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OVERCOMING APATHY: CONSTRUCTING A HOLOCAUST CONSCIOUSNESS IN AMERICA, 1950-1967

By

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ABSTRACT

OVERCOMING APATHY:
CONSTRUCTING A HOLOCAUST CONSCIOUSNESS
IN AMERICA, 1950-1967

By

Jordan William Paul

This is an interdisciplinary examination exploring when and how Americans first collectively began to publicly discuss the genocide of the European Jews. This study recounts the manner in which fiction, print media, Hollywood film, and other popular forms of representation functioned as the primary discursive arenas wherein the story of the genocide was constructed, contested, and transformed in America between 1950 and 1967. I have found that the shifting and gradually evolving nature of these images and stories has had a profound and enduring influence on public conceptions of the genocide in America and greatly impacted the subsequent flood of material related to the Holocaust released in the immediate aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

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Introduction

Between 1933 and 1945, the spread of Nazism in Europe spelled doom for millions of innocent civilians. Over twelve million people were murdered as a direct result of Nazi ethnic cleansing. While the Nazis targeted a variety of groups for extermination, Jews were pursued with particular single-mindedness in Nazi occupied countries. The Nazis 'war against the Jews' constituted a separate and distinctly different aspect of the German war effort. Six million Jews, constituting two-thirds of Europe's prewar Jewish population, were murdered during the genocide. Victims were initially isolated in their communities by harsh legislation and then isolated with the construction of numerous walled ghettos. From these ghettos, many Jews were then deported in boxcars to labor and death camps, where the majority perished from either malnutrition, starvation, exhaustion, by shooting, or by asphyxiation in gas chambers disguised as shower rooms. Today, all of these elements together fall under the general term 'Holocaust', used to refer to the systematic exclusion and extermination of European Jewry during this period.

Following the liberation of Europe, the murder of Jews under the Nazi regime went largely unacknowledged by the American public despite the publication of photos detailing atrocities encountered by American troops upon arriving at Western European concentration camps and the Nuremburg tribunal, which ran throughout the late 1940's.

Americans publicly expressed a desire to get on with their lives and to leave the war behind. Photographs appearing in Life Magazine in 1944 and 1945 depicting the charred remains of bodies and mounds of human hair and combs largely shocked and repelled American audiences. The images of these victims and accounts of American GI's failed to generate sustained public interest or discussion in the genocide. The Nuremburg tribunal, which followed, disappointed and quickly bored the American public. As one journalist commented, "with their cheap suits and hungry faces, these undistinguished men did not look like the archcriminals of the age." He added, "its mass of evidence created boredom, mixed occasionally with an abject . . ."[1] As the 1940's drew to a close, the genocide of European Jewry was subsumed within the larger figure of the 45 million total lives lost as a result of the war in Europe, and Americans expressed little interest in material related to this tragedy.

One of the perennial challenges facing historians face is to make their readers 'feel' the past. The Holocaust presents unique problems for historians in part due to the enormity of the tragedy and also because of the utter other-worldliness of the concentration camps. How could any reader be expected to relate their own personal experiences with the inhumane conditions, suffering, and dehumanization which defined the genocide? As one historian notes, "historians of the Holocaust, in short, know nothing- in an experiential sense- about their subject. This experiential shortcoming is quite different from their not having experienced, for example, the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia or Caesar's conquest of Gaul. Indeed, a recurring theme

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[1] Alex Ross, "Watching for a Judgement of Real Evil", the New York Times, 12 November, 1995, Section H, 37.

among witnesses is how 'unbelievable' the Holocaust was to them even as they lived through it."[2] The repelling nature of the Life photographs, when combined with the complexity of the Nuremburg Tribunal plus the general difficulties faced by historians, observers, and witnesses in describing the enormity of the crimes fostered a general silence among Americans during the late 1940's.

However, as the 1950's began, works began to appear in America dealing first with certain elements of the genocide while limiting descriptions of suffering and violence to that which mainstream audiences could still in some form abide. These generated interest and increased public awareness of the genocide among the American public by drawing comparisons between early phases of the extermination process, such as the isolation and ghettoization of civilians, to events occurring in contemporary America related to the Cold War and the culture of 1950's America. As one historian has argued, although the Holocaust remains in many senses an incomparable tragedy, "comparison is essential for any attempt to understand."[3] Writers, film producers, journalists, and playwrights narrowed the scope of their descriptions of the genocide to create stories which simultaneously informed American audiences about portions of the tragedy while also presenting relevant contemporary insights and critiques of modern society.

In this manner, American writers and the American public collectively crafted a language, form and style within which to discuss and describe the genocide during the

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[2] Christopher Browning, "German Memory, Judicial Interrogation, and Historical Reconstruction: Writing Perpetrator History from Postwar Testimony", in Probing the Limits of Representation ed. by Saul Friedlander, Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1992, 25.

[3] Dominick LaCapra, "Representing the Holocaust: Reflections on the Historians' Debate", in Probing the Limits of Representation, ed. by Saul Friedlander, Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1992, 111.

1950's and early 1960's. Works initially focused on limited elements of the Holocaust and only gradually began to particularize the suffering of Jews and explore the role of victims in their deaths. Throughout the 1950's, the concentration camps remained a mysterious and largely taboo topic within this gradually evolving public discussion. Only during the early 1960's did the American public begin to show interest in learning about these camps through popular forms of representation. Once the subject of the camps entered into the growing collective discussion, the suffering of victims and survivors marked the final phase in this evolution of awareness by American mainstream audiences.

Authors and producers utilized fiction as a means to convey the essence of suffering to audiences and drew upon a variety of contemporary national and international events to make their works relevant. The resurgence of Communism and the growth of the Cold War dominated the collective American mind in the 1950's, and works dealing with the genocide at this time largely reflected the fears and uncertainty of the American populace at this time. As the Civil Rights struggle mushroomed during the mid and late 1950's, material related to the genocide increasingly drew comparisons between the plight of Jews in Nazi Europe to the suffering of Blacks in contemporary America. Moreover, the growth of Israel and its increasing importance as an American ally in the Middle East was reflected in several pieces to emerge for American audiences in the late 1950's and particularly in the early 1960's. Throughout this entire period, the increasing assimilation of Jews into American culture and life impacted how Jews were portrayed and how Jews portrayed themselves in works that dealt with the genocide.

These events were the predominant but by no means exclusive agents affecting how the story of the Holocaust was presented to Americans and how these stories were received.

Works which appear in this study were selected based upon their public and critical reception at the time of their release and their subsequent impact on awareness and interest in the genocide. Nearly all of these pieces were bestsellers or top grossers at the box office. Moreover, works discussed in this study generated a litany of related articles in major periodicals and newspapers around the country as a result of their success. For example, the phenomenal interest engendered by Anne Frank's story provoked stories about famous diarists, Bergen Belsen Concentration Camp, children and the genocide, Dutch protectors of Jews, and many articles about Anne's family and friends. As a result, whether or not Americans actually read Anne Frank's diary or saw the theatrical and film versions of her story, the majority of mainstream readers were aware of Anne's tale and her suffering during the 1950's. Thus, pieces which either sparked attention and related articles in the media or led to subsequent books and films related to specific elements of the genocide are the focus of this study.

The majority of the pieces which are discussed in this study were written by and largely for urban Eastern audiences. Clearly, American Jews were the primary readers and viewers of the material which appears in this study. Most of these works were published or produced in New York and aimed at suburban and urban audiences. These pieces tended to universalize elements of the genocide to widen their acceptance among secular audiences and dealt with the Judaism of victims in very muted tones. While American Jews were obviously the most directly affected and interested audience of these

pieces, the success of many of these works suggests a wide secular and mainstream interest in this evolving public discussion as well.

Literally hundreds of new works and representations of the genocide appeared in America following the 1967 Six-Day War in Israel. Historian Judith Miller noted, "The impact of the war on the American public, and on American Jews in particular is difficult to overestimate."[4] Journalist and historian Charles Maier added, "the Six Day War in effect moved the Holocaust higher on the agenda of [American] memory".[5] As periodicals, newspapers, television, and radio news shows explored why and how American Jews raised so much money on such short notice and what role the Holocaust had played in the Jewish community's ability to organize so rapidly, a flood of new works were released in America intended to address what was perceived as a 'sudden' mainstream interest in the Nazi genocide of European Jews. As one consequence, many contemporary historians have looked back on 1967 as the year in which Americans first began to publicly discuss and disseminate information and ideas related to the genocide in the United States. According to many observers, 1967 marked the initial formulation of a collective Holocaust consciousness among American audiences. While one cannot deny the impact which the events of 1967 had upon shaping how Americans thought, discussed, and understood the genocide of European Jews, this study will argue against the notion that Americans first began to take notice of the genocide only in 1967.

This then is how a living experience moved through American culture and how, in turn, cultural representations shaped how Americans came to know about the suffering

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[4] Judith Miller, One by One by One, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990, 222.
[5] Charles Maier, The Unmasterable Past, Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1988, 164.

and mass-killing of Jews during the Holocaust. Historian Richard Rubenstein writes, "the Holocaust is defined largely by the stories that are told about it."[6] The stories that were told about the Holocaust explored in this study were popular, critically acclaimed, and publicly discussed representations of the genocide to appear in the United States between the years 1950-1965. Cumulatively, they helped shaped how mainstream Americans understood the genocide. When viewed together, these works provide a window into how contemporary American culture impacts our understanding of historical events.

[6] Richard Rubenstein, Approaches to Auschwitz: The Holocaust and its Legacy, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987, 9.

CHAPTER 1

REPRESSING AND DISCUSSING THE GENOCIDE IN 1950'S AMERICA

The 1950's in America were a time of collective anxiety, confusion and chaos. It was within this troubled climate that the recent genocide of European Jewry became a topic of significant interest among a segment of the American public. This chapter examines what cultural and political factors contributed to this interest and how contemporary international and domestic concerns shaped collective understanding of the events we today refer to as the Holocaust. Images presented to the American public in the 1950's were formative in shaping contemporary American consciousness of the genocide. In addition, understanding how works released in this period reflected the general mood of Americans in the 1950's also highlights the complexities involved in remembering, representing and relating atrocities to a nation of bystanders who largely had no first hand knowledge of these events. While this chapter refutes claims by scholars that a collective silence existed within America during the 1950's in regards to the Nazi genocide, understanding what was produced and how this impacted the public discourse on this topic goes a long way toward explaining why contemporary historians have interpreted this era as absent of any sustained collective discussion.

The body of works that emerged in America during the 1950's dealing with elements of the Nazi genocide shared several important similarities with each other.

While the uniqueness of the genocide was brought to light through these works, the true uniqueness of the events themselves was ignored. Concentration camps were depicted as 'black holes' where people were sent and presumably killed shortly after their arrival. Although the characters in these works were Jewish, the role of Judaism in their lives was rarely explored. Moreover, victims in works that appeared in the 1950's tended to be depicted as middle class, fairly well educated, and from urban areas.

Numerous studies have shown that the overriding concern facing Americans in the early 1950's was the escalating threat posed by the Soviet Union. In fact, a January 11, 1950 Gallup poll found seven out of 10 Americans believed that Russia was seeking to dominate the entire world.[1] While relations between the US and USSR rapidly deteriorated between 1945 and 1950, developments in weapons technology ushered in the nuclear age. The February 1950 announcement by President Harry Truman that America would embark upon construction of an hydrogen bomb capable of massive annihilation was followed swiftly with Soviet claims of nuclear capability. Suddenly, the stakes in a possible war between the superpowers had been raised considerably. Another poll issued in May of 1950 listed the threat of war as America's most urgent national problem.[2] Popular magazines such as Time, Life, and Newsweek speculated on the possibility of global nuclear war. Americans were left feeling powerless and scared by events which seemed to be escalating out of control. The spoils of victory from "the war to end all wars" had somehow been missed. Although America had won the war, people seemed to feel more uneasy about their existence than they had on the eve America's entry into

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[1] "Is Russia Seeking to Dominate the World?," Gallup Polls 11 January 1950.
[2] "Issues Affecting America," Gallup Polls 5 May 1950.

World War II in 1941. By August of 1950, over fifty percent of the American public believed that World War III had already begun.[3]

The Cold War served as a catalyst for a series of sensational events occurring in the early 1950's. Senator Joseph McCarthy rose to fame and power as he accused hundreds of State Department employees of espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union. As many Americans constructed bomb shelters behind their homes, McCarthy accused an ever widening pool of citizens, ranging from Hollywood screenwriters to military personnel of having pro-communist sympathies. Ethel and Julius Rosenberg's conviction and execution for treason in 1953, marking the first and only time Americans were ever put to death for spying during peacetime, only added further to the tensions in American society.

Life in America for Jews was changing as well in the early 1950's. The formation of the Jewish state of Israel was met with mildly positive responses from the American population. As Charles Stember notes in his study of American attitudes towards Jews, "the actual establishment of the State of Israel still found the American public in a mood of fairly widespread indifference, judging by polls taken in February, June, October, and November 1948."[4] Moreover, Jews in America found themselves in an unusual position at this time. By 1950, many American Jews had left the cities where they had first settled and were now living comfortably in suburbs with non-Jewish neighbors. As Arthur Hertzberg notes in his study, "American Jews needed to feel that

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[3] "Is the US in World War III?," Gallup Polls 19 August 1950.
[4] Charles Herbert Stember et al, Jews in the Mind of America (New York and London: Basic Books, 1966), 178.

they were part of America, and they were among the victors . . . the Jewish agenda was dominated by one desire, to expand the place of Jews in America. They wanted to be accepted by the Gentiles, not to confront them- at least not then."[5] Also around this time, a group of Jews known popularly as "the New York intellectuals", began to gain fame for their literary works. Authors such as Norman Mailer, Saul Bellow, Irving Howe, Alfred Kazin, and Lionel Trilling wrote best-selling pieces, however they also largely avoided discussing the topic of the recent Nazi genocide in their work, opting instead to dwell upon more theoretical issues and debates.

Ironically, just as American Jews were becoming acculturated and accepted into suburbia, the arrival of Displaced Persons from Europe was viewed by many American Jews as a potentially troubling development. Malnourished and shell-shocked displaced persons, European Jews whose homes and families had perished under Nazi attack, quietly entered a society which had no real sense of their ordeal. Historian Robert Abzug adds, "in the mind of most Americans, the survivors quickly became shadows of a distant nightmare"[6] Collectively, these DP's remained silent about their experiences. While a small handful of these survivors recounted their experiences in Yiddish publications, most carefully avoided retelling their stories for a variety of reasons. The shock of their losses still haunted many of these newly arriving Jews. Moreover, some Jews in America had sensed that these "old-world" Jews might jeopardize their increasing acceptance among non-Jewish neighbors. Finally, many DP's chose not to speak of their losses

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[5] Arthur Hertzberg, The Jews in America (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 303.
[6] Robert Abzug, Inside the Vicious Heart (New York and Oxford: Oxford Press, 1985), 141.

because of the disbelief and utter horror which their stories evoked when they did speak of their experiences.

While these events were hardly the only elements shaping American culture in the early 1950's, they were certainly among the most prominent factors determining how the story of the genocide was initially told to Americans. Texts and images to emerge from this decade which introduced Americans to the "human element" of the six million dead dwelt upon broad themes that were particularly relevant to the contemporary challenges being faced by US citizens. Thus, the major works dealing with this topic such as John Hersey's The Wall or Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett's stage version of Diary of Anne Frank presented the genocide to American audiences in safe, limited, and accessible ways. Rather than shock or repel audiences with the brutality and violence of life in the concentration camps, these works stressed themes about the will to live in the face of difficult hardships and offered larger messages about human nature and life on this planet which served as a salve for audiences who were unhappy and unsure of the direction in which their postwar world was heading.

John Hersey's The Wall represents not only the first fictional work dealing with an element of the genocide to be widely embraced by the American public, but also the first work of any kind to be widely discussed in popular magazines, newspapers, and journals. Hersey's work was met with praise by both Jewish and non-Jewish critics following its release. In fact, The Wall remained on bestseller lists for over 23 weeks in 1950 and 1951. Hersey's work greatly reflected the general mood of the United States in the 1950's through the themes he chose to emphasize, the events he described, and those

aspects of the genocide which he has omitted from his work. While we can really only speculate on why his novel caught the fancy of the American public, it certainly supports the contention of a link between contemporary collective concerns and the evolving awareness of certain aspects of the genocide of European Jews among the American populace.

The Wall describes the plight of 500,000 Polish Jews trapped in Warsaw between 1940 and 1943. The book is based on actual events which occurred behind the ghetto's walls, and it sets fictional characters within these events throughout the novel. The story is based on the discovery of an imaginary collection of notebooks belonging to the fictional Noach Levinson following the war's close. Through the pages of Noach's imaginary notebooks, Hersey introduces over thirty major characters and examines their reactions to the steadily deteriorating physical conditions of the ghetto. One of the novel's greatest strengths undoubtedly resides in the author's ability to show how the men and women of the ghetto undergo spiritual transformations as their predicament worsens. As the noose tightens around the ghetto's dwindling population, Levinson's notebooks detail the lengths to which some would resort in order to stay alive for just one more day. With their fate all but sealed, The Wall's final chapters describes the decision among the 50,000 remaining Jews to die fighting their oppressors in spite of being hopelessly outmanned and largely unarmed.

The choice of the ghetto as Hersey's subject was hardly arbitrary. In fact, his decision to write about the experience of Jews trapped in the Warsaw ghetto reflects the author's desire to create a work which would be accessible to American readers in 1950.

The ghetto was a very real and frightening component of the genocide of European Jews. Ghettos were erected and subsequently destroyed in multitudes of Eastern European cities between 1939 and 1945. Unlike the concentration or death camps where conditions were wholly unique in terms of the cruelty, barbarism and machinelike destruction of human life, Americans could at least compare (no matter how poor the analogy) tenements and ghettos within their own cities to the Warsaw ghetto as it was described in The Wall. Hersey emphasizes just this point through one of archivist Noach Levinson journal entries: "our ghetto differs from a normal society only in that all the normal pressures are increased a hundredfold; consequently the end products of pressure are also manifest a hundredfold- . . . This hydraulic press of a ghetto squeezes things out of us that our thin hides would normally contain, and that we would prefer not to see issue from us."[7] While the ghettoization process was unique, the deprivation and suffering was still largely within the realm of the average American reader's comprehension.

Fiction allows the author the opportunity to transcend issues related to the genocide in particular to investigate how men and women behave in a continually deteriorating environment. As one of Hersey's main characters states in the novel, "man can be on the whole agreeable and indestructible creatures and . . . his staying quality was to be found, in the last analysis, in his tendency, under stress, to band together with his fellows."[8] The Wall presents a group of ordinary people and follows their spiritual development through ever-worsening circumstances. While the ghettoization of these people serves as the catalyst for their various individual transformations, the novel

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[7] John Hersey, The Wall. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 162.
[8] Ibid. , 384.

focuses upon the character's reactions to events which are seemingly entirely out of their control. Hersey rarely, if ever, offers reasons why events are occurring as they do in the ghetto. The men and women of this novel appear to be caught in a whirlpool that is spinning rapidly out of control, and rather than assess what has produced this whirlpool and how it may be stopped or even slowed, Hersey devotes his attention to how people react as their plight continuously worsens.

The central theme of John Hersey's The Wall was the resiliency of the human spirit and man's choice to live in the face of deplorable circumstances. He writes, "here at last, man has shown that he holds within himself the capacity to withstand anything."[9] This theme clearly reflects the climate in which the works were produced and to a very large extent, the writer's personal experiences as a war correspondent during World War II. As Americans grew increasingly apprehensive about the future of their world due to the developing arms race and advancements in nuclear technology in 1950, numerous articles and reports appeared in popular periodicals which examined the possible effects of a nuclear attack on an American city. Within a five day span during February, 1950, major metropolitan newspapers devoted considerable time and space towards assessing the possible effects of a nuclear attack on urban areas.[10] The other dominant works of the decade which dealt with elements of the Nazi genocide such as The Diary of Anne Frank and stage and screen versions of her story were also set against this backdrop of urban decay and isolation. While a historian cannot absolutely claim that the success of these

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[9] John Hersey, The Wall. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 522.

