Mapping a Blindspot: Perpetrators, Shoah, and American Jewish Holocaust Education

Master’s Thesis

Presented to:

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ABSTRACT

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Thesis Presented to the Hornstein Program for Jewish Professional Leadership and the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies

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This thesis studies issues surrounding representation of a particular Nazi group – the HitlerJugend\(^1\) (HJ) – in educational settings directed towards American Jewish students at the elementary and secondary level. The three settings are Holocaust museums, educational travel, and formal day-school classroom curricula. These narratives are shaped – and often excluded – from some formal educational settings as part of an occasional effort to utilize the Holocaust to address contemporary communal concerns. As a result, the study of the Holocaust and wartime Europe is at times divided along very morally polar lines.

I trace the ways in which these settings shape perpetrator narratives, motivations for doing so, and potential impacts of Nazi exclusion. Ultimately I argue that Holocaust museums and educational travel deal with the victim-bystander-perpetrator trifecta in far more simplistic terms than many formal classroom curricula. My research led me to the conclusion that many of the Holocaust museums in the United States are focused on the victim and witness/liberator narratives, for the dual purpose of i) positing the Holocaust as a universal although uniquely Jewish experience, and ii) situating the Shoah within American values and society. Due to these preoccupations, as well as the effort to

\(^1\) German: Hitler Youth
maintain moral clarity, perpetrator narratives are almost non-existent. Within educational travel, ‘perpetrators’ and ‘bystanders’ are ill-defined, and participants’ understanding of these groups – and contemporary Poland - is shaped by travel, survivor testimonies, and commemorative experiences that take place during their time in Eastern Europe. This facilitates the construction of contemporary Poland as a land of ‘death,’ particularly when juxtaposed against Israel, the land of Jewish life and safety. As a result, participants come to understand themselves as bearers of an important tradition that was lost, and are thus encouraged to make Jewish choices. Formal educational systems often use a more nuanced approach to perpetrator narratives. In fact, many Nazi groups – particularly the HJ- are used to teach students about the responsibilities of citizenship. I argue this is both a result of autonomy of Jewish educators and a more current understanding of Jewish ethnicity.

Ultimately I argue that the inclusion of perpetrator narratives in all three settings is not only feasible, it is desirable. An understanding of the Nazi experience has the potential to give Jewish students a more nuanced and holistic understanding of the Holocaust, and counteracts a potential ‘victim culture’ the use of the Shoah promotes.
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I have learned that the Holocaust was a unique and uniquely Jewish event, albeit with universal implications. Not all victims were Jews but all Jews were victims. I have learned the danger of indifference.

Mr. President, we are grateful to the American Army for liberating us. We are grateful to this country – the greatest democracy in the world, the freest nation in the world, the moral nation, the authority in the world. But, Mr. President, I wouldn’t be the person I am, and you wouldn’t respect me for what I am, if I were not to tell you also of the sadness that is in my heart for what happened during the [wreath-laying at Bitburg Cemetery]. And I am sure that you, too, are sad for the same reasons. What can I do? I belong to a traumatized generation. And to us, as to you, symbols are important.

I am convinced that you were not aware of the presence of SS graves in the Bitburg cemetery. Of course, you didn’t know. But now we all are aware. May I, Mr. President, if it’s possible at all, implore you to do something else, to find a way, to find another way, another site. That place, Mr. President, is not your place. Your place is with the victims of the SS.

We know there are political and strategic reasons, but this issue, as all issues related to that awesome event, transcends politics and diplomacy. The issue here is not politics, but good and evil. And we must never confuse them.

- Elie Wiesel, speaking to President Reagan, 19 April 1985

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This thesis seeks to study the issues surrounding representation of a particular Nazi group – the Hitlerjugend\(^2\) (HJ) – in educational settings directed towards American Jewish students at the elementary and secondary level. Using the example of the HJ in particular, I will explore the ways in which the Nazi voice and experience is included, and excluded, from Jewish Holocaust education as a whole. The three settings in particular will be Holocaust museums, formal classroom-based education, and institutionalized educational travel. For the purposes of this paper, I will be incorporating commemorative experiences – like Yom HaShoah\(^3\) ceremonies - under the heading of both formal education and travel. By using the HJ as an example, I seek to discuss how

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2 German: Hitler Youth

3 Hitler: Holocaust Remembrance Day (full name: *Yom HaShoah v’Hagevurah*, Holocaust Heroes and Martyrs Day)
they defy the ‘perpetrator-bystander-victim’ trifecta by embodying all three categories. As they fall in a moral grey area, they are a group all but ignored.

By viewing Holocaust education through the lens of the HJ experience, I will be examining the way in which the Holocaust narrative is taught and shaped by certain educational institutions in order to address present-day Jewish communal concerns.

The removal of the Nazi voice in the education I examine can actually facilitate a gap in understanding of the Shoah, raise some concerns about moral education, and can perpetuate a crisis-centered Jewish identity. Ultimately I will include recommendations for perpetrator inclusion in education directed towards American Jewish students.

In order to contextualize, the first chapter will examine the history of Holocaust memory in the United States and will provide a basic historiography and methodology. Chapter two will deal with the creation of the HJ, and provide an in-depth narrative of their educational system and war-time experience. Chapter three will examine the role of HJ and perpetrator narratives in three major United States Holocaust museums. The fourth chapter will focus on the perpetrators in relation to the educational mission of institutionalized travel such as March of the Living. The fifth chapter will turn to curricula in formal educational settings, with a particular emphasis on Jewish day schools. The last chapter will provide recommendations and benefits for perpetrator inclusion in these three educational settings.
Chapter One: The Holocaust and American Judaism

Though the Holocaust happened far from American soil, in the second half of the twentieth century, it has had a deep impact on the shaping of modern American Jewish life. Many scholars and Jewish leaders have referenced the Shoah as both the catalyst for contemporary Jewish assimilation and the shift to the right in American Orthodoxy. It is also used as a tool to combat trends of assimilation, intermarriage and disengagement. Rhetorically, it has served as a rationale for the formation of the State of Israel, and validation for Israeli defensive actions. Debbie Findling and Simone Schweber assert

that the highly contentious role of Israel in American Jewry has played a significant role in the power of the Holocaust. The Holocaust remains an important symbol around which an increasingly disparate Jewish community can rally.

Jewish education is a primary forum for the dissemination of Jewish cultural memory and world-view. This is something perhaps unique to contemporary American Jewish life. In previous centuries and countries, both the tightly knit ethnic and geographic communities and a widespread religious tradition fostered strong Jewish identity and literacy. In modern America, widespread assimilation, secularization and geographic dispersal diluted the home and the immediate community as the assumed religious and identification authenticator. Thus, in the American Jewish community, the

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educational system is often seen as a central inculcator of Jewish history, religion, knowledge and values.\textsuperscript{11}

Considering the power given the Holocaust narrative, these educational settings are being utilized by the community for the transmission of Holocaust memory and in an effort to shape that memory (and an identity based on it). One of the most important examples of this attempted shaping is the way in which these Jewish educational settings treat perpetrator narratives. The term ‘perpetrators’ is an umbrella term granted importance by Raul Hilberg.\textsuperscript{12} In his influential book “Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945” he defines perpetrators as “people who played a specific role in the formulation or implementation of anti-Jewish measures.”\textsuperscript{13} He states that “no one man or organization”\textsuperscript{14} was responsible for the Holocaust, and that responsibility was spread out en masse. While he argues that people like administrators or clerks could not be labeled as perpetrators, this definition has transformed in the last decades to include any number of groups, from Nazi leadership to the SS, the Hitler Youth and collective German society.\textsuperscript{15}

Within the Holocaust discourse, there is an explicit desire on the behalf of many Jewish educators not to give credence or voice to Nazi perpetrators. This has many

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{13} \textit{Ibid.}, p. ix
\bibitem{14} \textit{Ibid.}, p. ix
\end{thebibliography}
articulated motivations, including i) a fear of creating pilgrimage sites for former Nazis\textsuperscript{16}, ii) a trepidation about the effects of a perpetrator narrative detracting from the survivor and witness narratives\textsuperscript{17}, and iii) the perception that in order to effectively portray perpetrators, one must understand them, which invariably leads to both empathy and forgiveness\textsuperscript{18}. The most important reason, however, is the fact that the complexities inherent in the perpetrator narrative are potentially threatening to the moral absolutism and valorization that characterizes most traditional Holocaust education.

This thesis does not seek to negate the Jewish experience in the Shoah. It only seeks to point out that the way the Holocaust is taught in specifically Jewish settings often transcends the factual history of the Shoah, and is designed to shape Jewish consciousness, politics, individual and communal identities. The Shoah is an event from which seemingly valuable lessons regarding democracy, morality, and the importance of Jewish life are pulled\textsuperscript{19}. In the last two decades, there have been deep communal concerns regarding the felt waning base of support for Israel, high rates of assimilation and intermarriage, and youth disengagement from Jewish ritual life\textsuperscript{20}. The potential


\textsuperscript{18} This can be drawn from a number of different sources, although few say it expressly. Some of these can be found in: Wiesel, Elie. \textit{From the Kingdom of Memory: Reminiscences}. New York: Summit Books, 1990. My sources primarily are personal interviews done with Jewish educators, as to explaining why Nazi narratives played no role. In particular these were my 8 March interview with David Marwell of Museum of Jewish Heritage NYC, my 8 February interview with Noreen Brand at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, and my 20 November interview with Yoni Kadden, of Gann Academy.


\textsuperscript{20} There are many sources that indicate this. It is frequently cited as one of the primary
disengagement has been attributed, among other things, to a changing perception of
Jewish peoplehood and ethnic identity, particularly with regards to marginalization and
victimization.\footnote{21 Brandeis Professor of Sociology. "Thesis Interview." Interview by author. March 10, 2011.} This thesis will explore the ways in which the Holocaust narrative is
generated from above, primarily by institutions and leaders in order to counteract waning
Jewish identity. Divided along generational lines, the rhetoric of crisis is being revitalized
and renewed in educational settings directed to students at the elementary and secondary
level. This rhetoric is particularly seen in the two ‘institutionalized’ settings, Holocaust
museums and pilgrimage travel, perhaps a result of much of their methodology and
governance being connected to an older generation. The use of the Holocaust narrative as
Jewish identity building is less prevalent within day school settings, where the
combination of greater individual autonomy and different understandings of ethnic
Jewish identity are present.

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i. Trajectory of Holocaust Memory in the United States

The place of the role of the Holocaust in the American discourse is both fascinating and paradoxical. Peter Novick brings up two important questions: why now, and why here?²² It is a geographical curiosity that American society should take such an avid interest in the Holocaust. It, as an event, was as geographically and socially removed from American life as is almost possible to be. It took place on a different continent.

Public opinion in the United States – affected by both the First World War and the Great Depression - tended towards isolationism, which inevitably affected policies towards Jewish refugees.²³ The primary role Americans played in the Holocaust was as one of many liberating armies.²⁴ And yet, the study of the Holocaust is incredibly compelling to many Americans. One law school professor intimated to me that if he included the word “Nazi” in his course titles, enrollment was certain to triple.²⁵ It is true, of course, that there are a large number of Holocaust survivors in America. The United States Holocaust

²⁵ Professor of Law at Western University. "Thesis Interview." Telephone interview. 11 Nov. 2010.
Memorial Museum and the Shoah Foundation together have documented around 300,000.\textsuperscript{26} But the survivors alone are not a sufficient presence to account for the high level of interest in the Holocaust. It is possible that this is facilitated by the way the Holocaust reaffirms American values and exceptionalism.\textsuperscript{27} These, such as the unalienable rights of the individual and the power of democracy are antithetical to the values of the Nazi state.\textsuperscript{28} It is possible that this juxtaposition of core values implicitly constructs the Holocaust as something that could not happen in the United States.

If one accepts it to be true that the Holocaust has had a significant impact on American society, it is important to explore the impact on American Jews specifically. The American Jewish community is the largest outside of Israel, in 2009 numbering roughly 5,120,800 persons.\textsuperscript{29}

Memory, and memorial practice, is an essential part of lived Jewish ritual.\textsuperscript{30} Hasia Diner indicates that particularly in the twentieth century, “memorializing tragedy


\textsuperscript{30} This is seen particularly in the Jewish calendar year, and the \textit{chagim} (holidays). Many are tied to events of crisis in the past. Most prominently these are \textit{Pesach} (slavery and exodus from Egypt), \textit{Purim} (attempted destruction of Jewish community in the former Persian empire) and \textit{Tisha b'Av} (The ninth of Av, when the temple in Jerusalem fell).
[underlies] the Jewish tradition." This group consciousness of the past, "collective memory" was a term coined by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in the 1920s. Halbwachs postulates that this communal memory is "dependent upon the cadre within which a group is situated in a society." This group consciousness impacts the individual’s understanding of the past. The study of collective memory reveals the way in which present considerations of certain groups shape the ways they view (and use) the events of the past. Many scholars have indicated – whether controversially or not – that the Holocaust was ignored for many years, and summarily in recent years has been employed to "inspire ordinary Jews to become more religiously or communally committed." This chronology is perhaps not completely accurate. Some recent scholars, such as Hasia Diner, have indicated that Holocaust memorialization has been a force in American Jewish life since 1945. There are significant points made by both ‘sides.’ This thesis discusses how perpetrator narratives are constructed as a result of how the Holocaust – as a symbol – is used by the community to address contemporary

34 *Ibid.*, p. 44
38 Diner, Hasia R. *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945-1962.* New York: New York University Press, 2009. p. 5. She is referring however to other works, the two most well-known (and perhaps controversial) are Peter Novick’s *Holocaust in American Life* and Norman Finkelstein’s *The Holocaust Industry.*
communal concerns. Thus, it will include a short history of the trajectory of Holocaust memory in the United States.

