and safe at the end, Matas paints a broader canvas in allowing ultimate goodness to root itself in all peoples. There is a fundamental message that human beings are good and that love and goodness will win out in this story. When Shmuel and Marisa part in the middle of the book he instructs her to keep love and not hate in her heart. This is a story about true forgiveness and the divine spark in all humans, topics that Matas could only have arrived at decades after the atrocities of World War II.

CHAPTER 7

URI ORLEV: AN ISRAELI VOICE

Uri Orlev was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1931 and spent the beginning of World War II in the Warsaw Ghetto. When the war broke out his father, who was fighting for the Polish army, was captured by the Russians. He only saw his sons again in 1954 in Israel. Eventually, his mother was murdered by the Nazis, and he and his brother were sent to Bergen-Belsen. They were liberated two years later and immigrated to pre-state Israel. Orlev began to write children's books in 1976 and has since published over thirty books, many of which are biographical. His books have been translated into twenty-five different languages. In 1996 Orlev received the Hans Christian Andersen Award for children's literature. The jury's statement was:

Uri Orlev's experience as a Jewish boy in war-torn Poland is the background of this outstanding writer for children. Whether his stories are set in the Warsaw ghetto or his new country Israel, he never loses the perspective of the

child he was. He writes at a high literary level, with integrity and humor, in a way which is never sentimental, exhibiting the skill to say much in few words. Uri Orlev shows how children can survive without bitterness in harsh and terrible times.⁵⁶

Orlev continues to be a unique and prolific voice in the genre of Holocaust youth literature. His books and his story have influenced children all over the world.

For the Hebrew component to this thesis, I read *Mishaq HaHol* by Orlev. Translated as *The Sand Game*, it is an autobiographical memoir. Orlev wrote about his life during World War II. The writing of *Mishaq HaHol* was sparked by one of his children, who after watching a hero escape enemies on television asked, "Father, how did you flee from the Germans?"⁵⁷ Orlev wasn't sure how to answer his son, "How to be able to answer a short answer that includes all that took place during those six years. And then I got the idea to give an example to him and I told him about the sand game."⁵⁸ He started to talk to his son about a game that he and his friends played when they were younger. The game was called, *How Many Will be Born to You?* It was played in a sandbox. The player or prophet as they would call him, took a handful of sand, threw it up in the air and did different things with his hands catching fewer and fewer grains. Finally, when only a few remained, those were the number of children one would have. It didn't end there though. Those grains were again thrown into the air and now each time grains fell towards the ground the prophet would come up with disturbing ways that the children would be murdered. Only those grains that fell in a secure place (the palm of the prophet-

⁵⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uri_Orlev

⁵⁷ Orlev, Uri. *The Sand Game*, pg. 5

⁵⁸ Ibid

player's hand) survived. Orlev writes:

I took my son to the sandbox and I showed him how one plays the game.

After this I explained to him that the Germans threw us every time in the air, and every time thus...thus...many men died, but we—that is to say my brother and I—we always fell in a secure place. Each time was a new number.

A new adventure.⁵⁹

Orlev talks about a number of those “adventures” in *The Sand Game*. He perceived these “adventures” as interwoven throughout his childhood. Talking about the prominence of his family, Orlev describes where they lived, the schools he went to and the nannies he had. Once Hitler came to power, one sees more and more freedoms being taken away. His family moves from the village to the city of Warsaw, riots occur, people begin questioning and taunting him about being Jewish, and his cook and teacher suddenly quit.

A major turn of events, of course, is when the Russians take his dad captive. Now Orlev's mom is left to take care of the family alone. The remaining tales in *The Sand Game* are about the hardships that occurred once Orlev and his family moved into the Warsaw ghetto. There are stories about sneaking off to school, scavenging in empty apartments, fears of being murdered, begging, and hiding. This unpretentious little book is a monument to the many tragic events that happened to and around Orlev and his family.

In the next chapter of this thesis I analyze three of Orlev's work: *The Island on Bird Street*, *The Man from the Other Side* and *Run, Boy, Run*. Each of these works is unique and based on a true story. *The Island on Bird Street*, though not exactly the story of

⁵⁹ Orlev, Uri. *The Sand Game*, pg. 6

Orlev's time as a child in the Warsaw ghetto, is very close. Having read *The Sand Game*, I went into reading this story with a much richer understanding of Orlev's childhood. I was surprised to find that pieces of many of his personal stories in this novel. From its taking place in a ghetto, to the disappearance of the mother, to the scavenging by the main character—all of these events happened in Orlev's real life. At times it is hard to differentiate between the main character, Alex, and Orlev himself.

The Man from the Other Side takes the spotlight off Orlev and on to a man he happened to meet while in Israel. Marek worked for a Polish newspaper and they met by chance at a mutual friend's home in Israel. Orlev, needing a few days off from work, asked Marek to join him on a sightseeing trip up north. Marek agreed and they spent a number of days talking about their personal stories during World War II. Orlev spoke about life in the ghetto while Marek spoke about life as a Polish Christian outside the ghetto walls. When they parted ways, Orlev asked permission to write Marek's story, but Marek said, even in 1987, that he was worried about what his family, friends and even the Polish government would do. In the end, Orlev said he would only sit down to write it if Marek passed away. Unfortunately only two months after their chance meeting, Marek died in a plane crash. In this book, Orlev puts into words the heroic acts of Marek and his step-father, Antony. *The Man from the Other Side* is a powerful tale of resistance.⁶⁰

Run, Boy, Run is the true story of Srulik Frydman as told by Orlev. Srulik is a young child, who is eight years old at the time when he escapes from the Warsaw ghetto, and stays alive through the war by taking on a Polish Catholic guise that he comes to truly believe in. The reader learns of his adventures living in the forest, working for farm

⁶⁰ Orlev, Uri. *The Man from the Other Side*, pp. 1-3

after farm, and trying to stay away from the German authorities. After the war, Srulik is taken in by a Jewish children's home, though against his will. He has lived the life of a Catholic for so long, that he could not see that he was actually a Jewish youngster. In the epilogue, we learn that Srulik excelled in mathematics, becoming a professor who immigrates to Israel after encountering anti-Semitism. In Israel he is reunited with his sister, marries his love from Poland and continues to teach and share his story from the war. It is in Israel that Orlev heard his story and wanted to tell it.⁶¹

Orlev does an amazing job melding fact with fiction in these three novels. He does not shy away from difficult scenes or difficult dialogue. The main characters are extremely likable and have many attractive characteristics that youth can identify with. He, like Carol Matas, knows how to do the Holocaust youth literature genre proud.

⁶¹ Orlev, Uri. *Run, Boy, Run*, pp. 184-186

C HAPTER 8

THREE GREAT WORKS OF URI ORLEV: *THE BIRD ON ISLAND STREET,* *THE MAN FROM THE OTHER SIDE, AND RUN, BOY, RUN*

Analyzing Uri Orlev's works is no less difficult than analyzing that of any other author in this genre. In fact, it might be even more challenging because of the stories Orlev chooses to tell. Each story is real. Unlike Carol Matas' books, which are based on true events and stories she has pieced together from a number of different survivors, the three books I read, *The Bird on Island Street*, *The Man from the Other Side*, and *Run, Boy, Run*, are all based on the true stories of one person. Whether it is *The Bird on Island Street*, which tells part of Orlev's personal story; *The Man from the Other Side*, which transmits the story of a Polish Catholic youth during the War; or *Run, Boy, Run*, based on a story of another Polish Jewish youth, Orlev writes each of these stories as only a master could.

Similar to the chapter that takes a deeper look at three works by Matas, this chapter will go through each of the three books Orlev has written and analyze them. I will be discussing the main character and whether or not that protagonist is one that can be related to by today's youth. I will also be presenting an overview of the major themes of the book, and I will look at how the Holocaust is represented in the text.

Orlev does an excellent job in *The Bird on Island Street*, by immediately bringing in and engaging the reader. In this introduction to the text he asks the reader to think about the situation in which he lives and then try to place his life in a ghetto. He asks the reader to think about his city or another city he knows. He asks, what would happen if a foreign army came it and began to occupy it? What would happen if a wall was just erected down the center of a street and you could not get to the extremely close movie theater right on the other side but you had to go to a theater a couple of miles away? It is a world, Orlev suggests to the reader, where you and your family might have been affluent before the invasion and you could roam free, but where now there are curfews and your money has to be spent on smuggling in food and on clothes so that you can survive. Now that Orlev's readers can somewhat contextualize what is going on, Orlev further involves them in by telling them how he came to create the plot for this book: he used another ever-so-familiar book for youth, *Robinson Crusoe*.

This world he opens up to his reader is like the one in which Orlev found himself as a young boy during World War II. Taking stories from his childhood and the time he spent in the Warsaw ghetto, Orlev creates *The Bird on Island Street*, a story that pays homage to Orlev's favorite book he read in the ghetto, *Robinson Crusoe*. Alex, the main

character in this story, spends the majority of the book hiding in a ruined house, waiting for his father.

This house is really not very different from a desert island... he must survive by himself for many months, taking what he needs from other houses the way Robinson Crusoe took what he needed from the wrecks of other ships that were washed up on the beach.⁶²

The difference that Orlev capitalizes on in this story is that Alex can see the outside world. He has an air vent that he can open and close, which overlooks the Polish side of the city. He can see all the happenings around him and feel as if he is sharing in the lives of the people who come and go each day. He is able to do this even though, in some respects, the people Alex sees are as far away as the nearest inhabited island from Robinson Crusoe. And yet, Alex holds on to hope—he always believes that his father will come back for him. Something Orlev also experienced in his real life, but not until a decade after the War in Israel.

Chapter one begins with a map. So much of what happens in this story is visual; Orlev does a great job in preparing his young readership so that they understand where things are in the ghetto and the outside world. From the map one can understand how the secret passageway was a risk, because it was not near 78 Bird Street where Alex was hiding. You can see where Stashya, the girl Alex likes, lives and where Bolek, the man who saves his life and helps his father, lives.

Shortly into the book, Alex is left to survive on his own. His mother has gone out and not returned; his dad is taken by the Germans when they close down the rope factory

⁶² Orlev, Uri. *The Bird on Island Street*, pg. xi

he worked in; and his dad's best friend, Boruch, sacrifices his life so Alex can escape the round-up.

We started out. The whole way Boruch kept coaching me about what I would have to do. As soon as we reached 78 Bird Street I would make a dash for the front gate by myself. I knew the house. It was full of windows without glass...Boruch would give me a push when the time came. He promised that father would follow me. Or else that he would slip away and join me later, in two or three days as the most. At any rate, I had to stay put...even if it took a whole year.⁶³

As we come to learn, it takes Alex's dad five months to make his way back to 78 Bird Street. Within those five months Alex exhibits all the characteristics you would want a young hero to have. He is brave, resourceful, smart and strong. Like the female heroines from Matas' books, he finds his first love and goes on his first date. And like the other heroes, he is worried, nervous, scared, and lonely at times. A life alone is not simple or fun and that comes out in this story. While the act of staying alive is an amazing feat for a youngster who is alone, Orlev does not "hype," or overly dramatize that feature of the story. The horrors of the Holocaust, in all their jarring realism, are kept in check in this story.

One of the main themes of this book is resistance. Resistance is obviously symbolized by Alex, who remains alive through a number of searches of 78 Bird Street and through his adventures inside and outside of the ghetto walls. But there are other special characters in the novel that do whatever they can so that others can remain alive.

⁶³ Orlev, Uri. *The Bird on Island Street*, pg. 21

One of those is the Doctor. Alex can see the Doctor from his air vent. Late at night he watches as people are smuggled in and out of the Doctor's house. Alex believes that he is part of the Polish underground. It isn't until later in the novel that Alex has direct contact with him. Two Jews who were fighting in the uprising come racing in to 78 Bird Street to get away from the Germans who are chasing them. Alex offers to take care of the Jewish man who was shot and risks his life to summon the Doctor to come and help the wounded Jewish man. The Doctor agrees and sneaks into the ghetto to treat him. A few days later, Alex watches in shocked silence as the police arrest the Doctor after someone presumably turned him in.

Another person who resists in the story is Bolek. Bolek is a Polish communist—all he wanted was for everyone to be equal including the Jews. The first time that Bolek meets Alex is by mistake. They are both going through apartments—Alex to find supplies to sustain himself and Bolek illegally smuggling goods out of the ghetto. They part as friends, Bolek giving Alex his address to come to him in case of emergency. When Alex needs help getting the recovered Jewish fighter out of his hiding place he goes to Bolek, who immediately offers to help. Bolek offers to hide Alex, but Alex reminds him he needs to be at 78 Bird Street for when his dad returns. They create a sign that Alex can signal from his hiding spot if he is in trouble—a pole in the window—and they leave it at that. Winter comes and the Polish citizens move into the ghetto. People now surround Alex each day that could turn him in. On New Year's Eve, Bolek pays Alex a visit:

“I've come to get you.”

“I'm sorry,” I said, feeling a catch in my heart. “I can't go.”

"You can't go on staying here, you pighead."

I didn't answer.