[10] "World Arms Talks Urged," the New York Times 7 February 1950, p. 1. also "Probable Effects of a Bomb Blast on Buildings in this Country," the New York Times 10 February 1950, p. 8. also "Vulnerability of US cities," the New York Times 12 February 1950, p. 36. also "Einstein Sees Bid to Annihilation in Hydrogen Bomb," the New York Times 13 February 1950, p. 1.

works was predicated upon their being set in devastated urban environments, certainly part of their appeal was related to their ability to address contemporary concerns in the collective American mind.

During the war, John Hersey established a name as something of an expert on disasters through his work covering events in the Atlantic and the Pacific as a war-correspondent for Time, Life, and The New Yorker. "He is", one reviewer noted "a man who attends catastrophes to observe how people act in an extreme situation, [and] no one writing today can match Hersey's appreciation of man under stress; he is a witness for humanity in a time of terror."[11] These experiences included landing with the US marines at Guadalcanal, touring the smoldering remains of Warsaw in 1944, walking amongst the mangled dead in Estonian concentration camps, and delivering a series of award winning articles from Hiroshima following the dropping of an atomic bomb on that city. Prior to 1950, the work he produced was widely praised and the novel A Bell for Adano won him the Pulitzer Prize in 1945. Of course, one can imagine that the weight of having been present for not one but several of the century's worst massacres would leave the author deeply scarred, and in some respects, they clearly did. However, as Hersey himself noted in an interview, "these experiences gave rise to certain optimism, too, for in each case there were survivors and, one had to conclude that mankind was indestructible."[12] Thus, the theme of man's choice of life over death and the ability of people to survive even under the most wretched of conditions became the dominant theme in many of Hersey's war reports and early novels.

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[11] Robert Hatch, review of The Wall, by John Hersey, in The New Republic 122 (April 1950): 18.
[12] David Sanders, John Hersey. (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1967), 57.

As in Anne Frank's diary and other adaptations of her work, Hersey spends little time detailing how religion or culture impacted individual's reactions to events. While Nazi propaganda had portrayed the majority of European Jews as orthodox followers of their faith, replete with long gray beards, curly sideburns, and black coats and hats, works to appear in the 1950's dealt largely with reformed Jews who were entirely assimilated into the material and cultural world and urban life. "The offense of these people was existing", writes Hersey. "How could they be so humble, so patient, so oblivious, so full of humor, so forgiving, so tenacious- in the face of their now obvious and implacable fate, how could they be so tenacious?"[13] By stressing the initially ordinary qualities of these characters, Hersey's novel encourages the reader to place himself/herself in the same situation and imagine how they would react.

Another similarity among works released and widely accepted by American audiences in the 1950's was the virtual absence of any type of discussion about Nazi run concentration camps. Hersey's novel omits nearly any mention of the camps except for a brief and technical description of the crematoria facilities at Treblinka. Hersey visited camps in Estonia during the last stages of the war, and he admits to being disgusted by the levels to which the people there had stooped in order to survive. Following a conversation with a Kapo in the camp, the author decided against writing a novel on the camps. The stories of family and community he had heard in the ghetto were far more uplifting than the cunning and bullying described by the camp survivors.[14] While audiences could relate to the suffering and persecution of the ghetto's inhabitants,

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[13] John Hersey, The Wall. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 250.
[14] David Sanders, John Hersey. (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1967), 56.

atrocities occurring within the camps were all but unfathomable to the majority of American readers. Therefore, in an effort to keep his work accessible, Hersey avoided even speculating on what life was like for the 450,000 Jews who were sent to the camps from Warsaw's ghetto in 1941 and 1942. The implication in The Wall is that once the characters step into a boxcar their lives are essentially over and they will be cremated in a matter of days. By treating the camps in this manner, Hersey purposively steers discussion away from the camps and their horrors.

Americans could read The Wall and sympathize with the tragedy of the Warsaw ghetto while at the same time setting down the novel feeling reassured in the strength which resides in ordinary men and women. Perhaps this was the strongest ingredient behind the novel's success. Readers gained a better understanding of contemporary historical events related to the genocide without coming away from the novel overly depressed or burdened with guilt. The Wall certainly promoted thought and feelings, but its most provocative elements were related to the larger issues of human nature and man's will to live rather than questions related to the genocide.

Public interest in the genocide substantially increased with the 1952 English translation of Anne Frank's Diary of a Young Girl. Although the Diary remained on the bestseller lists for about the same length of time as The Wall had in 1950, Anne's story engendered much deeper and more passionate reactions among critics and the public. As author/journalist Meyer Levin observed in a review of the Diary, "It is, in reality, the kind of document that John Hersey invented for The Wall."[15] Americans came away from

[15] Meyer Levin, review of Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl, by Anne Frank and translated by B.M. Mooyaart-Doubleday, in New York Times 15 June 1952, 1.

reading Anne's tale with a sense of personal loss. This marked the first time many- if not most -Americans grieved for a specific victim of the Nazi's genocide against the Jews. Although the Diary, much like Hersey's novel, dealt with the genocide in a very safe and distant manner, Anne's chronicle finally placed a face and a name on the tragedy which had befallen so many of Europe's Jews during the Holocaust. In retrospect, the Diary's ability to transcend the staggering, abstract statistic of six million dead may have been its most important contribution to the collective American awareness and understanding of the genocide.

Set in occupied Amsterdam, the Diary traces events in the life of a thirteen year old girl trapped in an annex above a spice factory with her family and four others over a two year period. Anne's account chronicles the slowly deteriorating conditions facing these eight people and traces how they physically and emotionally responded to their continuing adversity. The Diary also serves as a unique coming of age tale in which the author is forced to mature rapidly as a result of her family's situation. Anne initially appears as a rambunctious and shallow child in the first entries of her diary, but by the journal's concluding pages, she has blossomed into an introspective and soulful woman with an enormous amount of literary talent. Over the course of the story these dual storylines are developed as Anne offers observations and personal sentiments on events occurring within the Annex during her two year ordeal.

The Diary is an intensely personal chronicle that is filled with the young author's raw emotions and feelings. Recently, a friend related the following story to me about a sixth grader's reaction to Anne's diary. As the story goes, a group of sixth graders were

told to write letters to Anne as a follow-up exercise to reading her story. One of the letters began, 'Dear Anne- sorry I read your diary but . . .' Because this was a work meant only for herself and not for publication, the passages dealing with Anne's hobbies, quirks, and brief romance with Peter Van Daan further created a personal bond between Anne Frank and the book's readers. In fact, its honesty is sometimes embarrassing, as in Anne's assessment of her continuing conflicts with her mother when entries appear as follows, "I don't pronounce judgment on Mummy's character, for that is something I can't judge. I only look at her as a mother, and she just doesn't succeed in being that to me."[16] It was this sort of honesty which brought Anne to life in the minds and hearts of American readers. As Eleanor Roosevelt noted in the introduction to the English version of Anne's account, "I felt how close we all are to Anne's experience, how very much involved we are in her short life and in the entire world."[17]

Part of Anne's ability to successfully appeal to American readers in the 1950's were her Westernized traits and tastes. As in The Wall, the characters who populate Anne's account are largely middle class people who work in generally white collar jobs and live comfortably. Moreover, the Diary's characters have been raised in largely urban environments such as Amsterdam, whereas the Hersey novel centers its attention on Warsaw. Those who were most apt to read either of these works often were from urban areas or suburbs themselves, thus providing another accessible element for American audiences to identify with Anne's plight. In many respects, Anne Frank also appears very

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[16]Anne Frank, Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl, trans. B.M. Mooyaart-Doubleday, with an introduction by Eleanor Roosevelt (New York and Toronto: Bantam Books, 1952), 45.
[17] Eleanor Roosevelt, introduction to Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank, trans. by B.M. Mooyaart-Doubleday (New York and Toronto: Bantam Books, 1952), xiv.

much like American girls of her age. She reads the classics of Western literature, collects pictures of Hollywood movie stars, and is infatuated with the royal families of Europe. These qualities all contributed to the feeling among critics that Anne seemed like a friend from down the street to those who read her diary.

The Diary's treatment of Judaism in many ways mirrored the ambiguous role of Jews in 1952 America life. The Frank's and their friends are clearly very reformed Jews who have fully acculturated to life in an urban environment. Only in the last several months of her ordeal did Anne begin to show an interest in Judaism and its role in her life. In April, 1944 Anne wrote, "Who has made us Jews different from all other people? Who has allowed us to suffer so terribly up till now? It is God that has made us as we are, but it will be God, too who will raise us up again. If we bear all this suffering and if there are still Jews left, when it is over, then Jews, instead of being doomed, will be held up as an example."[18] While Anne mentions Judaism at various junctures, she spends relatively little time exploring her faith within the Diary.

Jews in American subscribed to the Americans- All philosophy which was prevalent throughout the culture during the early 1950's. Charles Stember's Jews in the Mind of America found that although there was a steep drop in anti-Semitism in America in the years following the war's close, American Jews found themselves in a very tenuous position during the early 1950's. Incidences such as the creation of Israel, subsequent Israeli aggression toward Arab neighbors, the Jewish sounding names of several defendants in the McCarthy trials, and American's past tendencies of associating Jews

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[18] Anne Frank, Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl, trans. B.M. Mooyaart-Doubleday, with an introduction by Eleanor Roosevelt (New York and Toronto: Bantam Books, 1952), 207.

with political radicalism, espionage, and Communism all presented a very real threat to an increase in domestic anti-Semitism.[19] As a result of these and other factors, Jews in America presented themselves as another element in the universal fabric advocated by conservative political leaders of American culture in the early 1950's. Noted social theorist Will Herberg proclaimed America a tri-faith society in his 1955 study Catholic, Protestant, and Jew and introduced the concept of a civil religion within America which was predicated upon any one of these religious faiths.[20] Therefore, the muted Judaism exhibited in the Frank's lifestyle and values fit well into the universalistic culture of 1950's America and may well have widened the book's appeal among segments of the American public.

In this vein, the principle themes to emanate from the Diary were an extension of those presented by John Hersey in The Wall: the universal will to live in the face of adversity and the resilient nature of human beings. As Meyer Levin noted in his review of the Diary, "these people might be living next door; within the family emotions, their tensions and satisfactions are those of human character and growth, anywhere." Conditions within the annex where her family was hidden gradually worsened over Anne's two year internment. The combination of a lack of privacy, dwindling food rations, the need for silence during the daytime, and a constant fear of a knock at their door created an extremely tense environment among the secret annexe's inhabitants.

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[19] Charles Herbert Stember, et al Jews in the Mind of America (New York: Basic Books, 1966) 12, 210, and 302.

[20] Arthur Hertzberg, The Jews in America (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 324.

Again, American readers could identify with this type of suffering even if they had never been in similar situations themselves.

The Diary ends abruptly and the fate of its author is to be implicitly assumed following the journal's last page. Ironically, some historians have noted that as the Diary ends, Anne's real experience with the genocide had actually just begun. Due to her confinement, Anne has no first hand knowledge of the concentration camps or what occurred there. In fact, her family learns more about the camps in much the same way as Americans did: by listening to the radio and war reports broadcast over the BBC. The horrors and cruelty which were part of the everyday routine in the camps are not dealt with in any form within the Diary. By omitting these elements of the genocide, the Diary leaves readers feeling bittersweet in its final pages. Readers are left to mourn Anne's death without being given enough information of how she died to provoke more disturbing questions and reactions to the Diary. Rather, hers is a life which seems short but well-lived, and this may in fact have been Anne's legacy, even though she spent two years essentially in captivity.

Two months prior to the discovery of the Franks and their friends, Anne wrote, "I want to go on living even after my death!"[21] Central to Otto Frank's decision to have his daughter's diary turned into a theatrical production were these sentiments. As the lone surviving member of the eight, the legacy of Anne's story fell into Otto's hands. Several authors expressed an interest in adapting the Diary for the stage, and though there was no guarantee of financial success, Anne's story had elicited enough attention in the early

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[21] Anne Frank, Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl, trans. B.M. Mooyaart-Doubleday, with an introduction by Eleanor Roosevelt (New York and Toronto: Bantam Books, 1952), 197.

1950's to interest Broadway producers. The plastic nature of the Diary lent itself very well to the theater, allowing writers to remain faithful to Anne's work while emphasizing certain portions of the piece and omitting others. Moreover, the cloistered setting of the Diary could be easily reproduced on the stage with a single set. Ultimately, the play extended the personification of Anne as an American-like victim of the genocide and underscored the overall tragedy of war and genocide.

Even prior to the Diary's translation and publication in America, noted Jewish author Meyer Levin had alerted Otto Frank of his interest in adapting this work for the theater. However, Otto Frank was not satisfied with Levin's script and subsequently found the author's aims different from his own. Frank's rejection of the Levin script centered on the role which the family's Judaism would occupy in the stage version of Anne's story. Following a reading of Levin's script, Otto sent the author a letter in which he wrote, "As to the Jewish side you are right that I do not feel the same way you do. I always said, that Anne's book is not a warbook. War is the background. It is not a Jewish book, either, though Jewish sphere, sentiment and surrounding is the background. . . It is read and understood more by gentiles than in Jewish circles. So do not make a Jewish play of it."[22] Frank instead chose Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett to write the script, a non-Jewish husband and wife writing team recommended to him by friend Lillian Hellman. Otto became a central element in the adaptation of his daughter's diary to the stage. As a result, some of the harsher sentiments expressed by Anne towards her family and friends were omitted or smoothed over and their Dutch protectors were more

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[22] Letter from Otto Frank to Meyer Levin, June 28, 1952, reprinted in Judith Doneson, The Holocaust in American Film (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1987), 66.

greatly emphasized in the final script. In effect, the play served as a means for Otto to give his thanks to those who had helped him in his ordeal and allowed Otto the opportunity to reshape certain elements of Anne's story according to his own memory and experiences.

Bringing the Diary to the stage was certainly not without its difficulties. After no less than 14 rewrites, the final production premiered at the Cort Theater in New York City on October 5, 1955. The final version of the play reflected some of the changes occurring within American society at this time. While the major theme remained centered upon the human will to live and the resiliency of the human spirit, there was a new emphasis placed upon the destructiveness of discrimination towards minorities. As noted above, Otto Frank sought to de-emphasize the Jewish nature of the story and instead focus upon the fact that these eight people were ostracized for being minorities in general rather than Jews in particular. One effect of this decision was to sharply veil the uniqueness of the genocide itself. By casting the story in a more general light, the Nazi's specific aim of eliminating Jews from the entire continent of Europe goes completely unmentioned during this production. Passages from the Diary which specifically mentioned Jews were altered in the stage version of Anne's story. Anne's diary entry on April 11, 1944 reads, "Right through the ages there have been Jews, through all the ages they have had to suffer, but it has made them strong too; the weak fall, but the strong will remain and never go under!"[23] However, in the Hackett and Goodrich script the same

[23] Anne Frank, Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl, trans. B.M. Mooyaart-Doubleday, with an introduction by Eleanor Roosevelt (New York and Toronto: Bantam Books, 1952), 207.

line reads, "We're not the only *people* that've had to suffer. There've always been *people* that've had to . . sometimes *one race* . . . sometimes another."[24]

Jews in the theatrical version of the Diary are not specific targets of the Nazis but rather representative of all minorities living in Western cultures. Therefore, many American critics and social observers viewed the play as a parable for America's burgeoning civil rights movement being spearheaded by Martin Luther King, Jr. and other Southern Black leaders who sought equality for their people within this nation. Several significant developments involving desegregation occurred in the months preceding and following the play's premiere including the Brown v. Board of Education decision and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. When viewed in this light, the play's central line, in which Anne concludes, "in spite of everything, I still believe people are really good at heart."[25] offered hope that domestic discrimination of minorities would not rip America apart but could be solved in a peaceful manner through appeals to basic human goodness and dignity.

Following its opening night performance the play was met with wide critical and public acclaim. Reviewer Walter Kerr wrote, "[the play is] for all its pathos- as bright and shining as a banner."[26] In another review William Hawkins added, "In the end, they must go to concentration camps. And Anne goes, smiling. She never stopped believing that, in spite of everything, people were good."[27] The Hackett and Goodrich production

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[24] Albert Hackett and Frances Goodrich, The Diary of Anne Frank with a foreword by Brooks Atkinson (New York: Random House, 1956), 168.
[25] Ibid., 168, 174.
[26] Walter Kerr, review of The Diary of Anne Frank, by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, New York Herald Tribune, 6 October 1955.
[27] William Hawkins review of The Diary of Anne Frank, by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, New York World Telegram, 6 October 1955.

won several major awards, including several Tony Awards, the Antoinette Perry Award, the Critics' Circle Award, and finally the Pulitzer Prize for theater in 1956. Sixteen year old Susan Strasberg was catapulted to fame through her portrayal of Anne, which also won her a Tony award for best actress. Strasberg appeared on the covers of Life and Newsweek magazines in the months following the play's release, and a multitude of other popular weekly magazines ran articles with photo spreads of the young actress.[28] To a certain extent, media coverage of the play may be one of the strongest refutations one can offer to the claims offered by contemporary historians that public discussion and awareness of the genocide was largely absent from the American landscape in the 1950's. Between the Diary's release and the premiere of the play, very few articles appeared in either mainstream or Jewish publications regarding Anne Frank. However, with the play's opening came an avalanche of articles and stories detailing not only Anne's life but also memorials and tributes offered in honor of the diarist all over the world, and information about the other characters who are mentioned in the play such as the Frank's Dutch protectors and Anne's childhood friends.

Some of the few voices of dissent in regards to the play came from Jewish critics who astutely recognized the dangers posed by minimizing the true horror, scope, and aims of the Nazi genocide. In a review of the Hackett and Goodrich production which appeared in the Jewish periodical Midstream, William Schack wrote, "the most crucial defect of the play- that it insufficiently projects the tragedy behind the comedy- is the

[28] "Sparkling Season", Newsweek 19 December 1955, 53-67. and "Shining Young Stars", Life 21 November 1955, 104.

result of omission."[29] Schack's review criticized the play for its emphasis on events happening within the Annexe at the expense of deeper analysis and commentary on events occurring in occupied Amsterdam and throughout Europe. Once again, as in John Hersey's novel, the coarser elements of the genocide were ignored in order to avoid repelling audiences from the story matter. American audiences, who had no first hand experiences of the genocide, were offered works during the 1950's which were set within the recent tragedy but avoided nearly any mention of what actually occurred to people like Anne once they were deported from their hiding places. Anne's wishes to be remembered beyond her death led, at least in part, to the production of this play. Moreover, Otto's desire to spread Anne's message to as wide an audience as possible clearly also lay behind the upbeat spirit of the show. The stage production intended to avoid depressing its audience, in spite of the show's tragic subject matter. While this certainly broadened the play's appeal, it also repressed and omitted many of the elements of the genocide which made it so unique and so tragic.

The Diary of Anne Frank closed its successful New York run after 717 performances on June 22, 1957.[30] From New York the play went on to be performed all over Europe, including in Germany, and in many smaller theaters throughout the United States. The financial and critical success enjoyed by the stage version of Anne's diary made the prospect of filming a motion picture version of her story very appealing to a number of Hollywood directors. Even before the play finished its original run, Otto

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[29] William Schack review of The Diary of Anne Frank, by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, Midstream, Winter 1956, 3.
[30] Theater World: The 1956 Season. 129 and 132.