Many scholars and teachers reference that the first “stage” of Holocaust memory existed from 1945-1961. Until recently, it was commonly accepted that the Holocaust was a matter of little communal import at this period. It was felt that until the Eichmann Trial in 1961, the community deliberately did not acknowledge – or properly deal with – the memory of the Shoah. Hasia Diner in 2009 wrote that this was not the case, and that in fact this period was shaped by a communal “sense of obligation to remember the victims, aid the survivors, and confront the guilty.” Diner points to significant material culture, such as *Haggadot*, songs and films that reflected a grass-roots attempt at memorialization. This is reinforced by the Jewish community in New York’s 1947 decision to lay a stone in Riverside park to commemorate the victims.

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39 These include: Thomas Fallace, Rona Sheramy, Hasia Diner, Peter Novick, Debbie Findling, among others.
41 This is a similar trend, seen in many of the above sources.
The Jewish community at this time, however, was loosely organized\(^{45}\) and so too was their response to the Shoah. Three scholars of Jewish education, Thomas Fallace, Rona Sheramy and Simone Schweber all indicate that the Shoah was taught in some Jewish schools, particularly in the NYC area, but not most.\(^{46}\) There was a significant lack of material, curriculum and structure.\(^{47}\)

The Jewish community in the late 1940s and early 1950s was involved in the “lengthy and complicated process of middle-class Americanization.”\(^{48}\) Thus, this supposed ‘silence’ that many contemporary scholars point to may be less a reflection on a communal desire to ‘sweep it under the rug,’ and more a result of community-building concerns.

It needs to be said, however, that many survivors indicated that there was little to no audience for their stories and reflections.\(^{49}\) Rona Sheramy wrote that there was a felt concern among Jewish educators at the time that an emphasis on the Holocaust was difficult in terms of the construction of a specifically American Jewish identity.\(^{50}\) The Holocaust narrative, which posited Jews as the consummate victim group, did not easily


\(^{49}\) This has been reported by Elie Wiesel in *Night* and Gerta Weissman Klein *All But My Life*, among others.

coalesce with the desired new American Jewishness. Furthermore, many in the community were concerned that a discussion of the Shoah would “traumatize students, alienate them from Judaism, and distract them from building Jewish life in America.”

Perhaps this time period is not able to be framed exclusively by silence or repeated attempts at memorialization. The American Jewish community may have wanted to commemorate the Shoah – and did so, often on a grassroots level – but it appears that there were significant concerns in doing so. The community was undergoing rapid political, social, economic and geographic change. This impacted their ability to effectively deal with the Holocaust and its place in the Jewish community.

In the years after 1961, there was greater public awareness and acknowledgment of the Shoah in America. This, perhaps, was impacted by events in Israel. In 1961, Adolf Eichmann was extradited from Argentina and brought to trial in Jerusalem. A mere six years later, the months leading up to the Six Day War generated a new Holocaust anxiety. This was further reinforced by the surprise Yom Kippur invasion in the 1973 war. Many in Israel and abroad felt the threat of a new Holocaust was very real. When Menachem Begin (whom Tom Segev describes as the great ‘popularizer’ of the

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Holocaust\textsuperscript{56} was elected as PM in 1977, Holocaust rhetoric became normative in the Israeli political discourse.\textsuperscript{57} Within the US, Holocaust knowledge was both diversifying and specializing. At this time, many communities were far more organized.\textsuperscript{58} This is reflected in the foundations, schools, and programs that existed to properly memorialize and teach the Shoah.\textsuperscript{59} In 1976, the first chair in Holocaust studies was elected at Yeshiva University.\textsuperscript{60} In 1977, the US Justice Department set up its Special Litigation Unit to investigate and bring to trial Nazi war criminals living in the continental US.\textsuperscript{61} The landmark NBC series ‘The Holocaust’ was released in April of 1978.\textsuperscript{62} Although fictionalized, it drew over one hundred and twenty million viewers.\textsuperscript{63} It is one of the primary instigators that sparked mainstream interest in the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{64} Perhaps most disturbingly to the large survivor population in the US, the National Socialist Party of America (NSPA) tried to march through Skokie, Illinois in 1978 (an area with a great many Holocaust survivors).\textsuperscript{65} The months of debate leading up to it brought the Holocaust into a specifically American spotlight. The same year, Jimmy Carter

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p. 45
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p. 45
\textsuperscript{60} Fallace, Thomas D. \textit{The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools}. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. p. 93
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p. 8
\textsuperscript{64} Fallace, Thomas D. \textit{The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools}. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. p. 113
\textsuperscript{65} Educational Director, Holocaust Museum, Midwest. "Thesis Interview." Interview by author. February 08, 2011.
announced his intention to create the President’s Commission on the Holocaust. This commission was intended to design a suitable American memorial to the Holocaust. This ultimately became the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

In the third period, from 1979 through to 1993, there was wide-spread growth in Holocaust knowledge and popularity. In the late 1970s, the Holocaust also started to be taught in the public school system. Between 1986 and 1990 it became a mandatory subject in many states, including Illinois and California. The mandatory state of education, however, came under a lot of criticism. Henry Friedlander, an Auschwitz survivor, said that requiring teachers to teach the Holocaust was ‘ludicrous’ because teachers they lacked proper knowledge and tools. In 1981, the commission for a Holocaust memorial in NYC was created.

The fourth stage, which continues to the present, started in 1993 with the release of both Steven Spielberg’s iconic film Schindler’s List and the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Given the escalating events of the previous 15 years, 1993 could be seen as the culmination of the growing American interest in the Holocaust. This was understandably impacted by an awareness of the impending mortality of the survivor population. In the wake of the survivors’ advancing age, there was greater emphasis placed on maintaining records and collecting stories from

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survivors. This was aided particularly by Steven Spielberg funding the Shoah Foundation to record such testimonies.\textsuperscript{71} From that time period until now, we have seen the Holocaust rise to an unprecedented place in the American consciousness.

\textit{Why the Holocaust and why now?}

This use of the Holocaust narrative is in some respects out of touch with the way that many Jews in younger generations understand themselves. In 1990, Steven Cohen’s study ‘Religious Stability and Ethnic Decline: Emerging Patterns of Jewish Identity in the United States’ defined eleven ways in which Jews understand themselves. These, divided along ethnic and religious lines, ranged from synagogue affiliation to attitudes towards Israel. One of these, the sense of Jewish peoplehood, was defined by “positive attitudes toward belonging to the Jewish people; sense of Jewish victimization.”\textsuperscript{72} Another was a sense of felt marginality in relation to the normative society. At this point, one of the dominant modes of self-definition was still an inherent feeling of victimization and tribalism.\textsuperscript{73} However, recent studies\textsuperscript{74} have shown that this is far more felt amongst people of older generations. This ‘tribalism’ (particularly with regards to endogamy) is

\textsuperscript{71} As of now, USHMM has recorded 150,000 of the presumed 300,000 that were living in the United States as of 1994. Findling, Debbie, and Simone Schweber. "Whad'Ya Know? About Teaching the Holocaust: Not Much, You?" In \textit{What We Now Know about Jewish Education: Perspectives on Research for Practice}, edited by Roberta Louis. Goodman, Paul A. Flexner, and Linda Dale. Bloomberg. Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2008. p. 313


\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 12

\textsuperscript{74} One of these in particular is an upcoming study undertaken by Brandeis University. The study identified that Jews in their 20s and 30s no longer feel a sense of victimization as a defining characteristic of Jewish identity. Interview by author. March 10, 2011.
felt to be ‘ghettoization.’ Within this dichotomy, traditional observance, understandings of Jewish self, endogamy, and monolithic support for Israel can become negative.

The Holocaust narrative can sometimes effectively be employed to counteract the perceived disengagement from Jewish life. Some scholars argue that two potential factors that may be impacting the use of the Holocaust within American Jewry: the growing contention over Israeli politics and action, and the high rate of intermarriage and resultant fear of Jewish continuity.

Some decades ago, public American Jewish support for Israel could be considered near-monolithic. Some scholars and educators, however, feel that post-1967 – and more particularly after the 1982 First Lebanon war - dissention within American communal ranks about Israeli politics has grown. It was felt by some that Israel was on the verge

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75 Definition: In-marriage.
76 Brandies Professor of Sociology. "Thesis Interview." Interview by author. March 10, 2011
of becoming a strong-armed, powerful, and potentially morally reprehensible nation. The Holocaust can be summoned potentially not only to validate Israeli action (ie. they are working to prevent another genocide) but also to spur other nations into automatically siding with Israel because of past inaction. As the negative rhetoric surrounding Israel increasingly posits Israeli society as perpetrators and Nazis themselves, the Holocaust narrative can potentially be summoned to validate the Jews as the consummate victim group. Thus, Israeli action can be framed as defensive as opposed to offensive. Furthermore, the Holocaust can provide the ultimate validation for the very existence of the state, to both Jews and non-Jews alike. As Simone Schweber points out, the pre-eminence of the Holocaust in American education is in part a reaction to the


84 Ibid., p. 30

“politically vexed bone of contention among American Jewry”: Israel.\(^{86}\) While the narrative can be used to legitimize the existence of the state to anti-Zionists,\(^ {87}\) it can also be used to solidify American Jewish support for Israel.

In America, the use of the Holocaust has the potential to be further complicated by the connection between the Holocaust and the fear of assimilation and intermarriage. The Holocaust as an event forced socially accepted anti-Semitism underground.\(^ {88}\) Its occurrence also created a significant material need for immigration.\(^ {89}\) With the booming economy in the American post-war era, many Jews were able to establish themselves as economically dominant.\(^ {90}\) Over the years, with the stigma of Judaism rapidly lessening, assimilation and intermarriage started to rise. Although it is threatening to Jewish continuity, the rate of intermarriage is indicative of the status of Jews in America.\(^ {91}\) It indicates the acceptance of Jews in American mainstream society, with a Jewish partner being an acceptable occurrence. The Holocaust narrative is sometimes used to encourage Jews to stay within the Jewish pale. Emil Fackenheim, a well-known Holocaust survivor,


\(^{91}\) Sales, Amy. *Class. Jewish Community and Identity*. Lecture, 10 November 2010.
verbalized the 614th Jewish mitzvah: not to allow Hitler any posthumous victories. This refers primarily to assimilation. He stipulated that Jews “must survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish.” He felt that losing Jews to assimilation and intermarriage is akin to the loss of a Jewish life in the Shoah. This idea of a connection to Judaism against a background of anti-Semitism is one that can be facilitated by the Holocaust narrative.

Regardless of the reasoning behind the ways in which the Holocaust has impacted American Jewish life, the way in which the narrative is often used contemporarily can have many potentially problematic ramifications. First, this education can facilitate the creation of an angry, almost intransigent attitude with regards to Israel. Second, the Holocaust being used as a tool for engagement and against intermarriage can implicitly construct Jewish identity around what the symbol represents: anti-Semitism and threat. Third, when the Shoah is constructed as the emblematic Jewish experience and the Holocaust is lauded as one of the essential common denominators around which a community can rally, it can resuscitate feelings of marginality and victimization in American Jewish youth.

**ii. Historiography**

This thesis is focusing on the ways in which perpetrator narratives are constructed and used in educational settings directed towards American Jewish students. As such, I am not meaning to imply that there has been no study of the perpetrator experience within the American Jewish community. There are organizations like the Center for


Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum that are doing so. In fact, there has been significant academic research regarding the psychological and historical complexities of the German people and their Nazi leaders. There are many important influential books that focus on this, such as Christopher Browning’s *Ordinary Men*[^94] and Daniel Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*.[^95] Moving beyond the German pale, there are Jan Gross’ two works *Neighbors* and *Fear: Antisemitism in Poland after Auschwitz*.[^96] Antony Polonsky’s *The Neighbors Respond* encourages a more nuanced understanding of the Polish war-time experience. The Nazi narrative, however, remains predominantly the providence of academia. What I am seeking to do through this paper is look at the way in which the Holocaust narrative is transmitted to Jewish youth in some of their most formative years.

There is also the issue that the majority of the Holocaust canon, with regards to personal narratives, is written by the victims. There are many Holocaust testimonies written by survivors. However, it is very rare that one finds an autobiography or account of a member of the Nazi Party, SS, or Hitler Youth. In terms of an understanding of Nazi

[^94]: Browning, Christopher R. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992. This book looks at a group of men who were given the choice of whether or not to participate in Einsatzgruppen-like murders in Eastern Europe. Many of the men chose to do so. Browning then deconstructs their decision making process in the attempt to understand why.


[^96]: These two books deal with the theme of Polish complicity in the Holocaust. *Neighbors* looks at the town of Jedwabne in Eastern Poland which destroyed its entire Jewish community without Nazi input. *Fear* deals with Polish knowledge of, and capitalization on, the events of the Shoah. This book discusses Holocaust complicity in largely economic terms.
leadership, one can look to the recovered diaries of some of the Nazi leadership. For example, The Goebbels Diaries series offers his personal thoughts from 1939-1945. In terms of the Hitler Youth, there are very few public testimonies. The most commonly used are Alfons Heck’s two books A Child of Hitler: Germany in the Days when God wore a Swastika, and The Burden of Hitler’s Legacy. The lack of Nazi narratives creates a serious complication in the general public understanding the perpetrator narrative.