"I've brought you a package. Throw me down a rope. If anyone enters the building, throw me the other end too. I'll be all right. And don't forget the pole in the window!"⁶⁴

Alex continues to wait and his father finally comes to get him. One of the first acts they do together is to put a pole in the window so that Bolek would help them escape out of Warsaw.

There was nothing pleasant about the representation of World War II in this novel. Alex's mom disappears, his father's best friend is murdered to save Alex's life, smuggling turns evil, and everyone is out to save his or her own life. Orlev paints an all-too-real picture. Alex is literally living alone for five months on a half of a floor that somehow hasn't caved in yet, in an abandoned bombed-out building. During that time he is scared for his life every day, he has to learn to stand up for what is rightfully his, he has to steal, murder and risk his life. And yet Orlev creates a world that the youth of today can connect with. This ghetto is made so that it is not too far away from the mind's eye of the average youthful reader. Orlev weaves the good and bad of his childhood into this exquisite piece.

The Man from the Other Side is a different type of story because the main character is a Polish-Christian youth rather than a Jewish one. This story is also unique because it is a Jewish author who is telling it. Oftentimes when stories about non-Jews during World War II are written, former Nazi youth members write them. This book is

⁶⁴ Orlev, Uri. *The Island on Bird Street*, pg. 151-152

based on a true story told by Marek, the main character, to Orlev when they were adults. It is a story of a family who is compassionate and kind and ultimately takes risks to help many Jews in a number of different ways.

Marek is the driving force in this story. As the main character he takes us on a number of adventures, both physical and emotional, throughout the text. At the beginning of the story, Marek is already doing the tasks of adults. His stepfather asks him to help smuggle food and supplies to the Jewish people in the Warsaw ghetto through the sewer system. These acts open up Marek's eyes to a whole new world. Shortly after that, he commits a crime—shaking down a Jewish man—which sets the trajectory for the rest of the novel. So racked with guilt, Marek tries to find another Jewish person to save. Pan Jozek is that person. Marek is a wonderful character that the reader can relate to. He is brave, confident, remorseful, trustworthy, emotional, and smart. He likes to learn, he questions things, and he believes in helping others. To be able to read a true story where the main character isn't Jewish and yet is not doing inappropriate Nazi-related acts on the side, is a wonderful gift.

Like many of the other books I explored for this thesis, the main themes seem to be resistance and theology/religion. Resistance takes on many shapes and sizes in this story. Whether it is smuggling goods in and out of the ghetto, helping Jews to escape during the uprising, hiding them in homes and places of work, giving advice to them to help them stay inconspicuous, or simply believing that all people are created equal, this book is rich with acts of resistance. Of all the acts of resistance that Marek's stepfather Antony did during the war, one of the most touching was smuggling Jewish babies out of the ghetto:

There was one other kind of merchandise that my stepfather sometimes smuggled, not into the ghetto but out, although strangely enough, he never kept a cent of the money he was paid for it. That was Jewish babies...[T]he first time I saw Antony being handed a baby, I was in shock. He hadn't warned me in advance, and I almost broke into tears like its mother.⁶⁵

A lot of what Antony did, in fact, he did at least partly for money, but this was truly an act of kindness. All of the money went to the nuns in charge of the orphanage where Antony would leave the children for safekeeping. He expected nothing in return.

Another act of resistance that we read a lot about in history books is the Warsaw ghetto uprising. Marek actually found himself in the middle of it in this story. Orlev does a great job painting the scene as it unfolds and expressing the pride that Jews felt for what was going on. When Pan Jozek, the Jewish man that Marek was helping to hide, heard about the uprising, he wanted to leave immediately and sneak back into the ghetto in order to help. Thus meditates Pan Jozek about the uprising: "...[N]o less important, and perhaps even more so, is their having saved Jewish honor for the Jews! The Jewish people have begun to fight back against the Germans...I'm going (back). Tonight," said Pan Jozek to Marek. Marek helps Pan Jozek sneak back into the ghetto through the sewer system. On there way there, a bomb explodes closing the return route. In a split second, Marek becomes trapped in the ghetto. He joins Pan Jozek in the fight against the Germans while he waits for Antony to realize he is missing and figure out a way to get him out of the ghetto. The Jewish fighters were successful. They killed a number of

⁶⁵ Orlev, Uri. *The Man from the Other Side*, pp. 18-19

German soldiers as Marek looked on. "The Germans began to pull back. Once more the Jews had to rub their eyes. To tell you the truth, so did I. The Germans were gone. We whooped with joy and hugged one another again."⁶⁶

The role that theology and religion play was very interesting in this story because it wasn't just from a Jewish perspective. Marek was a devout Christian who regularly went to church. Not only did he do that, but he also found comfort and stability by stopping by to pray or give confession. There are many discussions about God throughout the text as well as discussions about Jesus as a Jewish person and what the religious relationship is between Jews and Christians. One of the most profound discussions occurs between Marek and Pan Jozek as he is helping Pan Jozek sneak back into the ghetto.

"What do you think, Marek, if Jesus were alive in Warsaw now, would he join the revolt in the ghetto?" I didn't know the answer. "Do you think he would return to the ghetto to be crucified again?" I still didn't know what to say so he asked me a third question, "Do you think Jesus would be able to forgive the Germans?" This time I did answer, and I remember exactly what I said, because there was no forgiving the Germans for what they had done...And now it was my turn to ask... "But where is God, and how can He permit all this to happen?" Pan Jozek responded, "a lot of Jews wonder where God is too. But God doesn't operate the way men do. His punishments for their crimes aren't conceived in terms of human logic...think of what it will be like for the next generation of Germans, the

⁶⁶ Orlev, Uri. *The Man from the Other Side*, pg. 163

Nazis' children, to know that their parents were mass murderers. That could be part of the punishment."⁶⁷

One of the biggest and most difficult questions to come out of World War II is "where was God?" This is something that has haunted survivors their whole entire lives. There are a million answers to this question. Orlev does a great job offering up one option.

The horrors of World War II are often alluded to in this novel while not being depicted right in front of the reader's face. Maybe because this story is written from the perspective of a non-Jew. Whatever the reason is, the reader still manages to get a feeling for what is going on. This story is filled with angry Polish people who do not support the war or the Germans at all. Marek is surrounded by people who are helping Jews including—his uncle, his boss and the members of a local church. There is an active fighting scene during the uprising in which Marek watches a number of people being murdered, including Pan Jozek, whom he then carries on his back to shelter and begs the local Jews to make sure he receives a proper burial. Marek also watches Antony in the heat of the moment kill both a Polish person, who tries to blackmail him, as well as a German soldier. Though there are not that many specific horrific images described, there is an accurate suggestion from the Polish side of the wall of what is happening to the Jewish people. This is an aspect of the War that is not often depicted.

Run, Boy, Run, written in 2003 by Orlev is also a unique story. It tells of Srulik Frydman's adventures during World War II. Srulik was from a small village, Blonie, in Poland, before he and his family had to move into the Warsaw ghetto. The story begins with Srulik and his parents escaping the ghetto only to be caught together with his mother

⁶⁷ Orlev, Uri. *The Man from the Other Side*, pp. 140-141

on the outskirts of town by the Gestapo. They were returned to the ghetto and continued to try to scrape by. One-way was by dumpster-diving. Srulik did this while his mother watched on. One day he turned around to say something to his mother and found she had vanished. Srulik was a young boy. Members of his family were still in the ghetto, but it was a big place that scared and confused him; he didn't even know his own address so he couldn't ask anyone how to get home.

Wandering around the ghetto Srulik comes across a group of boys playing soccer. He joins them and soon is initiated into the "gang." He helps them steal food during the night and hangs out with them during the day. He comes to realize they are all orphans, who find amazing the fact that he had parents only such a short while ago. Hearing that everyone was going to be deported, the boys decide they have to escape the ghetto on the back of garbage trucks.

The rattle of the wheels and the clip-clop of the horse's hooves made Srulik feel hopeful. But now came more shouts—this time from far away. The wagon stopped once more...The German soldier and the Polish policeman were running towards them, shouting and waving their hands. The farmer leaned back, yanked the frightened boy from his place, and set him down on the road... "Don't move, boy. I'll get you out of here."⁶⁸

A regular Polish farmer saves Srulik's life. He leaves Srulik in the Polish countryside with a group of other young Jewish boys who have escaped the Germans thus far. Once in the Polish countryside Srulik does everything he can to stay alive.

⁶⁸ Orlev, Uri. *Run, Boy, Run*, pg. 18

Srulik, the main character of this novel has an amazing story to tell. He begins as a young boy, but quickly grows up as he learns to fend for himself. Each day is a struggle. In the beginning, he stays with the group of Jewish boys and makes a good friend, Yosele. Their friendship is quickly ended and they are all dispersed when they are shot at in the forest. Luckily, Srulik learned a number of survival techniques from the boys he was with. While he was once scared of the forest, now he knows the forest is his friend. He can hunt and gather the food he needs and he uses the trees as a place to hide. Soon needing more food and wanting human contact, Srulik begins to try to find work as a Polish-Christian boy at area farms. This carries him throughout the rest of the novel. While at various farms, he exhibits a number of additional characteristics that the reader can relate to. He is a hard worker, a good friend, smart, in love for the first time, and brave. He also is scared, lonely and dealing with what it means to live as someone you are not (a Polish-Christian) each and every day.

One of the main themes of this book is the importance of "family." Here, the word is used in a broad way. Though he loses his immediate family at the beginning of the story, he gains a number of surrogate families along the way—from the Jewish boys in the woods, to various Polish families that take him in and actually treat him well, to a Russian soldier, to a Polish family that has him baptized and treats him like a son, to the Jewish home that helps him adjust to life as a Jew again. All of these people and places act as support and a family structure for Srulik. He learns one major lesson through a chance encounter with a member of his immediate family, a lesson he takes with him throughout his journey. Srulik is working for a woman and the Germans find out he is Jewish. AS they come after him Srulik runs into a field.

He tried to move carefully, without touching the plants, thankful for every breeze that stirred them all at once. Something was blocking his way. He raised his head a bit and saw a man staring at him...He kept crawling until he was close enough to whisper, "Get out of here! The Germans are after me." The man didn't answer. His eyes widened in astonishment. He held out his arms and whispered back: "Srulik..." "Papa?"⁶⁹

He can't believe that he is staring at his father in the field. His father quickly passes on all the knowledge he can think of that will help Srulik survive.

Get someone to teach you how to act like a Christian, how to cross yourself and how to pray. Find a farmer you can stay with until the war ends. Always go to the poor people. They're more willing to help...And the most important thing, is to forget your name. Wipe it from your memory. From now on your name is Jurek Staniak. But even if you forget everything—even if you me and Mama—never forget that you're a Jew.⁷⁰

After that, Srulik's father is murdered by the Germans while he is trying to distract them so that Srulik can escape.

Another theme that is found in this story is the idea of giving life your all and overcoming hardships. Clearly this is evident in Srulik's ability and desire to stay alive during the War. It comes even more into play when Srulik is working for the Herman family during threshing time. He was walking the horses with a whip and the bottom of his whip got caught in the cogwheels. He was pulled into the machine and his arm got smashed. Srulik was taken to the hospital where the young doctor on duty refused to

⁶⁹ Orlev, Uri. *Run, Boy, Run*, pg. 63

⁷⁰ Ibid, pg. 64

operate on him because he was Jewish. Because of the wait, his arm had to be amputated. Srulik spends the remainder of the story proving to people that he can do just as much work as the next hired hand. He figures out a way to take care of himself as well as to do regular jobs around a farm with only one arm.

In Holocaust youth fiction it would seem to make sense that Judaism is a main theme, if for no other reason than that being Jewish would mark the character for a certain path in life. Judaism is also a theme in this book. But it is different here than in other stories. This story doesn't talk about Jewish ritual practice before the war. Alex doesn't worry about not being able to celebrate holidays or do other Jewish rituals, but the idea of being Jewish is forever present. Like mentioned above, Srulik's father's parting words was for him to remember he was Jewish. That idea plays out in a number of different ways. He is reminded of his Jewish roots every time he washes up, has a peeing contest, or plays in the river; he cannot hide his circumcision. Srulik also thinks about being Jewish when faced with tough decisions or things he is unsure of. It is his greatest secret. Close to the end of the book, right before he is going to be confirmed as a Catholic with his temporarily adopted family, he has a conversation about confession.

(The tutor said to him) "You have to confess everything. If you don't, your soul stays filthy and nothing will help you." There was one thing, Jurek (Sruik) knew, that he could not possibly confess. But was being Jewish a sin?⁷¹

He has carried this idea that he is Jewish with him through the whole war. He is so confused by its meaning that he doesn't know what to do with his Jewishness when faced

⁷¹ Orlev, Uri. *Run, Boy, Run*, pp. 164-165

with choosing another religion. In the end, he comes to terms with his religion and eventually moves to Israel, marrying his college sweetheart.