Frank had agreed to let George Stevens direct the Hackett and Goodrich version of the Diary for the cinema as a means of insuring Anne's immortality by conveying her story to an even larger segment of the American public.

The film version of the Diary opened in American theaters on March 18, 1958 and was similar to the stage production in both content and format. Once again, diary entries which referred specifically to Jews were altered or omitted in an effort to appeal to a wider audience, and the emphasis was placed upon events occurring within the Annexe as opposed to incidences involving occupied Amsterdam or other elements of the Nazi genocide. The movie particularly stressed the difficulties posed by the lack of privacy and claustrophobic dimensions of the Frank's hiding place through tightly filled camera angles, dim lighting, and accentuated sound. The film takes even perhaps greater pains than the stage version of the Diary to universalize Anne's story and present her plight as a parable for the suffering inflicted upon minorities in general rather than Jews in particular. In fact, while the film does depict a Hanukkah celebration, the filmmakers omit any mention of Hebrew words and focus instead on the giving of gifts, making this Jewish holiday seem very much like a Christmas celebration for American audiences. Essentially, the movie Diary of Anne Frank was a bigger, louder, and elongated version of the stage play which had appeared the previous year.

The Diary of Anne Frank ran on movie screens for seventeen weeks in 1958, a good run but by no means extraordinary, grossing upwards of two million dollars.[31] Nominated for seven Academy Awards in nearly every major category, the Stevens film

[31] Variety "1959 Year End Roundup" January 1960, 34, A60

made it onto most critic's best film lists for 1959.[32] Anne Frank's transformation into an American cultural icon culminated with the Hollywood version of her story. Director George Stevens makes confusing and ambiguous references to the concentration camps through a rapid series of images in which Anne is having a nightmare, but with the exception of this scene, the film version of Anne's story continued to repress the uniqueness of the genocide and the cruelty which was inflicted upon people like Anne following their deportation to the camps. Under Steven's direction, the film version of Anne's diary virtually shunned any and all events occurring outside of the annex while focusing upon the difficulties of life in confinement and isolation from society.

As the decade drew to a close, Anne Frank had become the primary conduit through which Americans discussed the genocide publicly. While Otto Frank succeeded in his mission to make people remember his daughter and her story, he may have inadvertently also contributed to the repression of many other elements of the genocide in public discourse during the 1950's. Anne Frank's story unquestionably began to create interest and awareness among Americans in the Nazi genocide of European Jews. However, it is not clear whether the window through which Americans viewed the genocide got larger or smaller as a result of the subsequent adaptations of Anne's story to the stage and screen.

By decade's end, Americans were discussing the genocide but in limited, sanitized ways. Works which dealt with elements of the genocide often set their stories

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[32] Variety Presents the Complete Book of Major US Show Business Awards, ed. Mike Kaplan (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985) 275-276.

against the backdrop of an occupied area and then proceeded to dwell upon events occurring among characters in isolation. Moreover, these characters were by and large depicted as general victims of the Nazi slaughter who were merely caught up in events occurring all around them. Works released during the 1950's to American audiences greatly de-emphasized Judaism in their stories. Similarly, as we have seen, there was nearly no mention of the crueler, most unique elements of the genocide in the major works of the decade. This was a Holocaust without deprivation, without torture and concentration camps, without Nazis or sadism, and without commentary on the destruction of the human spirit.

Rather than focus upon the most disturbing elements of the genocide, works released in the 1950's presented their material in a safe manner in a dual effort to broaden their audiences and avoid repelling their readers. The suffering that was described within these works was familiar in one form or another to most Americans. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, these works did not force Americans audiences to assess some of the more difficult questions to arise from the genocide which bewilder historians even today. By repressing the most tragic elements of the genocide, issues related to the darker side of human nature and the reduction in value of human life were avoided in public discourse during the 1950's. Instead, works emphasized the positive aspects of human nature and offered various instances of the will to live among those condemned to die by their Nazi oppressors.

Works released in the 1950's also reflected contemporary concerns and crises occurring within American culture. The tension and fear produced by the Cold War and

ensuing arms race largely shaped how and what was said regarding the genocide in the early 1950's, while the more conservative mood of America was largely reflected in the de-emphasizing of religion in the lives of many of these characters. Similarly, the birth of the modern day civil rights movement was also reflected in works appearing in the mid and late 1950's as the genocide became a parable for the dangers of discrimination towards any minority. Moreover, the silence of survivors and the reticence of the American Jewish community to draw attention to themselves left scant else available for American audiences who had very little first hand knowledge of the genocide to comprehend the uniqueness of the Jewish tragedy.

CHAPTER 2
IN TRUTH, WE ARE FIGHTERS

During the late 1950's and early 1960's, Leon Uris' Exodus (1958) became the primary shaper of collective American discourse, interest, and awareness in the Nazi genocide. Exodus traced the struggles and hardships of Jews from the late nineteenth century through the founding of the Jewish state of Israel in 1948. Uris highlighted not only Jewish suffering through these years, but also Jewish responses and resistance to tyranny and oppression. Following its release, the novel went on to enjoy enormous success in America, remaining on bestseller lists for over eighty weeks through the winter of 1960. As a direct result of this success, a series of works were soon written and produced which were designed to capitalize on the novel's popularity. Authors and artists searched for events occurring during the genocide which would allow them to paste Uris' new imagery of tough Jews against the backdrop of the Nazi genocide. This search invariably led writers and directors to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which marked the largest and longest Jewish resistance effort of the Nazi era. An entire body of works emerged in America between 1958 and 1963 which dealt with the genocide through the Ghetto Uprising and greatly impacted the evolving collective discourse begun by John Hersey and sustained through the figure of Anne Frank during the early and mid-1950's.

Exodus' eventual impact on American awareness and interest in the Nazi genocide remains somewhat ironic due to the relatively minor role which the Holocaust plays in this work. The novel follows a set of fictional characters through real events which Uris believes were pivotal in leading to the establishment of the state of Israel. Liberally mixing fact with fiction, the author presents a romantic and oftentimes fanciful portrait of the struggle to create the Jewish state. According to Uris' novel, Israel was needed by Jews as a safe haven in a world which was continually hostile and unkind to Jewish people. From this perspective, the genocide was but another example, albeit of epic proportions, of the persecution and suffering endured by Jews throughout the modern era. Thus, the bulk of the novel's focus was on the general suffering of Jews throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the struggle to create a state where Jews could seek refuge from oppression and tyranny.

Underlying the entire novel is the author's relentless emphasis on Jewish heroism and bravery in the face of seemingly constant suffering and injustices. Every instance of cruelty towards Jews in the novel is met with determined, tenacious, and often violent resistance from Jewish characters. As the author noted in an interview shortly after the book's release, "we Jews are not what he have been portrayed to be. In truth we are fighters."[1] Uris appears to have taken it upon himself to eradicate the traditional stereotype of Jews as passive and meek individuals through this novel. As an American Jew who was also an ex-Marine and World War II veteran, certainly some of the author's motivation in emphasizing this theme was to let readers know that there were Jews like

[1] Phillip Roth, Reading Myself and Others (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1975), 137.

himself who did defy traditional stereotypes. However, it remains as gigantic a leap to say that all or even most Jews were courageous, violent, and brave as it was to say that all or most Jews were passive, weak, and insecure.

In a sense, Uris takes the traditional Jewish stereotype and stands it on its head through his Jewish protagonists. Prior to the publication of Exodus, Uris was probably best known for having authored the screenplay to Gunfight at the OK Corral. The central Jewish character in Exodus, Ari Ben Canaan, is described in glowingly heroic terms by Uris and more closely resembles a traditional American cowboy hero than an Israeli soldier. Ben Canaan is described as large and husky, with a handsome face and a hardness in his eyes.[2] Uris takes great pains to depict Ari as a traditional American style male hero through his imagery and characterizations. He even goes so far as to have Ari fall in love with an American nurse in the novel who possesses what the author describes as "Marilyn Monroesque beauty" in an effort to create a character with whom American readers would be able to relate.[3] At one point, this American nurse notes, "this Ben Canaan doesn't act like any Jew I've ever met before. You know what I mean. You don't particularly think of them in a capacity like his . . . or fighters . . . things of that sort."[4] In fact, Ari Ben Canaan acted like few Jews anyone, particularly Americans, had ever met before. Ari and other characters in this novel represented Uris' fictional conception of Jews which was often arrived at through great exaggeration or even total fabrication on the part of the author.

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[2] Leon Uris, Exodus (Garden City: Doubleday, 1958), 13.
[3] Leon Uris, Exodus (Garden City: Doubleday, 1958), 4.
[4] Leon Uris, Exodus (Garden City: Doubleday, 1958), 55.

Following the release of Exodus, several Jewish critics took Uris to task for his historical inaccuracies and hyperbole. Certainly part of the concern was related to the novel's enormous success. Many feared that the American public was buying into imagery and depictions which was feel-good history with little grounding in historical fact. One of the novel's most vociferous critics was Jewish novelist Philip Roth who noted, "there does not seem to be any doubt that the image of the Jew as patriot, warrior, and battle-scarred belligerent is rather satisfying to a large segment of the American public."[5] Moreover, as a reviewer in the Jewish periodical Commentary noted, "the overwhelming success of Exodus is due to its exceptional ability to tell its readers what they want to believe in simple, easily graspable terms."[6] While these critics went on to score Uris for his romanticized depiction of Sabras in Israel and his penchant for greatly embellishing upon the historical record, American readers, and particularly American Jews, were swept up in the fervor of Uris' imagery and story.

As is the case for the majority of works discussed in this study, Exodus owed a good deal of its success to its ability to reflect contemporary concerns in American culture. One of the primary reasons why Exodus was so successful rested in its ability to recast the story of the founding of Israel in a very Americanized form. In a 1959 Commentary article the reviewer noted, "the overwhelming success of Exodus is due to its exceptional ability to tell its readers what they want to believe in simple, easily graspable terms."[7] The tough Jews of this novel are modeled after traditional American

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[5] Phillip Roth, Reading Myself and Others (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1975), 137.
[6] Joel Blocker, "Fantasy in Israel", Commentary 27 (June, 1959): 539.
[7] Joel Blocker, "Fantasy in Israel," Commentary 27, (June, 1959): 539.

heroes. Moreover, the story's texture and language are very American in that the characters' Judaism remains muted while they utilize slang and other colloquialisms emblematic of late 1950's America. While Uris does deal with several grisly events in the novel, he avoids repelling readers by maintaining limits to the suffering he describes and the violence he portrays. Moreover, ethnic pride fit neatly into the zeitgeist of the late 1950's and early 1960's as the Civil Rights movement continued to make substantial gains in highlighting the injustices and contributions of African Americans.

American Jews were also undergoing changes in their lives as the 1950's drew to a close, and these changes were also reflected within the text. As one American Jew in the novel states, "We're Americans, but we're different Americans. Maybe we make ourselves different. . . All my life I've heard I'm supposed to be a coward because I'm a Jew. . . Everytime Palmach blows up a British depot or knocks the hell out of some Arab he's winning respect for me. He's making a liar out of everyone who tells me Jews are yellow. These guys over here are fighting my battle for respect. . . understand that?"[8] Conditions in America for Jews were steadily improving by 1958. Many Jews had moved into the suburbs and become acculturated, even assimilated, into the majority gentile culture. In spite of their successful transition into American life, Jews were still considered mystical or different, according to Gallup polling data taken throughout the decade.[9] Ari embodies this fusion in the Uris novel. He is at once comfortable, normal, and very American, thus appealing to secular American and Jewish audiences. Yet he

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[8] Ibid., 99-100.

[9] Charles Herbert Stember et al, Jews in the American Mind, (New York: Basic Books, 1966), 151.

and the other soldiers we meet in the novel also are a little bit different, a little more spiritual than the average citizen.

Exodus became an international phenomenon when Otto Preminger began filming the motion picture version of the novel on location in various sites around Israel during the spring of 1960. Articles appearing in Hollywood trade magazines described how the production provoked bitter recent memories for Arabs and Jews by recreating battles and border skirmishes less than a decade after they actually occurred in the same locations. As one writer noted, "the artificially stimulated agitation among the Israeli Arabs has created an uneasy atmosphere, particularly since Exodus has been shooting extensively in areas where the Arabs predominate."[10] Preminger and star Paul Newman, who was playing the role of Ari Ben Canaan, received anonymous letters urging them to 'quit and get out before it's too late.' Moreover, "Exodus cars passing through Nazareth have been stoned. Rocks have been hurled from rooftops at the cast and crew, and the Communist party has published leaflets attacking the production."[11] The article goes on to describe the beatings of several British civilians who were mistakenly believed to have been associated with the production.

Israeli crowds flocked to the film set for scenes requiring tens of thousands of extras. A general lottery was held to attract people to the Russian compound square for the filming of a scene depicting the November 27, 1947 announcement declaring Israel a state by the United Nations. While 20,000 lottery tickets were sold, another 40,000 persons showed up for the filming. The shoot actually turned into a celebration for those

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[10] Fred Hift, "Exodus Harassed by Reds, Arabs," Variety, 25 May 1960, 15.
[11] Ibid., 15.

in the square and many stayed through the night as they had done a decade before when news of the partition vote was first delivered from the Jewish Agency Building in the square.

In spite of (or as a result of) these difficulties, anticipation for the film ran very high among American audiences as filming drew to a close. In fact, according to a United Artists publicist, "advance tickets for the engagement at the Warner Theater in New York have reached what is said to be an all time high of $324,896, representing 108 fully sold-out performances."[12] In keeping with the emphasis on Eastern audiences for material related to Judaism and the genocide, advertisements were placed in 16 major newspapers in New York, Baltimore, and Chicago to announce the acceptance of mail order ticket reservations in the three cities where the movie was first scheduled to open.

When the movie finally opened, many theaters staged special promotions and events in conjunction with its premiere. In Kansas City, theater goers packed the 1288 seat Empire Theater for two nights while submitting music and art work related to the theme of Man's Struggle for Freedom and Dignity in a contest sponsored by several secular organizations.[13] At the Saxon Theater in Boston, American Nazi George Lincoln Rockwell protested the film's opening in front of 1500 spectators who were waiting in lines up to an hour long to see the show. The imagery of the tough Jew from the book and the film seems to have infused these persons with a sense of passion, as the crowd hurled stones and eggs at the protester until police whisked Rockwell to safety.[14] In

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[12] Ibid., 15.
[13] "Whoopla, Contests Mark Exodus Start in Kansas City." Variety.
[14] "American Nazi Stoned in Boston," New York Times, 15 January 1960, 3(L).

Chicago on the same day, four pickets were driven away by an angry crowd of 250 patrons waiting to see the film. It is not only interesting that these crowds reacted to these protesters with violence, but also that prominent papers such as the New York Times were running articles describing these 'uprisings' among theater goers on their front pages because in a sense this also seems to legitimate some of the tough Jewish imagery which Uris created in his novel's characters and Preminger depicted in the film.

Whether or not this movie actually matched the expectations of these theater-goers is difficult to ascertain. Even at a time when American audiences were used to seeing long epics such as Ben Hur and The Ten Commandments, Preminger's Exodus ran on and on, for 3 ½ hours. The movie was filmed in color and featured a pounding orchestral score. Music from Preminger film became so popular that the Exodus theme song actually made it onto the music charts in the summer of 1960. Yet, in spite of its great size and publicity, Exodus leaves viewers with an ambiguous feeling as it concludes. As one reviewer noted, "it has so much churning around in it that no deep or solid stream of interest evolves- save a vague rooting interest in the survival of all the nice people involved."[15] The cast included some of Hollywood's top actors and actresses- Paul Newman, Eve Marie Saint, Sal Mineo, John Derek, and Ralph Richardson. However, Preminger chose to present a multitude of characters at the expense of thoroughly developing any of them. What we get, rather, is a lot of surface characterizations and shallow dialogue between people whom we know are good but are not quite sure why.

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[15] Bosley Crowther, review of Exodus by Otto Preminger, in New York Times 16 December 1960, 44:1.

As a result of the film, as one historian has noted, "suddenly, Jews were glamorous."[16] Paul Newman first appears on screen emerging from the sea at night as Ari Ben Canaan. As Newman enters the picture so did an image which would become the symbol of the new Jew created by the Uris works. His blond hair and blue eyes shimmer in the night as his bare chest reveals a well toned physical specimen. Moreover, Newman emerges from the Sea wearing a Jewish Star proudly dangling from his neck. Jews in the film are strong, stubborn, and committed to creating and defending Israel. The Nazi genocide is discussed only very briefly in the film, yet it does provide what may be the most intense scene between a young Sal Mineo and his Irgun interrogators. Essentially, enough is said about the annihilation of Jews in Europe only to justify the violence these Jews are perpetrating on the screen. In this vein, violence becomes vengeance, as the Nazis are seen collaborating with the Arabs and the British Union Jack is flown with a swastika painted in its middle by refugees aboard their stolen freighter.

Exodus wrapped up its 1960-1961 run as the second highest grossing movie of the year, narrowly out earned by Columbia Pictures' The Guns of Navarone. Grossing over ten million dollars in ticket sales, the Preminger film wound up ranked as the 16th highest grossing film of all time following its release. Although its storyline was seriously skewed, one cannot easily claim that the movie did not impact how Americans imagined and understood events in the Middle East or the role of Jews in the establishment of Israel. This paradox between the quality of this film and the lasting images it produced might best be encapsulated by a New York Times film reviewer's decision to place

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[16] Paul Breines, Tough Jews: Political Fantasies and the Moral Dilemma of American Jewry (USA: Basic Books, 1990), 55.

Exodus on his top ten list for 1960. In defending his decision, he wrote, "Despite its great length, some interior confusion and general inconclusiveness, this massive drama of the fight to liberate Israel is full of fine personality sketches and heroic incidents. . . it is the best 'blockbuster' of the year."[17] The legacy of the images embedded in American viewers' minds of the new Jew emerging from the sea as strong, smart, and handsome, would soon be reflected in a host of other forms- on the stage, on television, in other books, and in political rhetoric and commemorative ceremonies.

Indeed, the imagery which Uris created in Exodus, for whatever reason - - be it to improve Jew and Gentile relations in the US, to simply eradicate an old and frustrating stereotype, to provide a 'usable' laymen's history of the founding of Israel, or to covertly strive to generate greater political and financial support for Israel in America - - replaced the existing universalistic paradigm as the dominant mode of storytelling for artists interested in representing the genocide for American audiences between 1958 and the mid 1960's. As we shall see, Uris himself had little choice but to write Mila 18 even as Exodus was at # 1 on the Bestseller list because his work begged a question: If the Jews are so tough and strong, as Uris portrays them to be, then why did they go to their deaths in World War II so passively? Why didn't they fight?

Revisiting Warsaw

[17] Bosley Crowther, review of Exodus by Otto Preminger, in New York Times 25 December 1960, 3:7 (II).

In the late 1950's and early 1960's, the story of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was the subject of many popular novels, films, plays, and television productions. Moreover, the uprising became the most discussed element of the Nazi genocide in American newspapers and magazines. The aim here is to examine why and how the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising captured the American imagination beginning in 1958. What was it about the cultural environment in America which fostered the growth of this genre? Moreover, who were the authors, directors, and artists creating these images? Who were they targeting their works towards, and whom do we suspect were reading or watching them? Finally, what brought this genre's growth to an end?