It is of particular interest to this topic that the primary voice of the HitlerJugend is that of Alfons Heck. In all three Holocaust museums I researched for this thesis, as well as in such wide-spread curricula as Simone Schweber and Debbie Findling’s Teaching the Holocaust and Facing History and Ourselves’ Holocaust and Human Behavior, he was the sole representative of the HitlerJugend voice. This is not only the result of a dearth of competing autobiographies (although this certainly plays a part). This could also be a reflection on the fact that his writings and his post-war actions allow him to be an acceptable voice of Nazism to Jewish students. First, although he was an

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100 USHMM, MJHNYC, Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, and the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles.
admittedly ardent supporter of Hitler and was apathetic towards the fate of the Jews, he played no part in the direct action of the Holocaust. Second, his work is framed around a post-war rejection of Hitler as a direct result of an awareness of the genocide. Third, and most importantly, he spent his later years lecturing in conjunction with Helen Waterford, a Holocaust survivor. In their lecture series, *Parallel Journeys*, they discussed the events of 1933-1945 that led one of them to being an Obsterbannführer in the Luftwaffe and the other to Auschwitz. Thus, although his work is written with the intention of speaking for his dead, it can be an acceptable part of the Jewish educational canon. It bears mentioning that this is the primary source most often summoned in Chapter Two. Issues of post-war agendas and transparency do need to be addressed. That said, his books provide excellent detail and information about life under Hitler and in the *HitlerJugend*. These are details that are hard to truly replicate elsewhere. As a result, regardless of the issues inherent within it, there is still significant value for use.

### iii. Methodology

I used different research methods for each chapter. Chapter two, which focuses on the *HitlerJugend* narrative, was researched primarily through secondary source research and an analysis of existing *HJ* autobiographies. There are very few personal testimonies of the *HJ* experience. One area in which there is a surplus of material is collections of propaganda and curricula used in Nazi Germany. I did not have sufficient German to adequately analyze the majority of existent primary sources. Most of my research was thus done through English secondary sources, or primary sources that had previously been translated.
Researching the museum setting was more hands-on. I visited each museum, toured with a tour group (or audio guide, depending), and met with either the educational director or executive director at each museum. I sought to analyze not only the contents of the exhibition, but also the language and rhetoric employed by docents and staff members. There is also a wealth of existing primary and secondary source material on American Holocaust Museums. I researched four of the largest Holocaust museums in the United States: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC), Museum of Jewish Heritage New York City, the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center (Skokie, Ill) and the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. However, ultimately the Museum of Tolerance was not included. As a media-based museum – without a specifically Holocaust narrative – and with very few actual artifacts, it was felt to be outside the scope of this paper.

For the institutionalized travel section, research was far more complicated. Some of the research was drawn from personal experience as a participant and multiple-time madricha on March of the Living. I also interviewed many students who participated on various trips (including, but not limited to: March of the Living, March of Remembrance and Hope, USY Pilgrimage, and school trips), to get a better understanding of the scope of the experience. Some of these people I had access to as a result of being their madricha; others I was connected to through friends and family. I accessed the 2010 March of the Living Educational guide, as well as many of their promotional materials, all of which were available on the website. I drew on some secondary sources, although many of these focused on the Israeli IDF trips as opposed to North American ones. I also interviewed many directors and madrichim.
Lastly, for the formal educational section, I was granted the ability to meet with department directors and teachers at three schools/curricula creators in the Boston area. The specific people are outlined in each section.
Chapter Two: German Society and the Making of the Hitler Youth

To examine in-depth the issues surrounding the way that perpetrator narratives (particularly that of the HitlerJugend) are taught to American Jewish students requires an understanding of the HitlerJugend.

i. Pre-war German Society

The inter-war period in Germany was a difficult time for many of its citizens. In the wake of their loss in the war, the harsh penalties of the Versailles treaty – particularly that of the War Guilt clause – was devastating to large sections of the populace. The economic straits had a severe impact. Psychologist Ervin Staub believes that this was a period in which inflation, revolution, depression and joblessness, ‘moral and political chaos, and a pervasive sense of political violence’ was the norm. This reality threatened both individual and collective survival, and the German self-conception. The post-war Weimar Republic was unable to shield German citizenry from the effects of what was essentially over a decade of economic depression. When Germany fell victim to the slump of the early 1930s, it was in fact its second economic collapse within the space of a decade. In 1924, the practically worthless Deutsche-Mark stood at a currency

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105 Ibid.
conversion rate of 4.1 Billion DM for a single American dollar.\footnote{Heck, Alfons. \textit{A Child of Hitler: Germany in the Days When God Wore a Swastika}. Frederick, CO: Renaissance House, 1985. p. 12} The complexities of this situation allowed Hitler to be elected, seize power, and introduce and represent fascism as beneficial for the state. Hitler, however, was only able to succeed on the basis of the creation of a personality cult and overwhelming popular support, a support created and maintained predominantly by the youth of Germany. For men and boys in particular, the impotence of the Weimar Republic contrasted fiercely with the hegemonic masculinity that characterized Germanic self.\footnote{Loewenberg, Peter. "The Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort." \textit{The American Historical Review} 76.5 (1971). Print.} Furthermore, the perceived inefficacy of the leadership in the face of continually worsening economic woes left many unemployed, disillusion German youth, particularly vulnerable in the declining labor market in fear for their own future.\footnote{Kunzer, Edward J. "The Youth of Nazi Germany." \textit{The Journal of Educational Sociology} 11, no. 6 (1939).} With conditions worsening, the youth were ready to grasp at any straw, and fell prey to Hitler, who promised them the shortest road back to security. By 1932, the year prior to Hitler’s ascension to power, one out of every three Germans was unemployed.\footnote{Merkel, Peter H. \textit{The Making of a Stormtrooper}. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980. p. 108} The Nazi party sought to capitalize on the vulnerability of the massive youth population, directing a spectacularly successful campaign to draw the German young to Nazism; in 1932, the official slogan of the Nazi party was: 

\textit{Nationalsozialismus ist organisierter Jugendwille} (National Socialism is the organization of the will of youth). The Nazi party’s ideology capitalized on the latent elitist and anti-democratic undercurrents of German society, and catered to youthful mindset, with its
spirit of adventure and idealism, a “lust for violence and military discipline,” the quest for both material and emotional security, and a concerted attack on age and established power.  

Those who elected Hitler, some of whom were to eventually swell the ranks of the SS and the SA, did so because Hitler embodied all that had been lost for them: Germanic national pride, material comfort, a strong father figure, and the strength of government. However, the fantasy very often does not live up to reality. As a direct result of many of their actions, Germany was thrust into years of deprivation far worse than that of the interwar period, and a new Germanic identity, bowed by irremediable guilt, was created.


113 Many Germans of the time period discuss how far worse the economic and social situations were in the immediate post-war years. This is clearly detailed in Heck’s The Burden of Hitler’s Legacy. Fulbrook, Mary. A Concise History of Germany. Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print.;

ii. Perpetrators, Bystanders and Victims? The HitlerJugend Narrative

The SS, by virtue of the status it occupied within the Holocaust machinery is an easy group to vilify. The SS were the youth who fell to the siren song of Hitler, who propelled him into victory. As they matured, they executed the more horrendous aspects of the Nazi party line, but there are many within Nazi and German societies whose position is not so easily definable. One of those is the generation of children educated and reared in Nazi Germany. These children, whom composed the vast HitlerJugend movement became the political soldiers of the state. They were the most naively fanatical and dedicated to the Fuhrer. From their entry to the Volksschule at the age of six, children received education in the two basic tenets of the Nazi creed: belief in the innate superiority of the Germanic-Nordic race, and the conviction that total submission to the welfare of the state – personified by the Fuhrer – was their first duty. Hitler, ever aware of the importance of youth for the future of his movement, impressed upon them the feeling that they were his trusted helpers, those with whom he had the most sacrosanct relationship with. Vital to the indoctrination of the HJ was the implementation of the phantom idea that the fatherland was more important than personal life. The marching song of the HJ declared:

*Forward, forward, call the bright fanfares*  
*We march for Hitler through night and suffering*  
*With our banner for freedom and bread*

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118 Ibid., p. 12
Our banner means more to us than death.\footnote{Heck, Alfons. \textit{A Child of Hitler: Germany in the Days When God Wore a Swastika.} Frederick, CO: Renaissance House, 1985. p. 14}

This last line was oddly prophetic. By the end of the war, Hitler, Baldur von Shirach, and Arthur Axmann, the two heads of the \textit{HJ}, had thrown millions of the \textit{Jungvolk} into the final stages of the war in defense of a lost cause. By the end of the war in Europe, millions\footnote{I have found sources that list the death toll from anywhere between 1.9 and 2.7 million. I have yet to be able to find one that is definitive, however. These are: Kater, Michael H. \textit{Hitler Youth.} Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2004. Print.; Koch, Herbert W. \textit{The Hitler Youth, Origins and Development: 1922-1945.} Yale UP, 1985. Print.; Heck, Alfons. \textit{The Burden of Hitler's Legacy.} Frederick, CO: Renaissance House, 1988. Print.} of boys under the age of 16 would be dead.\footnote{Koch, H. W. \textit{The Hitler Youth: Origins and Development 1922-45.} New York City: Stein and Day, 1976. p. 123} It was a generation utterly destroyed.

\textit{Section 1: Formal Education in the Third Reich}

The two dominant Nazi educational settings were the \textit{Volksschule} and the \textit{HJ}. While they worked together to transmit Nazism, they had distinct purposes and outcomes. Gregory Zeimer, an American schoolteacher in Berlin prior to the outbreak of hostilities famously described the Nazi educational system as ‘education for death.’\footnote{Ziemer, Gregor. \textit{Education for Death, the Making of the Nazi.} London: Oxford University Press, 1941. p. 11} The juxtaposition of these two settings successfully resulted in the creation of a Nazi Youth bred by nationalistic instruction and a dismissive contempt for Jews and other ‘subhumans’. These children were taught that individuals exist solely for the promotion of \textit{Fuhrer} and fatherland. And most importantly, to die for this loyalty is something one must be prepared to do.
The Volksschule

The indoctrination of youth in Nazi ideology began at the age of six, when students entered the Volksschule.\textsuperscript{123} Formal Nazi education was the primary incubator for Nazi ideology. Gerhard Rust, the Minister of Education in the Third Reich, created and implemented an educational system that exemplified Nazi creed. The Volksschule existed to indoctrinate the youth with the Nazi set of moral and ethical values, fanatical nationalism, a hatred of Jews, and the importance of state above all else. Education in Nazi Germany was first and foremost created to cement the Nazi totalitarian claim on the individual. Boys from the earliest age were trained to be soldiers, whereas girls were socialized to be mothers of soldiers.\textsuperscript{124} While the female educational system wrought its own set of horrific implications for those who were raised within it, for the purposes of this paper, only the male educational system will be examined.

The legacy of Nazism in contemporary society German is often the Holocaust, and the anti-Semitism to which the leadership subscribed. There was awareness though, that it was certainly not an ideology that could compel a mass movement.\textsuperscript{125} Consequently, the ‘Nazification’ of anti-Semitism was predicated on the portrayal of Jews as i) the source of the economic ills that plagued inter-war German society, and ii) as the ultimate hindrance to the future success of the German Aryan race.\textsuperscript{126} This is not to negate the importance and prevalence of anti-Semitic thought in the leadership. It is just important to note that as an ideology, it also effectively became a way to cement Hitlerian

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Ibid}, p 26
\textsuperscript{125} Koch, Herbert W. \textit{The Hitler Youth, Origins and Development: 1922-1945}. Yale UP, 1985. p. 245
Thus, the *Volksschule* promoted from the outset a scientific hatred of Jews and other ‘subhumans.’ Fundamental to Nazi education was the promotion of ‘Nazi’ values of vindictiveness, violence and hatred. Also important was the dismissal of ideals such as decency, kindness and tolerance. These were seen as “ideals to which only the weak subscribe.” The hatred of the Jews, thus, was cultivated as the target for this institutionalized hatred, and the Nazi perversion of racial science.

In 1939, Edward Kunzer wrote that ‘few who have read reports coming out of Germany can have any doubt about the insidious and barbaric treatment of the Jews.’ Rust expressly articulated to Gregory Zeimer that the Nazi school system ‘teaches that the Jews are [their] greatest enemy.’ Anti-Semitism was bred into the German youth in a cold, scientific manner. There was an element of envy that ‘Hitler cleverly exploited,’ as the Jews were seen as ‘the economically privileged class which had not suffered as much in the inter-war period.’ Prior to their expulsion from the German school system in 1936, Jewish students were actively used in the daily racial science classes as an example for the instruction of how and why Jews were different. The constant disclaimer was added, however, that ‘some have obstructed such tell-tale signs as this by their infamous mixing with Germans.’ The *Handbuch fur die Schulungsarbeit in der HJ, vom Deutschen Volk und Feinem Lebensraum* (hereafter...