Like his other two books, this story shows the real World War II. It is a moving story that touches on the sadness of loss, the challenge of survival and the hope that was found by so many survivors. Does this story go into the nitty-gritty of World War II? No. It doesn't go on and on about the horrors of the situation around Srulik. But it includes enough, as when the Germans burn down a whole village because one woman's family was fighting for the partisans; or when the German's set up mines to blow up a bridge; or when the doctor refuses to operate on Srulik because he is Jewish. The tragedy is ever-present. But that isn't what this story concentrates on. It concentrates on the resilience of one real youngster.

C HAPTER 9

A TRANSLATION OF THE SAND GAME BY URI ORLEV

Page 5

Several years ago my son saw a movie on television in which the hero succeeded to escape from the hands of the enemy. He gave me a serious look and asked: "Father, how did you flee from the Germans?" Initially I didn't know what to answer. How to be able to answer a short answer that includes all that took place during those six years. And then I got the idea to give an example to him and I told him about the sand game.

When I was a boy we played a prophesy game called *How many will be born to you?* We generally played this game in a sandbox. The boy who was the prophet gathered a fistful of sand and threw it in the air, turned over his palm, grabbed a little from the sand that returned and fell from above back on to his hand and said: "Thus, this will be your children." The intention was to count the grains of sand that fell upon his hand.

Clearly this was not logical, because the number of grains was very great. But this was only the beginning. The one who was the prophet immediately again threw the sand into the air, as long as the grains were flying about and returned downward, he turned over his palm and said: "In this way they will die in the forest."

He intended for the grains of sand to fall on the sides (of his hand) and that was the fate of the majority. Only a few of them landed again into his open hand. The one who was the prophet returned

Page 6

...to him again and again, he grabbed them once upon the back of his hand and once in the hand and each time announced how the children died that fell down around and didn't land in a secure place: Thus run over under the wheels of a trolley car, thus killed by cholera, thus kidnapped by the circus, thus drowned in the sea, thus electrocuted, thus fell from a roof, thus fell into a well, thus killed by fire, thus killed in an earthquake, thus choked on too much food, thus...and thus...

Until the remainder in the palm of his open hand was tens of grains. And this was counted as the children who will be born to him. There were also others who began to count already like that were open tens of grains, all according to the system of the prophet. Correct that each time he counted was different, but this didn't ruin the game.

I took my son to the sandbox and I showed to him how one plays the game. After this I explained to him that the Germans threw us every time in the air, and every time thus...thus...many men died, but we—that is to say my brother and I—we always fell in a secure place. Each time was a new number. A new adventure.

I wrote, "adventure" because of all the time I saw the hero of the suspense story die, that the end of it had to end good. I will begin from the beginning.

Page 7

I was born in Warsaw in the year 1931. My father was a doctor. I wanted to be a streetcar driver. I wanted to stand leaning upon the back of the seat with a hand on the steering wheel and caution passers-by, carriages, wagons and cars by pressing a foot upon an iron peddle which activated a bell which had a pleasant ring to the ear. Until I understood the policeman was much stronger, particularly the traffic cop, who with the waving of his hand directed the vehicles to stop or to go, and I decided that I would be a policeman.

In the beginning we lived in the city in large rooms with tall ceilings, which in part served as the x-ray clinic of my dad. Together with father worked Mundek, his younger brother, who wasn't a doctor in spite of his wearing of a white coat. He was so tall that he was not able to travel in streetcars. He said to me that if he were to enter a streetcar his head would break a hole in the ceiling. I didn't yet have enough brains to ask him why he wasn't able to crouch or to sit. He was strong. I saw with my very own eyes how he swallowed with appetite from the bakery a piece of paper on top of a slice of bread, immediately after my mother warned him that there was paper upon the slice that he was eating.

My first babysitter I forgot and mom was very surprised when I couldn't identify in a faded photo the woman in the white gown who was holding me—a baby. "After all you loved her so much..."

Until then I thought that our nanny, Tzelna, had been with us always. Tzelna wasn't strong. She had fat legs because she ate while standing. The explanation is quite graphic. In truth when one stands it is possible to think that the food goes straight down the legs.

In a little time after my brother was born, we moved to a village because mom sought to keep us away from the streets of the big city. From the filth, the curses and the germs. We went (entered) to live in a new house, a two-family house. Father traveled each morning to his clinic in the city and he returned late at night. We would spend time with him only on Sundays. In the summer he would go rowing with me in a small boat or kayak and in the winter, the two of us, would go skiing. In order to see father I would get up early in the morning and I would sit...

Page 8

...watch him doing exercises. He would raise his hands above, to the sides, he did different bends and he would put finally the palms of his feet under the closet in order to lift his upper body from the floor. I watched him shave with a razor that he sharpened beforehand upon a leather strap connected to the sink. In order to check if the razor was sharp he would in a sweeping motion cut through a very thin hair that he held in the air, and clearly with such a sweeping motion it was possible to cut also the head of an enemy in battle. Shaving with a razor was, in my eyes a real feat and I was sorry when razor blades were invented and dad went over to use them, these pitifully small and not at all frightening knives. Worse still, they would sharpen them in a small flat tin box with hand motion back and forth with a rhythmic ticking sound. I brought dad his shoes after he

had gotten dressed and afterwards we sat down to eat breakfast. I drank coco, and I ate a slice of white bread with honey and dad ate in a transparent cup three soft-boiled eggs mixed with salt, butter, and cubes of black bread. That is what I would eat when I grew up.

Mom, too, was absent from the house frequently for the duration of a week because she would travel to help dad in the clinic. Or perhaps, so Tzelinah customarily said, "to keep an eye on him there." In the summer, on Sundays, mom would go swimming with us in the river. Tzelinah also used to come with us, and one time when she was drowning dad pulled her out by the hair. One Sunday in the winter mom tried to join with us, when father and I went skiing, but she lagged far in back of us and she didn't repeat the attempt any more.

All the days of the week we would remain at home with Tzelinah and with Helenkah the cook. I loved to watch how Helenkah worked in the kitchen. I peeked sometimes when she would cut off the head of a hen. One time it was a rooster and it ran without a head, sprinkling splattering blood to all sides, straight at me, and I quickly closed the door on it. Helenkah would peep at me in the shower when I bathed, and when I told the story to mom and she could not restrain herself and burst out laughing. Tzelnah,...

Page 9

...by contrast, would hit and pinch when I made her nervous. One time I decided to complain, and I showed mom a black and blue mark that she gave me on the inner side of my arm. Mom said: "No, no it cannot be."

Until today when I recall the feeling of shock that I felt comes back to me. How is it that she did not discern that what I told to her was the real truth. Tzelinah said to me one day: "Look closely at me for a moment. You see how I sit? Are you able to sit for a moment like me?"

This was the first time that I saw that she sat in one place and did not move, and did not do anything. I tried. I sat next to her in the garden upon a bench and after a moment I felt like they chained me in heavy chains. I was compelled to get up from there and to run around.

When we lived in the country they (the villagers) told me twice that I was a Jew. I didn't know really what that was. One time the children said this to me. I shrugged my shoulders and afterward we dealt with the subject. It was correct that we did not go to church. They, all of them, went to church. Was it sufficient not to go to church in order to be a Jew? One boy said: "No. All people are born Jewish and are Jewish until the priest baptizes them to Christianity. Did they baptize you when you were a baby?"

I asked mom. In truth they didn't baptize me. On the other hand, they cut off a bit from my penis and because of this I always lost in the contests competitions (to see) who could urinate the farthest.

The second time the ones who told me this was were the workers dug pits in order to erect inside of them wooden pillars smeared with black tar whose aroma I loved. It was summer, a very hot day. The bees buzzed energetically. Mom was getting tan in the garden with a couple who were visiting. The workers were working on the other side of the fence. They were bare-chested and their arm muscles shook when they were breaking up the soil into pieces and bringing it up from inside the pit.

Page 10

Perhaps I will be a worker? Mom called to me and gave me a tray full with glass cups and in the center stood a clear pitcher with a cold drink. "Bring it to the workers," she said to me.

I brought the tray to them with emotion. And then they asked me: "Are you Yids?"

I said to them I didn't know exactly, but that I wasn't baptized in a church. After all of the telephone polls were standing in place and telephone cables were stretched between them along the length of the railroad track, it was possible to put your ear close to the wood to try to hear a conversation. I could never hear anything, but I breathed deeply the aroma of the wood soaked with lacquer, its aroma was especially nice in the days of summer.

Already then I could have known that we were Jews, if I had compared the appearance of the Jewish peddlers who happen to come with their wares to the village and the way they dress with the dress of the people on the street in which by grandpa and grandma lived in Warsaw. But I didn't compare them and the things refused to be connected in my mind. We use to chase the Jewish peddlers and sometimes throw at them stones. They were dressed in black clothes and had beards and payot next to their ears. They and the gypsies would snatch the children and Tzelinah threatened they would snatch him when I harassed her. Only one lame peddler who came into the village didn't get hurt because a big boy told us that it was a sin to throw rocks at the handicapped.

Twice or three times a year we traveled by train with mom to Warsaw to visit grandpa and grandma. Grandpa had a beard, he said in the house wearing a hat on his head (a kippah) and he told us stories with letters that I did not recognize and big silver coins in a drawer that carried the face of the Tsar of Russia. He permitted me to play with them.

When I was six years old I received a bike with two wheels. I took them to the field...

Page 11

...I fell and I fell until I learned how to ride. And from then on I would go out on long trips on grooved dirt roads by round wheels – roads were not yet paved where we lived– and I road on the paths of the forest until the house of the guard in order to get from his wife a cup of water. I didn't tell my mom for she had forbidden me to drink water in the farmers houses on the way and the guards houses of the forest because of germs. Occasionally I joined up on my bike with Edward who watched the crazy person, like when he took out the crazy person for a walk. The crazy one would defecate in the forest without being embarrassed and that was very interesting. Edward was worried all the time that the crazy person was going to soil his suit.

"I will have to clean it after this," he explained to me.

For a long time the village was preserved in my mind like it was a Garden of Eden, the lost Garden of Eden lost. One day a big red wagon harnessed to two gigantic Belgium horses arrived. The workers (movers) put into it all of the stuff but we traveled with mom on the train. We moved to the city so that I could begin to study in the school. Mom promised me we would return and we would visit the village, but never did she

fulfill her promise. My heart remained full of longings until I visited there 50 years later. The forest had shrunk and the asphalt roads covered the ground. The train turned into an electric train, but the house remained like it was, only that strangers lived in it. I approached to the rusted fence that once was green and I began to photograph. A few people came out and they asked me what I was doing. I tried to explain to them that I lived in their house when I was a child. They shrugged their shoulders and then I said:

“I remember the land lady of the house, Mrs. Smolenskah.”

An old woman that was among them said with emotion:

“Oh! Behold this is my mother!”

And then they invited me to come in. They showed me that the old ovens were still there. Mrs. Smolenskah frightened me every first of the month when she came to collect the flat rent. She looked like a witch especially in the winter when she would approach from far away, waddling in the snow, dressed in fur...

Page 12

...long and leaning upon a walking stick. I told the story to them without mentioning that I trembled, of course, and they said to me in a chorus of one voice:

“Ah, the fur coat is still lying in the attic!”

Definitely the witch is still hiding in it.

Her daughter, the old woman, said:

“Mrs. Doctor Orlevsky paid each month 100 zlotys to my mother...”

She repeated this a few times without any conversation.

The name of my family was Orlevsky before the director of the publishing house in Israel forced me to change my name to a Hebrew name. This was the 50s when the political leaders tried to force all the people to get rid of galut names, as if it were possible to change men into free men with a new name. Some time ago I wanted to restore my real name to myself but my children refused to hear about this.

We moved from the village to Warsaw and my parents registered my at the school. I was obligated to sit each day without moving next to a designated writing desk for two children in the class that had in it 30 strange children, to pay attention to the words of the teachers that echoed in the class for hours, and to remember what they said and respond to questions. When I didn't know how to respond to their questions I received a bad grade. The report card at the end of the year was entirely "passing with difficulty" in all subjects. None-the-less, I wasn't kept back in my class because my father was Mr. Doctor. The situation was even worse when I didn't know how to answer the questions of the other children. Simply they beat me up. And I was the second weakest kid in the class.

"Are you Jewish?"

"I don't know."

"You leftest or rightest?"

"I don't know."

Page 13

"Where do you live?"

"In a big house on a street with trees, not far away."

“What is the name of the street?”

“I don’t know.”

“Are you a boy or a girl?”

That was the only thing I did know. I returned to my house and I cried until my mom arrived to take me to my barber in spit of the fact that it was Monday, and Monday it is forbidden to go to barbers because they are liable to snip a ear after they have drunk to intoxication on Sunday. Much time didn’t pass before I knew that we were Jews and that we for the workers with the red flag. But on May Day, my mother would shut me in the house so that I wouldn’t get caught in riots. In the end I also understood that grandpa and grandma were not strange people but simply religious Jews like all the tenants on their street.