In the spring of 1943, Nazi General Jurgen Stroop initiated an operation to raze to the ground the 'Jewish Quarter of Warsaw'. Stroop assured Nazi bureaucrats the action would be completed in three days at most. What the Nazis found when they came to burn the remnants of the ghetto were thousands of Jews hidden in bunkers, sewers, and basements, some with arms, prepared to fight to their deaths. More than 400,000 Jews had passed through the ghetto and either perished from disease in Warsaw or been sent to their deaths at Treblinka and other Nazi death camps. Of the remaining 50,000 Jews, 600 formed a Jewish fighting force in early 1943 and armed themselves with four machine guns, 200 pistols and 50 rifles. The fight between the Jews and Nazis was grossly unequal but the Jews managed to hold off the Nazis for nearly a month. Finally, on May 16, Stroop wired Berlin "the former Jewish district of Warsaw has ceased to exist."[18] By

[18] Jurgen Stroop, The Jewish Quarter of Warsaw is No More! , trans. Sybil Milton (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), 1.

Nazi accounts, 5565 of 60,000 Jews died in the fighting, and the rest were sent to concentration camps after the insurrection was ended.

These are the fundamental events comprising the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943. The Ghetto Uprising was significant for a number of reasons. First, it marked the largest single effort by Jews during the Nazi genocide to engage their attackers in battle using modern weaponry. Second, the Ghetto uprising became the most successful action planned and carried out by Jews against the Nazis dating back to Hitler's rise to power in the early 1930's. The uprising frustrated the Nazis for a time due to the tenacity of the ghetto fighters and it forced them to use many more weapons and troops than they had intended to expend. Finally, the Ghetto Uprising provoked a tremendous amount of written material from the victims and perpetrators detailing the extraordinary events of April and May. While many memoirs and diaries were kept by ghetto fighters and were later found, General Stroop ordered his troops to take hundreds of pictures of the ghetto's destruction and kept meticulous records of the liquidation process. The photos Stroop's produced were collected in a photo album by the General and distributed to other Nazi officers. When the Axis powers were defeated, the photos were published in a variety of international magazines, journals, and newspapers.

Prior to 1950, there were basically two sources available in English which described the Jewish experience in the Warsaw Ghetto. The first of these was The Black Book of Polish Jewry, which detailed the tragic stories of many Jewish survivors and victims of the genocide during the Nazi occupation of Poland. The second were the meticulous mountain of written records which were seized by Allied troops from hastily

vacated Nazi offices during late 1944 and early 1945. These documents provided chilling descriptions of the conditions faced by Jews living within the Warsaw Ghetto. However, due to the nature of these documents, few if any ordinary middle class Americans every came into contact with these texts.

Almost immediately following the war, a flood of diaries, journals, notes, and stories recording the daily trials and tribulations of life in the ghetto were released to European audiences in Polish and Yiddish. These documents were largely read by intellectuals in America and abroad. The first account of the ghetto as recorded by one of its Jewish inhabitants to be published in America was Bernard Goldstein's The Stars Bear Witness, which was translated into English in 1950. By this time, according to one historian's count, some eight hundred similar primary accounts had been published abroad in Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew.[19] Goldstein's work drew very little critical or public discussion upon its release in America. Similarly, Philip Friedman's Martyr's and Fighters, published in 1954, contains excerpts from a variety of diaries and journals never before published in English for American audiences. Still, this work received little praise or attention outside of either Jewish or intellectual circles in America. The most widely read primary account of the Warsaw ghetto experience was Emmanuel Ringelblum's Notes From the Warsaw Ghetto, unearthed in 1946 and later translated and published in the United States in 1958. These stories of survival and tragedy provided much of the framework for Hersey's fictional The Wall, and Uris' Exodus and Mila 18. Through the

[19] Reuben Ainsztein, "The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the Poles." Midstream (Autumn, 1963): 37.

fictional approach, authors and artists were able to adapt their message to more specifically suit the tastes of middle class American readers.

While the movie Exodus played to sold out audiences in the spring of 1961, CBS Playhouse 90 presented Rod Serling's In the Presence of Mine Enemies, a tale of life and death in the Warsaw Ghetto. One reviewer noted, "The timing for [the play] could hardly have been more fortuitous." However, the reasons he cites are political, rather than related to the Exodus phenomenon. "Coming smack in the middle of the great Summit upheaval and the world shattering Kruschevian nipups with their threats to world peace, it was indeed a fitting reminder of the inhumanities and indignities to which mankind can be subjected to under dictatorship, whether of the Communist or Fascist stripe."[20] Rose's review on a whole rates the play as very mediocre. With the preceding observation, he brings to light how the story of the Ghetto can be retold as a warning against tyranny and a reminder of the strength of the human spirit. Yet, this tale is being told by Serling, a non-Jew, and as we shall see, his flawed production was severely panned by several prominent Jewish critics, chiefly by Leon Uris himself.

As this reviewer also notes, "time and again since the days of Hitler, the bestial excesses of the Nazis and the heroic faith of the Jews of the Warsaw ghetto have been related in many forms, poignantly, emotionally and with telling power."[21] Thus, this review of the play brings to light an interesting dilemma. Many memoirs had been printed following the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto, and the works of historians such

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[20] Review of In the Presence of Mine Enemies by Rod Serling (CBS Playhouse 90), Variety, 24 May 1960, 35:4.
[21] Ibid., 35:4.

as Philip Friedman and the YIVO Institute were available to the American public during the 1950's. However, they were read and discussed by very few. The heroic faith of the Warsaw ghetto Jews was a relatively new phenomenon among the American public- or interest in this faith and its roots was a new phenomenon as a result of the emergence of the new Jew through Uris' work.

Most striking among the criticism of the Serling work was an article appearing in an entertainment magazine describing Leon Uris' reaction to In the Presence of Mine Enemies. The article quoted Uris as being "incensed" with the telecast because "it could not have been a more perfect piece of Nazi apologetics than if it had been produced by Joseph Goebbels." The letter he sent to CBS executive Dr. Frank Stanton was reprinted in full within the article. It goes on to state, "the historic inaccuracies, caricature characterizations and totally false plot constitute a pitiful sham on the public." Uris closes with the following, "As recipient of the International Association of Jewish Survivors of Concentration Camps and Ghettos Award, I demand that the Columbia Broadcasting System *burn the negative* of this film and publicly apologize for this outrage."[22] Uris had become an important voice and his criticism displays in part his own recognition of his importance as a representative of the American Jewish community. Moreover, the particularly harsh language he resorts to and his demands for nothing short of burning the negatives of the film sound like something Ari Ben Canaan would say, rather than a real person. At the time of this letter, Uris was busily working on Mila 18, a

[22] "Leon Uris' Blast at CBS for Serling's Nazi Apologetics," Variety, 25 May 1960, 26.

book on the same subject as the Serling play, and it is in this book that Uris provides a response to the flaws he saw in the CBS production.

Jewish critics responded to Serling's production swiftly and in angry tones. Lucy Dawidowicz, later a famous Holocaust historian, wrote, "There was no single moment in the entire play, as I watched it and later read the script, that did not offend or outrage with its falseness and fraudulence. This ghetto was no ghetto, this rabbi no rabbi, these Jews no Jews, these Germans no Germans, and this Pole no Pole."[23] In the mind of Dawidowicz, the Serling work, which featured a love affair between Robert Redford as a confused Nazi and the Jewish daughter of a rabbi trapped within the ghetto's walls, did violence to the memory of the half a million Jews who lost their lives in Warsaw during the madness of 1942 and 1943. When all was said and done, Serling's work received mediocre ratings and marked the last CBS Playhouse 90 ever to be produced.

Following in the wake of Leon Uris' best-selling novel and hit film, producer Kermit Blomgarden's decision to fund playwright Millard Lampell's adaptation of John Hersey's The Wall seemed like a smart investment. Lampell would adapt the Hersey novel to fit with the public's new demand for more Jews in the image of Ari Ben Canaan. Thus, Lampell stated, "the thread that bound all my characters and provided the chief dramatic suspense of the play was a question. How long will it take them [the Jews] to believe that the Nazis mean to exterminate them? And a twin question. When they believe, will they resist?"[24] In Lampell's adaptation, it took the Jews too long to believe in the Nazi's barbarous intentions but once they did, they resisted on a heroic scale

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[23] Lucy Dawidowicz, "Boy Meets Girl in Warsaw Ghetto," Midstream (Summer, 1960), 110.
[24] Millard Lampell, "Bringing The Wall to the Stage," Midstream (Autumn, 1960), 18.

considering their predicament. And it was this resistance which Lampell saw as "a moment in history when the Jews of Warsaw spoke for all mankind." Moreover, the playwright added, "A handful of Jews exposed the fullest potential of the human race. To resist death. To trust one another. To commit themselves. To endure."[25] Thus, Lampell's story is specifically about Jews. While their will to live represents a universalistic theme which was so prevalent in Hersey's novel and in the Anne Frank material to emerge in America during the 1950's, his heroic depiction of the uprising and the character's strength speaks volumes for the new conception of the Jews which Americans were prepared to accept following the success of Exodus. The Jews who fought in Israel as Lampell wrote his article, and the Jews described in the Uris novel and film, represent not an aberration in history, but rather a continuation of the Jewish willingness to fight and utilize their intelligence and strength as a people through the Nazi era.

The theatrical version of The Wall opened in New York on October 11, 1960 at the Billy Rose Theater. The drama, as was the case in previous movies and plays dealing with the genocide of European Jews, boasted an excellent cast. George C. Scott, Vincent Gardenia, and Yvonne Mitchell were among the headliners of the production. However, the play received largely ambiguous reviews and was deemed a financial failure by one leading industry magazine.[26] It closed its run on Broadway on March 4, 1961.

What is most significant about Lampell's drama may be its perpetuation of the images first produced by Uris in 1958 and sustained by the Preminger film and the

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[25] Ibid., 19.

[26] Daniel Blum, ed. Theater World: Season 1960-1961 (New York: Chilton Company, 1961), 6, 26.

Serling television show. As the characters decide to finally bear arms and revolt against the Nazis in the ghetto, Rachel 'the little mother', mournfully laments "Why are we all so quiet? The most gentle bird does not go to death without a scream! This will be an eternal mystery: why didn't we resist when they began to resettle us . . . if we are too weak to defend our lives, let us at least defend human honor."[27] As the play concludes, the character of Rachel reiterates Lampell's central message: "what have we proved? We have proved it is possible to resist, even in hell."[28]

Once again, this story of the Ghetto Uprising borrowed heavily from the imagery created in the Uris novel. George C. Scott starred as Dolek Berson and his physical appearance- tall, blond hair, well built, handsome, were similar to those exhibited by Newman in the Exodus movie. Moreover, Lampell takes a good deal of liberties with the character of Dolek from the original Hersey novel, as the theatrical version of the story stresses Dolek's individuality and unwillingness to commit to anyone, which were qualities not even touched upon in the book.

Several reviewers faulted the Lampell play for its inability to produce the types of strong emotions which previous works in the field such as the Hersey novel or the Goodrich and Hackett theatrical version of Anne Frank's story provoked among viewers and readers. As one critic from the New York Mirror wrote, "it never makes us as angry as it should."[29] In fact, while the majority of reviews of the opening night production of The Wall were either wholly negative or mediocre, one critic praised the play's efforts

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[27] Millard Lampell, The Wall (New York: Knopf Books, 1961), 132.
[28] Ibid., 160.
[29] Robert Coleman, review of The Wall by Millard Lampell, in the New York Mirror 12 October 1960.

and recommend it to audiences. That critic was Howard Taubman of the New York Times, and one cannot help but wonder if he was reacting to the play itself or to the story of the Warsaw Ghetto in his critique. He wrote, "They are Jews and they are men, women and children who could inhabit any city of the world. They are the innocents whose suffering will take a long time- and a purified race of mortals- to atone." Moreover, Taubman wrote, "this is life as it was lived in those barbaric years in Warsaw. It takes place on a stage, but it is not make believe."[30] What is so interesting about the Taubman review is that he actually defended his praise in another article written two weeks later. He wrote, "Is The Wall a masterpiece? No. Is it a play you should see? By all means." Thus, Taubmann defends his review of Lampell's play by stressing the importance of the Ghetto Uprising as a historical event and painting The Wall as a means of raising consciousness in America regarding the plight of those Jews who fought against their Nazi oppressors.[31]

As the final curtains closed over Lampell's production, Leon Uris' Mila 18 hit bookstores in the spring of 1961. The novel represents an amalgamation of sorts between Hersey's The Wall and Uris' own novel Exodus. It rose rapidly on the New York Times Bestseller list beginning on June 18 and essentially remained third on the list through the duration of the summer. Unlike Uris' earlier novel, Mila 18 never hit number one - - it peaked at number two for several weeks in August. The novel remained on the Best-Seller list through January 28, 1962. Its total run lasted 33 weeks- long by many standards, but hardly comparable to the 80 week stint posted by Exodus several years

[30] Howard Taubman, review of The Wall by Millard Lampell, in the New York Times 12 October 1960.
[31] Howard Taubman, "The Wall" in the New York Times 23 October 1960, 1:1 (II).

before. Once again, this novel provoked a good deal of critical response from secular and religious publications. Moreover, it firmly linked the tough Jews presented in the Exodus novel and movie with the heroic uprising staged by the final remaining survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto, for as Uris writes, "This rabble army without a decent weapon held at bay the mightiest military power the world has ever known for forty-two days and forty-two nights!"[32]

The parallels between Hersey's The Wall and Uris' Mila 18 are quite obvious, and appear to be the result of a conscious choice on the part of the author. Nearly every major review of the Uris novel compared it to The Wall, usually extensively. As one critic wrote, "that this work by Uris, over 500 pages in length, should be compared to Hersey's is unavoidable. . . Why he should have wished to recast a tale so brilliantly told in the first instance is difficult to understand unless he felt that it was one that should be told by a Jew."[33] Another reviewer added, "the chief obstacle to reading Mila 18 is the reader's own memory. The novel all but duplicates John Hersey's The Wall. Uris even retains Hersey's slow device of telling whole sections of the story in the form of journal entries from the diary of a garrulous intellectual archivist."[34] Several questions need to be answered regarding Mila 18. Why did Uris choose to write a novel so similar to Hersey's? Why did he choose to write on this topic at all? How successful was it and why was there no motion picture developed following its release?

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[32] Leon Uris, Mila 18 (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 538.
[33] Rose Field, review of Mila 18 by Leon Uris, in the New York Herald Tribune 4 June 1961, 28.
[34] Review of Mila 18 in Time #77 2 June 1961, 94.

Hersey's decision to cast Noach Levinson as an archivist whose journals would frequently be referred to in order to provide historical perspective in the story were an original and critically acclaimed method of linking history with fiction in The Wall. Uris' decision to have Alexander Brandel's journals appear periodically in his text represent a very conscious decision by the author to recreate the same feelings and tone of the Hersey text. Moreover, Mila 18 presents a wide variety of characters representing many different walks of life, as did The Wall. Both authors, however, have largely limited their characters to the middle and upper classes. This of course begs the question: why would Uris seek to imitate these aspects of Hersey's book? The answer, I believe, is that Uris sought to employ the scaffolding set up in The Wall which would be familiar to many of his readers while presenting a different spin on the events described in the Hersey book. Rather than focusing on the will to live or the ability of humans to adapt to deplorable conditions, Uris' book centers on the uprising itself. Whereas the uprising marks a tragic last act of desperation in The Wall, it marks the heroic climax of Mila 18. Characters in both of these novels largely meet the same fate, but the Uris book leaves readers feeling those who died did so only after successfully fighting their attackers, while the Hersey book ends on a note of sorrow and pity for these poor victims of tyranny and injustice.

Another interesting approach to why Uris chose to write this book was sparked by a review in which the critic wrote, "the hero of the book is Andrei Androfski, a captain in the Polish cavalry. He represents the new Jew who is an ardent nationalist of the land of

his birth."[35] Uris, as an American Jew knew that a good deal of his readers would be American Jewish middle class citizens. For other readers, however, this subtheme which he develops in both of his books may have been an effort on his part to paint Jews in a more favorable light to their non-Jewish neighbors. Contrary to the image of the "wandering Jew", Uris presents Jews who believe in their nations and will fight to the death in the name of the ideals which these countries were created upon. In one scene, Andrei bitterly proclaims, "I am a Polish officer, and this is my country".[36]

Clearly part of Uris' motivation to rewrite The Wall were similar to those of Millard Lampell in adapting the novel for his play. There was money to be made in the story of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Americans who belonged to book clubs or enjoyed reading historical fiction had expressed recent interest in the Nazi genocide and in the new image of tough Jews purveyed by the Exodus book and film. Moreover, the nagging question left dangling following the Exodus phenomenon demanded an answer if Uris was to retain some sense of credibility from the American Jewish and non-Jewish community. If, in truth, Jews were fighters, as Uris asserted in a late 1950's interview, then why did so many Jews die without a fight during the extermination of European Jewry? Mila 18 is Uris' response to this potential contradiction. The novel transplants many of the Exodus characters from Israel back several years to the crumbling Warsaw Ghetto. These Jews did fight, and in the Uris novel, they fought well above and beyond their capabilities, especially in light of their meager rations and even smaller cache of weaponry. Thus, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in Uris' novel allows readers to see the

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[35] Rose Field, review of Mila 18 by Leon Uris, in the New York Herald Tribune 4 June 1961, 28.
[36] Leon Uris, Mila 18 (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 324.

establishment of the State of Israel as part of a continuous thread of Jewish strength and courage.

While a parallel certainly and purposively exists between The Wall and Mila 18, an even greater correspondence can be seen between the characters in Exodus and those in Mila 18. Most striking is the similarity between the hero of Mila 18, Andrei Androfski, and the central character of Exodus, Ari Ben Canaan. Readers are introduced to Androfski in much the same way as they met Ben Canaan. Andrei is described as "a classic Ulany officer in the Polish Army" who has rippling muscles, is very intelligent and was once a soccer player on the Polish Olympic team. Like Ari, Andrei is a Jew but we never really see him engaging in any of the rituals of his religion. Moreover, while Ari loved the American gentile Kitty Fremont, Andrei is in love with blond haired, blue eyed Polish Catholic Gabriela Rak. Like Kitty, Gabriela is also connected to America. She works for the American embassy in Warsaw until she absolutely must leave for her own safety. Androfski strikes an even less emotional posture than Ari throughout the novel. In Mila 18, the hero cries only once over the death of his horse during the Nazi invasion of Poland. However, the most obvious similarity between Ben Canaan and Andrei is their desire and willingness to fight. These are men who believe in force as a means to an end when employed righteously, and they both are firmly committed to fighting for their land and their people. For Ari, the land was Israel, and his people were the Displaced Persons who were suffering in British camps. In the case of Androfski, his home is Poland, and "in his heart, he had no desire to go to Palestine- Warsaw is his city,

not Tel Aviv."[37] Thus, these two heroes are both fighting to stay in land where foreign oppressors are demanding they leave- through threat of death, and they meet this challenge through resorting to violence in defense of their rights.

Similarities exist between a host of other characters in Mila 18 and Exodus as well. Hard drinking gentile American journalist Mark Johnson proves instrumental in helping Ben Canaan and his crew run the Exodus out to sea: Chris De Monti is a hard drinking gentile American journalist who proves invaluable in letting the world know of the Ghetto's last stand in Mila 18. The love between teenagers Dov and Karen in Exodus is mirrored in the relationship between Wolf Brandel and Rachel Bronski. These reoccurrences of characters can be seen in the descriptions and actions of many of the minor characters in Mila 18 as well.