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129 Ibid.
131 Ibid., p. 15
132 Ibid., p. 20
133 Ibid., p. 11
known as the Nazi Primer), the state created textbook utilized in the Volksschule, declared that “although physical characteristics seem to designate both as members of the family of white men, the great difference which separates Germans from Jews is blood.”\(^{134}\) Citing such groups as Marxists and Free Masons as the other “implacable opponents”\(^{135}\) of Nazism, these groups too are portrayed as “concealing their Jewish plans for ruling the world behind the catchwords of mankind and humanity.”\(^{136}\)

International opinion was summoned to validate said racial science. “We need only think of the growing line up of states set for defense against the destructive influence of the Jews. And also we need to remember that the immigration laws of many states overseas do not let Jews or other undesirables into the country.”\(^{137}\)

Within the educational system, the innate enemies of Nazism and Germany all become encapsulated by the ‘Jew.’\(^{138}\) The terminology became interchangeable. It became immaterial whether the hate was directed against Judaism, Marxists, Slavs, blacks, or the mentally inferior.\(^{139}\) Ultimately, the Nazi symbol of the Jew came to represent the whole spectrum of those who threatened Nazism.\(^{140}\)

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\(^{134}\) NSDAP. *Handbuch Fur Die Schulungsarbeit in Der HJ, Vom Deutschen Volk Und Feinem Lebensraum*. 1938. p. 26


\(^{136}\) *Ibid*, p.12

\(^{137}\) *Ibid*, p. 46


The other important function of the educational system was to foster, from an early age, an all-abiding love for *Fuhrer* and Fatherland. These are two ideas that became inextricably intertwined.\(^{141}\) The combination of education and propaganda worked to effectively create the ‘*Fuhrer*-myth’ and the Hitlerian cult of personality. Through this, he became the physical embodiment of Nazi ideology and promise. Hitler was brilliantly successful at bestowing upon all German youth the immensely flattering conviction of their being responsible for the future of Nazism.\(^{142}\) The *Volksschule* was responsible for fostering blind belief in Adolf Hitler.\(^{143}\)

Hitler demanded that the *Volksschule* impart to all of the German young the unwavering belief in the superiority of Germans and the Aryan race. Incumbent in this education was the indoctrination in the utmost submission to authority. This complemented the pervasive idea of the glory of death for *Fuhrer* and Fatherland. The principle of self-sacrifice was implicit in the *Volksschule* education. Rust was insistent on the promotion of the idea that the true wealth of Germany was derived from the people’s faith, ability and might. He insisted that the ‘chief purpose of the school is to train human beings to realize that the state is more important than the individual, and that individuals must be willing and ready to sacrifice themselves for Nation and *Fuhrer*.\(^{144}\)


\(^{143}\) We do not need intellectual leaders who create new ideas because the superimposing leader of all desires of youth is Adolf Hitler; he who serves Adolf Hitler, the *Fuhrer* serves Germany, and whoever serves Germany, serves God.’ Source found: Heck, Alfons. *A Child of Hitler: Germany in the Days When God Wore a Swastika*. Frederick, CO: Renaissance House, 1985. p. 118

The *Volksschule* was responsible for the academic cultivation of Nazi ideology. This particularly included the innate belief in Germanic superiority, contempt for subhuman populations, and the training of the importance of self-sacrifice. However, the Nazification of German youth was predicated on the fact that all aspects of information, including formal and informal education were controlled by the state. The education system was founded on the assault of the individual. The intention was to envelop the individual at every stage of development in every aspect of society: school, church, family, community, press, theater and radio. And the *HitlerJugend*.

*The HitlerJugend*

Childhood in Nazi Germany ended at the age of ten, with induction into the *Jungvolk*, the first stage of the *HitlerJugend*. Children had already been socialized by the *Volksschule*. The *HJ* was a youth group that drew in all Germans from ages ten to eighteen. It had three primary functions: a) to destroy the notion of a right to private life, b) to foster an unswerving obedience to authority, and c) to create a generation of militaristic youth prepared to fight and die for the Fatherland.

Organized like an army, the *HJ* was designed in fact to develop attitudes and skills that would ensure a proliferation of perfect soldiers for the state. Training became more

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146 Welch, David, ed. *Nazi Propaganda*. Kent: Croom Helm Ldt, 1983. p. 66
exacting and serious once youth reached the age of fifteen.\textsuperscript{149} The \textit{HJ} leadership was charged with the ‘proper Aryan’ education of the Germanic youth. It focused on physical education, for the purpose of breeding ‘absolutely healthy bodies.’\textsuperscript{150} All the \textit{HJ} activities stressed first and foremost the importance of health and physical exercise. Mental rigor and intellect were denigrated as ‘feminine.’\textsuperscript{151} The \textit{HJ} was the physical manifestation of the Nazi view on education. To the leadership, education existed solely to create a subservient mass completely amenable to the dictates and needs of the state.\textsuperscript{152}

\textit{History of the Hitler Jugend}

The \textit{Hitler Jugend}, as an organization, was founded in 1922. Originally it was a small youth group, similar to the boy scouts. It was created by Hitler as a means of creating and perpetuating youth involvement in National Socialism. For seventeen years, joining the \textit{HJ} was voluntary. One was eligible for the \textit{HJ} if he had: a) proof of Germanic-Nordic descent, b) unobjectionable medical health and no trace of hereditary illness or disabilities, and c) unobjectionable Nazi attitudes and high physical capacity.\textsuperscript{153} Hitler articulated the aims of his Youth League in \textit{Mein Kampf}, stating that it existed to “a) reawaken and to treasure characteristics which had their origin in the Germanic blood, namely love of one’s country and people, b) enjoyment of honest and open combat and of

\textsuperscript{149} NSDAP. Handbuch fur die Schulungsarbeit in der HJ, Vom Deutschen Volk und Feinem Lebensraum. 1938. p. 87
\textsuperscript{150} Kunzer, Edward J. "Education under Hitler." \textit{The Journal of Educational Sociology} 13.3 (1939).
\textsuperscript{151} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{153} Rempel, Gerhard. \textit{Hitler's Children: Hitler Youth and the SS}. University of NC, 1989. p. 34
healthy physical activity, c) the veneration of ethical and spiritual values, and d) the rejection of those values originating from Jewry and mammon.\footnote{Hebrew transliteration: ממון – meaning ‘money’.}

In 1928, two additional groups, the Jungvolk (boys age 10-14), and the Bund Deutscher Madel (BDM, girls 10-18) were formed.

When Hitler came to power in 1933, the essential makeup of German youth groups was irrevocably altered. Immediately, Hitler and von Shirach set out to eliminate the other 70+ competing youth leagues.\footnote{Hitler, Adolf. Mein Kampf. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. p. 78} This process continued until 1936, declared ‘the year of the Jungvolk’. That year a vast campaign was initiated to recruit every boy in the age 14 cohort.\footnote{Ibid.} On 1 July 1939 the ‘Law of the Hitler Youth’ came into effect, which made involvement in the HJ compulsory for all children over nine. It accorded to the HJ the entire ‘physical, spiritual and ethical education of the German youth.’\footnote{Ibid. p. 35} The initial head, von Shirach was thus granted the task of educating all Aryan German youth in the image of the HJ motto: swift as greyhounds, tough as leather, hard as the steel of Krupp.\footnote{Heck, Alfons. The Burden of Hitler's Legacy. Harper Collins, 1990. p. 89}

The Appeal of the Hitler Jugend

The HJ as an organization was desirable to many in the youth cohort because it offered independence and maturity. The HJ offered the youth of Germany the ability to remove themselves from childhood and take on an essential ‘pioneering’ role in German
Hitler and Baldur von Shirach were able to effectively stimulate the overactive imagination of youth with the romanticized promises of a German utopia. If children were young, healthy and Aryan, the world held unlimited promise.

Considering the aims of the Hitler Youth, it is interesting that what attracted the youth was the perception of freedom. The HJ offered a life of action and adventure away from the supervision of parents and school teachers. This was a new youth who were no longer disillusioned. The HJ allowed them to feel actively involved within the political and social structure of Germany, and deeply involved in the fate of the nation. Prior to 1939, entrance into the Jungvolk was voluntary; however, 6.5 million, 82% of German youth joined with no compulsion. Gerhard Mann, who turned 10 in 1938, ‘joined independently simply because [he] wanted to be in a boys’ club where [he] could strive towards a nationalistic ideal. The HJ had camping hikes and group meetings, and there were no social or class distinctions.’ Boys were compelled by the opportunity to break out from their ‘childish, narrow life’ and attach themselves to something great and essential.

The HJ was oriented primarily towards the male sector of the population and removed the rigid hierarchical class distinctions. It offered the potential for real

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161 Ibid. p. 7
162 Ibid. p. 67
164 Ibid., p. 16
167 Ibid. p. 42
responsibility and the chance to demonstrate capacity for leadership. Youth were also glorified as being the future of the movement. Hitler, in Mein Kampf, displayed this obsession, saying:

‘I am beginning with the young. We older ones are used up, we are rotten to the marrow. We have no unrestrained instincts left. We are cowardly and sentimental. We are bearing the burden of a humiliating past, and have in our blood the dull recollection of serfdom and servility. But my magnificent youngsters! Are there finer ones anywhere in the world? Look at these young men and boys! What material! With them, I can make a new world.’

Hitler fostered the undying loyalty of the youth through many repetitions of statements like the above. Additionally, he also accorded the HJ a variety of special privileges such as ‘the right to carry daggers, wear uniforms, and issue commands.’ Through the HJ, adolescents were placed above those who were traditionally in the position of power. This is an age group typically without real agency. The sheer power afforded them likely facilitated an apathetic attitude amongst the youth towards the exploitation and stringent disciplinary control.

As one matured in the HJ, there was increasing stringency applied to physical education and Nazi world-view conditioning. Von Shirach declared in 1938 that “racial teaching is the point of departure of all Nazi teachers; from it the consequences of Nazi youth education derive. Corresponding with the will of the Fuhrer, the strengthening and toughening of one’s physical capacity is the first as well as the highest duty of the young generation. Self-confidence obtained through struggle and victory must be acquired by every member of the Germanic racial community from the earliest days of

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170 Kunzer, Edward J. "The Youth of Nazi Germany." The Journal of Educational Sociology 11, no. 6 (1939).
his childhood. His entire education must be planned with the aim of giving him the conviction of superiority over others. The young must accustom themselves at an early stage to acknowledge the superiority of the stronger and to subordinate themselves to him.\textsuperscript{171}

In the mind of von Shirach, the Nazi youth was to be cultivated to know they had no rights; they had a duty, which was greater than right.\textsuperscript{172} Given the importance placed on physical over intellectual development, the Nazi spirit was to be cultivated through the \textit{HJ} by weekly meetings and ideological lectures, daily hiking trips, and “games of all kinds requiring a maximum of physical movement.”\textsuperscript{173} The imagination of the youth was caught by the use of Teutonic ceremonies, similar to religious rituals, which were practiced widely.\textsuperscript{174} The \textit{HJ}, as the `physical component’ of Nazi education was shaped through the primary motives of a) popularizing the state, and b) creating habitual loyalty and attitudes.\textsuperscript{175} Consequently, the \textit{HJ} was strictly uniform and highly centralized.\textsuperscript{176} It created an environment that advocated aggression and competition and rewarded accomplishment. However, great care was taken to ensure that the sense of competition was never fostered between individuals. All \textit{HJ} competitions were between groups, further emphasizing the centering on obedience and subordination to group

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\textsuperscript{171} This was found in: Merkl. \textit{The Making of a Storm-Trooper}. Princeton UP, 1980. p. 12. I was unable to find this in another English translation.
\textsuperscript{172} Kunzer, Edward J. "Education under Hitler." \textit{The Journal of Educational Sociology} 13.3 (1939).
\textsuperscript{173} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{175} Kunzer, Edward J. "Education under Hitler." \textit{The Journal of Educational Sociology} 13.3 (1939).
\textsuperscript{176} NSDAP. \textit{Handbuch f"ur die Schulungsarbeit in der HJ, Vom Deutchen Volk und Feinem Lebensraum}. 1938. p. 12
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mentality.\textsuperscript{177} The \textit{HJ} was designed in this way so that ‘individuals were no longer left to themselves, or ultimately left to think for themselves.’\textsuperscript{178} In the Third Reich, there was no room for individualism or the questioning of the stringency incumbent in that. Therefore, Nazi leadership felt they had the right to ‘design the individual’\textsuperscript{179} in the image necessary for the advancement of their society. The dissolution of the individualistic mentality, and even eventually family ties, was intrinsic to the belief system perpetuated by the \textit{HJ}. Nazi Leadership sought to assure itself of the youth’s unquestioning obedience and the willingness to sacrifice oneself for the Fatherland. As a result, the \textit{HJ} were socialized to believe themselves responsible to Hitler and the Reich first and foremost.\textsuperscript{180}

The Nazi assault on the individual was merely a part of the expansive German ‘re-education’ movement, one that wrought horrific implications for those who came of age within it. The youth movements created a subservient mass in the name of a Hegelian concept of state. They were ultimately viewed as expendable in the name of Reich advancement. It was an education system that innately bred force.\textsuperscript{181} With such a strong overflow of military concepts into civilian life, and an emphasis on the glory of war, it was one that made war inevitable.\textsuperscript{182} The members of the \textit{HJ} at increasingly younger ages were thrown into positions of essentially unlimited power.\textsuperscript{183} When Germany entered the

\begin{thebibliography}{183}
\bibitem{177} Kunzer, Edward J. "Education under Hitler." \textit{The Journal of Educational Sociology} 13.3 (1939).
\bibitem{179} Kunzer, Edward J. "Education under Hitler." \textit{The Journal of Educational Sociology} 13.3 (1939).
\bibitem{181} Ziemer, Gregor. \textit{Education for Death, the Making of the Nazi}. London: Oxford UP, 1941. Print. p. 21
\bibitem{182} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 21
\bibitem{183} Heck, Alfons. \textit{The Burden of Hitler's Legacy}. Frederick, CO: Renaissance House,
war, the importance of formal education (which was never of great import) lessened.\textsuperscript{184}

As the German war machine started to implode, the \textit{HJ} became the youngest sacrifices on the altar of Nazism.\textsuperscript{185}

\textit{The HitlerJugend in the War}

In the early years of the war, life on the home front for the Hitler Youth changed very little. Germany, in its success, continued to focus youth education on the development of a reservoir of future soldiers. The \textit{HJ} were used as a domestic force. They were used to keep locals in line in the expansive Reich, to denounce traitors to the Gestapo, to collect scrap metal and old clothes, to police streets and railroad stations, and to serve as couriers and messengers.\textsuperscript{186} However, as the tides of war turned against Germany, so too did the role the \textit{HJ} were expected to play.