Some time after we had moved to live in the city, Tzelinah the nanny married and we got a female educator, Mrs. Yankah, who was a Jew. Her being Jewish made it easier on me because all the times after quarrels at home I would run away to the church and Mrs. Yankah it didn’t occur to her to look for me there. In the church I became friends with an old woman beggar already during the period of time I visited there with Tzelinah on Sundays. When I escaped from the house I came to sit with her and helped her to gather hand-outs and we prayed and talked about life. Only once I attempted to confess and to tell her that I am Jewish, but she was very mad at me and she said to me that I should play cowboys and Indians, and at cops and robbers, but not at Jews, crucifiers of our Lord.

In school I suffered not only because of the teachers and the children but also because of the exercising classes. Not only when we went out to run in thin sports clothes

and bare feet in the snow so that we should become toughened—that actually/davkah was in my eyes something connected with being strong, but the shower after exercising lessons was the real torture.

Page 14

Again not only because the water was one moment hot and one moment cold that was also to become tough, it was because there was a *woman* who opened and closed the faucet, and that didn't make it easy for me at all, she wore a white smock. In the shower in was possible to see whom they had cut and whom they hadn't.

Then the war broke out, WWII, and after a month of bombing and shellings the Germans conquered the city and much time didn't pass until the educator approached me and said to me I would not be able to come to school because I was Jewish.

...The Germans came and freed me from school. Not only from school. Also from Helenkah the cook and Myankah the educator. They all disappeared from the house. Indeed also dad went. He was an officer in the Polish army and he went out to the Russian front of the war. When I said to grandma and I was hoping "he would be killed for the sake of his homeland," she tried to slap me, but she missed and she chased after me around the table and didn't catch me. And then she sent flying all the soldiers that stood on the table and most of them broke. Plastic had still not been invented so the soldiers were made of time and led. I thought it would have been better to have been slapped, but already it was too late.

In the beginning didn't know what happened to dad. After, it was made known to us that he was in captivity in Russia. Mom said:

"When dad returns it will all be ok."

Everything changed. Mom was with us all the time. She washed us in the evening and I loved when she dried my hair for me after shampooing my head because then I would lean my head upon her and she would rub it with a soft towel. One time my brother took advantage of the opportunity and touched my naked back...

Page 15

...with a cold cup. If mom hadn't saved him, I would have "killed" him in that very spot.

Mom read to us stories before we went to sleep, prepared for us meals in the morning, afternoon and evening and she sent us to study. My brother continued to go to kindergarten. He was the strongest in kindergarten and on time even hit the kindergarten teacher. I studied with a private teacher, Mrs. Landau, with my cousin....

....Already before the war, I read a lot of books. There was no radio and no television. That is to say, we had a radio, but it was dad's. Like the telephone. Only dad's dog was also my brother's, and they use to lie down together under the table. When I use to go to the library I always asked two questions: Are there pictures in the book? And if so, I asked: Is the book frightening? If those two conditions were met, I would take the book. I loved stories about wars....

Page 16

...and hair-raising adventures. I loved books about adult heroes or children that went through troubles upon troubles and they suffered greatly until things were able to work out peacefully. A book that finished badly would fill me with fright that I sensed for a

long time after finishing reading it. But not one time did I ask the librarian what the ending was so as not to spoil for me the suspense of the reading it. Concerning this I was always ready to take a risk. The more I read, the stronger my jealousy grew of all the heroes who were portrayed in the books. Why does nothing happen to me? And then the war broke out.

I didn't understand that immediately—here it was happening to me too. In the beginning we left our apartment in the suburbs of the city and we moved to the apartment of my childhood, in the center of the city. Mom thought that if the Germans drew near they would shell Warsaw with mortars and therefore it would be preferable to be in the center far from the lines of fortifications, in our old house whose walls were thick and whose cellars deep, and not in our new house where the walls were thin, like walls of houses of cards. But mom didn't think about the bombings from in the air. Thus, after a month of bombings, we escaped by the skin of our teeth from the big building that went up in flames....Grandpa went after us while in his hands were two suitcases with winter clothes. The street was full of belongings that the people threw away in their flight. Mom turned again and again her head backward and shouted to him:

"Dad, throw away the worthless clothes!"

She called him "Dad" although he wasn't her dad, but the dad of my dad.

Page 25

Grandpa didn't throw away the suitcases and we had warm clothes for two winters in the cold ghetto. My grandpa wasn't lucky enough to see this. He was among the first to be killed by the Germans already in the first winter. The Jews killed a German

in the street and then the Germans gathered more than 500 men from among the neighborhoods, stood them up in a row and killed each 10th man. My grandpa did not return. My mother told us what had happened and gave to me his work tools. When she saw that I had taken the work tools and put them in a drawer she stopped me, and she showed me the handle of the hammer....and explained to me that their form was shaped over the course of many years according to the shape of Grandpa's hands. As if traces of his had been engraved in the material.

"Do you understand?"

"Certainly."

Page 26

The Germans squeezed into the ghetto half a million Jews from Warsaw and from all of the surrounding area and after they closed the region within the walls hunger and disease spread. I would go out each morning from the house and go to learn, still from Mrs. Landau.

Page 27

The books and the notebooks I would hide on my belly under my sweater. Because, for the Jewish children it was forbidden to learn. ...

....I saw on the way the dead who were taken out to the sidewalk towards morning, covered with newspapers, children....

Page 28

....and adults. It was possible to know according to their length. When I returned from Mrs. Landau they were already not there.

Because of the hunger there were in the streets those who were called the kidnapers. They would snatch everything that was possible to eat, and their method was to shove everything straight into their mouths, because then it was impossible to take anything back from them. One day a kidnapper dressed in rags took from me my lunch package. He took it and shoved it straight into his mouth. I wasn't so sorry that the man took my sandwich. I stood and I looked with curiosity. I wanted to know how he would succeed in swallowing the paper and what he would do with the twine. But two well-dressed adults jumped on him and began to hit him because he had snatched food from a child. And then I went away from there. I didn't want to see. I remember well white crumbs of cheese that were scattered upon the beard of the kidnapper when he gnawed at the package....

Page 29

One day I had pity on that unfortunate child who sat at the gate of our house and cried all the time in a voice that gradually became weaker:

"A piece of bread, *ay shikele broit*, a piece of bread..." And not a person had pity on him. Perhaps because there were so many children like this everywhere. I stood a little farther away, I extended my hand and I said in a strong voice:

"A contribution for a poor child...a contribution for a poor child...."

And to my amazement the people gave money to me. One man stopped and said to his wife:

"Take a look, a child from a good family, he still looks good...."

In a short time I received quite a lot of money, and the temptation was great to enter the small toy store across the way and finally to buy for myself a pocketknife. Mom had refused to buy a pocketknife for me. She said I would be wounded or wound my brother. In the end I thought that this would not be appropriate. I had not begged for this reason. I gave all the money to the child, I returned home and related to my mom with much pride what I had done. Mom looked me up and down with a serious gaze and asked:

Page 30

"Did any one of the neighbors see you?" Lest they think that I was sending you out begging. What a disgrace, the son of Dr. Orlevsky. I had to promise that I wouldn't do this ever again, from then on, mom gave me a coin every once in a while to give to the child.

Perhaps we would have succeeded in remaining alive until the end of the war in the ghetto, but the Germans began to take the people out, a few thousand each day, and became to send them on a train to "resettlement." It was possible to think that they invented this concept because they had quite a macabre sense of humor. No, no, they didn't have any sense of humor. They only sought to hide their deeds from the victims and from history. There were people who understood the meaning of this, but there were those who refused to believe it. The Germans were considered a very cultured people. It

simply didn't make sense that people that produced from its midst poets, and philosophers, doctors and scientists and such famous writers would do such a thing. People did not yet know then the matters do not necessarily contradict each other. And in the course of three months there remained in the ghetto out of half a million people only 50,00 or 60,000.

Most of the ghetto was already empty, which is to say empty of people. The Germans guarded walls all around in order that not one Polish person of the residents of the city could enter and could take anything from the houses. They wanted to take the things for themselves. People remained only in isolated islands of factories that worked for the sake of the German army and in a very small ghetto which was called "Barbaric", because in the opinion of the Germans it should not have existed. Mom and aunt Stepha worked in a factory that employed about a thousand people. Not in exchange for salary. Only in exchange for the right to live. We lived in an apartment house next to another apartment house that turned into a factory. All the other houses and all the streets around were empty. We were like a living island surrounded by a strange silence of death. It was possible to go out to the street, to enter through any gate, to climb any stairwell to open any door—the Germans forbade people who were banished...

Page 31

...from locking their doors—to enter any apartment, and everything was there. Sometimes arranged/neat, sometimes not. Sometimes an apartment of the wealthy, mostly apartments of the poor. Clothes in the closet. Bedding on the beds. Dishes in the kitchen. Sometimes dishes on the table. And only the people were missing, and there

wasn't food or valuables. When someone needed something he could take a risk and go and search in the empty houses. It was dangerous because of the German guard patrols. The people broke holes in the walls and went from house to house through these holes.

My aunt occasionally sent me with two grown-up fellows to look for coal to warm our apartment. I also always looked for children's rooms. If I found an orderly child's room, I looked for two things—stamps, because I collected stamps, and books that I had not yet read. When I used to return I used to have big quarrels with my brother. With regard to the stamps I got him good, I would give to him the torn ones. On the matter of the books, it was more difficult. I explained to my aunt that I didn't want to give them to him to read first because he reads slowly, I would finish my book and he would still be bogged down in his, and I don't have the patience to wait. But that was not the truth. We had a game.

I was Tarzan commander of the world, and my brother was not my brother but rather my enemy during war time and he returned to be my brother who stood at the head of a neighboring county during peace time. Each of us had a big army, and during the six years of the real war, we conducted our own war game. The form of the game was determined by the circumstances. If it was night, or in a dark hiding place, we would simply speak. What I was doing with my army and what my brother was doing with his army. When we were able to play games during the day on the floor we would conduct real wars with lead soldiers or with armies of chess pieces or with huge piles of playing cards that brought from the apartments of the banished people in the neighboring houses. In the days that we didn't need to hide we arranged battles or we played peace games

alternatively across the entire room over the course of twelve hours, until the adults returned from work. During a certain amount of time....

Page 32

Mrs. Lahover's baby disturbed us, because we had to take care of her when her mother was absent and to hide her together with us in the hiding place in moments of danger. Really we loved to feed her, but we took turns with who would clean her tush.

Every time that they came to look for children, I used to open the hiding place and lifted up the baby up into there. Mrs. Lahover and aunt Stepha quilted the walls of our hiding place with pillows and bed covers in order that her crying wouldn't be heard from the outside if she burst out crying suddenly, but she never cried....

....I hated hiding and listening how they were searching for us. It would frighten me to death. It frightened me also when we used to hide together with adults. Sometimes we sat curled up in an attic or in a closed up storage room in a closet or in a narrow crawl space behind a wall of bricks. It was impossible utter a sound, and one heard only the searchers, their steps, their tapping on the walls—they will find—they won't find—it was forbidden to cough or to sneeze—and one's throat scratched just at that time or one's nose tickled.

As long as the baby was with us my responsibility was so much heavier, because raising the little one to the hiding place was not so simple and one needed enough time for that....

...My brother and I were able to go up there quickly. But one day Mrs. Lahover and her baby went on the street to bring food for her mom and did not return.

Our game of war became more and more perfected all the time. Truthfully, I could have beaten him always. If it was clear to me that some rule was working to my disadvantage I simply changed it, and my brother was forced to agree, otherwise he was beaten up. But there was a limit to his oppression, because he had in his possession murderous ammunition:

"I'm not playing with you, pig!"

And then I would relent or allow him to win a big battle in order that everything would return to normal.

Every one of us had in his army heroes and generals. Each soldier who remained last in a big battle, was hit by a mortar shell-coin, went was reincarnated and was stood up again, and turned into a hero. Each heroism, like this or of another type, allowed the soldier to earn an "x" which we indicated on its base with a pencil. Three "x"s credited him with a name. And then, we returned to our quarrels, "who got to read the book first." The names of the heroes came from the books. Whoever read first recruited the soldiers of the book for his army. Naturally, in my army were the most important heroes, like General Captain Nemo, General Gordon, General Socrates, General Napoleon, General Kosciusko, General Washington and General Joshua ben Nun and many others. Except for Robin Hood. In a certain period, even before they took mom it was forbidden to turn on a light and mom was not able to read us a story before sleep time. She would light a candle under the table and we would sit with her hugging on her bed and she would tell story.

When she told us story the story of Robin Hood, my brother jumped suddenly and recruited a hero into the army. From then on General Robin Hood was in his army, god damn it!

When it was forbidden to the factory workers to keep children, mom tried to smuggle us to the Polish side of Warsaw. This was one of the great adventures which happened to me during the time of the war, in spite of the fact that the adventure itself lasted only ten hours. I write "adventure" because still I saw....

Page 34

....myself all the time as the hero of a suspense story, and the more people that they killed around me, the more did my faith grew strong that no evil could happen to me and that the end of the story in which I played the role of the hero would of necessity be a happy ending. In the factory we competed with other children who still survived, "who had more family member killed." My mother was born in another city, all we found out that all of her family was taken from there to Auschwitz, we reached the number 98, but the son of our neighbor passed 100, and then one day we invented for ourselves several aunts and uncles and we caught up to him.