Uris' second novel provides much more descriptions of the Nazi perpetrators than any of the texts examined dealing with the Ghetto other than the skewed characterization of a young Nazi officer played by Robert Redford within the Serling playhouse work. The Nazis readers met in Mila 18 were uniformly sadistic and evil. While torture and sadistic brutality are hinted at in regards to the punishments inflicted upon Jews, the most violent scenes of the novel describe the killing and beating of Nazi officers by the ZOB. (the Jewish resistance) For example, one passage read, "blood and sinew and muscle and shrieks speared skyward. Nuts and bolts erupted like an angry volcano. Disintegrated bits of hundreds of Germans floated back to earth. The near living, the half-living whimpered with shock. . . other Germans tried to leap the ghetto walls. Their hands were

[37] Ibid., 324.

sliced to ribbons on the cemented broken glass, their bodies tangled in the barbed wire."[38] In the most graphic violence of the novel, Jewish ZOB fighters torture the Pawiak Nazi Prison commandant and then kill him in the morning. Uris relates the disgust with which the Jews perpetrated the torture, but notes, "he knew he could not puke in the presence of an enemy who regarded it as a weakness."[39] Thus, the Jews were capable of using violence not only to kill their attackers but also to force information from them. This is justified in the Uris novel because through his portrait of the Nazis, this is the only type of behavior they would understand and respond to- the sadists are the Nazis, the Jews are merely gaining revenge and fighting to survive.

Ultimately, Mila 18 not only retold Hersey's The Wall with an emphasis upon the Uprising itself, it told the story of the Uprising in such a fashion as to create a tale of nearly mythic proportions. Uris writes, "If the Warsaw ghetto marked the lowest point in the history of the Jewish people, it also marked the point where they rose to their greatest heights."[40] As the book concluded, Uris left readers with these thoughts as well, "I look through the books of history and I try to find a parallel. Not at the Alamo, not at Thermopylae, did two more unequal forces square off for combat. I believe that decades and centuries may pass, but nothing can stop the legends which will grow from the ashes of the ghetto to show that this is the epic in man's struggle for freedom and human dignity."[41] Thus, Uris' Mila 18 reads like a final tribute to the strength and character of

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[38] Ibid., 483.
[39] Ibid., 414.
[40] Ibid., 539.
[41] Ibid., 538.

those Jews who were left to fight or die as the Nazis began liquidating the ghetto in the spring of 1943.

While the critical response to the novel was decidedly mixed in secular circles, Mila 18 still managed to attract a large amount of readers. Moreover, the novel is significant today when we realize that it marked the last of this genre to develop in the late 1950's following the publication of Exodus. Why, readers may wonder, was no movie version of the Uris novel released for American audiences in 1962? The answer may well lie rest in the apprehension of Adolf Eichmann by Israeli agents and his much publicized trial and hanging in Israel during the early 1960's. Many reviewers alluded to contemporary events related to the trial in their critiques of Uris' novel. In a New York Herald Tribune review, Rose Field wrote, "There is no exaggeration in the Uris story. The facts he tells in fictional form are the same which are currently appearing in newspaper reports of the Eichmann trial."[42]

The fifteenth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising received little attention from the media and little recognition outside of New York City in 1958. Newspaper coverage of events occurring to honor the fighters was generally abbreviated, and articles were largely limited in length and content. Articles that detailed the plight of Jews in the ghetto were often descriptions or summaries of the events leading up to the uprising and the Nazi's eventual victory in Warsaw. Events held in New York to honor the uprising's 15th anniversary were given scant if any coverage in local papers. Articles and letters appearing in the New York Times dwelled upon universal lessons to be learned from the

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[42] Rose Field, review of Mila 18 by Leon Uris, in the New York Herald Tribune 4 June 1961, 28.

tragedy and spent relatively little time discussing the uprising or its importance. As a result of the success of Exodus and subsequent works to follow, the Ghetto Uprising took on a much larger importance within the American press.

The 1963 commemoration of Yom Hashoah in the United States and its coverage by the media highlighted the impact which imagery created by fictional writers and artists ultimately had on the public's remembrance, awareness, and understanding of the genocide. Newspapers noted how extensive ceremonies for the Uprising's 20th anniversary were in New York City. Times Square was renamed Warsaw Ghetto Square for one week in tribute to the Jews who fought in the uprising.[43] Events held largely by Jewish organizations drew overflow crowds throughout the week of April 19. The Sunday magazine section of the New York Times ran a three page photo montage honoring the ghetto fighters.[44] It contained now-familiar images of the fighters as recorded by Nazi cameras and punctuated these photos with excerpts from memoirs and poems of victims and participants in the ghetto fight. The special pages further highlighted the growth in awareness in mainstream American culture of the events involving the uprising.

One such gathering drew 3000 persons to Carnegie Hall and was described in detail by national newspapers. The Carnegie presentation featured a dramatic production written by Howard Fast entitled "Never to Die" which recounted the story of the uprising. The drama was presented against a backdrop of 500 memorial candles and featured songs from the ghetto and poetry reading. The article reported that audible sobbing could be

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[43] "Times Square Renamed For Warsaw Ghetto" New York Times 20 April 1963.
[44] "The Heroes of Warsaw's Ghetto," New York Times Magazine 21 April 1963, 22-24.

heard and at its conclusion, "there was no applause in keeping with the solemnity of this occasion."[45] Finally, in what was apparently a very emotional moment, several survivors of the ghetto uprising rose from their seats in the audience as a tribute to their courage, and one survivor, Vladka Meed, a courier in the Jewish underground, read a selection in Yiddish recalling her experience.

The Carnegie presentation also featured messages sent from President Kennedy and delivered in person by New York Senator Jacob Javits. The President's message read, "Just as many before them did, the people of the Warsaw Ghetto affirmed that a few men who honor their freedom can speak for all men: that the only genuine choice in the history of man is not between living and dying but between seeking or not seeking the right. It is a measure of their own courage that the brutality they opposed will be remembered only in the light of their sacrifice."[46] Moreover, a proclamation passed by Congress as a Joint Resolution and signed by Kennedy was also read which stated, "though they lacked both military resources and a military tradition, they were able to conduct their struggle against the overwhelming forces of the Nazi occupiers for more than three weeks, thereby providing a chapter in the annals of human heroism, an inspiration to the peace-loving people of the world and a warning to would-be-oppressors which will long be remembered."[47] Several other tributes were also read on that evening by various local politicians and dignitaries to the capacity crowd.

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[45] Irving Spiegel, "Jews of World Mourn Victims of '43 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising," the New York Times 22 April 1963.
[46] Irving Spiegel, "Jews of World Mourn Victims of '43 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising," the New York Times 22 April 1963.
[47] United States Statute 407 (28 August 1962): 72.

The Ghetto Uprising became a cultural phenomenon in the late 1950's and early 1960's in America. Americans were interested in works and stories about the ghetto revolt at least in part because heroic rebellion was consistent with beliefs and ideas Americans held about the human response to tyranny. As we shall see in the next chapter, however, the Eichmann trial produced contradictory and troubling images of passive Jews dying without a fight, even collaborating with the Nazi tyrants and over the course of the next several years, authors such as Hannah Arendt and others presented evidence which flew in the face of the imagery created by Uris' works and others related to the uprising.

Most of the material related to the uprising which appeared for American audiences was written by moderately established men who were not known for producing either pulp fiction or intellectual works. Rather, they had experienced some success at creating mass produced works in the past and their names were recognizable to ordinary American consumers. The works they produced were often Book of the Month Club selections. They were to be bought, read, and prominently displayed in a person's home. The same held true for memorabilia from films, plays, and other such representations. The audience for these works appears to be American Jews, but also middle class Gentiles. The values and ethics purveyed in nearly every work were aimed at appealing to the American middle class consciousness. .

As we will see below, 1962 and 1963 marked another turning point in the way the story of the genocide was told to ordinary Americans through the arts and other forms of representation. While Israel had hoped to use the trial as a means of reminding the world

of the tragedy and scope of the Nazi annihilation, it also reminded Americans that while the Ghetto uprising was real, it was a relatively unique and limited event. The reality of the Holocaust, as the Eichmann trial reminded listeners and readers, highlighted the bureaucratization of death which the Nazis nearly perfected and the numbing pace at which thousands of Jews per day went to their deaths in gas chambers. Moreover, it reemphasized the image of passivity in the Jewish response.

Works released as a result of the success of Exodus pushed themes and imagery of earlier works dealing with Anne Frank in new directions while straining to provide an answer to this troubling question. Uris stood the traditional stereotype of Jews as passive and meek individuals on its head by emphasizing strength, violence, courage, and heroism in his Jewish characters throughout the novel. While pieces dealing with the genocide during the late 1950's continued to emphasize universal themes, set their stories against urban backdrops, and omit any detailed discussion of the concentration camps, they also stressed new themes and events, chiefly the Ghetto Uprising, while subtly underscoring the particular nature of the suffering and cruelty inflicted upon Jews during the tragedy. Works released during the late 1950's led to increased interest among Americans in the role of Jews during the genocide. Moreover, these pieces lent a sense of logic to the genocide in that the heroism and bravery of Jews described in these texts, films, and plays seemed like rational responses to the Nazi threat while remaining consistent with traditional American ideas about responses to tyranny and oppression.

CHAPTER 3
WHY DID YOU NOT PROTEST?

The capture, trial and execution by Israel of former Nazi lieutenant colonel Adolf Eichmann greatly impacted collective American understanding, awareness, and discussion of the Holocaust in the early 1960's. In fact, the Eichmann trial marked a turning point not only in how Americans came to understand the aims and extent of the Nazi's campaign against the Jews, but also in that the trial forced American audiences to confront a host of troubling questions that had been repressed or ignored after the liberation of Europe in 1945. Moreover, extensive newspaper, magazine, and television coverage of the trial generated new interest in the details of the genocide and consequently led to the release of a new body of works dealing with some of the controversial themes raised during the trial. The trial of Adolf Eichmann thus sent public discussion of the genocide in America in a number of new and different directions, while awakening audiences to the scope, totality, and particularity of the Holocaust.

As we have seen, the most works in the 1950's which dealt with elements of the genocide sought to universalize their characters and stories. Moreover, these pieces carefully avoided dealing with the brutality of the concentration camps and the specifically Jewish character of the Nazi's racial and extermination policies. Works in the 1950's presented the genocide as a series of loosely connected events that failed to

1950's presented the genocide as a series of loosely connected events that failed to provide any sense of cohesiveness or unity to the Nazi's persecution of civilians throughout Europe particularly between 1939 and 1945. The Eichmann trial provided a first glimpse for many Americans of the totality of the Nazi's genocide and of the various steps that eventually led to the murder of millions in gas chambers and concentration camps. As a result of the trial, terms such as *concentration camps*, *Auschwitz*, *deportation*, and *'final solution'*, took on a new significance. In this manner, the trial not only highlighted the particular fate of European Jewry during the Holocaust but also established a sense of coherence to the Nazi's overall plan which had not been earlier discussed in America.

Just as Anne Frank and the Ghetto Uprising were the primary means by which Americans discussed the genocide in the 1950's, much that was publicly stated or written in regards to the genocide during the early 1960's was related to the Eichmann trial. The trial was critical in shaping the future direction of discussion and awareness among the American public. The Eichmann trial raised a number of provocative questions involving the role of Jews in their own destruction, the culpability of non-Nazi nations and individuals in the destruction of European Jewry, and the mindset of men like Adolf Eichmann. It depicted the destruction of the Jews as a plan of the Nazi government carried out with bureaucratic efficiency in places of mass death.

A Gallup Poll taken during the summer of 1961 found that over 87 percent of Americans had heard something about the trial of Adolf Eichmann.[1] This figure becomes significant when one reflects upon the limited way in which the genocide was discussed during the 1950's and the fact that the trial dealt with many issues previously repressed or ignored in the evolving mainstream American dialogue. One of the chief factors behind the trial's high recognition factor was the extensive coverage devoted to Eichmann's capture, trial, and execution within the news media. Hardly a week went by between the years 1960-1963 when at least one major periodical, newspaper, or television production did not extensively cover some aspect of the trial.

The attention which Eichmann attracted among Americans reflects, at least to some extent, the culture and climate of the United States in the early 1960's. Differences between 1950's America and the early 1960's were most probably manifest in the evolving and increasingly volatile civil rights crusade. While gains were made by Blacks seeking equality during the latter half of the 1950's, expectations rose among minorities as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. continued to gain the attention of white and black audiences alike in his calls for racial harmony through peaceful resistance. As the Freedom Riders rode through the South in 1961 to raise awareness and attention to their cause, minority leaders increasingly sought to end discrimination through appeals to justice and morality. These calls for social justice came at a time when the election of John Kennedy as President signaled to many Americans a new beginning for this country

[1] George Gallup, The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1991, Random House: New York, 1972, p. 1719.

based upon increased individual responsibility and accountability for one's actions towards their nation and towards each other. This was, as Kennedy would claim, the time to "ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country." The election of John Kennedy marked the end of the conservative climate which had dominated American culture throughout the 1950's.

Briefly let us recount the story behind the capture and trial of Adolf Eichmann. Eichmann was abducted by Israeli agents from a busstop in Argentina on May 13, 1960. He had been hiding in Argentina since 1952 and had worked at a Volkswagen factory while living under the assumed name of Ricardo Clement. Israeli agents had been shadowing Eichmann for quite some time, and finally opted to seize the former Nazi officer as he returned home from work in the early evening. Several days later, Eichmann was smuggled out of Argentina on an El Al flight bound for Jerusalem, and on May 23rd Israeli premier David Ben-Gurion officially announced to the media that Israel had seized Eichmann and intended to try him for crimes against humanity.

Although Eichmann was absent from the Nuremberg Trials during the late 1940's, his name arose frequently in the testimony of Nazi officials as the officer in charge of the Gestapo's Bureau of Jewish Affairs. The defendant was an active member of the Nazi party beginning in 1930 and served in nearly every branch of the Nazi bureaucracy throughout the decade with stints in the SS, SD and Gestapo. During this time, Eichmann gained a rudimentary grasp of the Yiddish language and made several trips to Palestine. Hence, he became regarded as the Reich's 'expert on Jewish Affairs' and increasingly

was consulted in matters relating to Jews in newly occupied Nazi territory as the decade drew to a close.

The actual trial of Adolf Eichmann largely focused upon the crimes he committed after 1941 in his role as head of Jewish Affairs. It was during this time that the Nazis formulated their 'Final Solution' as a means of exterminating Jewry from Nazi occupied territory for once and for all. Eichmann was a critical figure both in the decision to use the deadly gas Zyklon B to poison Jews and in overseeing that this extermination campaign would be carried out to its fullest capacity over the next four years. He insured that transports were run on schedule to the camps and that camp commandants were provided with adequate quantities of Zyklon B to kill their prisoners. As the war dragged on, Eichmann pursued his task with ever more zeal, and it was at his insistence that deportations began and continued from Hungary through the war's final days. Thus, the chief concern of Eichmann's work and life from the mid 1930's through the war's close was formulating and executing Nazi policies aimed specifically at Jews.

The trial officially began in Jerusalem on April 11, 1961. Over the next four months more than 1500 documents were submitted and 120 witnesses offered testimony to the court. Israeli Attorney General Gideon Hausner opened the trial with a lengthy recounting of the crimes committed by the Nazi regime and emphasized the particularly anti-Jewish nature of these crimes. He then went on to officially charge the defendant with fifteen counts of genocidal acts and crimes against the Jewish people. Over the course of the next several months, one survivor after another was called upon to recount

the horror, brutality and violence inflicted upon themself and their families during the Nazi genocide.

Following this moving but somewhat prolonged spectacle, Eichmann himself took the stand on June 20 and remained there until July 24. His testimony revolved around his claims of having been a little cog in a big machine and of only being guilty of obeying orders issued by his superiors. The testimony of the former Nazi officer was often confusing and did little to bolster his chances for an acquittal. By August 14, 1961, the defense rested its case and four months later, on December 11, the Israeli Judges announced their decision in which they found the defendant guilty on all fifteen counts and sentenced Eichmann to death. After the rejection of a final appeal Adolf Eichmann was hanged in Jerusalem on May 31, 1962, thereby ending the odyssey which had begun in Argentina some three years earlier.

From its inception, the Eichmann trial was intended to be different than the international tribunal at Nuremberg had been during the late 1940's. Unlike the Nuremberg trials, which focused little on the Nazis' 'final solution', the Israelis spoke openly about their desire to focus upon the crimes and atrocities Eichmann committed rather than dwell upon issues of legality and nuances related to the law. The trial was meant to serve as a reminder to the entire world of the particularity of the Nazi's extermination program and against the Jews of Europe. However, many observers heavily criticized both the manner in which Eichmann was kidnapped and Israel's decision to hold the trial in Jerusalem rather than handing the defendant over to an

international tribunal. As a 1961 editorial which appeared in The New Republic stated, "For the Israelis, the Nuremberg trials were not quite enough. The fate of the Jews was only an item- though an essential one- in the indictment and condemnation."[2] Thus, the Eichmann trial was intended to accomplish much more than simply judging whether or not the defendant was guilty of war crimes against humanity.

In an interview which ran in the New York Times Magazine on the eve of the trial in December, 1960, Israeli Premier David Ben-Gurion outlined several of the goals he hoped the Eichmann trial would achieve. As the interview began, the Premier emphasized the specifically Jewish nature of the genocide and noted, "He [Hitler] never intended to murder an entire people, except the Jews."[3] Shortly thereafter he emphasized that Israel wants to establish before the nations of the world how millions of Jews were murdered by the Nazis simply because they were Jews. By 1960, as we have seen, the majority of information which Americans had received concerning the genocide largely universalized the victims and made no distinctions between the fates of Jews and non-Jews in occupied Europe. The Eichmann trial thus became the first means by which most Americans learned that Jews were the specific targets of the Nazis and as such suffered horrible losses as a group during the Holocaust. As Commentary writer Harold Rosenberg concluded, "the trial was held in order to tell the story of the Jews of Europe".[4]

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[2] Patrick O'Donovan, "Reflections on the Eichmann Trial," The New Republic 15 May 1961, 8.
[3] David Ben-Gurion, "The Eichmann Case as Seen by Ben-Gurion," New York Times Magazine 18 December 1960, 7.
[4] Harold Rosenberg, "The Trial and Eichmann," Commentary #32 November 1961, 377.

However, the trial was held to achieve several other aims in addition to particularizing the suffering of Jews during this tragedy. Israel saw the trial as an educational tool in which to show the world that, as Premier Ben-Gurion stated, "in our day the gas chamber and the soap factory are what anti-Semitism may lead to."[5] Beyond utilizing the trial as a means to alert nations of the dangers of anti-Semitism, Ben-Gurion also hoped the trial would "help to ferret out other Nazis" who were believed to be hiding abroad. Moreover, the Israeli Premier acknowledged that he sought to educate the youth in Israel of the tragedy which befell Jews in Europe before they were born. The New York Times interview generated a tremendous response from readers as evidenced by several weeks worth of letters to the editor in which the pros and cons of the impending trial were discussed and argued. More cynical observers claimed Israel was trying to set herself up as the spokesperson for world Jewry by having the trial in Jerusalem, and others added that Ben-Gurion was trying to appease more politically conservative anti-German factions within the Knesset by abducting and indicting Eichmann. On the other hand, many passionately argued that at a time when civil rights were of paramount concern in America, the trial would serve as an excellent reminder of the dangers presented by discrimination against a minority in the 20th century. As the trial approached, two things seemed clear: this would be an event of historic importance with the potential to shed light on the darker side of human nature; and the trial promised to

[5] David Ben-Gurion, "The Eichmann Case as Seen by Ben-Gurion," New York Times Magazine 18 December 1960, 62.

provoke further controversy as it continued due to the involvement of the more grisly and unique elements.

In their quest to inform the world of the specifically Jewish nature of the Holocaust, Israel could not have found a better defendant than Adolf Eichmann. In his article on the Eichmann trial, Harold Rosenberg labeled Eichmann "a living protagonist for this crime, a man bound to the misery of the Jews as his specialty, his sole reason for being . . . he had not other role, no status, nor stature apart from this single function, that of ferrying Jews to their deaths."[6] Clearly, the specific capacity in which Eichmann served the Nazis generated new awareness and interest in the specific suffering inflicted upon Jews as a result of the genocide.