It’s somewhat easy to trace Germany’s military decline in relation to the content of the propaganda being directed towards the \textit{HJ}. Starting in 1943, the emphasis was ‘no longer on youth’s contribution to the home front effort, but rather on their mobilization for military action as a future strike force and a last line of defense.’\textsuperscript{187} Goebbels’ total war mobilized the \textit{HJ} more so than the rest of the population. The Nazi leadership believed in the youth’s ability to fight fanatically until the end.

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\textsuperscript{184} Heck, Alrons. \textit{The Burden of Hitler's Legacy}. Frederick, CO: Renaissance House, 1988, p. 198  \\
\textsuperscript{185} \textit{Ibid.} p. 178  \\
\textsuperscript{186} Rempel, Gerhard. \textit{Hitler's Children: Hitler Youth and the SS}. University of NC, 1989. Print. p. 56  \\
\textsuperscript{187} Welch, David, ed. \textit{Nazi Propaganda}. Kent: Croom Helm Ldt, 1983. Print. p. 67
\end{flushleft}
\end{footnotesize}
Starting in 1943, it was not uncommon to see millions of emaciated boys over fourteen digging tank traps, manning anti-aircraft batteries, and being shipped to the Eastern front. The heavy losses sustained at Stalingrad created an increasingly desperate sense of urgency within the Germany army. This was reflected in the creation of the HJ Division of the Waffen SS. Frequently entire classes were shipped to the front en masse.\textsuperscript{188}

On the Eastern front, they were expected to dig ditches and clear minefields. The HJ in the later stages of the war became a substitute for deceased flak personnel (those on the front lines in charge of distributing ammunition and loading guns).\textsuperscript{189} After heavy losses sustained on the Eastern front – particularly at Stalingrad - the leadership of the HJ envisioned a ‘children’s crusade.’\textsuperscript{190} A group of boys already charged with the work of men, their involvement in the war effort became official in 1944. The idea of creating an iron reserve of Hitler Youth was originally broached by General Mockel on the Eastern Front on the second of August of that year.\textsuperscript{191} In the weeks after D-Day, doubtless the most decisive turning point in the war, the creation of the ‘third wave’ of the Volkssturm (the People’s Militia) formalized the draft of HJ age 14-16, not already in uniform.\textsuperscript{192} This was a move largely influenced by Arthur Axmann. He was the later-war head of the HJ and he was ‘impatient’\textsuperscript{193} to allow his youth to show their quality on the field of

\textsuperscript{189} Merkl. The Making of a Storm-Trooper. Princeton UP, 1980. p. 84
\textsuperscript{190} Rempel, Gerhard. Hitler's Children: Hitler Youth and the SS. University of NC, 1989. p. 234
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid. p. 68
\textsuperscript{193} Rempel, Gerhard. Hitler's Children: Hitler Youth and the SS. University of NC, 1989. p. 81
battle. The *HJ* leaders were largely in charge of the *Volkssturm* units. The *HJ* were granted almost complete control. Most were under 16.

In 1945 Axmann suggested to Hitler that an additional third wave composed of 180,000 fourteen year olds could be utilized on the receding Eastern Front.\(^{194}\) A few weeks later, Himmler approved the introduction of another 100,000 boys to ‘beef up the rear defense line.’\(^ {195}\) By this time, however, Himmler and Axmann were seeking to mobilize boys as young as twelve.\(^ {196}\) As the German war effort imploded, the defense of the country became increasingly the responsibility of its children. Desertion even among the very young was treated with zero leniency. All unit leaders were held accountable for any successful attempt.\(^ {197}\) Typical punishments fell anywhere on the spectrum. They could be as lenient as immediate transferal to a concentration camp, or more severe, such as being assigned to a penal battalion on the Eastern Front.\(^ {198}\) Their *HJ* creed allowed for the recognition of fear, but also reasserted the utmost necessity of overcoming that fear at all costs.\(^ {199}\) The threat of reparations for ‘not subduing one’s fear was highly effective and the basis of [the] system of unquestioning obedience.’\(^ {200}\)

By the spring of 1945, the fate of Germany was unquestionably dire. Many Nazi officials made public statements about defense to the end, but chose to flee.

\(^{194}\) Rempel, Gerhard. *Hitler's Children: Hitler Youth and the SS.* University of NC, 1989. p. 48


\(^{198}\) *Ibid.* p. 35

\(^{199}\) *Ibid.* p. 69

Tragically, it was often the children, who, fed so long on legends of heroism, were the most ‘stalwart resistors.’ This suicidal defense was encouraged by the $HJ$ leadership. Ten days before committing suicide, Hitler decorated the ill-fitting uniforms of his $HJ$ in the destroyed Berlin Chancellery Garden. He applauded their efforts and exhorted them to fight on, even when all hope for the Third Reich had already vanished. The narrative of the Hitler Youth came to a tragic end with the battle for Berlin. Some 20,000 10-12 year olds were charged with the defense of the city, and a mere 500 survived to tell the tale. They were the most naively fanatic. They were those reared to believe that death was preferable to surrender. They went and died for a leader who had them abused their idealism, used them to ensure power, and who ultimately sacrificed them in the name of the Reich.

After the War

When the war ended, the Russian forces considered the Hitler Youth as a criminal organization. It was felt that they were more fanatic than even the SS. Those on the Western front were more fortunate, as the Americans were disinclined to persecute adolescents. The Americans preferred extensive re-education. Many had been completely unaware of the Holocaust. When the Allied forces attempted to make them understand the scope of the genocide, many of the German youth considered it faked propaganda

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intended as part of the democratic re-education.\textsuperscript{204} Many of the \textit{HJ} in the post-war years indicated feelings of bitterness towards their former leaders, having become all too aware of the realities of the Hitler regime.\textsuperscript{205} Baldur von Shirach, in the Nuremberg Trials apologized for ‘training the youth to believe in a man whom [he] regarded as above reproach; for organizing for him a youth that would look up to him.’\textsuperscript{206} He would be one of very few to admit guilt. Many of the \textit{HJ}, after the war, were able to accept the defeat of Germany only intellectually. By 1948, however, none could deny the full scope of the Holocaust. However, this acknowledgement was always accompanied by the caveats of not having been personally involved, and that they had suffered immeasurably in the war.\textsuperscript{207} They were a generation of children for whom ‘the call to sacrifice was no empty phrase. It went straight to their hearts, and they felt now their hour had come, the moment when they really counted and were no longer dismissed because they were still too young. They died for a cause their elders had already abandoned.’\textsuperscript{208}.

\textit{The HitlerJugend in Holocaust Education}

The narrative of the Holocaust theoretically provides its students a sense of moral clarity. Raul Hilberg designated the actors in the Shoah into three roles: perpetrators, bystanders, and victims.\textsuperscript{209} This remains a lens through which the narrative is viewed. Framing the Shoah as such demands that those in Europe from 1933-1945 be

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{204} Heck, Alfons. \textit{The Burden of Hitler's Legacy}. Harper Collins, 1990. p. 12
\item \textsuperscript{205} Kater, Michael H. \textit{Hitler Youth}. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2004. Print. p. 231
\item \textsuperscript{206} \textit{Ibid.} p 35
\item \textsuperscript{207} \textit{Ibid.} p. 250
\item \textsuperscript{208} Pfrengle, Hermann O. \textit{Forget that you have been Hitler's Soldiers: A Youth's Service to the Reich}. Shippensburg: Burd Street, 2001. Print. p. 68
\end{itemize}
definitely placed into one of three categories. There are groups, however, whose real
‘place’ lies somewhere in the grey areas between such decisive categories. The
HitlerJugend is one of these groups. They are perpetrators, because they were fanatic
supporters of Hitler. They are bystanders because they were unconcerned with the fate of
the Jews. And they were also victims, because they were brutalized, used, and ultimately
destroyed fighting for a cause many of their elders had long-since abandoned. Hitler
started the war, and they had gladly followed him. They were Hitler’s victims as surely
as they were his soldiers.

The fact that the HJ cannot be effectively situated displays the difficulties with
Hilberg’s categorization schemes. These absolutist classifications disregard the
complexities inherent within each group, and don’t promote real understanding. The HJ,
though perpetrators were neither inhuman or beyond human agency. The attempt to
understand the motivations and wartime experience of those classified as ‘perpetrators’
reveals a complex narrative that might change the way the Holocaust is presented through
Jewish educational ventures.

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210 It is important to note that in the American Holocaust discourse, a fourth role has been
assigned: the witness/ rescuer.

Chapter Three – The Jewish Center: The American Jewish Community and the Holocaust Museum

Holocaust museums in America are at the nexus of the relationship between America, American Jews and the Holocaust. As public (if sacred\textsuperscript{212} and intentional\textsuperscript{213} sites), they are intended to both educate the American public on the historical events of the Shoah,\textsuperscript{214} and to shape the narrative and memory of the past.\textsuperscript{215} A Holocaust museum can be defined as a “space that collects, classifies, and arranges artifacts, testimonies, and documentary evidence in order to present a specific audience with a narrative or set of narratives about the Holocaust.”\textsuperscript{216} Through these sites, we can determine the narrative of the Holocaust the American Jewish community wants to share with the American public.

There are many hundreds of Holocaust museums and memorials on American soil.\textsuperscript{217} These range from multi-million dollar museums in cities such as Washington and New

\textsuperscript{212} Sacred space is defined by David Barnhill of the University of Wisconsin as “a particular place that is considered to have special sacred power which results from the place being ‘storied’ with human meaning.” http://www.uwosh.edu/faculty_staff/ barnhill/ES_243/glossary_anw.html; in terms of specifically looking at American sacred space, and how Holocaust museums can be defined as such, see: Chidester, David, and Edward Tabor Linenthal. \textit{American Sacred Space}. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995.

\textsuperscript{213} By intentional, I mean that it they are sites created with a specific intention/ take away.

\textsuperscript{214} Hebrew: for the Holocaust. Word that was originally coined by the Jewish community to describe the events.


York City, to smaller educational centers, to public memorials such as those in Boston, Philadelphia and Dallas.\(^{218}\) The vast majority of these were created by Jews.\(^{219}\) Thus, although these are not sites or educative experiences intended solely for the Jewish community, one can understand a great deal about the American Jewish relationship with the past through a careful analysis of the public Holocaust museums, monuments and educational centers.

In this paper, I will be focusing on the educational exhibits and programs of three major U.S. Holocaust museums: the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City, and the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Skokie, Ill. The proliferation of Holocaust museums in the United States is indicative of the place that the Shoah has assumed in national memory. Many of these museums are small and local efforts, created by communities to commemorate local survivors.\(^{220}\) These represent three very different types of museums: USHMM is federal, MJHNYC is highly mission-focused, and IHMEC is more locally-focused. I will discuss each museum separately, then offer a collective analysis about the ways in which they display perpetrators, particularly in relation to their Jewish victims.

\(^{219}\) Ibid., p. 87
The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

This is the largest and most influential Holocaust museum on American soil, and arguably one of the two most important in the world.\textsuperscript{221} The permanent exhibition alone spans four floors, and it is located steps away from the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The exhibit was designed by Ralph Appelbaum, and Holocaust survivor James Ingo Freed designed its architecture. It was designed to, in Appelbaum’s words, be a “play in three acts;”\textsuperscript{222} i) Nazi assault 1933-1939, ii) Final Solution 1940-1945, and iii) the Last Chapter. According to the museum, more than 30 million people have visited since it opened in April of 1993.\textsuperscript{223}

\textit{History}

USHMM was the result of the Presidential Commission on the Holocaust. An early major debate was over the site of the museum. Opinion vacillated between New York City and Washington, D.C.\textsuperscript{224} Proponents of it being in NYC, people such as prominent historian Lucy Dawidowicz and archivist Yaffa Eliach felt that it was the “center of the Jewish population in the United States and the cultural crossroads of the modern world.”\textsuperscript{225} Furthermore, Eliach expressed that it was “a harbor of safety and a cradle of liberty for all who came to America. It was the place where most of the

\textsuperscript{221} The other being Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.
\textsuperscript{225} Dawidowicz’s statement in President’s Commission on the Holocaust miscellaneous files, box 15 [file: “Opening and Closing Remarks, Elie Wiesel"]
survivors came when they left the DP camps.”226 People who sought for it to be in Washington D.C., such as Hyman Bookbinder of the American Jewish Committee and historian and curator Michael Berenbaum, thought that the placement of it there would situate the Holocaust appropriately within American national memory. Ultimately a location adjacent to the National Mall was decided upon. The commission called upon it to have three parts: a museum, a monument, and an educational center.227 In 1985, the ground breaking took place, and the cornerstone was laid with soil from each of the six death camps, Bergen Belsen and the Warsaw Ghetto.228 After eight years of construction, it was opened on 22 April 1993.