One day I invented for myself a story that the war, the Shoah, and all of this wasn't really happening. It was only a dream that I was dreaming. I was the son of the King of China and my father the King commanded to set up my bed on a high platform and he seated around me twenty wise Mandarins. They called them Mandarins because each one of them had a Mandarin connected to their hat. My father commended them to put me to sleep and cause me to dream this dream in order that when the day came that I

would inherit the throne of my father, I would know how bad wars were, and worse than them hunger and being orphaned, and I would not make wars. For there was a very great demand of this story by my brother. Every time that something happened, a threatening and frightening situation was created, we were subjected to immediate danger, my brother would coax me to tell to him this story. He was ready to give to me in exchange everyone of his generals except for Robin Hood, of course. And if there wasn't time to tell everything from the beginning, how the court of the Chinese King looked, and what I ate at each meal and what commands I would give to the servants, he would settle for the assurance actually that all of this was only a dream that I was dreaming. In the great adventure I was 12 and my brother was 10. We went out of the ghetto and two Germans caught who were dressed in civilian clothes caught us. They transported us to the wall of the ghetto and took out pistols in order to kill us. My brother pulled my sleeve. I knew what he wanted, and I whispered,

“Yes, I had only dreamed.”

Page 35

....Mom became sick, her entire left side was paralyzed and she was taken to the Jewish hospital in the ghetto. We remained with aunt Stepha. The evening before mom lost her consciousness she layed down in her bed and her head hurt more strongly than normal. They thought that I was sleeping and they were talking among themselves. Mom said:

“What will happen with the children if I don't hold on?”

“Don't worry, Zoshya,” said aunt Stepha, “I will take the children.”

And then mom said to her:

"Stepha, I take them together with you always, through the good and bad."

And aunt Stepha promised and kept her promise.

In January 1943 the Germans killed all the patients of the hospital who were not able to walk to the trains. Aunt Stepha didn't say a word to me. I didn't ask. And I didn't say anything to my brother.

As long as mom was alive I thought and I felt that was some transparent image that guards over me all the time. There were a few times that I was almost able to discern it slipping away from the corner of my eye. But I didn't succeed in seeing it really even once. After some time my mother replaced the mysterious image and she, herself, guarded over the two of us.

In the beginning of February aunt Stepha smuggled us to the Polish region of Warsaw. When the rebellion broke out in the ghetto near two of us had already been hiding for two months, alone in a room which protruded from the roof of a tall apartment house. It didn't have water, nor electricity or gas, and therefore no municipal collector bothered us. The room....

Page 36

....belonged to the owner of a laundry on the ground floor. She and her children took care of us and they feed us. Until someone from among our neighbors told on us. Perhaps because the noise that we made while we played the game of war. A Polish policeman dressed in plain clothes came, he passed carefully between the battalions of soldiers that

we made from wood and paper and that we standing upon the floor, and he asked us questions for which there were no answers. For example:

“To which school do you go?”

The man slapped me several times because I answered in place of my brother. He tried to draw out the truth from my brother, since he was small, but my brother remained silent. Afterwards he claimed that he forgot the entire story that they had taught us. I spoke instead of him. The man became nervous and he said that I should be quiet. Nothing helped, my brother didn't open his mouth and then I spoke. And again he got nervous. But my brother continued to remain silent and the man agreed to hear what I had to say. In the end he said:

“Stop lying. But don't worry, children. Everything will be ok.”

He indeed reported to his superiors that we were Polish children. Nobody knew how to explain afterwards how this had happened. When the man got up to leave my brother's ability to speak suddenly returned and he asked him:

“You are not going to take us?”

“No.”

“Why are you not taking us? You are not a wicked man?”

The man hugged my brother and said to him:

“I am an evil man. But I will not hand you over.”

On this way to the door he looked over our soldiers and said:

“You are playing a war game, huh?”

C HAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

Holocaust youth literature slowly began in the 1950s and has become a prominent genre in today's literary world. As with all literature, there is the good and the bad. Carol Matas and Uri Orlev represent the best of this genre. They continually take a complex topic, one that is difficult even for adults, and create various different worlds that today's youth can explore and learn from.

Is simply reading one of their novels sufficient Holocaust education? The answer has to be no. As the number of survivors of World War II continues to shrink, the task of figuring out how Holocaust education will need to be taught in the future only becomes more paramount. But novels of this caliber certainly help. Learning the history of World War II and the Holocaust can feel impersonal and distant. *Lisa's War*, *Greater than Angels*, *In My Enemy's House*, *The Bird on Island Street*, *The Man from the Other Side*, and *Run, Boy, Run* all give the reader an opportunity to establish a connection with that

terrible era and its impact on individual lives. The authors take a subject from which the youth of today are so far removed, and they make it seem closer. Among their successful literary strategies are the characteristics they choose for their main protagonists, the adventures they brilliantly describe, and the challenging relationships these authors illustrate. These are by no means easy stories, but they do something that no picture of a concentration camp can do: they translate a distant horrific event into one that can resonate with their audience.

As we move ahead in the 21st century, time and time again we will be faced with the challenge of how to remember World War II and the Holocaust. For our younger generations, there is no better way for them initially to delve into this topic than by reading Holocaust youth literature.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Arnow, David. "The Holocaust and the Birth of Israel: Reassessing the Casual Relationship." Journal of Israeli History 15:3 (1994): 257-281.
2. Bauer, Yehuda. Rethinking the Holocaust. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
3. Bischoff, Katherine. "Interpreting Social Influences on Holocaust Knowledge." Contemporary Jewry 17(1996), pp. 106-135.
4. Bosmajian, Hamida. Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust. New York: Routledge, 2002.
5. Cohen, Michael. "Why Britain Left: the End of the Mandate." Wiener Library Bulletin 31:45/6 (1978): 74-86
6. Dawidowicz, Lucy. The War Against the Jews 1933-1945. 10th Anniversary Ed. New York, 1985.
7. Edelheit, Abraham J. "The Holocaust and the Rise of Israel: a Reassessment Reassessed." Jewish Political Studies Review 12:2 (2000) 97-112.
8. Facing History and Ourselves, The Jews of Poland Resource Book. Brookline, 1998.
9. Facing History and Ourselves, Holocaust and Human Behavior Resource Book. Brookline, 1994.
10. Flanzbaum, Hilene, ed. The Americanization of the Holocaust. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
11. Friesel, Eviatar. "The Holocaust: Factor in the Birth of Israel?" in: Yisrael Gutman (ed.), Major Changes Within the Jewish People in the Wake of the Holocaust. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996.
12. Kremer, Lillian. Witness through the Imagination: Jewish American Holocaust Literature. Internet Article.
13. Langer, Lawrence. Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
14. Matas, Carol. In My Enemy's House. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1999

15. Matas, Carol. Greater than Angels. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1998
16. Matas, Carol. Lisa's War. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1987
17. Orlev, Uri. The Bird on Island Street (*Ha-Yi Be-Rehov Ha-Tziporim*, Keter 1981).
Boston: Houghton Mifflin/Walter Lorraine Books, 1984
18. Orlev, Uri. Run, Boy, Run (*Rutz, Yeled, Rutz*, Keter, 2001). Boston: Houghton
Mifflin/Walter Lorraine Books, 2003
19. Orlev, Uri. The Man from the Other Side (*Ha-Ish Min Ha-Tzad Ha-Ahar*, Keter,
1988). Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991
20. Orlev, Uri. Mishaq HaHol (*The Sand Game*). Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House
Ltd., 1996
21. Rosenfeld, Alvin. The Americanization of the Holocaust. Ann Arbor: Jean and
Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, The University of Michigan, 1995.
22. Rosenfeld, Alvin, and Irving Greenberg, eds., Confronting the Holocaust.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.
23. Rosenfeld, Alvin. A Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980.
24. Rossel, Seymour. *The Holocaust: The World and the Jews, 1933-1945*. New
Jersey: Berhman House, 1992.
25. Segev, Tom. *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*. New York:
Owl Books (Paperback edition), 2000.
26. <http://carol.carolmatas.com/writer.htm>
27. www.myjewishlearning.com

PPENDIX I: M.A.R.E. CHAPTER

HOLOCAUST YOUTH LITERATURE IN THE CLASSROOM

Curriculum Rational

When I choose my thesis topic, Holocaust youth literature, I did so, knowing that it would not only lend itself well to the rabbinic thesis, but all the more so to the education component. There is a huge challenge in how to teach World War II and the Holocaust to our children. When I was growing up, we used one textbook in religious school—*The Holocaust: The World and the Jews, 1933-1945* by Seymour Rossel and one story in secular school—*The Diary of Anne Frank*. Neither was appropriate and neither was enough. I have always been drawn to the idea of learning about the Holocaust through literature. Maybe it is the English major in me. But whatever it is that lead me here, I have found a number of valuable resources to help students in middle school learn about World War II and the Holocaust throughout my research.

Uri Orlev and Carol Matas are two of the most prominent and prolific writers of Holocaust youth literature. Having done research earlier in my studies at HUC-JIR on this topic, I chose these two authors because of their personal backgrounds and knowing that I could choose from a number of different novels for my research. After I read all six stories, (Matas' *Lisa's War*, *Greater than Angels*, and *In My Enemy's House* and Orlev's *The Island on Bird Street*, *The Man from the Other Side*, and *Run, Boy Run*) I felt I had found a wonderful way to transmit this history to today's youth. Each story was complex and thoughtful. The main character was always written to connect with the reader. World War II and the Holocaust were revealed in such a way as not to push away the reader, but rather leaving them with a true desire to find out more about this part of our shared history.

As I analyzed the books, I realized they lent themselves to be taught a slightly different way. I didn't want to teach them one at a time or by having the students only read one book. Ideally they would read all six and the curriculum developed would work off that idea. Each story was so unique, it had to be read and it would help the student gain a much deeper picture overall of what went on during World War II and the Holocaust both historically and emotionally.

This larger curriculum would not be solely looking at Holocaust youth literature. It would include much of the history from the time—beginning with the rise of the Nazi Germany until the liberation of the concentration camps and the fall of the Nazi regime. Whenever the topic of discussion can be found in the text of any of these six books, it would be used as a basis to start our exploration. Historical topics that are found within the novels include: the Danish resistance movement, the Warsaw ghetto uprising, the

heroics of Le Chambon, France, working as a Polish Christian in Nazi Germany, the Russian invasion, refugee camps, hiding with non-Jewish families, and concentration camps. This is only a small sampling of what was discussed in these books.

The curriculum, however, would not just concentrate on the historical topics of World War II. A part of what makes these books special are the emotions that come out in them. The readers can connect with the main characters. They might be in a very different society today, but there are basic attributes they share as well. For example, first love, bravery, being scared or unsure. The authors certainly kept their readership in mind when writing. The other challenging topic that is important to discuss is the role of God and theology in the texts. The question "where was God during the Holocaust?" will forever haunt many Jewish people. And there is not a simple answer; the young characters in these books pose that question and other difficult ones. The authors struggle to answer them and I think they would prove to be rich discussion starters for middle-schoolers of today too.

Why insist that the youth of today study the Holocaust? I think Elie Wiesel said it best, "For the dead and the living, we must bear witness." This commandment is now being passed on to younger generations. Those who survived the Holocaust are now passing away. The Holocaust is one of the most horrific tragedies of our Jewish history. It is imperative that each new generation is taught about what happened to their ancestors. If our youth hasn't learned about our past, they certainly can't pass on what they know nor help others in need.

Jewish schools have a responsibility to teach the Holocaust. But with that being said, they have a responsibility to do it in an age appropriate way. The only way this part

of our history will continue to be important is if the transmission of it resonates with the students of today. By using Holocaust youth literature as a medium, students are given a chance to connect in a rich way to a situation they otherwise wouldn't. The literature isn't meant to scare off the reader or show them such horrible images that the thought of continuing study would be unimaginable. The goal of this genre is to take an extremely difficult topic and weave stories based in fact where the main character is of the reader's age; though in a very different time and place, going through similar emotions and possibly experiences. Just like when we teach students Torah and try to relate it to who they are and what is important to them, so too must we try to convey the tragedies of World War II in a similar fashion.

Overview of Class Sessions

What I have created for this paper are three sample lessons from the larger curriculum. The first is titled *Role Models from our Past*. This is more of an introductory lesson. It starts with assessing where the students are with their knowledge of World War II and the Holocaust. It also looks at the authors and their backgrounds as well as what drew them to writing the novels the students are reading. It concludes with the students looking at the main characters from the six novels and analyzing who they are and what types of characteristics they share with them.

The second lesson is titled *God and the Holocaust*. This lesson is more challenging. It begins by having the contemplative mood set by an opening activity and from there the students jump right into talking about their personal God beliefs as well as the role God plays in the stories. They have an opportunity to think the attributes they believe God has, to think about how God is referred to in the novels as well as the chance

to do some drama with a couple of difficult situations that arise in the texts. The first is one that has to do with Eve eating the apple and the second situation tackles the “where is God?” question.