The manner in which Eichmann was captured and subsequently brought to Israel to stand trial drew intense media coverage and scrutiny to the defendant and to Israel following the Ben-Gurion announcement. When reporters questioned the Israeli Premier as to where and how Israeli agents found Eichmann, Ben-Gurion adamantly refused to divulge any of details behind the abduction of Eichmann and vowed never to publicly reveal this information. In the ensuing days and weeks, a flood of sensational stories claiming to have the details behind what Newsweek called "the greatest cloak and dagger drama in years" appeared in a variety of American publications.[7] Only several weeks after his capture was made public, The Case Against Adolf Eichmann and Eichmann:

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[6] Harold Rosenberg, "The Trial and Eichmann," Commentary #32 November 1961, 375.
[7] Newsweek, "Nazi Killer of Millions," #55 June 6, 1960 51.

The Man and His Crimes became the first of many sensationalized paperback books aiming to capitalize on the sudden notoriety of the former Nazi officer.

While the publicity and speculation behind Eichmann's capture generated a tremendous amount of renewed interest in the genocide among the American public, this sudden media attention also carried with it a heavy cost. Left to their own devices to figure out not only how Eichmann had managed to live in hiding as a fugitive for fifteen years but also how he was eventually captured, journalists often embellished upon the facts they had and endowed the former Nazi with non-human qualities. An article appearing in Time Magazine on Eichmann's capture ran under the headline 'Last of the Beasts' while other periodicals likened the defendant to the devil and often referred to him as a monster. In a letter to the New York Times, one reader wrote, "it is unrealistic to think of Eichmann in any respect as a member of the human race and our tradition and law does not hesitate to remove a monster wherever found."[8] Sensational coverage created tremendous interest among the American public in Eichmann following his arrest, but as we will see, the defendant's total failure to live up to these descriptions contributed to a rapid loss of interest in the trial among American audiences as it proceeded.

Upon his capture, the American press released a multitude of stories detailing Eichmann's role within the Nazi apparatus. Of particular interest to American readers was a Life magazine two part exclusive interview with Eichmann that had been obtained from Wilhelm Sassen, a former SS officer, during the 1950's. The article presents an odd

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[8] Samuel Hofstadter, "Not a Human," New York Times 8 January 1961, 17.

mixture of family snapshots taken during Eichmann's youth and horrific images of concentration camp victims reprinted from GI photos which had first appeared in 1944 and 1945. Eichmann stresses within this interview that "neither I nor my men would have anything to do with the physical liquidation. We would act only as policemen; that is we would round up Jews for the others."[9] Throughout the Life exposé Eichmann asserts he was no more than a cog in the massive machinery of the Nazi bureaucracy and as such was not responsible in any way for the tragedy which had befallen Europe's Jews. He notes, "Whether they were bank directors or mental cases, the people who were loaded on these trains meant nothing to me. It was really none of my business."[10]

The lack of regard for human life which characterized so many of Eichmann's opinions and views frightened and enthralled many Americans. Attempting to understand the motivation behind a man like Eichmann became a passion for some Americans who viewed the trial as a chance to probe the depths of human callousness and cruelty. In 1960, William Shirer's The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich was first published in America and dealt largely with the composition and motivations of the Nazi leadership. The book enjoyed incredible success, sitting atop the bestseller list for well over two years. In spite of the book's occasional historical inaccuracies and exaggerations, Americans who read this work viewed it as the definitive text towards understanding the Nazis' bureaucratic apparatus. This fascination with the structure of

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[9]Wilhelm Sassen, "Eichmann's Own Damning Story," Life 28 November 1960, 24.
[10] Wilhelm Sassen, "Eichmann's Own Damning Story," Life 28 November 1960, 101.

Nazi power further contributed to interest in the story of Adolf Eichmann during the early 1960's.

The portrait of Eichmann to emerge from his own account was confusing and more than a bit troubling for American readers as evidenced by their reactions to the interview. One reader wrote, "your story, replete with practically social family pictures of Eichmann and his family, is getting sympathetic reaction from some of our weaker minded citizens."[11] Americans who had been anticipating a trial of other-worldly implications between justice and absolute evil were slowly realizing that Eichmann was human, indeed very mortal at that. As an editorial in the Nation admitted, "like it or not, it may be well to keep in mind that Eichmann was once a two-year-old who played in the sand as my child is doing now."[12] Following the trial's conclusion, Hannah Arendt pressed these same claims much further in her work Eichmann in Jerusalem, which will be discussed in greater detail below. However, by December of 1960, Life had already conceded, "the depressing fact is that Eichmann is basically a rather unextraordinary man".[13] Nowhere would this become more evident than in the defendant's own testimony offered during his trial.

As the trial's opening date approached, Israel announced only one television network in America would be allowed to film the proceedings and set off a very heated battle between media representatives for the three major networks. Due to the unusually

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[11] Bernard S. Min, "Letters to the Editor," Life 19 December 1960, 4.
[12] Stuart Palmer, "Eichmann and Ourselves," The Nation 20 August 1960, 92.
[13] "Eichmann and the Duty of Man," Life 5 December 1960, 46.

high level of anticipation accompanying the trial's start, news and print media outlets in the U.S. were scrambling to set themselves up in Jerusalem to offer exclusive coverage of the proceedings. Shortly after the trial began, survivors of the Holocaust were called upon to share their stories in front of the courtroom. The American media began to pull back from its coverage in an effort to avoid repelling audiences with the brutal images and scenes recalled by many of the witnesses called upon to testify. However, the media contingent dramatically increased on the days proceeding the testimony of Eichmann himself. As a result of the terrifying descriptions of the defendant which had been circulated in American periodicals upon his capture, the American public was very curious and interested in the testimony of Eichmann. However, the testimony of the defendant proved far less dramatic and engaging than had been expected and the media soon lost interest in the bickering exchanges between Attorney General Gideon Hauser and Adolf Eichmann during his month on the stand. Thus, as the trial concluded it was being broadcast to far fewer Americans than in its opening days.

The Eichmann Trial brought to light many issues and themes related to the genocide which previously had been repressed or ignored by the American public. Even today scholars are struggling to define and assess culpability among nations and individuals in the wake of the Holocaust. One of the first times a periodical publicly declared a possible link between U.S. indifference and the deaths of six million Jews was in a Life magazine editorial in December of 1960. The article read, "just as millions of Germans, by closing their eyes and ears to the crimes around them, shared some of

Eichmann's guilt, does *anyone's* willful blindness to injustice *anywhere* make them a conspirator with evil." It goes on to add, "says he [Eichmann]: 'the plain fact was that there was no place on earth that would have been ready to accept the Jews' and God help us all, it was a true statement. It was true of the United States of America."[14] Justice and responsibility in the aftermath of the Holocaust are the two major themes dealt with in Stanley Kramer's 1961 major motion picture Judgment at Nuremberg. The movie reflects the cultural climate of America at this time while dealing with issues and themes familiar with the populace in light of the extensive news coverage granted to the Eichmann Trial.

The picture's opening date of December 14, 1961, intentionally coincided with the sentencing of Adolf Eichmann. Opting to open the film on this date only underscored what was already a very obvious relationship between the release of the film and the actual trial. As in the case of several films which preceded it and dealt with other elements of the genocide, Judgment at Nuremberg featured an all-star cast in an effort to appeal to broader audiences. Actors and actresses appearing within the film included Burt Lancaster, Judy Garland, Montgomery Clift, Spencer Tracy, Maximilian Schell, and Marlene Dietrich. Once again, as in the case of other pictures dealing with aspects of the Holocaust, Stanley Kramer's film opened to international publicity featuring a world premiere in Berlin attended by dignitaries and political figures from around the globe along with hundreds of journalists and several of the movie's stars.

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[14] "Eichmann and the Duty of Man," Life 5 December 1960, 46.

Filmed entirely in black and white and running over three hours in length, this film provided audiences with an intense and often very troubling viewing experience. One of the film's most memorable scenes followed Spencer Tracy on a stroll through the dilapidated remains of the Nuremberg Stadium which once held hundreds of thousands of Hitler's audiences rapt during the 1930's as echoes of music, roaring crowds, and Hitler's screaming are heard in the background. This film was also unique in that it presented several minutes of actual Army film footage of the liberation of camps which had not been seen by most Americans since their initial release on news reels fifteen years earlier. As dramatic music plays, Richard Widmark narrates these films and in a sense provides a 'group history lesson' for American audiences in which it is stressed that two thirds of the victims were Jews and that six million Jews were exterminated during the Holocaust. However, while Jews are mentioned as victims of the genocide at several points in the film, these victims play a very minor role in the overall story.

While Judgement at Nuremburg achieved outstanding financial success and publicity following its premiere, the film's tendency to universalize its message and failure to give Jews any agency in the tragedy raised the ire of some Jewish critics. In many respects, as historian Judith Doneson has pointed out, many of the film's defects and inaccuracies reflected the failures of the Nuremburg Trials itself.[15] Director Stanley Kramer makes a somewhat contradictory case for the culpability of Germans in the Holocaust while also arguing that they were no more guilty than any other person who

[15] Judith Doneson, The Holocaust in American Film. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1987, 100.

stood by while the genocide was taking place. While this point certainly is compelling, it produced conflicting images and themes in the film which drew parallels between the American bombing of Hiroshima to the Holocaust.

Judgment at Nuremberg rotates around one major question, first asked by defense attorney Maximilian Schell at the outset of the film: do *you* consider *yourself* free of responsibility for crimes committed by the Nazis? The film then presents a series of characters from a variety of different backgrounds who represent various levels of direct and indirect responsibility for the rise of Hitler and the deaths of millions of Jews. While judges who willfully manipulated the law appear very guilty of complicity in these crimes, the role of others such as a Nazi General's widow, a young girl who refused to break off her friendship with a Jewish man in spite of the danger she knew her friendship posed, and a maid and butler who worked for a Nazi family evoke much hazier opinions from the audience on the levels of their guilt. Marlene Dietrich, as the widow, represents the German citizen who simply will not admit atrocities even occurred in the aftermath of the genocide. Likewise, the maid and butler initially claim to have been totally unaware of the horrors being perpetrated by the Germans, but then express the refrain commonly uttered by German citizens during the 1950's and 1960's in which they claimed even if they did know what was happening, what could they have done about it.

The film sets out to recount a trial of four judges accused of participating in crimes against humanity during the Nuremberg Tribunal of 1948. The two main combatants in the movie are Richard Widmark, as the prosecutor who blames Germany

and all her citizens for the genocide, and Maximilian Schell as the defense attorney who is attempting to create a future for Germany by highlighting the universal guilt of many nations and individuals beyond those seated in the courtroom or even within Germany itself. Schell reminds the court that the Soviet Union, the Vatican, Churchill, and even American industrialists are responsible for what happened to the Jews of Europe. Judgment at Nuremberg brought these issues into the public sphere of discussion for the first time in America. Prior to the release of this film, issues of responsibility and the role of bystanders in the deaths of Jews were not broached in American society due in part to their uncomfortable and inconclusive nature of these themes.

However, the financial success of this movie does in some respects reflect America's increasing willingness to confront the more difficult and disturbing aspects of the genocide. The concluding message of the film, although somewhat ambiguous, seems to have been stated by a defendant portrayed by Burt Lancaster who finally admits 'if we did not know it was because we did not want to know.' Judgment at Nuremberg was nominated for nearly every major Academy Award and won Best Actor honors for Schell's performance and a Best Screenplay trophy for previously blacklisted writer Abby Mann, who had adapted his own Playhouse 90 script to make the movie. Moreover, the film proved to be very lucrative at the box office. The film's final note, in which the viewer is told that none of the judges sentenced for their crimes were still serving their sentences due to Cold War politics certainly seemed to have been added as a means of advocating the death penalty or a similarly severe punishment in the impending

Eichmann verdict, thus reflecting the contemporary concerns of the international community.

As noted earlier, one of the aims which Israeli Premier David Ben-Gurion had hoped the trial would achieve was to alert the public that many Nazis were still at large living as fugitives all over the world. Following Eichmann's capture, Newsweek ran an article which described efforts underway to determine the fate of former Hitler aide Martin Borman and other Nazis previously assumed to have died in the final days of the war. Two weeks later, Newsweek again did a story on the 500 top Nazi fugitives "scattered from Germany to Latin America to the Middle East" including Borman, Hans Haple, Fritz Katsman, Professor Horst Schumann, and Dr. Mangle [sic] and noted that as a result of the Eichmann Trial renewed efforts were underway to apprehend these and other criminals.[16]

Perhaps the most interesting capture to follow the arrest of Eichmann occurred in 1963 and was widely publicized in American papers. Under the headline "Sleuthing Adds Two Footnotes to History", The New York Times reported former Nazi Karl Silberbauer was suspended by the Vienna police force and awaiting trial for charges stemming from his arrest of Anne Frank and her family in 1944.[17] Anne Frank had become a cultural icon in America during the 1950's as her story was adapted to reflect broader concerns, and it was through Anne which Americans discussed elements of the genocide. Anne's story evolved with public discussion and awareness of the Holocaust.

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[16] "They Hide, They Hunt," Newsweek #55 20 June 1960, 64.
[17] "Sleuthing Adds Two Footnotes to History," New York Times 21 November 1963, 1.

While there was little mention of exactly who arrested Anne in the 1950's or whether the person or persons were ever found, one of the themes which the Eichmann Trial brought into the public discourse was the existence of fugitive Nazis living under assumed names who went unpunished following the war's close. Just as Anne had become America's collective victim of the Holocaust, the realization that many Nazis had eluded capture and punishment fostered by the trial led audiences to advocate and then applaud the arrest of Silberbauer as they would the arrest of any criminal who had harmed a friend or relative.

It cannot be stressed enough that the Eichmann Trial transformed collective American awareness and discussion of the Holocaust by emphasizing the particular suffering inflicted upon European Jewry. The trial built upon the Exodus phenomena in a different direction by once again giving Jews agency in the tragedy but this time suggesting that they may have had a hand in their own destruction. Western audiences heard first hand accounts of the harsh conditions and cruel treatment afforded to Jews in concentration camps all over Europe. Just as the Hackett and Goodrich stage adaptation of The Diary of Anne Frank allowed Otto Frank the opportunity to reshape his daughter's story and memory, the Eichmann Trial gave Israeli Jews the chance to retell the story of the genocide and emphasize the particularity of Nazi crimes. While the trial emphasized Jews as the targeted victims in the story of the genocide, several works were published which also dared to ask previously taboo questions relating to the role of Jews in their own deaths. Although this was purposely not emphasized during the proceedings, the complicity of some Jews- especially Jewish leaders was an issue which crept not only

into the testimony of countless survivors who had been called as witnesses for the Prosecution, but also in the account offered to the court by Adolf Eichmann.

The issue of Jewish complicity seems to have been first brought to the attention of American audiences in Raul Hilberg's 1960 historical work The Destruction of the European Jews. Hilberg's study received very high marks from critics but was predominantly popular among scholarly circles where it was widely praised as the most complete and well-researched piece to date dealing with the Holocaust. Hilberg concluded that "the reaction pattern of the Jews was characterized by almost complete lack of resistance."[18] However, he devoted relatively little space to developing this argument more fully with stronger evidence. The author criticized the methods by which Jews tried to appease Nazis by resorting to standard or rational logic in their appeals. Ultimately, Hilberg claimed, "insofar as the Jews cooperated in other ways, the attempts at forestalling not only availed nothing but actually fitted into German plans. Playing into German hands, they speeded the process of destruction."[19] The Destruction of the European Jews was a massive book aimed largely at academic audiences, and as a result of the sheer quantity of issues with which it dealt, Hilberg's arguments linking Jews at least in some extent to their destruction went largely unnoticed by the American public.

Also in 1960, Bruno Bettelheim's The Informed Heart was released in America and continued the assessment of Jewish culpability in their destruction much like Raul Hilberg. Bettelheim took a different tack than Hilberg in pursuing his argument by

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[18] Raul Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, Quandrangle: Chicago, 1961, 662.
[19] Ibid., 665.

defining and speculating far more deeply on the psychological motivations behind Jewish complicity in their deaths. The author examined Jews within ghettos and concentration camps who were in a position to resist their oppressors but instead chose not to rebel. Bettelheim found that "the persecution of the Jews worsened, slow step by slow step, when no violent resistance occurred. It may have been Jewish acceptance, without fight, of ever harsher discrimination and degradation that first gave the SS the idea that they could be gotten to the point where they would walk to the gas chambers on their own."[20]

The Informed Heart presented no great answers to the provocative questions it posed and in fact concluded on a note of frustration. "Millions of the Jews of Europe who did not or could not escape in time to go underground as many thousands did," wrote an exasperated Bettelheim, "could at least have marched as free men against the SS, rather than to first grovel, then wait to be rounded up for their own extermination, and finally walk themselves to the gas chambers."[21] Finally, Bettelheim ended his work on a question, wondering "why then did millions walk quietly, without resistance, to their death . . . why did so few of the millions of prisoners die like men?"[22]
It is on this note of confusion, ambiguity, and even despair which Bettelheim ended his book.

Bettelheim's work was certainly provocative and offered many compelling psychological opinions from the author related to the mental strength and weakness of

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[20] Bruno Bettelheim, The Informed Heart: Autonomy in a Mass Age, The Free Press: Glencoe, 259.
[21] Ibid., 263.
[22] Ibid., 264.

humans in captivity. However, Bettelheim's work was decidedly unobjective and actually quite poor history. He frequently omits mentioning events or circumstances which may have contradicted his thesis that Jews went passively to their deaths and that Jewish leaders contributed greatly to the destruction of European Jews. While this work again raised the issue of Jewish complicity among the small circle of its readership, the role of Jews in their own destruction had not managed to enter mainstream public discussion of the genocide prior to the start of the Eichmann trial.

During the interview with Adolf Eichmann which appeared in Life magazine in November, 1960, the former Nazi officer tellingly recounted how impressed he was with the passivity exhibited by Jews as they were about to be killed. According to Eichmann, "I watched the last group of Jews undress, down to their shirts. They walked the last 100 or 200 yards- they were not driven- then they jumped into the pit. It was impressive to see them all jumping into the pit *without offering any resistance whatsoever.*"[23] Although the trial did not directly deal with this topic, the testimony of survivors and at times of Eichmann himself led reporter Hannah Arendt to more fully pursue this theme in her work Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil published in 1963. This piece was a compilation of articles written by the author as a reporter for The New Yorker during the trial. It dwelled mostly upon the ordinariness of Eichmann's character also on the role Jews played in their own destruction.

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[23] Wilhelm Sassen, "Eichmann's Own Damning Story," Life 28 November 1960, 102.

Arendt leveled particularly harsh criticism at the Jewish councils of Europe and blamed their leaders for greatly contributing to the numbers of Jews deported and murdered during the genocide. According to the author, "Jewish officials could be trusted to compile the lists of persons and of their property, to secure money from the deportees to defray the expense of their deportation and extermination, to keep track of vacated apartments, to supply police forces to help seize Jews and get them on trains, until, as a last gesture, they handed over the assets of the Jewish community in good order for final confiscation. . . we still can sense how they enjoyed their new power."[24] Moreover, this work strongly criticized the decision by Judenrat leaders of deciding who must be spared by introducing categories ranking Jewish citizens according to their prominence. The acceptance of these categories by the Jewish community, was, according to Arendt, "the beginning of the moral collapse of respectable Jewish society."[25] While Jewish community leaders were particular targets to come under fire in this study, Jewish civilians also were criticized by the author.