Mission

The mission statement of USHMM reads that it is “America’s national institution for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history, and serves as this country’s memorial to the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust.” It outlines the Holocaust as the “state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.” It states that “Jews were the primary victims – six million were murdered” but it also designates Gypsies, Poles, handicapped and others as also being targeted. It goes on to say that the Museum’s “primary mission is to advance and disseminate knowledge about this unprecedented tragedy; to preserve the memory of those who suffered; and to encourage

226 President’s Commission on the Holocaust, miscellaneous files, box 20 [file: “Subcommittee: Museum & Monument]
its visitors to reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by the events of the Holocaust as well as their own responsibilities as citizens of a democracy. 229

USHMM adopts two primary perspectives. First, it seeks to situate the experience of the Holocaust within American ideals and the American experience. It does this by asking visitors to reflect upon the responsibilities of citizenship within a democracy, and appealing to the pluralistic ideal by citing a wide range of groups as fellow sufferers in the Shoah. Second, while it does situate the Holocaust within these ideals, it is careful to create a hierarchy of victims, with Jews at the top. The mission statement drives the exhibitions and educational directives of the museum. Thus, these two themes, i) the American-Holocaust relationship and, ii) the hierarchy of victimization, pervade the USHMM experience.

Exhibits

The permanent exhibit at USHMM spans four floors. When a visitor enters the museum, he/she is given an identity card that outlines the life (and often death) of a particular victim. Visitors then take an elevator to the fourth floor, at which point they watch footage of American soldiers liberating a concentration camp. The American GI in question states “a patrol leader called in by radio and said that we have come across something that we are not sure what it is. It’s a big prison of some kind, and there are people running all over. Sick, dying, starved people … such as sight as that, you … you can’t imagine it. You, you just … things like that don’t happen.” 230 This opening


230 USHMM Permanent Exhibit. Museum Exhibit, Washington, D.C.; visit, 27 March
sequence locates the exhibit in an American context, as does the building’s location on the Mall. The American freedom and democracy motifs pervade both the architecture and exhibitry, a constant rationale for having a Holocaust museum in the United States.

The fourth floor details the ‘Nazi assault on the Jews.’ The third floor, the darkest\(^{231}\) of all in the museum, is focused on the ghettos and death camps. The second floor offers thematic exhibits such as rescue, resistance, children, liberation and emigration. When the visitor reaches the first floor, they enter the Hall of Remembrance. Primarily the permanent exhibit uses only authentic artifacts. When there are reconstructions (such as the *Arbeit Macht Frei*\(^{232}\) sign) they are clearly marked.

The museum also mounts temporary exhibitions. The current, as of Spring 2011, is “State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda.” This uses a combination of posters, photographs and films to display the ways in which Nazis used propaganda to consolidate power.

There is also a children’s exhibit, “Daniel’s Story.” This uses the story line of the popular Carol Matas book of the same name, which follows a young fictive child throughout the Shoah. At other museums, the youth exhibits focus on the overall themes that brought the Holocaust to pass, such as intolerance and hatred, without touching on the actual events of it. In this way, the USHMM’s youth exhibit differs from them, clearly outlining his childhood in Frankfurt, time in the Lodz ghetto, his transportation to Auschwitz, and his eventual liberation. The fact that the children’s exhibit is base on a

\(^{231}\) Darkest here refers to both thematically and physically. The architecture/ aura reflects the seriousness of the subject displayed.

\(^{232}\) ‘Work will make you free’ – sign that stood at many concentration camps, most notably Auschwitz.
fictive character has been the subject of some controversy. The museum emphasizes preserving and displaying authentic artifacts from the Holocaust in order to combat denial. Perhaps in their attempt to make it more accessible to children, this could be seen as lending an air of fiction to the museum – and by extension, to the Shoah. In fact, this is an exhibit that has occasionally been exploited by Holocaust deniers, to “prove” the fiction of the Holocaust, noting that USHMM can’t find a real child upon which to base their exhibit.233

Throughout the permanent exhibit, there are primarily two narrative perspectives: that of victim and witness. The victim narrative is primarily that of the Jews. The way the victim narrative is constructed displays the tension over whether the Holocaust is a Jewish story or a universal one. Elie Wiesel, during his time as chairman, stipulated that victims were not to be referred to “en masse,” and that the visitor must not fail to remember that only Jews were destined for total extermination.235 That said, American society and government, guided by values of pluralism, encouraged the inclusion of other victim groups236 including but not limited to: Gypsies (Roma and Sinti), Poles, homosexuals, and political prisoners.238 However, often these groups are explained in

233 Brandeis Professor of Material Culture. “Thesis Interview.” Email by author. 11 April 2011.
235 Ibid., p. 132
237 In a label on the third floor of USHMM, the museum describes the two primary gypsy groups as the Roma and the Sinti. USHMM Permanent Exhibit. Museum Exhibit, Washington, D.C.
relation to the primary victims – the Jews. Of the over 250 profiles on the identity cards visitors receive at the beginning of the exhibit, only 8 are non Jews. The permanent exhibit is framed around the Jewish experience. The first of three sections is entitled “The Nazi Assault on the Jews,” framing the experience of the Holocaust in specifically Jewish terms. While assaults on the aforementioned groups are mentioned, it is often done on smaller explanatory placards. The museum uses material culture artifacts to discuss pre-war life, the majority of which are Jewish religious artifacts. The emotional “tower of faces” exhibit (discussed later), is a collection of photographs of a town’s Jewish community. Furthermore, when discussing the machinery of the Holocaust and various destruction methods, many labels focus on the Jewish experience. The temporary exhibit, which focuses on Nazi Propaganda, is framed as presenting the methods the Nazis used to “start a war that killed 55 million people, including six million Jews.” USHMM does include other groups, both in their mission statement and exhibits. However, by constructing exhibits and the majority of artifacts around the specifically Jewish experience, these ‘other groups’ are situated around the Jewish center.

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241 Ibid.
242 The few that survived the war. Ibid.
245 Ibid.
246 Ibid.
The museum seeks to personalize the experience of the Holocaust. This is done primarily through the identification cards and numerous photographs.\textsuperscript{247} One of the most notable exhibits is the “tower of faces,” a collection of photographs donated by Yaffa Eliach.\textsuperscript{248} This is a three-floor exhibit of the Jewish residents of Eisiskes, Lithuania. These residents were all victims of the \textit{Einsatzgruppen}\textsuperscript{249} in 1941. This is often considered to be one of the more powerful exhibits in the museum.\textsuperscript{250} Through identification with the victims, the museum seeks visitors to “eschew the role of the bystander.”\textsuperscript{251}

The second dominant narrative present at USHMM is the American narrative: the witness/ liberator. This narrative outlines the American relationship with the Holocaust, both in terms of action and inaction. American exceptionalism and pluralism naturally have places within its narratives. However, while the museum incorporates these themes, it does so in very specific and structured ways. While there are some smaller sections on

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{249} German: mobile killing squads. Their creation marked the first stage of the Final Solution. The \textit{Einsatzgruppen} followed the invasion of Russia in Operation Barbarossa, destroying entire Jewish communities in their path. Their methods generally included rounding up the Jewish population of a town, marching them into a nearby forest, and massacring the collective. The Jews were summarily buried in mass graves, often which they had been ordered to dig themselves. The psychological breakdowns and issues experienced by many in these ranks is one of the reasons given for the 1942 shift to the more impersonal death camps. \\
\end{flushleft}
American society as ‘bystanders,’ the general focus is that of their being a liberating force. For the sake of historical accuracy, it does include some unfavorable American actions, particularly in the pre-war stages. There is a small section on the fourth floor that focuses on the S.S. St. Louis.\(^{252}\) There is also a section on the second floor about why the tracks to Auschwitz were not bombed. However, this is done cautiously, and remains book-ended by exhibits of Americans liberating the camps, and survivor testimonies about the wonders of American life and freedom. There are extensive sections on the second floor about the American wartime experience, the liberation of the camps, and the survivors emigrating to America. Finally, at the end of the permanent exhibit, the videos of survivor testimonies generally focus on the compassion of the American troops and the rebuilding of their lives in America. The end of the museum with this very uplifting message was intentional. Many American Jewish lay leaders, such as Albert Abramson, believed the ending needed to “convey hope in order to satisfy the American public.”\(^{253}\) Through the exhibit, America is still seen as a land of promise, rebirth and redemption.

The architecture of the museum supports the dual themes of European terror and American promise. While the building seeks to remove the visitor from American space,\(^{254}\) it is still intimately connected with it. One enters the museum from the National Mall, within sight of both the Lincoln and Washington memorials. Through the architecture and exhibits, visitors are thrown into the harsh world of the Holocaust. However, when leaving the liberation section, there are various windows through which

\(^{252}\) The Hamburg-America line ship, filled with Jewish refugees, which was refused entry into the United States in 1938.


the visitor can see the outside world: the nation’s capital, its buildings and its spaces that theoretically define and protect freedom.

The perpetrator narrative takes on a number of different forms within USHMM. There is no explanatory perpetrator story. This discussion of how to effectively portray perpetrators had been an important part of the conversation about the museum’s storylines from the outset. In 1986, German government officials contacted Wiesel (then the chairman) to “moderate the portrayal of Germany in the museum.” The effort to establish the ‘US-German Committee on Learning and Remembrance’ began the same year. However, among the committee, Linenthal reports that there was “little enthusiasm” and a lot of resentment, and the project came to a swift end. Within the exhibits, a lack of concern over the portrayal of Germans is reflected. On the fourth floor, in the section “1933-1939: The Nazi Assault on the Jews,” the exhibit explains the rise of Nazism. The perpetrators discussed are the central Nazi leadership (Hitler, Himmler, Goerring, Goebbels), SA and SS. There are brief sections that outline the Nazi propaganda system. There is one label that outlines the HitlerJugend, describing them as a fanatic youth group. Throughout the rest of the permanent exhibit, the perpetrators are the SS. Their primary presentation within the museum is in photographs: the Auschwitz album, unloading Jewish victims from the train, aiming guns at a woman begging for her life. There are very few artifacts and exhibits through which to analyze the way perpetrators are shown, because as a general rule, they’re not exhibited. While there is

256 Ibid., p. 12
257 Ibid., p. 15
258 Picture, third floor. USHMM. USHMM Permanent Exhibit. Museum Exhibit, Washington, D.C.
clearly a perpetrator presence, they are mostly seen as being an ominous ‘behind the scenes’ presence.

By not allowing the perpetrators any voice beyond grainy pictures of them committing various atrocities, it keeps them permanently entrenched as inherently evil. The museum does not allow for any understanding of how the German state came to be Fascist, and how the men and women responsible for the Holocaust came to feel it acceptable (and even desirable).

By constructing the perpetrators as fixedly and thoroughly sadistic, it also substantiates the ways in which both the victims and the witnesses are discussed. By positing the Nazis as inherently evil and criminal, the victims (ie. Jews) come to represent the paragon of innocent suffering. Furthermore, the witness/ liberators (Americans) become increasingly moral and just. Therefore, the inclusion of some of the historical facts of American inaction in the face of the Shoah (such as the S.S. St. Louis) can take on a less negative dimension.

The construction of the museum in Washington has two possible impacts. First, it serves to consolidate the Holocaust experience within an American national narrative. Second, by not situating USHMM in New York (the center of Jewish life in America), it allows the possibility of reading the Holocaust not simply as explicitly Jewish event.259 However, the inclusion of various others often doesn’t necessarily foster an understanding of them as victims in their own right. These groups are constantly constructed in relation to the six million Jewish dead. Thus, while non-Jewish victims are included in order to validate American value systems, they simultaneously reinforce the

prioritization of Jewish suffering and centrality in the Holocaust. Perpetrator narratives
are excluded, thus, in part because they do not advance either of these pedagogic goals.

**Illinois Holocaust Museum and Educational Center**

This museum in Skokie, Illinois was originally founded in 1981. It moved to its
new location in 2006. An example of a locally-based museum, its primary focus is to tell
the story of mid-west Holocaust survivors. Not a federal or specifically Jewish
organization, it differs – in funding sources and narrative presented - from some of the
other large Holocaust museums in the United States. Annually it draws about 250,000
visitors.

**History**

Skokie, Illinois (a suburb of Chicago) became one of the centers of survivor life
in America in the late 1960s. When the National Socialist Party of America threatened
to march in Skokie in the late 1970s, many of those survivors (both in Illinois and
nationally) were spurred into action to rally against this prejudice. Numerous marches
and rallies against the NSPA were organized. Afterwards, Chicago-area survivors came
together to form the Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois. As a specifically
educational center, they focused on outreach to the local (and often specifically non-
Jewish) populations. One of the early accomplishments was the passage of the Holocaust
Education Mandate in 1990, by which, Illinois became the first state to require Holocaust

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260 Educational Director, Holocaust Museum, Midwest. "Thesis Interview." Interview by
author. February 08, 2011.

education in the public school system. In 2005, the museum was once again influential in expanding this mandate to include the teaching of all genocides. In 2006, the museum was relocated into a 65,000 square-foot three-part building in Skokie.