The third lesson is titled *Tough Choices*. This lesson talks about resistance and bravery during World War II and brings in what we can do today to help others. It opens with focusing on what resistance and bravery are during World War II. It is very careful to incorporate resistance as simply staying alive an additional day to smuggling out babies from the ghetto to safety. No act of resistance is too small. Students will have a chance to look at different acts of resistance from the six novels and have a chance to discuss them. The final piece is realizing how we can help today. Students will be researching ELEM, an organization that helps Israeli youth in distress.

Age Group

6-8th Grade

Core Concept

Learning about World War II and the Holocaust is imperative as Jews. By using Holocaust youth literature as a point of entry, a world of history and emotion are opened up to us.

Essential Questions

1. What can I learn from studying World War II and the Holocaust?
2. Why is it important to study World War II and the Holocaust?
3. In what ways can I connect with the characters in the novels and how can they help me to become the person I am striving to be?
4. What can I learn from the experiences in the novels and how can I use what I learn to help others?

Assessment

1. Each week students will participate in discussions on various topics raised by the text including: resistance, god/theology, historical events, refugee camps, etc.
2. Students will make connections between the text of the novels and their lives through discussions and activities.
3. Students will take what they have learned about World War II and the Holocaust and apply the principle of helping others to today's world.
4. Students will hone their analytical skills through a series of activities that require them to pick apart texts.

Lesson #1

Class: Role Models from Our Past

Length: 90 mins.

Core Concept: When it comes to Holocaust youth literature the people who write the books are as important as the characters they bring to life. Carol Matas and Uri Orlev each bring a specific history and personal attachment to the Holocaust that comes out in their stories. The main characters they create have been written to connect with the reader and open them up to a different world.

Goals:

- For students to become familiar with two major Holocaust youth literature writers
- For students to realize that they have a lot in common with kids there own age from around the world and from a different time
- For students to continue to work on their group skills

Assessment:

- Students will be able to tell you who the two authors are that we are studying
- Students will successfully work in small groups or pairs to accomplish two different tasks
- Students will be able to analyze a text by pulling out characteristics of the main characters
- Students will make connections with the authors and the characters of these books

Set Induction: What We Know

Time: 15 mins.

Goals:

- To have students think about what they have already learned about the Holocaust
- To be aware of (as a teacher) what the students already know about the Holocaust

Materials:

- Half-sheets of paper
- Pens/pencils
- Dry-erase markers/chalk

Procedure:

1. Pass out pencils/pens and half-sheets of paper and ask the students to number them 1-10.
2. Allow the students 5-7 minutes to write down ten things they know about the Holocaust. Ask them to write more than one word for each.
3. At the end of the time given, ask students to share some of what they listed and write it on the board.

4. Go through the whole list the class came up with. Chances are the students have missed a lot of important information about the Holocaust. Reinforce that what they do know is important information, but that there is a lot more that we will explore over the next couple of classes. Stress that though this topic can be and often times is studied in a secular school setting, it is important to be able to look at these stories through a Jewish lens—what we will be doing in this classroom. Also, discuss the importance of studying the Holocaust. Mention that many of the survivors are passing away and that each new generation needs to learn about the previous ones. By passing on what happened during World War II, we can hope that we would be able to stop anything else like this from happening again as well as respect those who came before us.

Activity #1: Who Are They?

Time: 40 mins.

Goals:

- To have the students to learn the stories of the authors we will be looking at as well as a little about the history of each novel
- For students to work in a group and create a finished product
- For students to have an opportunity to present/speak in front of the whole class

Materials:

- Copies of background information on Matas and Orlev
- Scrap paper
- Poster board—one sheet per group
- Markers/pens/pencils/crayons
- Any other art supplies teacher might find valuable for the activity

Procedure:

1. Split the class into 2 or 4 groups (depending on number of students and their ability to work together).
2. Assign each group one of the two authors
3. Pass out to them the author's background information, scrap paper and pencil
4. Explain to the students that they will have 15 minutes to read through the material as a group and create a sketch of a poster that best represents who they think the author is as well as includes something about each book discussed in the piece.
5. Ask each group to get an "ok" from the teacher and then allow them to do their work on the poster board with the art supplies. (15 mins.)
6. When each group is done, hand the posters in the front of the classroom and have each group come up and explain what they did and why.
7. If there are holes in how they represent the authors, fill them in at the end.

Activity #2: Do they have anything in common with ME?

Time: 35 mins.

Goals:

- To learn about the main characters in these novels
- For students to learn about kids who are similar in age to themselves and even though they were living through something horrible, there are still connections to be made
- For students to have an opportunity to work on small group skills
- For students to analyze a text

Materials:

- Copies of specific texts from each of the six books
- Copies of worksheet
- Pens/pencils

Procedure:

1. Split the class into six groups.
2. Assign each group one character from one of the books written by Matas or Orlev
3. Ask the students to read through the piece together as a group and fill in the answers on the worksheet. Students should be concentrating on characteristics that they have in common and that are different with the characters they are reading about. The scenes that the students will be looking at are the following:
 - a. From Carol Matas' Works
 - i. *Lisa's War*, pp. 26-31 (Lisa goes on her first mission for the resistance and is nervous)
 - ii. *Greater than Angels*, pp. 14-19 (Anna displays her talent for making people laugh and helping in a difficult situation)
 - iii. *In My Enemy's House*, pp. 116-121 (Marisa sneaks out of the house and almost gets caught)
 - b. From Uri Orlev's Works
 - i. *The Island on Bird Street*, pp. 142-146 (Alex goes on his first date and is bullied)
 - ii. *The Man from the Other Side*, pp. 79-82 (Marek taking care of his elderly grandfather)
 - iii. *Run, Boy, Run*, pp. 7-11 (Srulik plays soccer and learns to steal)
4. Once the students have finished the worksheets, go around and ask them to share characteristics that are similar to who they are and those that are different. Write them on the board.
5. Wrap up the activity by looking at the two lists and asking the students what they think of them.
 - a. What type of youngsters are these main characters?
 - b. Are you surprised you have so many things in common with them?
 - c. Are you not surprised?
 - d. What do you think is the most interesting characteristic and why?

Conclusion (5 mins.)

Wrap up the class. Go through the information that the students learned during the session. Make sure to use the students' comments as a way to solidify the material.

Carol Matas: A North American Voice

As a child growing up in Canada, Matas did not expect to become an author. Although reading was her favorite pastime, she always had her heart set on becoming an actor. She graduated from college with a degree in English, but chose to pursue an acting career. She eventually found herself amongst actors who also wrote in their spare time. They would write stories on their own and share them and give each other feedback. With each story, Matas' fictional work became longer and more developed, until finally in 1977 she wrote her first full-length book. Matas began writing fiction with young people as the lead characters. However, it was not until she submitted her book to the National Film Board of Canada and they wrote her back encouraging her to continue to write fiction for children, that she realized she had come upon a genre she loved. Since then she has written many books of fantasy, science fiction, and historical fiction for youth.

Her interest in writing World War II stories was piqued by her husband, Per. At one point he ran the theater in a Jewish community center. While he worked there, an exhibit on the Holocaust opened, and he started to share all these stories of his parents' time as Jews in Denmark when Germany invaded in 1942. Matas had never heard any of these stories before, but all of a sudden her husband began recalling such vivid details as told by his parents, who were twelve when the Nazis invaded Denmark. The stories

she heard were incredible. For example, her father-in-law had put sugar in Germans' gas tanks so their cars wouldn't run.

When he was fifteen years old he was officially a member of the resistance movement. Matas also recalls her husband telling her that his father's biggest fear concerned his mother:

His mother had been making his bed one morning when she felt something lumpy under the mattress. She picked up the mattress only to find two handguns and a machine gun. Apparently she almost killed him. He was certainly more afraid of *her* than he was of the Germans.¹

Matas adds that what was so ironic, was that her father-in-law's dad was also in the resistance, but that the cells were so small that the two men did not know that the other had been part of it. Each night his father would lie about leaving the house to see friends, and her husband's dad would do the same as well. After hearing all these stories, Matas decided to write a book on the Danish resistance entitled *Lisa's War*. She took the premise from all her other books—namely, that one person can make a difference— and applied this to the Holocaust youth literature genre. For additional research she

¹ <http://carol.carolmatas.com/writer.htm>

spent time in Winnipeg interviewing a number of Holocaust survivors from the Danish Club. Many of their stories are also woven into *Lisa's War*.

The idea for *Greater Than Angels*, a book written by Matas in 1998, came about while she was lecturing in St. Paul, Minnesota on *Lisa's War* and the heroism of the Danish people. There she saw a film, *Weapons of the Spirit*, about a man whose parents were saved by the people of Le Chambon, France, a small farming village. This story struck a cord with Matas, because like *Lisa's War* it was a story about people who risked their lives to save others. First she wrote *Daniel's Story* for the United States Holocaust Museum. During her visit to the museum she was reminded of the heroism in Le Chambon through an exhibit. So moved by the story, Matas decided to write a novel. She interviewed a number of survivors who had been hidden in Le Chambon during the war and heard many inspiring stories including those of Pastor Trocmé who was the pastor of Le Chambon and a pacifist. He was opposed to fighting the Germans and refused to cooperate after they invaded France. France might have broken its promise to protect its Jews, but Le Chambon did not. Pastor Trocmé and the people of Le Chambon hid as many Jews, and others fleeing the Nazis, as they could.

While Matas was doing research she came across a number of stories of Jewish families who lived in Germany during the war and managed to hide by using false papers or by constantly moving. These stories led her to write

In My Enemy's House, a book that tries to answers questions like what it was like to live in Nazi Germany and what did ordinary German people believe and think at the time. Matas expected the story to be about German Jews. To find people to interview, Matas put out a general advertisement asking for those who survived the war living in Germany. German Jews did not respond, but Polish Jews who had been disguised as Polish Christians sure did. Matas interviewed a number of Polish Jews who had all hidden their identities in order to survive. Each of them told his or her unique story about living in the Lion's Den itself. The information Matas gathered enabled her to tackle the difficult question of what humans are capable of in the book.

Uri Orlev: An Israeli Voice

Uri Orlev was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1931 and spent the beginning of World War II in the Warsaw Ghetto. When the war broke out his father, who was fighting for the Polish army, was captured by the Russians. He only saw his sons again in 1954 in Israel. Eventually, his mother was murdered by the Nazis, and he and his brother were sent to Bergen-Belsen. They were liberated two years later and immigrated to pre-state Israel. Orlev began to write children's books in 1976 and has since published over thirty books, many of which are biographical. His books have been translated into twenty-five different languages. In 1996 Orlev received the Hans Christian Andersen Award for children's literature. The jury's statement was:

Uri Orlev's experience as a Jewish boy in war-torn Poland is the background of this outstanding writer for children. Whether his stories are set in the Warsaw ghetto or his new country Israel, he never loses the perspective of the child he was. He writes at a high literary level, with integrity and humor, in a way which is never sentimental, exhibiting the skill to say much in few words. Uri Orlev shows how children can survive without bitterness in harsh and terrible times.²

Orlev continues to be a unique and prolific voice in the genre of Holocaust

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uri_Orlev

youth literature. His books and his story have influenced children all over the world.

Orlev wrote about his life during World War II in *Mishaq HaHol*, translated from the Hebrew it means *The Sand Game*. The writing of *Mishaq HaHol* was sparked by one of his children, who after watching a hero escape enemies on television asked, "Father, how did you flee from the Germans?"³ Orlev wasn't sure how to answer his son, "How to be able to answer a short answer that includes all that took place during those six years. And then I got the idea to give an example to him and I told him about the sand game."⁴ He started to talk to his son about a game that he and his friends played when they were younger. The game was called, *How Many Will be Born to You?* It was played in a sandbox. The player or prophet as they would call him, took a handful of sand, threw it up in the air and did different things with his hands catching fewer and fewer grains. Finally, when only a few remained, those were the number of children one would have. It didn't end there though. Those grains were again thrown into the air and now each time grains fell towards the ground the prophet would come up with disturbing ways that the children would be murdered. Only those grains that fell in a secure place (the palm of the prophet-player's hand) survived. Orlev writes:

³ Orlev, Uri. *The Sand Game*, pg. 5

⁴ Ibid

I took my son to the sandbox and I showed him how one plays the game. After this I explained to him that the Germans threw us every time in the air, and every time thus...thus...many men died, but we—that is to say my brother and I—we always fell in a secure place. Each time was a new number. A new adventure.⁵

Orlev talks about a number of those “adventures” in *The Sand Game*. He perceived these “adventures” as interwoven throughout his childhood. Talking about the prominence of his family, Orlev describes where they lived, the schools he went to and the nannies he had. Once Hitler came to power, one sees more and more freedoms being taken away. His family moves from the village to the city of Warsaw, riots occur, people begin questioning and taunting him about being Jewish, and his cook and teacher suddenly quit.

A major turn of events, of course, is when the Russians take his dad captive. Now Orlev’s mom is left to take care of the family alone. The remaining tales in *The Sand Game* are about the hardships that occurred once Orlev and his family moved into the Warsaw ghetto. There are stories about sneaking off to school, scavenging in empty apartments, fears of being murdered, begging, and hiding. This unpretentious little book is a monument to the many tragic events that happened to and around Orlev and his family.