She wrote, "the Jews registered, filled out innumerable forms, answered pages and pages of questionnaires regarding their property so that it could be seized the more easily; they then assembled at the collection points and boarded the trains. The few who tried to hide or to escape were rounded up by a special Jewish police force. As far as Eichmann could see, no one protested, no one refused to cooperate."[26] She then added, "Without

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[24] Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, Penguin Books: New York, 1963, 118.
[25] Ibid., 131.
[26] Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, Penguin Books: New York, 1963, 115.

Jewish help in administrative and police work- . . . -there would have been either complete chaos or an impossibly severe drain on German manpower."[27] Rather than search for the historical or psychological motivations behind their decision to passively comply with Nazi orders, Arendt was primarily interested in emphasizing that Jews did not fight back when challenged largely because tyranny was internalized by its victims. The author extends this observation by claiming this not only hurt the Jewish cause but it helped the Nazis in their extermination program who "had regarded this cooperation as the very cornerstone of their Jewish policy."[28]

Whereas Hilberg and Bettelheim's reports treated this topic very carefully and often ambiguously, Arendt's work possesses an almost damning tone to its findings. "As Eichmann told it," she recounts, "the most potent factor in the soothing of his own conscience was the simple fact that he could see no one, no one at all, who actually was against the Final Solution."[29] Indeed, in an article written at the trial's conclusion, Elie Wiesel admitted, "the Jews themselves failed to do everything they should have done: they ought to have done more, they could have done better."[30] The role of Jews in their own destruction entered into mainstream American discourse following the release of Arendt's study.

Arendt's work provoked a torrent of bitter criticism from Jewish observers and critics following its release. As in the Bettelheim study, Arendt's history was poorly

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[27] Ibid., 117.
[28] Ibid., 124.
[29] Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, Penguin Books: New York, 1963, 116.
[30] Elie Wiesel, "Eichmann's Victims and the Unheard Testimony," Commentary 512.

constructed and riddled with historical exaggeration and inaccuracies. Jacob Robinson and other prominent Jewish writers and editors suggested that Arendt's book could be viewed as anti-Semitic as a result of her determination to prove that Jews were passive and meek in the face of the tragedy. Once again, Eichmann in Jerusalem presented the genocide in a decidedly unobjective fashion designed to prove the author's philosophical themes related to tyranny and bureaucracy while omitting elements and events which might contest these theories.

These works which dealt with the Jewish role in their extermination undoubtedly contributed to the simultaneous appearance of works detailing the heroism of the Jewish resistance at the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943. As we shall see in the next chapter, the public discussion of the genocide in America evolved sometimes in response to the discussion itself. That is, these images of passive Jews provoked new images portraying Jews as tough and strong during the early 1960's. However, another series of works also appeared during the 1960's which presented the stories of survivors and reflected the guilt and confusion of Jews themselves who had managed to live through their ordeal. Together, these conflicting works contributed to the evolution of America's awareness and comprehension of the Holocaust.

The Eichmann Trial was significant because it emphasized the particularity of the Nazi crimes. This emphasis transformed the more universalistic discourse which had previously existed by taking it in several new, more difficult directions. One of these was towards refuting claims of Jewish passivity with images of heroic resistance. Another as

we will also see was to foster audience interest in the stories of the survivors themselves. Finally, the Eichmann Trial reawakened Americans to the brutality of the Holocaust and laid the groundwork for future studies which explored the direct and indirect responsibility of nations and individuals previously unassociated with the extermination of the Jews. Whether or not the American public's interest in the trial itself was sustained throughout its entire length, the arousal of this interest and the media stories which accompanied Eichmann's capture and trial were critical in reshaping how Americans dealt with the genocide and what kinds of works were presented to Americans on the Nazi genocide.

CHAPTER 4
THOSE WHO DID NOT PERISH

America's awareness and understanding of the Holocaust itself was fundamentally transformed by a series of works written by and about survivors of the genocide in the early 1960's. Works such as Elie Wiesel's Night (1960) and Primo Levi's Survival in Auschwitz (1960) represented the first primary accounts authored by survivors who had been in the death and concentration camps to reach mainstream American audiences. For the first time, these memoirs described the day to day rigors of camp life and vividly recounted the physical and mental deprivations which were part of their experiences in the concentration camps. Not only did these works profoundly alter how America thought and talked about the genocide, they also helped foster an environment among mainstream American audiences which prompted new works dealing with the plight of survivors in contemporary society. All told, the body of pieces dealt with in this chapter marked the beginning of a profoundly new and different era of consciousness of the genocide among American audiences.

A progression of books, plays and films beginning with John Hersey's The Wall in 1950 gradually expanded American awareness of and interest in aspects of the genocide while slowly but steadily pushing the boundaries of what Americans were willing to discuss relating to the more troubling elements of the genocide. This evolution

in discourse and growing awareness of the particularity of the Nazi extermination program aimed at Jews coincided with the rise of an increasingly vocal and volatile civil rights movement in America. As the struggles of African Americans to achieve full equality in the United States increasingly drew greater coverage and sympathy from mainstream American audiences and the media, interest in the racial extermination program of the Nazis grew substantially among the American public. People began to reexamine the Holocaust in the early 1960's and to draw tentative comparisons between the plight of Jews in Nazi Europe to the suffering of African Americans in the United States. Together, the dually evolving discourse on the Holocaust and increasingly strident civil rights struggle fostered curiosity among some Americans in the more disturbing and unique elements of the Nazi genocide.

This chapter examines when and how public discussion of the Holocaust in America first began to deal with concentration camps and their effects on survivors in contemporary society. As we have seen in earlier chapters, works released during the 1950's and early 1960's either wholly ignored the concentration camps altogether or treated them as an abyss of death where victims were sent and presumably murdered immediately on arrival. Authors and producers sought to present the genocide in such a manner as to avoid repelling mainstream audiences and seemed feel that Americans would not be interested in material related to life within the camps. While these pieces made important first steps in raising awareness and understanding of the genocide among the American public, they left readers with no sense of what experience in concentration camps must have entailed. Therefore, the release of the Wiesel and Levi memoirs in

1960 and their success both financially and critically marked the first time that the subject of the camps was dealt with in any sort of detail within America and helped pave the way for future stories by and about survivors and their experiences to be published and accepted by a significant portion of the American public.

Collectively, survivors stayed on the fringes of society during the 1950's and largely kept their stories within themselves. As historian Edward Linenthal notes, "Adapting to American culture, survivors generally wanted to turn away from the horror they had lived through, become Americans, build a new life, and take advantage, cautiously, of the American dream."[1] There were pressures placed upon Holocaust survivors to remain silent and suppress their stories by both Gentiles and Jews as was discussed in Chapter One of this work. Many of those who had managed to survive the genocide and were now living in America also were coping with the tremendous physical and mental losses inflicted upon them during the tragedy. The burdens of memory, which really lie at the core of the survivor experience in post-Holocaust society, could not be described to the American public before audiences first understood that many *but not all* Jews were sent to the crematoriums immediately following their arrival at Auschwitz and other camps.

Fifty years later in American society, Holocaust survivors have attained a lofty status, particularly among Jews, as moral exemplars whose insights are particularly valuable and important in this day and age. Historian Judith Miller writes, "among the chosen people, they have become the chosen of the chosen."[2] Moreover, there is a certain

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[1] Edward Linenthal, Preserving Memory, Viking Press: New York, 1995, 6.
[2] Judith Miller, One by One by One, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

sense of urgency which accompanies the words of survivors today in light of the fact that many are elderly and soon all will have passed away due to natural causes. Miller echoes these sentiments when she adds, "many have become obsessed of late with speaking out. They feel compelled to tell their stories now, before it is too late."[3] Efforts to preserve the stories of survivors through multi-media techniques received a recent boost when director Steven Spielberg embarked upon an ambitious plan to establish a film archive featuring interviews with over 100,000 survivors currently living in the United States. The Spielberg project, along with his film Schindler's List and the opening of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. has contributed to the high profile survivors now occupy on the American cultural landscape. Furthermore, survivors today are often interviewed in the media for their perspective on genocidal massacres in places such as Rwanda and Bosnia and many speak regularly to groups of school children, church congregations and other community organizations. As Primo Levi notes in the preface to the 1993 edition of Survival in Auschwitz, "The need to tell our story to 'the rest', to make 'the rest' participate in it, had taken for us, before our liberation and after, the character of an immediate and violent impulse, to the point of competing with our other elementary needs."[4] However, the respect which survivors receive today from the American public and the desire to hear their stories is a relatively new phenomenon, which has its origins in the initial literature to emerge at the very end of the 1950's.

In 1959 Philip Roth wrote what may be the definitive critique of Jewish assimilation into suburban culture in his series of short stories entitled Goodbye,

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[3] Ibid., 220.
[4] Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz, translated by Stuart Woolf, New York: Collier Books, 1960, 9.

Columbus. Roth's work received critical acclaim for its cutting analysis of the shallowness of suburban culture and the sacrifices Jews collectively chose to make in order to gain acceptance among their Gentile neighbors throughout the 1950's. While the title story received the most critical acclaim and attention, the book's final story, Eli, the Fanatic, subtly dealt with themes and issues previously ignored by more mainstream works relating to the relationship between American Jews and survivors of the Holocaust. During the course of this short story, Roth raised several difficult questions concerning American Jews' perceptions of survivors and themselves in the wake of their increasing acceptance and assimilation into mainstream American culture and life.

Eli, the Fanatic tells the story of Eli Peck, a reformed Jew living comfortably in a mixed suburb during the 1950's. Eli serves his community as its attorney and has the difficult task of soothing tensions between townspeople and several orthodox Jews who have opened a Yeshiva on the edge of the village's residential area. Initially, Eli looks at the Yeshiva and the Jews dressed in traditional attire there with condescension and perhaps loathing. In a letter to the school's director he writes, "Woodenton, as you may not know, has long been the home of well-to-do Protestants. It is only since the war that Jews have been able to buy property here, and for Jew and Gentiles to live beside each other in amity. For this adjustment to be made, both Jews and Gentiles alike have had to give up some of their more extreme practices in order not to threaten or offend the other. Perhaps if such conditions had existed in prewar Europe, the persecution of the Jewish people, of which you and those 18 children have been victims, could not have been

carried out with such success- in fact might not have been carried out at all."[5] In this manner, Eli expresses his fear that his own relative comfort might be jeopardized by the Old-World appearance and customs of these unassimilated Jews while also shifting guilt upon the victims themselves for the suffering they endured during the Holocaust. As we have seen in previous chapters, several works were released during the early 1960's which focused upon the culpability of Jews in Europe in light of their seeming compliance and passivity during the genocide.

As the story progresses, the emphasis shifts from forcing the Yeshiva to relocate to merely convincing the adults who reside there to dress and act more American when they are traveling through the community. Eli cannot understand why it is so difficult for one man in particular to shed his orthodox clothes and assimilate into the community's culture. Finally, the director angrily lectures Eli on why the man's clothes and customs are so dear to him. He tells Eli, "he has nothing. Nothing. . . . A mother and father? No. A wife? No. A baby? No! A village full of friends? A synagogue where you knew the feel of every seat under your pants? . . . And a medical experiment they performed on him yet! That leaves nothing, Mr. Peck. Absolutely nothing!"[6] These lines finally impress upon Eli the suffering which this man has endured and the plight which faces many survivors in contemporary society. Moreover, it forces Eli to reexamine his perception of survivors and of the genocide itself, as he comes to realize the physical and mental devastation wrought upon not only those who perished, but also upon those who survived. With this description, Roth first introduced many American readers to the

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[5] Philip Roth, Eli, the Fanatic, Vintage International: New York, 1959, 262.
[6] Ibid., 264.

complexity of issues relating to survivors and also highlighted the ignorance of American Jews and Gentiles held in reference to the genocide and to the continuing burdens placed upon survivors.

Through Roth's short story, mainstream American readers were first introduced to characters who were physically and mentally destroyed as a result of their experiences during the Holocaust. While Eli, the Fanatic shed some light onto the previously undiscussed plight of survivors in contemporary society, it did not deal with more complex issues relating to the ordeals they had endured in Europe and the guilt which their experiences had forced upon them. In fact, it was not until the translation of Primo Levi's Survival in Auschwitz and Eli Wiesel's Night in 1960 that mainstream audiences were presented with materials which focused upon the suffering inflicted upon those who lived within the camps and the massive privations they suffered on a daily basis.

Primo Levi's Survival in Auschwitz was originally released under the title If This Is a Man in Italy in 1947. Levi's work chronicles the degradation and suffering inflicted upon its author during his year in Auschwitz and illustrates the demoralizing and decivilizing structure of the camps. Shortly after the release of Levi's work to American audiences, Elie Wiesel's Night was translated from its original French version and released in America. It recounts Wiesel's experiences as an adolescent in the camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald and grapples with many of the same issues and themes raised in Levi's account. The decision to translate these works and release them in America- years following their original publication- seems due, at least in part, to a belief among American publishers that the evolving discourse regarding the genocide in America had

progressed to the point where readers understood that **for some** the camps did not mean instant death and in spite of the misery which marked life within the camps there were people who managed to survive.

Survival in Auschwitz and Night focused upon the camps and the twin burdens of guilt and memory plaguing those who managed to survive. Together, these works brought the concentration camps into the evolving American discourse regarding the genocide and generated further interest among readers in elements of the Holocaust which had previously been ignored or considered taboo in American culture. Their release coincided with another important work, Andre Scharz-Bart's fictional Last of the Just, which also dealt with the grim violence and illogical nature of life within Nazi Europe. Moreover, the glowing reviews which these pieces received increased awareness about this previously omitted element of the genocide and fostered the publication of subsequent works such as Edward Wallant's The Pawnbroker and Sidney Lumet's film version of the Wallant novel. Consequently, they were critical in establishing the camps as a unique aspect of the genocide among American audiences and in stirring empathy among American readers for the horrors which survivors endured during their ordeals.

Perhaps the most striking quality of both the Levi and Wiesel works remains their ability to convey how horrible life was in the camps while maintaining an extremely dignified and objective tone devoid of graphic violence or excessive descriptions of brutality. In a review of Levi's piece which appeared in The New Statesman, David Caute noted, "His [Levi's] story is told without melodrama, without self-pity, but with a muted passion and intensity, and an occasional cry of anguish, which makes it one of the

most remarkable documents I have ever read."[7] In the hands of less talented writers, the omission of the more gruesome elements of the genocide might have fostered works which continued to gloss over the horror and tragedy of the camps. However, the understated and poetic writing of Levi and Wiesel produced countless chilling and indelible images while exposing the full brutality of the camps by focusing upon the internal breakdown and gradual destruction of individuals occurring as a result of psychological atrocities which were so fundamentally a part of the camps' structure and purpose. While reviewing Night, one reviewer noted, "this spare, unblinking recollection is one of those hard facts which surmount the inferences and generalizations one feels compelled to make about them."[8] Emerging from these texts are the eloquent observations of two survivors on the camps.

While both of these works described the hunger and harsh conditions of the camps, they also emphasized the indescribable elements of the entire concentration camp experience. The dehumanization of prisoners through hunger and fatigue fostered a community structure among victims predicated upon the laws of animals rather than the laws of humans. As a result of the importance of even a crumb of bread or a drop of soup, objects ordinarily taken for granted such as spoons and bowls often meant the difference between one man's life and another's death. The works of Levi and Wiesel recounted the absence of privacy, compassion, and reason within the camps. As Levi notes, "In the Lager it is useless to think, because events happen for the most part in an

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[7] David Caute, review of Survival in Auschwitz by Primo Levi in The New Statesman, , #59 19 March, 1960, 410.

[8] James Finn, review of Night by Elie Wiesel in Commonweal, #73 9 December, 1960, 282.

unforeseeable manner; and it is harmful, because it keeps alive a sensitivity which is a source of pain, and which some providential natural law dulls when suffering passes a certain limit."[9] Through these pieces, American readers first found themselves presented with descriptions of the daily regimen in Auschwitz and the operation of these camps.

The Nazi genocide of European Jews was predicated on the idea that Jews were filthy, sub-human creatures who were polluting Germanic culture with their very existence in European society. Historian Lucy Dawidowicz notes that this ideological dehumanization of Jews was essential to Hitler from his earliest days of influence. Within Mein Kampf Hitler wrote, "If the best men were dying at the front, the least we could do was to wipe out the vermin. If at the beginning of the war [WWI] and during the war twelve or fifteen thousand of these Hebrew corrupters of the people had been held under poison gas . . . the sacrifice of millions at the front would not have been in vain."[10] The camps served as a means to turn hateful propaganda into reality by recrafting Jewish prisoners into the decivilized and repellent creatures described by Hitler and other Nazi bureaucrats in their hateful rhetoric and publications. Survival at Auschwitz and Night emphasized the debilitation of victims upon their arrival to the camps in great detail and highlighted the transformations in character which the camps provoked from the prisoners.

While these books did not nearly reach the size audience which works such as Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl, Exodus, or Judgement at Nuremburg, their impact on the evolving discourse regarding the genocide is comparable. As a result of these pieces,

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[9] Primo Levi, Survival at Auschwitz, translated by Stuart Woolf, New York: Collier Books, 1960, 171.
[10] Lucy Dawidowicz, The War Against the Jews, New York: Bantam Books, 1975, 158.

the subject of the camps began to be broached in more detail by American authors than ever before. Moreover, the memories described by Wiesel and Levi fostered interest in what happened to those who did not die within the camps following the Holocaust.

Another unique aspect of the camps largely undiscussed and perhaps unbeknownst to American mainstream audiences in 1960 was the intentional burden of responsibility forced upon victims and survivors within the confines of the killing centers. As Elie Wiesel noted in a 1961 article, "guilt was not invented at Auschwitz. It was disfigured there."[11] Indeed, guilt was disfgured at Auschwitz, and the works of Levi and Wiesel began to deal with reasons why survivors were often wracked by guilt as well as depression following their ordeal. In Night, Wiesel described how memories of his thoughts and actions still haunt him years after his liberation. When he and his father are separated from one another with his father on the brink of death, Wiesel recounted his having thought, "Don't let me find him! If only I could use all my strength to struggle for my own survival, and only worry about myself. . . immediately I felt ashamed of myself, ashamed forever."[12] Levi also described numerous instances and experiences when as a result of hunger and fatigue he acted in ways which have left him greatly scarred and ashamed for his past behavior. He concluded, "Survival without renunciation of any part of one's own moral world- apart from powerful and direct interventions by fortune- was conceded only to very few superior individuals, made of the stuff of martyrs and saints."[13] Through the perversity of the camps and the silence which followed their

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[11] Eile Weisel, "Eichmann's Victims", Commentary. December, 1961, 516.
[12] Elie Wiesel, Night, trans. by Stella Rodway, New York: Bantam Books, 1960, 101.
[13] Primo Levi, Survival at Auschwitz, translated by Stuart Woolf, New York: Collier Books, 1960, 92.

liberation, survivors were thus burdened not only with their horrible memories but also with largely unwarranted guilt for their role in the deaths of their friends and family.

These pieces were hailed as important contributions to American awareness of the Nazi past. They also laid the foundation for future works to deal with the plight of survivors in the aftermath of the Holocaust. The burden of guilt certainly weighed upon these authors as they write, but so did a more generally burdensome memory of the horrors which they witnessed. As Wiesel eloquently wrote, "Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever. . . Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never."[14] Beyond these twin burdens of guilt and memory, these authors both offered insight into the human condition and ruminations on the meaning of life throughout their texts. Combined with the elegant prose and stark style which marked these works, Levi and Wiesel- in their near literary brilliance- initiated the idea among American audiences that survivors offered a unique and important perspective on suffering and human nature as a result of their harsh ordeals.