Mission

The Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center’s (IHMEC) mission statement reads that it is “dedicated to preserving the legacy of the Holocaust by honoring the memories of those who were lost and by teaching universal lessons that combat hatred, prejudice and indifference.” It seeks to complete this mission not through just the exhibitions, but also through the educational programs and initiatives. As a museum intended to tell the story of local survivors, it does focus on their particular narratives.

Much of the museum’s mission is played out in the educational vision and programming of the organization. The exhibits and programming together are framed around promoting ‘upstander-ism.’ This is a term to indicate the opposite of a ‘bystander.’ Similar to the educational principles of Facing History and Ourselves, the museum seeks to inspire visitors to ask what people can do to make a difference in their local and national communities.

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263 IHMEC Permanent Exhibit. Museum Exhibit, Skokie, Ill.; http://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/pages/about_the_museum/2.php
264 A curriculum-creation organization based in Boston, MA. It will be outlined further in Chapter 5. See page 34.
To that end, their activities include training programs for Illinois teachers, Chicago police recruits, and local FBI agents. Within these programs, the focus is on expanding the ‘universe of obligation’ and teaching civic duties.

Exhibits

There are three primary exhibits within IHMEC. The Karkomi permanent exhibition – detailing the Holocaust - is the primary focus of the museum. On the upstairs floor, there is an art museum, documenting primarily refugee art. In the lower floor, there is an extensive Miller Family Youth Exhibit, which addresses some of the root issues of the Shoah – such as intolerance and scapegoating – in ways that apply to children’s lives.

The majority (almost 72%) of the visitors to IHMEC are school groups. Within the Chicago education system, school groups learn about the Holocaust and then come to the museum. The students, if they are under the age of eleven, go to the Youth Exhibit. Older students go to the permanent exhibit. Afterwards, all the tour groups listen to a Midwest survivor speak about his or her experience.

The permanent exhibit follows the path of a traditional Holocaust museum, moving from the rise of Nazism, through the Holocaust, and ending in liberation and emigration. The Karkomi exhibit at times does not reflect the core educational vision in the museum. While there are emphases on other groups (such as one full section on

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267 Ibid.
268 Ibid.
the Jewish experience in the Holocaust remains the central focus of the permanent exhibit. This is particularly reflected in the tours for school groups. Within the tour, examples of life in the Holocaust are seen almost exclusively through a Jewish lens. One of the docents, when describing the T4 Euthanasia program, discussed it exclusively within the context of being a “forerunner for the Jewish Holocaust.”

Furthermore, the majority of statistics and artifacts are specifically Jewish. The entrance to the “Final Solution” exhibit reads “just prior to the Wannsee conference, some 80% of the Jews who were to die in the Holocaust were still alive; 18 months later 80% were dead.” As a result, the years 1942-1945 are framed through a specifically Jewish lens.

The exhibit ends not with liberation and the successful lives survivors have made for themselves on American soil, but with the impetus for the creation of the museum: the attempted NSPA march on Skokie. The end of the exhibit includes pictures of the NSPA, the rallies in Skokie, and actual marching signs made by Holocaust survivors at that time period.

One of the very problematic aspects of the permanent exhibit is that the majority of the photographs and artifacts on display appear to be replications from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The educational director spoke to me about the necessity of differentiating the museum from USHMM and the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City. However, by having the majority of photographs and artifacts reproduced from Washington, it would appear that there would be little incentive

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269 Appendices, picture 1, page 145. Subsection: Permanent Exhibit: IHMEC
270 Docent tour, 8 February 2011. IHMEC Permanent Exhibit. Museum Exhibit, Skokie, Ill.
271 Appendices, picture 2, page 145. Subsection: Permanent Exhibit: IHMEC
272 Appendices, pictures 1 and 2, page 146. Subsection: Permanent Exhibit: IHMEC
to draw the ‘North Shore’ Jews she describes as ‘already having been to Washington.’

Although the museum was founded by local survivors with the intention of focusing on the experience of mid-west survivors, by replicating the majority of artifacts, that mission isn’t always effectively communicated.

The Miller Family Youth Exhibit removes itself from specifics about the Holocaust, and instead focuses on tolerance and compromise. It opens with the quotes “remember the past … transform the future!” It charges each youth visitor with personal accountability and civic duty. Around the walls of the exhibit there are various inspirational quotes, including “choose what makes you take a stand” and “the time is always right to do what’s right.”

There are various stations in which visitors can sit. Each station has a computer in which the visitor participates interactively in situations where tolerance is necessary. The computer explains basic concepts such as bullying and stereotyping. One of the examples given is where a girl’s father who won’t allow her to invite the new boy (presumably a Muslim) to her birthday party. She expresses this to her friends who want to invite him. The visitor is then able to record a video of herself or himself as one of the ‘friends,’ expressing what he or she thinks the girl should do. Then the video is replayed with the visitor a part of it. At the end, the girl tells her friends she’s going to insist to her father that she should be allowed to invite the new boy in class regardless of his religion.

Fundamental to IHMEC is their programming. The organization was foundational in the creation and maintenance of Holocaust education in the state of Illinois, and they

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274 Appendices, pictures 1 and 2, page 147; pictures 1 and 2, page 148. Subsection: Miller Family Youth Exhibit, IHMEC.
are working now to substantiate these curricula. They have extensive teacher training programs, which about 85 teachers attend per session (presently there are over 50 on the waiting list). The primary training tool is the BBC film: *Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State.* These sessions include ‘teaching tricks’ and ‘best practices’. IHMEC also has a ‘curriculum trunk’ program, in which trunks are delivered to classrooms with a complete set of important books and materials.

The ways in which perpetrator narratives in particular are constructed are interesting. Their programming and children’s exhibit certainly attempts to use the perpetrator experience as a cautionary tale. The ways in which the narrative is taught to smaller children (through the Miller Exhibit, and theoretically, through the teacher training) indicates the importance of understanding perpetrators as a lesson in civic and democratic duty. However, within the actual core exhibit, aside from a few small panels the perpetrator narrative remains simplistic. There is one small section on the *HJ* in which an armband and a pin are shown. However, these objects are included merely as an example of a Nazi group. Considering the mission of the museum, one might expect that the permanent exhibit would have the same high emphasis on responsibility and tolerance that the programming does. This disparity may be a reflection of the fact that many of the artifacts are reproduced from USHMM, however. As a result, the IHMEC are bound by many of the same things USHMM chose to include (and exclude) from their own halls.

As a locally-based museum, IHMEC is connected to the experience of Midwestern Holocaust survivors. This can be seen clearly in the way that the permanent

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276 *Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State - Interview Series.* Performed by Linda Ellerby, Melvin Jules Bukiet, Michael Berenbaum. BBC. DVD.
exhibit ends. Contrary to USHMM, it doesn’t end in a specifically Americanized or uplifting way – although the story ends on American soil. It instead focuses on the presence of racism and hatred of Jews that persisted many years after the Shoah.

The way in which IHMEC constructs the museum has a number of interesting outcomes. IHMEC’s presence in America is overshadowed by the presence of USHMM and MJHNYC. As a result, the leadership team appears to have felt a need to define themselves in relation to both USHMM and MJHNYC. As they are neither federal nor specifically Jewish, they need to fulfill a different function. Perhaps this is one of the reasons the leadership has sought to focus on the narrative as impetus for civic self-discovery. Although they appear to be committed to utilizing the Holocaustal narrative (and presumably the story of how one becomes a perpetrator) to inspire visitors to be ‘upstanders,’ this is a message more reflected in their programming than in the core exhibition. The permanent exhibit retains much of the moral simplicity they claim to eschew. While their programming is innovative, their failure to strictly adhere to their mission within their permanent exhibition could potentially reduce the efficacy of IHMEC.

Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

This New York City museum in Battery Park, in sight of the State of Liberty, opened its doors in 1997. It was created with the intention of personalizing the Jewish experience in the Holocaust, and exploring European Jewish life before, during and after

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the Shoah. It seeks to “honor those who died by celebrating their lives.”\textsuperscript{278} It is a specifically Jewish organization, targeting a plural and intentional audience.

\textit{History}

The museum came into fruition as a result of the New York Holocaust Commission, created in 1981 by New York City mayor Ed Koch.\textsuperscript{279} This came a mere three years after the President’s Commission on the Holocaust was formed. Rochelle Saidel, who wrote an extensive history of MJHNYC, said that these commissions were not founded out of pressure from Jewish lobby groups. Instead, both of these men “co-opted the issue of the memorialization of the Holocaust in order to gain favor with the organized Jewish community and thereby obtain Jewish votes and financial backing for their upcoming election campaigns.”\textsuperscript{280} In 1983, it became the New York City Holocaust Memory Commission, although the “City” was lost when the Governor became a part of the task force in 1986.\textsuperscript{281} Many members on the Commission were prominent members of the NYC Jewish community, such as Holocaust survivor Ben Meed and JCRC leader Malcolm Hoenlein. Its groundbreaking was presided over by New York Governor Cuomo, with the admonition that “just as we must never forget the lessons of hatred gone mad taught by the Holocaust, we must never forget the lessons of Jewish survival and

\textsuperscript{278} MJHNYC Permanent Exhibit. Museum Exhibit, New York City, NY.
\textsuperscript{279} Saidel, Rochelle G. \textit{Never Too Late to Remember: the Politics behind New York City's Holocaust Museum}. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1996. p. 34
\textsuperscript{280} Ibid., p. 8
achievement over the centuries."\textsuperscript{282} It opened in 1997, and since then has greeted over 1.5 million visitors.\textsuperscript{283}

**Mission**

The mission of the MJHNYC is to “educate all people of all ages and backgrounds about the broad tapestry of Jewish life in the 20\textsuperscript{th} and 21\textsuperscript{st} centuries – before, during, and after the Holocaust.”\textsuperscript{284} To serve this mission, the museum’s permanent exhibit is divided into three sections: Jewish Life a Century Ago, The War Against the Jews, and Jewish Renewal. Each of these, on a different floor, uses artifacts with provenances attached to persons and stories to personalize the Jewish experience. As it is not a federally-funded, there is no obligation for it to include other victim groups – and it doesn’t. While other victim groups (and other themes) are explored in their public programming, the physical exhibitions of the museum decidedly stay true to the mission, focusing on the life and history of the European Jewish community.

Although perhaps not intended explicitly to counterbalance some of the themes present in USHMM, the museum often takes a decidedly different stance. Situating the museum within NYC is indicative of an emphasis on the Jewish narrative – instead of an Americanized one. NYC, with over two million Jews at the time of the museum’s opening,\textsuperscript{285} has the largest per-capita Jewish population of any city in the United

States.286 Within the Jewish community, New York has also assumed a significant place as the point of entry for the majority of the immigrant survivors (although this would be true for many immigrants of that time period.) The emphasis on a specifically Jewish narrative is further implicit in the architecture of the building itself. The museum is housed in a six-sided building, both intended to reflect the six points of the magen david287 and the six million Jews who died in the Shoah.288 Geographically, it occupies a large space in Battery Park, in view of both the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

Exhibits

The first floor of the MJHNYC focuses on the pre-war European Jewish life. The entrance into the exhibit is marked by two quotes from the Tanach: ‘remember, never forget’ (Dvarim 28:17) and ‘there is hope for your future’ (Jeremiah 31:17). By drawing on words from the Judaic cornerstone text, the curators of the museum are framing the museum within specifically Jewish terms. Furthermore, the first artifact displayed in the museum is a Torah scroll. This sefer Torah289290 is described as being indicative of the mission of the museum. Its label reads “during the war, the Nazis destroyed the Jewish community of Domazlice [where the scroll was written] and murdered most of its members. The scroll was looted together with a vast collection of Czech Jewish property, which the Nazis planned to exhibit in a museum of the ‘extinct Jewish race’ in Prague after the war. Instead, the Torah was recovered and is now displayed in a museum created by a living, flourishing Jewish


Ibid., p. 11


Hebrew: Torah Scroll, first five books of the Tanach.

Appendices, pictures 1 and 2, page 143. Subsection: Sefer Torah, MJHNYC.
community. Its presence here reminds us of the rich Jewish life that thrived in prewar Europe and the barbaric events that snuffed out that life, and bears witness to the dramatic renewal of Jewish community around the world following the tragedy of the Holocaust.291

This is the theme that underlies the majority of the narratives found in this museum (particularly the first and third floors.) Predominantly, the artifacts displayed on the first floor appear to focus on the two mainstays of historical Jewish life: religious ritual and family. There are a great deal of ritual artifacts on display, from tallitot292 to havdallah sets293. The emphasis on the Jewish family is seen through the presence of many ketubot294 and images of traditional Jewish families and familial life. One such display is centered around a Yiddish quote:

דאם הורונען צא ביכי א יידן דאם נאמען ליבון, פיך איוינען אים אין האראן

This translates into “the family is the whole life and spirit of a Jew.”295 Towards the end of the first floor exhibit, it segues into an analysis of the impact of Nazism in Germany prior to 1939. This focuses on the impact of Hitlerian propaganda on the German state and its people. The displays focus on such artifacts as radio, board games (such as JudenRaus296) and Der Giftpilz.297 The final display in this particular section focuses on the S.S. St. Louis. It features a film about the Jewish experience of trying to flee Germany before 1939. It features some of the survivors from the ship (primarily those

291 Appendices, picture 2, page 143. Subsection: Sefer Torah, MJHNYC.
292 Hebrew, plural: prayer shawl traditionally worn by men. Often they are white, have four fringed corners, and are decorated with blue or black stripes.
293 Hebrew: Havdallah is the ceremony that marks the end of Shabbat. To mark Havdallah, numerous objects are used, including: a Kiddush (wine) cup, a spice box, and a multi-wicked candle.
294 Hebrew: traditional Jewish marriage contract.
295 IHMEC Permanent Exhibit. Museum Exhibit, Skokie, Ill.
296 German, “Jews Out!” a popular board game in which the winner was the first player to rid the Jews from his/her town.
297 German: “The Poisonous Mushroom.”
fortunate enough to disembark in England). This futile attempt to enter America is the last glimpse visitors have of the pre-war Jewish life.