Each of Orlev’s works, *The Island on Bird Street*, *The Man from the*

⁵ Orlev, Uri. *The Sand Game*, pg. 6

Other Side and *Run, Boy, Run* are unique and based on a true story. *The Island on Bird Street*, though not exactly the story of Orlev's time as a child in the Warsaw ghetto, is very close. Having read *The Sand Game*, I went into reading this story with a much richer understanding of Orlev's childhood. I was surprised to find that pieces of many of his personal stories in this novel. From its taking place in a ghetto, to the disappearance of the mother, to the scavenging by the main character—all of these events happened in Orlev's real life. At times it is hard to differentiate between the main character, Alex, and Orlev himself.

The Man from the Other Side takes the spotlight off Orlev and on to a man he happened to meet while in Israel. Marek worked for a Polish newspaper and they met by chance at a mutual friend's home in Israel. Orlev, needing a few days off from work, asked Marek to join him on a sightseeing trip up north. Marek agreed and they spent a number of days talking about their personal stories during World War II. Orlev spoke about life in the ghetto while Marek spoke about life as a Polish Christian outside the ghetto walls. When they parted ways, Orlev asked permission to write Marek's story, but Marek said, even in 1987, that he was worried about what his family, friends and even the Polish government would do. In the end, Orlev said he would only sit down to write it if Marek passed away. Unfortunately only two months after their chance meeting, Marek died in a

plane crash. In this book, Orlev puts into words the heroic acts of Marek and his step-father, Antony. *The Man from the Other Side* is a powerful tale of resistance.⁶

Run, Boy, Run is the true story of Srulik Frydman as told by Orlev. Srulik is a young child, who is eight years old at the time when he escapes from the Warsaw ghetto, and stays alive through the war by taking on a Polish Catholic guise that he comes to truly believe in. The reader learns of his adventures living in the forest, working for farm after farm, and trying to stay away from the German authorities. After the war, Srulik is taken in by a Jewish children's home, though against his will. He has lived the life of a Catholic for so long, that he could not see that he was actually a Jewish youngster. In the epilogue, we learn that Srulik excelled in mathematics, becoming a professor who immigrates to Israel after encountering anti-Semitism. In Israel he is reunited with his sister, marries his love from Poland and continues to teach and share his story from the war. It is in Israel that Orlev heard his story and wanted to tell it.⁷

⁶ Orlev, Uri. *The Man from the Other Side*, pp. 1-3

⁷ Orlev, Uri. *Run, Boy, Run*, pp. 184-186

Names: _____

Is the Main Character at all Like Me?

Title of Book: _____

Author of Book: _____

Main Character's Name: _____

Similar Characteristics

Different Characteristics

Lesson #2

Class: God and the Holocaust

Length: 75 mins.

Core Concept: Holocaust youth literature, though written for the youth of today, does a valiant job tackling difficult topics including God. God and theology play a large role in a number of these works and what is discussed in them, can help us understand the Holocaust better and help us shape our own personal theologies.

Goals:

- For students to become familiar with what some Holocaust youth literature does with the challenging topic of God and theology
- For students to have an opportunity to really think about the role God plays in our lives and the lives of others
- For students to learn to work well together and engage in discussion

Assessment:

- Students will turn in a number of worksheets
- Students will demonstrate their ability to work in small groups
- Students will demonstrate how they have internalized the material by their comments in class

Set Induction: Being Mindful

Time: 15 mins.

Goals:

- To have students shift their mindset from their fast-paced life to something more contemplative
- For students to experience something new

Materials:

- "Fun Bag" of M&Ms for each participant

Procedure:

1. Introduce activity
2. Pass out M&Ms to each person
3. Go through the three steps of the activity with the group:
 - a. Eat 5 M&Ms in a normal fashion
 - b. This time, eat two M&Ms as slowly as possible. No biting!
 - c. This time, take one M&M. Hold it in your hand and look at it before eating. Notice the color and texture. Feel the weight. Next, place it in your

mouth. Let it melt. Eat it even slower than the first two. This time, take care to concentrate fully on the taste of the M&M. Eat like it's the past piece of chocolate you'll ever eat in your life!

4. Once everyone is done. Open it up for comments.
 - a. What did it feel like to eat M&Ms that way?
 - b. Was it annoying or a good experience? Did you realize something about the M&M that you didn't normally notice?
 - c. How can you connect what you just experienced to how you connect with God?
5. Conclusion: Talk about how the M&M activity was meant to get you in a more thoughtful mindset. Talking about God can be difficult and scary, but if we all go into it with an open mind than we can get a lot out of the lesson.

Activity #1: The Many Attributes of God

Time: 15 mins.

Goals:

- For students to begin to articulate their thoughts on God
- For students to think about God in relation to World War II and the Holocaust

Materials:

- Index cards
- Pens/pencils
- Dry-erase markers/chalk

Procedure:

1. Pass out index cards and pens
2. Ask students to answer the two questions that should be written on the board:
 - a. When you think about God, what type of God do you think about?
 - b. After you have answered the first question—what types of challenges do you think Jews had during World War II with their feelings and thoughts about God?
3. Ask the students to share their answers to the first question and write them up on the board. Once there is a list on the board, go through it with them and ask them

to talk about the answers they came up with for the second question. What impact do they think WWII had on people's beliefs?

Activity #2: God in Holocaust Youth Literature

Time: 15 mins.

Goals:

- For students to be exposed to different God ideas that came out of Holocaust youth literature
- For students to work successfully in pairs
- For students to begin working on debate skills

Materials:

- Pens/pencils
- Copies of "God in Holocaust Youth Literature" worksheet

Procedure:

1. Split students up into pairs
2. Pass out the worksheet and allow them time to follow the directions and complete one sheet together
3. When each pair is done, go through each God idea and by showing hands see who marked an "X" for what. Keep track of the number on the board.
4. When you have finished going through the list, see which God ideas seem to be split in the class between Yes/No. Circle those on the board.
5. Ask students from each side to take 60 seconds and come up with an argument as to why they believe they were correct. At the end of 60 seconds have them share with the class. Allow the class to vote again with each topic and see where they stand afterwards.
6. Once each God idea has been talked about. Let the students know that actually all the God ideas came from Holocaust youth literature and that just goes to show the different experiences that were had during WWII and different way people's Judaism played a role in their life. Allow students to share their thoughts on why all of the descriptions of God might have been articulated in Holocaust youth literature.

Activity #3: Looking to the Texts: Two Tough Situations

Time: 25 mins.

Goals:

- To have the students grapple with the actual text
- Allow students an opportunity to read in front of their classmates
- Allow students an opportunity for critical thinking and contemplation

Materials:

- Copies of the skits
- Copies of the question sheets
- Pens/pencils

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity by telling the students that there are going to be two short text readings with discussion and question time interspersed. Choose 5 people for the first skit (taken from *Greater than Angels* by Carol Matas), pass out the parts and ask them to come up and act it out to the class.
2. When they are done reading the text, pass out a series of questions for the students to answer individually.
3. Choose 2 more people to come up to the front and read the next text (taken from *The Man from the Other Side* by Uri Orlev).
4. When they are done reading, ask the students to answer the rest of the questions.
5. Ask the students to split up into pairs and share their answers from both texts.
6. When they are done, choose one or two questions to ask the whole class and take a few minutes to really talk it through with them.

Conclusion (5 mins.)

Wrap up the class. Go through the information that the students learned during the session. Make sure to use the students' comments as a way to solidify the material.

Names: _____

God in Holocaust Youth Literature

Directions: Mark an "X" next to the descriptions of God you believe to be found in Holocaust youth literature.

- _____ God punishes
- _____ God protects
- _____ God doesn't exist
- _____ God has forgotten about the Jewish people
- _____ God is not to blame for creating evil people
- _____ The Divine spark can be found in all human beings
- _____ God created a world that needed to be completed
- _____ God is all-powerful
- _____ God has a plan for all human beings
- _____ God is a mysterious being that we cannot understand
- _____ God is whom I pray to
- _____ God doesn't listen to our prayers
- _____ God arranges things so humans need to choose between good and evil
- _____ God doesn't operate the way that human beings do
- _____ God can be felt

Text A: Taken from *Greater than Angels* by Carol Matas

Anna: I arrived in a barracks that was filled with young people from the ages of fourteen to twenty. Standing in front was a middle-aged man with a beard. He introduced himself as Professor Malkovitch, and told us he had taught religion and philosophy at the university in Berlin, before he'd been fired because he was a Jew. He suggested that we begin at the beginning, studying Genesis.

He spoke for a while about the story of Genesis, when a young man with wild blond hair leaped up and interrupted him.

Boy 1: "Professor, if Eve hadn't eaten from the forbidden fruit, which God *warned* her not to eat, wouldn't the world still be a perfect place? Didn't she let in knowledge, and with that, the concept of good and evil?"

Anna: I scowled. It always ended up being the female who was at fault! Without stopping to think that I knew nothing and should keep my mouth shut, I burst out, "If God knows everything, don't you think He knew Eve would eat the apple? So He must have planned it that way." Everyone was staring at me. In a smaller voice I said, "It wasn't her fault, at all."

Boy 1: The young man shot back. "If she hadn't eaten that apple, that day, we wouldn't be *here*, right now."

Girl 1: Someone else piped up. "Are you saying this is all Eve's fault?"

Boy 1: "Yes," the young man insisted. "Without knowledge, we'd still be in a state of paradise."

Professor: "And maybe," said the professor, "there would then only be Adam and Eve in the world. After all, what use are people, an entire planet full, if only to live in a state of unconscious bliss? Only with knowledge can we become conscious. And this brings us to the heart of Genesis. Did God create a perfect world? And if not, why?"

Rudi: "Professor, God created a world that need to be completed. We must mend the world. *Tikkun Olam*. That is our job. After all, if the world were perfect, if we *knew* for sure God existed, we'd spend all our time praising Him and doing nothing else. What else could you do if you knew, for *sure*, that there was a God? So God had to separate us from Him. He had to make a not-quite-perfect world for us to work on."

Text B: Taken from *The Man from the Other Side* by Uri Orlev

Marek: And now it was my turn to ask... "But where is God, and how can He permit all this to happen?"

Pan Jozek: "A lot of Jews wonder where God is too. But God doesn't operate the way men do. His punishments for their crimes aren't conceived in terms of human logic."

Marek: "Then the Germans won't be punished?" I asked.

Pan Jozek: "They will be, but not with the kind of punishments we're used to."

Marek: "What other kind is there?"

Pan Jozek: "Think of what it will be like for the next generation of Germans, the Nazis' children, to know that their parents were mass murderers. That could be part of the punishment."

Name_____

What Do You Think?

Directions: Answer the following questions on each of the two scenes acted out in class.

Text A: Torah Study

Why might the boy have blamed Eve for all the troubles the Jewish people were going through?

Do you believe what Rudi said makes sense? Do you believe in a type of God that might not make things perfect so that humans can help fix what is wrong?

What role do you think the Holocaust/WWII has in the way these young people are thinking about God and Biblical stories?

Text B: Does God Punish?

Do you believe that God punishes people? Why or why not.

One tough question from the Holocaust is "Where was God?" What do you think the answer to that question is?

Do you think enough people know about what really happened during the Holocaust? Explain your answer. And, do you believe that by knowing about the horrific events of the Holocaust, tragedies like this will not happen again?

Lesson #3

Class: Tough Choices

Length: 75 mins.

Core Concept: Resistance during World War II took many different forms from simply living another day in a concentration camp to killing a German in the Warsaw ghetto uprising. These acts and everything in between should be considered large feats by those who participated in them, both Jewish and non-Jewish. From them, we can learn of the importance of helping to save others today.

Goals:

- For students to become familiar with various types of resistance done during World War II
- For students to take lessons from World War II and apply them to how we can help others today
- For students to continue learning how to work well with others

Assessment:

- Students will be able to analyze text answering specific questions about different types of resistance
- Students will learn to argue for an organization that they find meaningful seeing the value in modern-day resistance

Set Induction: What Are We Talking About?

Time: 15 mins.

Goals:

- To have the students grapple with the actual text
- Allow students an opportunity to read in front of their classmates
- Allow students an opportunity for critical thinking and contemplation

Materials:

- Index cards
- Dry-erase marker/chalk
- Pens/pencils

Procedure:

1. Pass out index cards and pencils/pens
2. Write on the board two words: Resistance and Bravery
3. Ask the students to take five minutes and define what they think each of those words mean in relation to being Jewish and their age during World War II and the Holocaust

4. When time is up, ask students to volunteer to read their definitions for one word and then another
5. Talk about how resistance and bravery of all different kinds happened during World War II. Those two categories don't just include the people who fought in the Warsaw ghetto uprising or tried to kill Germans. Those categories include the people who hide through the war, lived as Polish Christians, helped save other Jews, etc.

Activity #1: Resistance and Bravery in the Text

Time: 25 mins.