Andre Schwarz Bart's Last of the Just was a fictional works which was also eloquently written and dealt with elements of the genocide previously undisccussed among the American public. The novel was a bestseller for almost 25 weeks following

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[14] Elie Wiesel, Night, trans. by Stella Rodway, New York: Bantam Books, 1960, 32.

its American release (it had been initially released in French in 1959) and drew many excellent reviews from Jewish and secular critics and observers. This piece certainly remains important in terms of generating further interest and awareness of the genocide and its particularly Jewish element through its pages. However, its focus was not on the camps but on the darkness and brutality of life within Nazi Europe, culminating in the deportation of its main character to Auschwitz. As such, it functioned as a reality-check to the works released following the success of Exodus which Westernized Europe's ghettos and glamorized the resistance efforts of Jews.

Shortly after the release of Levi and Wiesel's groundbreaking work, Edward Wallant's The Pawnbroker appeared in American bookstores and presented an entirely new series of themes related to survivors of the Holocaust and the challenges they faced in contemporary society. The novel offers a fictional account of a month in the life of a Holocaust survivor who runs a pawnshop in a broken down section of the Harlem ghetto during the late 1950's. Through the course of the story, a series of events unfold which ultimately force the main character to confront his buried past. Wallant's work represents a departure from other works related to the genocide which preceded it in that the novel explores the horrors of the camps and the burdens which these memories placed upon survivors struggling to find their place in contemporary American society. In a review of the novel, one critic labeled it "an unforgettable, raw, horrifying portrait of man's inhumanity to man. The book is merciless in its realism; it is not for the thin skinned."[15]

[15] Review of The Pawnbroker by Edward Wallant in Kirkus, #29 1 June, 1961, 478.

As we have seen in many of the pieces examined within this study, works dealing with the genocide which also reflected contemporary domestic concerns tended to be more widely accepted by American mainstream audiences. Whereas The Wall and Diary of Anne Frank offered reassurance to Americans during the early and mid 1950's, The Pawnbroker offers very relevant and piercing social commentary on the impoverishment of America's inner cities which was becoming a major concern among Americans in the early 1960's. This undoubtedly increased the book's relevance to American readers and generated interest among a wider swath of the domestic audience.

The Pawnbroker also reflects how Americans perceived Jews during the early 1960's. At the time this novel was written, Jews were increasingly assimilated into the fabric of mainstream American life. Data collected by Charles Stember in Jews in the Mind of America found that while Jews had become increasingly accepted, they were still considered to be somewhat 'mystical' by their non-Jewish neighbors. Wallant builds upon this imagery in his descriptions of how others view the survivor due in part to his religion and also as a result of his having survived the Holocaust. "Only the Pawnbroker," the author writes, "with his cryptic eyes, his huge, secret body, seemed to have some sly key, some talisman of *knowing*."[16] The novel built upon American perceptions of Jews and embellished upon these observations by hinting at the main character's "mysterious history" and "strange survival of fantastic horrors".[17] American readers were just beginning to understand the massive suffering survivors endured while in the camps. Amidst the crime and poverty of the inner city, Sol Nazerman represents

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[16] Edward Wallant, The Pawnbroker, New York: Harcourt, Brace, &World, Inc. 1961, 71.
[17] Edward Wallant, The Pawnbroker, New York: Harcourt, Brace, &World, Inc. 1961, 75.

the man who has suffered most- beyond what any of the pawnshop's customers can even imagine.

Pawnshops embodied the hopelessness and problems of the urban ghetto during the early 1960's. Customers sell their most personal and private mementos in these shops for paltry sums of money. As Wallant notes, pawnshops are "a place where poor people obtain ready cash on the collateral of anything and everything."[18] The poor people who frequent the shop are each searching for a way out of their problems and out of the ghetto. Customers part with their most cherished goods, including baby shoes, school trophies, and wedding rings hoping that the money they receive will be enough to help them restart their broken lives. Wallant offers a compelling but not entirely convincing analogy between the demands placed upon the inner city poor and the oppression heaped upon Jews during the early stages of the Holocaust. The crime and violence which plague the ghetto are abhorrent and seem, as Wallant argues, to be desperate responses by inner city youths to their hopeless situation. However, the severity of their oppression and the absence of an organized government program specifically designed to eliminate inner city residents highlights the inappropiateness of this broad metaphor.

The central character in the novel is Sol Nazerman, and his primary goal is to keep his suffering buried deep within himself to avoid having to confront his staggering losses inflicted upon him during the Holocaust. In its review of the novel, Time magazine desribed Sol Nazerman as "that literary rarity- the character whose sorrows seem as real as the reader's own."[19] Sol's primary means of achieving this goal resides in

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[18] Ibid., 130.
[19] Review of The Pawnbroker in Time #78, 18 August, 1961, 75.

his practiced ability to ignore the suffering of his customers. Nazerman's position in the shop is not unlike that of the Kapos in the camps- his physical and psychological well-being remains contingent upon his total lack of empathy for those suffering around him. Throughout the novel, Sol refers to his customers in non-human terms, describing them as animals, creatures, and beasts. In this manner, Nazerman distances himself from his customers and blames them for their broken lives. As the novel proceeds, however, Sol finds it harder and harder to maintain his cold exterior to customers whom he can fully sympathize with due to his own experiences during the genocide.

Wallant poses two major questions through Sol Nazerman: has Sol really survived the Holocaust, in a spiritual sense? and what is the purpose behind his survival? Sol's coldness to his customers extends into his private life as well. He treats his family with disdain and has no friends to speak of. "I am safe within myself" notes Sol, "I have made an order for myself, and no once can disturb it."[20] Of course, a series of events occurring throughout the story gradually force Sol to confront his past and drop this wall which he has built up over the years. However, it is quite clear that while Sol survived the camps, his reentry into society has been far from smooth. He trusts no one, has no friends, and ignores his family. Moreover, Wallant makes a strong point in emphasizing how difficult adjusting to American life was for someone who had been born and raised in Europe. This marked the first fiction or non-fiction work in which an author examined difficulties faced by survivors who not only had to contain their memories, but also

[20]Edward Wallant, The Pawnbroker, New York: Harcourt, Brace, &World, Inc. 1961, 119.

needed to insert themselves into a foreign society and learn new customs and a new language.

Through a series of flashbacks in the novel readers are exposed to the brutality of the camps. These scenes are powerful, but they also represent Sol's version of his past, and thus the flashbacks nearly always end with Sol helplessly watching a family member suffer as he stands paralyzed with shock and fear. Through this unique perspective, Wallant goes on to detail the unwarranted guilt and shame which burdens Sol and highlights how despite Nazerman's best efforts, his past dictates his present. Wallant's work does not pretend to be the definitive work on the camps or on survivors- rather it is a study in how one man remembers the camps and how he interacts with these troubled memories.

The burdens of guilt and memory are the driving forces behind Sol's every thought and action. Sol's guilt is indicative of the guilt expressed by many survivors who placed the blame for their having suffered so intensely on themselves. The novel echoed themes raised in the works of Levi and Wiesel pertaining to the victims holding themselves responsible for the suffering of their families and friends. The Pawnbroker goes even further when interrogating the guilt plaguing survivors by also showing how many viewed their very existence and survival as emblematic of their failures to stem the suffering of their loved ones who perished in Nazi camps. Moreover, there are distinctions in levels of guilt among survivors themselves, as Wallant describes the differences between Goberman, a Jewish survivor who must live with the fact that he turned his family into the Gestapo in order to survive, with Sol, whose guilt revolves

largely around his paralysis in the face of the horrors and brutality he witnessed as a prisoner. The Pawnbroker's emphasis on guilt marked the first time an American work highlighted the specific and unique difficulties encountered by survivors as a result of their experiences in concentration camps.

While The Pawnbroker raises many complex and difficult questions through its story, it definitely is not literature of the caliber of the Levi or Wiesel pieces. Rather, Wallant aspires to write at a level apparently too high for his talents, resulting in an abundance of contrived metaphors, superficial descriptions, and sometimes very flimsy dialogue between characters. In spite of these shortcomings, The Pawnbroker still received relatively positive reviews from critics and the general public alike. Reviewer David Boroff adds, "The Pawnbroker sometimes fails: its prose is often strained- but Edward Wallant is a gifted writer who probes with a kind of troubled tenderness into pools of human darkness."[21] Moreover, the novel pushed American awareness and understanding of the genocide to a new and different level by focusing on the debilitating effects of the camps for those who managed to survive their imprisonment.

Following the release of the novel, the Eichmann Trial captured the attention of the American mainstream public. The testimony offered by Jewish victims during the trial further corroborated the horrors described in the Levi, Wiesel, and Wallant pieces. Moreover, they fostered an environment among Americans conducive to the adaptation of the Wallant novel to the big screen. It was becoming acceptable to discuss the plight of

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[21] David Boroff, review of The Pawnbroker by Edward Wallant in Saturday Review, #44, 26 August, 1961, 16.

survivors in contemporary society and to describe their experiences within concentration camps in mainstream American publications.

Just as the film versions of Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl and Exodus generated increased interest in the literature that spawned them, Sidney Lumet's 1965 film version of the Wallant novel further familiarized American audiences with the plight of Sol Nazerman. However, The Pawnbroker was a very different kind of movie than others which preceded it and dealt with elements of the genocide. Unlike these other films, Lumet's work offered no redeeming message, no life affirming lessons, no mythical portraits of courageous Jewish fighters destroying the Nazi enemy. Sol Nazerman is a pitiful man who cannot separate his past from his present and therefore cannot coexist with others in contemporary society. As reviewer Bosley Crowther of the New York Times succintly stated in his review of the film, "It is not an ennobling picture that . .. Sidney Lumet has directed. It is a picture of the shabbiness of man- of the misused, debilitated hero, as well as those among whom he lives."[22] The gritty reality of this movie makes it incredibly compelling, and also difficult to sit through. In fact, the Lumet film represents everything previous movies related to the genocide strived very hard not to be- a depressing, chilling, frustrating, and deeply troubling story.

Movies which dealt with elements of the genocide prior to the release of The Pawnbroker often tied their premieres in with festive events and 'considerable hoopla', as one Variety reporter noted. The premiere of Diary of Anne Frank was met with international publicity attention, and acclaim in 1959. About one year later, Otto

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[22] Bosley Crowther, review of The Pawnbroker directed by Sidney Lumet, in New York Times, 21 April 1965, 51.

Preminger's Exodus opened in theaters with contests and benefits tied into the movie's premiere across the nation. Shortly thereafter, celebrities and diplomats from around the world gathered in Berlin to participate in opening festivities honoring the first run of Judgement at Nuremburg. However, the release of Sidney Lumet's The Pawnbroker opened in relative silence and is indicative of the fundamental differences between this film and earlier works related to the genocide. The suffering of Sol Nazerman was too solemn to defile with 'the Hollywood treatment' given to these other films, which allowed and encouraged audiences to leave theaters feeling largely untroubled, upbeat, and spiritually rejuvenated at their conclusion.

Through the use of innovative cinematic techniques and superb acting, director Sidney Lumet's version of the Wallant novel challenges viewers to attempt to understand how a Holocaust survivor views and acts within contemporary society as a result of his past ordeal. Many contentious debates have been waged in academic circles during recent years over whether literature or non-fiction are the more appropriate forms of retelling the horror of the camps to foreign audiences. Some feel it is inappropriate to present the camps in fictional manners and that the experiences of survivors are trivialized by literary conventions. However, The Pawnbroker feels genuine, and through the convincing portrayal of Sol by Rod Steiger, viewers cannot help but to come away from this film with a deeper sense of the burdens of memory which plague this and presumably other survivors as a result of their experience during the Holocaust. Moreso than any other film related to the genocide released prior to 1965, the Pawnbroker

conveyed to audiences the 'essence' of one survivor's troubled existence in contemporary society.

The character of Sol Nazerman is rich and well-textured in the Wallant novel but much more complex and stubbornly imperfect in the Lumet movie. In a sense, Lumet has crafted Sol Nazerman into the anti-Anne Frank, a character who despises life and yet grudgingly continues to live out of punishment to himself for having survived the Holocaust. For Sol, *because* of everything, he believes that people are really bad at heart, and his past dictates his every waking thought and action in his tortured present.

Steiger's performance as Sol is difficult to review objectively. He is simply spellbinding in the role of the survivor. Steiger's acting lends unusual depth to Sol's character and the subtleties in the actor's emotions and body movements contribute to the sense of genuine sympathy evoked from viewers as the film proceeds. The haunting silence and uncomfortable coldness which forms Sol's exterior is unnerving on screen, and Steiger manages to gradually display the effects of Nazerman's evolving breakdown. 'I didn't die' says Sol near the film's conclusion, in a nearly whispering voice, 'everything that I loved was taken away from me and I didn't die. Nothing I could do. nothing. nothing.'[23] Nazerman embodied the survivor in all of his/her complexity and built upon the theme of guilt which was so central in the Levi and Wiesel works. It is this guilt which has been so creatively and depressingly caught on film through the use of unusual montage techniques to convey flashback sequences and the merging of the past and present.

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[23] Sidney Lumet, The Pawnbroker, 1965.

One of the film's most provocative scenes occurs when several black street toughs come into the shop and begin asking questions about Sol's tattoo. They ask if he belongs to a secret society and then ask 'what do we do to join?' Sol dryly responds, 'learn to walk on water.'[24] This exchange raises the issue of the importance of educating Americans about the Holocaust, particularly minorities. For it is clear that these young men do not really know what the tattoo represented or about the genocide and all it entailed and it is precisely the Puerto Ricans and African Americans who many felt were at greatest risk in America at this time. As film historian Judith Doneson notes, "the Jewish victim indirectly becomes a victimizer because of his inability to rise above his own suffering."[25] Lumet emphasizes that those who most need to know about the genocide due to their status in America are the ones least informed about the Holocaust and least likely to learn more about in the future- a point still relevant in today's society. However, it is also important to know that Sol cannot teach them what they must learn about the genocide because he will come undone if he begins recounting his experiences. The paradox is that Nazerman can only continue existing through suppression but clearly his greatest contribution to society would be in telling his story to avoid future genocides of the kind he endured.

Although the subject matter was intensely depressing and the film ended on a decidedly downbeat note, *The Pawnbroker* won critical and public acclaim in 1965. Certainly part of its success was due to the film's ability to offer relevant social commentary to urban audiences in light of the progressing civil rights struggle within the

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[24] Sidney Lumet, The Pawnbroker, 1965.
[25] Judith Doneson, The Holocaust in American Film, New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1987, 112.

United States. However, the success of this film also depended heavily on the gradually progressing dialogue which initially began in 1950 among American mainstream audiences and stirred curiosity and interest among audiences in the suffering of survivors during and after the Holocaust.

It is tempting and quite easy to blame Americans for not being more compassionate and empathetic to the plight of those who survived the camps and struggled to insert themselves into American society in the 1950's. However, this criticism is somewhat misguided only in that mainstream audiences by and large had no real sense of the depths to which life had sunk for Jews and others trapped in Nazi camps. The significance of the Levi and Wiesel works rested in their ability to push mainstream awareness, interest, and discourse in the genocide to its deepest and most informed levels while addressing the terror of experiences within the camps.

Through the works which appeared in America during the 1960's, mainstream discourse regarding the genocide finally incorporated the concentration camps and their essential and unique role in the murder of six million Jews. These pieces pushed American awareness and understanding of the genocide to new levels by emphasizing how these camps functioned and the debilitating psychological torture inflicted upon those who endured their ordeals.

Once Americans possessed a rudimentary understanding of the camps, they could begin to empathize with the deep scars left upon those who managed to survive. The novel and film The Pawnbroker highlighted the complexity of issues facing survivors and pushed American audiences beyond the simplistic and life affirming messages put forth

in works to emerge during the 1950's. Moreover, these works stressed the challenges facing survivors to not only put their lives back together without their family and friends, but to do so in a foreign country while adapting to an alien culture and customs.

The works to appear in the early 1960's fundamentally transformed how Americans thought and discussed the genocide in public. They fostered an interest among the American public in subjects not discussed previously and laid the groundwork for future works to appear relating to the genocide, the camps, and the survivors themselves. While many historians date the beginning of a Holocaust consciousness in America after the 1967 Six Day War, these pieces and their acceptance among a large segment of the American public stand counter to those claims. By the time the film version of The Pawnbroker was released, Americans were presented with and responding to material that argued that Jews were the primary targets of Nazi hatred and killing, Jews suffered disproportionately more losses than other ethnic groups during the Holocaust, the concentration camps were designed to not only kill prisoners but also to dehumanize those who labored within them, and that survivors were burdened with unique and tremendous burdens of guilt and memory far beyond the suffering they had endured during their ordeals.

Epilogue

This study grew from my initial interest in when and how Americans first collectively began to publicly discuss the genocide of the European Jews. Contemporary scholars have pointed to the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 and the reaction of American Jews to this crisis as the birth of a "Holocaust Consciousness" in the United States. While I do not refute that the Six Day War in Israel spurred a new level of sustained public awareness and interest in the genocide, through the course of my research I have found that awareness and interest in the genocide gradually grew among the American public throughout the 1950's and 1960's. The foundation laid by works released during this period greatly impacted not only how Americans understood, remembered, and discussed the genocide, but also gave agency to the 1967 public and collective American Jewish reaction to events in Israel. As a result of my research, I now view the dichotomy posed by some contemporary scholars between pre 1967 'silence' and post 1967 'awareness' in the story of the genocide as reductionist and generally untrue.

On the eve of the Arab Israeli War of 1967, Americans were presented with and expressing interest in material which had evolved over the years to include each step in the particular and unique destruction of the European Jews, from isolation and ghettoization through deportation and elements of life and death in the camps. The final

phase of this evolving discourse, which introduced the complexities of guilt and anguish continuing to plague those who survived the genocide, symbolized the extent to which a genocide consciousness had been crafted in America and pervaded into the public discourse. The language and imagery of this discourse would be critical in understanding the urgency and coverage granted to American Jews during the 1967 Middle Eastern crisis.

As war was set to break out in Israel, American Jews marshalled their resources and raised unprecedented amounts of money in little over one week to prevent what many viewed as the beginning of 'another Holocaust'. The media devoted considerable space to not only covering the ensuing war, but also to documenting the passionate reactions of American Jews to the impending conflict. Under banners reading Never Again! and Remember Auschwitz! American Jews appealed to the collective memory of American Jews and non-Jews in the hopes of averting what some viewed as the seeds of another genocide.

Ironically, this collective memory was largely constructed throughout the 1950's and 1960's through forms of popular representation and fictional accounts. The American response to the genocide as it was occurring was largely apathetic and disinterested between 1933 and 1945 for a variety of reasons. One of the chief hurdles to overcoming this apathy were the lack of victims and elements of their suffering with whom Americans could relate to their own experiences. Through works such as The Diary of Anne Frank and several others, a public discourse was constructed in America which offered audiences an opportunity to identify and grieve with the plight of victims

and in this manner more deeply feel and come to know the history of the genocide. Over the course of the next sixteen years, this public discourse created a strong series of images, phrases, and language which fostered a sustained public interest in the genocide and went on to become, in effect, the American public's collective memory of this tragedy.

Following the 1967 War, a multitude of new works relating to the genocide were released within America aiming to capitalize on the public sentiment and feelings sparked by the American Jewish community's fund-raising efforts. The public discourse relating to the genocide branched off into many new and complex directions as a result of these pieces. However, this discourse built from the foundation of understanding initially erected prior to the Six Day War and was predicated upon the ability of these earlier works to create identification and interest among general audiences while responding to contemporary events and trends in American culture.

Today, the genocide of Europe's Jews remains an important and dynamic element within the American collective memory. The works which have been explored in this study were critical to creating and sustaining inital interest in the genocide as an important historical event with valuable lessons and meaning for contemporary society. The critical and financial success of Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List and extremely high visitation to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum stand as testaments to the level of importance which the genocide has acquired in American thought and memory.

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