Goals:

- To have students learn about different forms of resistance/bravery in the novels
- For students to come to appreciate that there were all types of acts that could and should be considered acts of resistance/bravery

Materials:

- Copies of texts
- Copies of question sheet
- Pens/pencils

Procedure:

1. Tell students that now they are going to looking at texts from the various books that have to do with resistance and being brave.
2. Pass out the texts and ask the students to read the text silently.
3. Once the class has finished reading them, pass out the sheets with the questions and allow them to work in pairs to answer the questions.
4. Once everyone is finished, go through them as a class and talk about the student's answers.

Activity #3: One Who Saves a Life...

Time: 30 mins.

Goals:

- For the students to begin to think about the idea of resistance and bravery and how it can apply to how they live their lives today
- For the students to learn about and argue for a worthy organization

Materials:

- Arts and crafts supplies
- Paper

- Pens/pencils
- Copies of the assignment sheet
- Copies of background material on ELEM

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity to the students. Start with the Talmud text that states, "One who saves a single life within humanity is as if they had saved all of humanity." Talk about how we are commanded to help out those in need. One form of resistance during the Holocaust was to help others. That is something we can still do today. Keeping that in mind, we are going to look at an organization call ELEM that helps youth in distress in the State of Israel. Your goal is to look at their background materials and other programs they offer and create a creative persuasive presentation as to why you believe we should support this organization and all they do.
2. Split the class into small groups and pass out the background information and copies of the assignment sheet and pens for them to take notes. Allow them time to come up with an idea. Have them run it by you and then give them the rest of the time to flesh it out.
3. The last 5-7 minutes of class, have each group present.

Conclusion (5 mins.)

Wrap up the class. Go through the information that the students learned during the session. Make sure to use the students' comments as a way to solidify the material.

To Resist

The door slams and Susanne runs into our room. Her face is flushed. She pulls a gun out of her purse.

"We've got to his this," she says.

I jump up and slam our door shut. "What have you been doing?" I ask.

"Remember those two men we met when we followed Stefan?" she asks, still panting and now shaking a little.

I nod.

"They're both dead."

"How?" I ask. "What happened?"

"They were informed on by a new member of the group. We were suspicious of him, and I've been watching his house—Stefan and I—and yesterday we saw him meet a Gestapo officer. I was the one who did it. I insisted on doing it. Stefan and Jesper are taking him for a little boat trip now, his one-way ticket to Sweden."

Now I know what she's talking about. She shot him, and the boys are dumping his body into the sea. That way the Germans can't be sure we've killed him, and they may not retaliate so quickly.

Lisa's War, pp. 51-52

Now Klara is a girl who never, ever says anything. But she chose this moment to become a blabbermouth.

"And," Klara butted in, "Anna is going to sing with you."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Sonia Morenthal.

"No," I said, glaring at Klara. "No. I couldn't."

"Yes, but you must. What is your repertoire?"

"That's the thing," I said, turning bright red. "I don't have one."

"You know all of *The Threepenny Opera* by heart," Klara piped in again. "She really can sing that!"

I used to force Klara to listen to me when I practiced. I'd forgotten what a good friend she'd been to me until I became too busy for her.

"But I love Kurt Weill," Miss Morenthal said. "And he's been banned by the Nazis. So, naturally we must sing him. Yes, that will be our first concert. As soon as I get my violin we will practice."

Greater Than Angels, pp. 52-53

On the way home I could bear Charlotte's blindness and brainwashing no longer. Pretending to be completely ignorant, I asked her, "Charlotte, please explain something to me."

"Certainly," she agreed, delighted to be asked.

"Many German Jews have lived here for over a thousand years, correct?"

"Yes, as I'm told."

"Why is it that only now they pose such a threat to your country?"

"Oh, but they always did."

"But, I still don't understand. Isn't Germany the greatest civilization in the world?"

"Yes," she agreed proudly.

"With the best writers, composers, philosophers, architects, everything?"

"Yes!"

"How could Germany develop like that if the Jews were so evil and so smart? Surely over the course of a thousand years they would have ruined your country. I mean, that's what evil people do. They destroy. And yet, Germany grew and flourished."

There was a long pause. For a moment, I think she was so confused she couldn't answer.

"Well," she said finally, "I don't know. But they must have been kept in check somehow."

In My Enemy's House, pg. 101

We started out. The whole way Boruch kept coaching me about what I would have to do. As soon as we reached 78 Bird Street I would make a dash for the front gate by myself. I knew the house. It was full of windows without glass. There was nothing left inside it either, just smashed walls with bits of floor hanging from them and pipes sticking up into the air. Boruch would give me a push when the time came. He promised that father would follow me. Or else that he would slip away and join me later, in two or three days at the most. At any rate, I had to stay put as long as I could. Even if it took a whole month. Even if it took a whole year.

"You're a bright boy," he said. "You'll manage. If they mean to kill us all, the children have the worst odds."

The Island on Bird Street, pg. 21

The first time I saw Antony being handed a baby, I was in shock. He hadn't warned me in advance, and I almost broke into tears like its mother. He never let me know about such things beforehand, because he believed in learning by experience. The baby's mother couldn't stop crying. She undressed it for the doctor, who came to give it a shot in its little behind to make it sleep, and then wrapped it up again, kissed it, and gave it to Antony together with a bag. In the bag, I was told by someone there, was the name and address of the baby's parents and of an aunt in America, so that the child could be returned to its family after the war. "And there's also some money, all of which your father claims is for the mother superior of the convent."

Although Antony looked annoyed when he heard that, he didn't say a word.

He put the baby in his sack and we descended into the sewers. After walking a while I asked him about it, and he told me that he brought the babies to a convent where they were raised to be nuns and good Catholics.

The Man From the Other Side, pp. 19-20

"Don't worry," she said. "I'm not sending you away just yet."

She told him to go to his alcove, shut the door, and knock. When she opened it, he was to enter the big room, take off his hat, and say, "Blessed be Jesus Christ." Then he would wait for her to answer, "Forever and ever, amen." They practiced that a few times.

Finally she said, "Very good. And what will you say when you're asked where you're from and who your parents are? You have to be prepared."

"I don't know."

She sat him down in front of her and told him, "You were born in a little village. You don't remember its name. You don't know how old you are. All you remember is that one day your father hitched the horses to the wagon, loaded all your belongings on it, and set out with you and your mother."...

Every day she repeated the story to him. He didn't have to remember it exactly as she told it, she said. He just had to know some version of it by heart. When he was asked about himself, he had to tell as if it were true.

Run, Boy, Run pp. 72-73

Questions:

What type of resistance is present in each of these pieces of text?

What do you know about the situation each of these characters might be in from reading the texts (write about each one individually)?

Has there been a moment in your life where you have resisted or acted bravely? If so, when.

Resistance Today: Who Should We Support?

A Strong Persuasive Presentation

It is your job to research ELEM and create a presentation about the organization that would make all your classmates want to support it

The basic questions you should be able to answer and that you should work into your presentation must include:

1. A summary of what the organization does and who it serves
2. An argument for why the organization provides important work and why we should support such an organization
3. How you see helping this organization today as a form of resistance
4. Include visual aids including but not limited to: brochures, posters, and flyers

BE CREATIVE! Your group presentation can be a rap, an advertisement, a written piece, a piece of art work, etc.—just make sure you get all the important information into it.

ELEM: Helping Israeli Youth in Distress

Our Mission

- To design and model effective treatment and rehabilitation services for troubled, neglected, abused and adjudicated youth.
- To accurately and carefully measure outcomes and disseminate information about effective interventions via publications, seminars, conferences and forums to professionals involved with youth and youth-related services in both public and private agencies.

To advance public awareness of the various problems concerning youth at risk and in distress, as well as to advocate and lobby legislation on their behalf.

Partnerships

ELEM's primary partners include The Israel Ministry of Welfare, The Ministry of Education, The Absorption Ministry, The Joint Distribution Committee, Ashalim, The Legacy Fund, The Jewish Agency and numerous private foundations and individuals in the United States, Israel and Europe. Working together, these partners develop new and innovative programs that have been central to ELEM's vision since its establishment.

Evaluation of exciting new and innovative programs has been one of ELEM's major goals since it was established. For this purpose and to disseminate knowledge ELEM established *The Forum for Children and Youth Affairs* jointly with The Tel Aviv University, Bob Shapell School of Social Work. The Forum provided a professional academic platform for the purpose of promoting research, imparting knowledge, formulating field theories and advancing youth policy in Israel. In 2001, *The Forum for Children and Youth Affairs* was formalized into an academic establishment, operating as part of Tel Aviv University. Since then it has been known as *The Interdisciplinary Center for Children and Youth Studies*.

Programs

Derech Hamelech - King's Way

This program serves to assist teens to return to a normative lifestyle through occupational training and work placement. The program helps to raise self-esteem, develop and improve life skills, develop creativity, independent thinking and initiatives among its participants.

The teens have the opportunity to work at one of the "Spagetim" restaurants which has 15 locations nationwide. There are also a number of

teens that work at the Volcani Institute near Ramle. They work alongside scientists from the Institute, growing organic vegetables and selling them to the employees and local residents of the community.

The "Derech Hamelech" project often works in conjunction with "Life Coaches"-- a joint project of ELEM and the Youth Probation Service. The objective is to find a volunteer mentor (similar to the "Big Brothers/Big Sisters" Program) for each juvenile delinquent who acts as a role model. Last year there were 65 mentors in the program in Tel Aviv, Netanya, Rehovot, Migdal Ha'emek, Jerusalem, Kfar Saba and Beersheva.

Drop-in Centers

ELEM established the first, crisis shelter for runaway and homeless youth-- *Makom Acher* (Another Place) in Tel Aviv in 1994 and *Et Nachta* (Rest) was opened in Jerusalem in 1995. In 2000, the Sachlav (Emergency Help for Youth at Risk) project was established in Haifa as a comprehensive community program, which includes the Crisis Shelter, Outreach Van, Day Treatment Center and Community apartments program (the program provides support to those adolescents who are capable of living independently.)

The average stay in these centers is from a few days to six weeks. The main objective of the project is to provide a comprehensive solution for the problems of youth at risk in the community. The guiding principles are immediacy, availability, accessibility and intervention during times of crisis.

Outreach Vans

Faced with the growing population of transient youth, ELEM created a street outreach program----the only one operating in Israel today. Mobile units travel the streets late at night operating in 13 cities nationwide: Kiryat Shemona, Acco, Haifa, Netanya, Holon, Tel Aviv, Ramla, Rehovot, Jerusalem, Sderot, Bat Yam, Kiryat Gat and Beersheva.

The "Children of the Night" vans operate in city back streets where runaway youth congregate. The vans sweep through public parks, beaches, and entertainment centers, abandoned areas and prostitution haunts where poverty-stricken children loiter. Van personnel, professional and volunteers, offer immediate help to homeless and drifting youngsters (last year they made over 30,000 contacts) exposed to all the dangerous elements of a society ready to prey on the helpless.

Multi-Cultural Programs

Understanding the unique needs of adolescents from recent immigrant populations, ELEM has pioneered special programs expressly for young people from the Former Soviet Union and Ethiopia. In addition, innovative, culturally-sensitive programs have been initiated for Arabs, Druze and ultra-orthodox

Jews.

There are culturally specific programs to help ease the transition to life in Israel, both for the young person as an individual and within the context of the family. ELEM also trains social workers from various cultures and volunteers within the immigrant community throughout Israel to increase their awareness, knowledge, sensitivity, and effectiveness in working with these youngsters.

Migdalor Centers - provide a solution for young people who find it difficult to integrate into formal institutions and who are in high-risk situations. The activities conducted at the Centers include academic studies, athletics, music, computers, workshops focusing on sexuality, drug and alcohol abuse, and enrichment studies.

There are five Migdalor Centers open in cities with a high level of cultural diversity including Kiryat Malachi, Bat Yam, Petach Tikva, Ashdod and Yarka.

Someone to Run With & Galgal

Someone to Run With is located in Tel Aviv and serves older immigrant youth (ages 18 to 25) who came to Israel alone or whose families disintegrated after they arrived in Israel. These young people are often drug addicted and wander the streets without the knowledge or resources to know how to contact community services that could help them.

The project operates a drop-in center that provides basic needs in the form of hot meals, warm clothing, showers, etc. The staff guides and supports all contacts between the youth and the community services. In addition, the youth receive assistance in locating temporary living accommodations in hostels or rented apartments. Recently, the Center has opened an additional day, exclusively for young women, so that the specific needs of this population can be addressed more effectively.

The Galgal project was established in Jerusalem in order to serve adolescents (ages 16-26) who live on the streets, in total alienation from society and under severe conditions of neglect. Many are new immigrants from the Former Soviet Union with no family in Israel. Most of them abuse drugs and alcohol and are involved in criminal activities.

Staff members go out to the streets to reach out to the youngsters and try and motivate them to seek help. They can come to Galgal where they are offered a place where they can eat, shower, change clothes, do laundry and even store personal belongings. Referrals are made to relevant local rehabilitative and therapeutic programs such as the methadone center and drug-rehabilitation centers.