The second floor, which documents the history of the Holocaust, starts out by outlining the invasion of Poland and the implementation of anti-Jewish racial policy there. Very immediately it outlines life in the ghettos. While there is obvious focus on the suffering in the ghettos, many of the displays focus on how the Jews “[Met] Hate with Humanity.” The displays focus on Jewish cultural and social life within the ghettos. There are numerous artifacts implemented to do this, such as violins, Shabbos candles, and diaries. The exhibit continues to include information about the machinery of the Holocaust, including “organizing mass murder,” “deportation to death camps,” and “the killing centers.” True to the mission of personalizing the Holocaust, however, these are displayed in specifically Jewish and personal ways. For example, in the display on “the Killing Centers” there are six photographs, one of a person who died at each camp. Only under the biographic details of each person is the name and location of the camp. In the “death camps” section are towers of photographs of people who died in them. Perpetrators are not an active presence in this section. There is no significant documentation, explanation, or imagery allotted to perpetrators. This is perhaps a reflection on the intentional emphasis on the Jewish experience.

The third floor’s theme is “Jewish renewal.” It begins with displays on Jewish migration to Israel and the United States. Immediately there is a set of photographs displaying themes/ events in contemporary Jewish life. This includes images of Bnei

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298 MJHNYC Permanent Exhibit. Museum Exhibit, New York City, NY.
299 Appendices, picture 2, page 145. Subsection: The Holocaust: MJHNYC
300 Appendices, picture 1, page 145. Subsection: The Holocaust, MJHNYC
Mitzvah\textsuperscript{301}, kibbutzim\textsuperscript{302} in Israel, Torah scholars in Yeshiva\textsuperscript{303}, Falashas\textsuperscript{304} working, and Haredim\textsuperscript{305} celebrating a simcha.\textsuperscript{306} The third exhibit deals primarily with the US Jewish community, outlining their history and its contemporary relationship to Israel. Although Israel is discussed, America remains the focus. The end of the exhibit confronts contemporary prejudice against Jews in the American community. Director David Marwell suggested that this floor has been under constant revision and change since it opened – and requires more change and refinement still.\textsuperscript{307}

According to the Director, the museum differs from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in one specific way: it seeks to show the Jews outside of their status as victims.\textsuperscript{308} It was founded upon the notion of showing “what happened to me and my people.” It aims to show the Jewish life that existed in Europe before the Nazis, and the life that continues on after them.

As a specifically Jewish organization, MJHNYC does not have the same federal and political complications that some other museums – like USHMM - do. It is designed to tell the Jewish story. It does not include other groups. It is funded entirely by the Jewish community.

\textsuperscript{301} Hebrew, plural: Bar/ Bat Mitzvah, the Jewish coming-of-age ceremony. For girls, this happens at 12, and boys, at 13.

\textsuperscript{302} Hebrew, plural: Kibbutzim are collective living sites in Israel, guided by socialist principles.

\textsuperscript{303} Hebrew: religious school, typically reserved for men. (For women, they are called seminaries)

\textsuperscript{304} Ethiopian Jewish immigrants to Israel.

\textsuperscript{305} Hebrew, plural: Ultra-Orthodox.

\textsuperscript{306} Hebrew: happiness (happy event).

\textsuperscript{307} Director of Holocaust Museum in New York. "Interview about the Museum of Jewish Heritage New York City." Interview by author. March 08, 2011.

\textsuperscript{308} Ibid.
While the museum intends to use these narratives to see Jews outside of merely a ‘victim’ status, the explicit focus on the Jewish experience in MJHNYC can have two conflicting effects. By making the ‘pre’ and ‘post’ war lives as ‘important’ as the Holocaust (by assigning each equal space and their own floor), the permanent exhibit is a marked shift away from Jews being solely remembered by their deaths. However, by telling a singularly Jewish story of the Holocaust, it reinforces the ‘victim hierarchy,’ maintaining the Jewish experience in the Holocaust as unique.

Within this museum, there is what the Director describes as a “conscious divorce” from the perpetrator narrative.\textsuperscript{309} Interestingly, he feels that museums like USHMM and Yad Vashem tell the story entirely through the perpetrators; not that this means there is an attempt at explanation, but by focusing entirely on Jewish death, the museum is displaying the Jewish narrative through a specifically perpetrator lens. The lack of perpetrator narrative is very clear within the MJHNYC ‘Holocaust’ section (second floor) of the museum. There is little to no inclusion of photos, videos, or other artifacts detailing the ways in which Nazis killed the Jews.\textsuperscript{310} The majority of artifacts displayed focus on Jews people and communities. However, it is the only museum that has any substantial description of the HitlerJugend. There is an entire window which includes such artifacts as two HitlerJugend medals, HJ pamphlets and postcards, a knapsack, Der Gilpfitz and the board game JudenRaus!\textsuperscript{311} It is interesting that a museum focused exclusively on the Jewish experience should include the most substantial publicly-exhibited collection of the

\textsuperscript{309} Director of Holocaust Museum in New York. "Interview about the Museum of Jewish Heritage New York City." Interview by author. March 08, 2011.
\textsuperscript{310} \textit{MJHNYC Permanent Exhibit}. Museum Exhibit, New York City, NY. Visit. 08 March 2011.
\textsuperscript{311} Appendices, pictures 1, 2 and 3, page 143. Subsection: HJ: MJHNYC.
While many of the artifacts place them in relation to the Jews (such as *Der Gilpfitz*), it could be considered a slight departure from the core mission. When Marwell was questioned about it, he explained that it was because they were “children.” The labels don’t provide a clear rationale. While some, such as on *Der Gilpfitz*, discuss the impact of Nazi propaganda, the labels on the postcards and knapsack merely identify them as belonging to members of the *HJ*. Perhaps as well, it is one of the most effective ways to display the efficacy of Nazi propaganda (the section they are displayed in).

The way the perpetrator narrative manifests itself at MJHNYC is complicated. It is essentially impossible to tell the story of the Holocaust without including the Nazis. Thus, in the second half of the first floor, there are exhibits on Nazism. However, these exhibits primarily focus on Nazi propaganda. This, similar to USHMM perhaps, is done to show the ways in which a society was influenced so as to allow the occurrence of the Holocaust. Although they have attempted to distinguish themselves from Washington by not including the perpetrators at all, this decision ultimately has the same impact. By removing them from the story, they are holding an indefinable group accountable for the Shoah. Perpetrators aren’t restricted to those specifically responsible for day-to-day life in the camps – they could have been any German, Pole, or collaborationist. They could be anyone, anywhere, anytime. Through the way MJHNYC constructs the narratives, perpetrators take on a mythical role. They remain shrouded in mystery, invisible, and thus beyond the pale of human comprehension.

As a mission-based museum, MJHNYC is impacted and influenced by a specifically Jewish agenda. As a museum built for a specific purpose, their strict

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adherence to their mission is entirely acceptable. However, considering how the leadership has attempted to differentiate the exhibits from the other large Holocaust museums (both in the US and abroad), their exhibitions have similar outcomes. Lastly, the museum successfully shows that Jewish life did not begin and end at Auschwitz. They are not constructing the Shoah as the emblematic Jewish experience. However, they are suggesting the Holocaust was an emblematically Jewish experience.

**Holocaust Museums**

These three museums all have very different intentions and missions. USHMM, being federal, seeks to situate the Holocaust experience within specifically American and universal values. IHMEC seeks to juxtapose the experience of primarily mid-West survivors against the need for greater civic responsibility. MJHNYC seeks to focus on Jewish life before, during and after the Shoah. Regardless of these different intentions, there are some striking similarities and implications of their actions and exhibits.

In spite of their specific intentions, they all ultimately have the same audience: Americans. Regardless of geographic placement or intended scope, these museums by definition are part of American space and display specific interpretations of the Holocaust for presentation to a universal audience. Thus, these educational spaces fall in both the Jewish and public educational spheres. Although they are not specifically Jewish (in that they do not transmit their message solely to a Jewish audience), they represent the Jewishly-constructed and interpreted history of the Shoah.

In all three of these museums, we can often see a very clearly defined principle guiding the exhibits and narratives: the sanctification of Holocaust memory as a uniquely
Jewish experience. I use the word sanctification because of the common occurrence of the fear of ‘holocaust desanctification’ in much of the existent literature. This influences both the ways in which Jewish victimization narratives are constructed, and the ways in which perpetrators are permitted to be included.

When the cornerstone for USHMM was laid, Elie Wiesel noted that the building of the museum would allow “a physical dimension to [the] relentless quest for remembrance.” Far from being the culmination of years of struggle, it was merely the beginning of a different one. For years, many survivors had sought the wide-scale knowledge of their history. They wanted to ascertain that the memory of the Holocaust would be transmitted. Although the Holocaust was now thrust in the public spotlight in a very substantial way, this popularity at times came at the expense of some questioning, denial, and push-back against the uniqueness of the Jewish experience. To many in the Jewish (and specifically survivor community) there was a very real fear of the ‘diminution’ of the specifically Jewish nature of the Shoah. The ways in which these museums interpret the history of the Holocaust respond to this fear. Although in two of

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315 Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State - Interview Series. Perf. Linda Ellerby, Melvin Jules Bukiet, Michael Berenbaum. BBC. DVD.

the three sites other victim groups are a part of the narrative, their stories are merely placed in relation to the Jewish center. Jews remain at the nucleus of victimization, and the sufferings of others are related in comparison. In New York, by telling an exclusively Jewish story, this site also reinforces the singularity of the event. With the Holocaust history becoming a very real part of American education, pop culture, and social life, the trauma of the Holocaust has perhaps become widely acknowledged in American society. While this is significant, perhaps this has resulted in a shift away from the need for acknowledgment and towards the need for victim supremacy. This definitively stacked hierarchy is fairly evident across all three museums.

This fear of the desanctification of memory understandably influences the ways in which perpetrators can be discussed within these settings. Generally the exploration of the Nazi state, including education and propaganda, is done solely in terms of its relationship to the Jewish victims. Within none of these museums is there any attempt at explaining how these Nazis came into being. The dominant fear appears to be that to offer an explanatory narrative of the perpetrator groups would allow for empathy and understanding. These museums very fiercely adhere to Hilberg’s traditional ‘victim-bystander-perpetrator’ trifecta, with empathy directed towards any group other than the victims rendered unacceptable.

These museums reveal the inherent complexities of the Jewish community’s public relationship with the Shoah. Although the decades-long struggle for voice is now over, the explosion of popularity in American culture has wrought an entirely new set of complications and concerns. The overall narrative of these museums set up the Holocaust within specifically American values, so as to allow the American public to internalize the
story and work towards the ultimate goal of ‘Never Again.’ At times, the construction of
the exhibits within these museums seeks to have the audience internalize the fact that the
Holocaust is a uniquely Jewish experience. Furthermore, it seeks to stratify those in
wartime Europe into four different groups – victim, perpetrator, bystander, witness/
liberator; and, to solidify a sense of clear difference between these groups, and to keep at
least one of them – the perpetrators – invisible.
Chapter Four - Here There Is No Why: Perpetrator Narratives in Educational Trips to Poland

Loneliness is the key word that evokes the Jewish experience in Poland. Why didn’t the Polish population protect them – or at least help them? We tried, Polish officials tell us. They quote facts and figures. The fact remains that today there are six thousand Jews in Poland. Before the war, there were three million five hundred thousand. It is only natural, therefore, that a Jew feels out of place in today’s Poland. He looks for his brothers and he fails to find them; even among the dead. A sentence here, a line of verse there, an allusion: not enough to recall their memory to future generations.

The hosts refer to victims in general; we speak of Jews. They mention all the victims, of every nationality, of every religion, and they refer to them en masse. We object: of course, they must all be remembered, but why mix them together? Both Poles and Jews must be remembered, but as Poles and as Jews. The Jews were murdered because they were Jews, not because they were Poles. True, they both faced the same enemy; both were victims of the Nazis. But the Jews were victims of the victims as well. They, and they alone, were destined for total extermination, not because of what they had said or done or possessed, but because of what they were; to ignore this distinction, this essential fact about them, is to deny them. And so we told our Polish hosts, “if you forget the Jews, you will eventually forget the others.”


Primo Levi once wrote than an unbridgeable abyss yawns between one who was there and one who wasn’t. Astoundingly, it seems today that this gap is narrowing. Many of us feel as though we might have been there; to a certain extent, it’s as if we were there. “Our young people, second and third generation offspring of native-born Israelis, gravitate towards Auschwitz. They want their own feet to tread that cursed earth, as to assure themselves that the sun which rises there is the same one which rises in our world. I’ve watched them there, clinging to one another, clutching the flag of Israel, weeping ...

“We shouldn’t suppose that we differ from our grandparents who went to the gas chambers. What separates us from them is not that we are some sort of new Jew. The main difference is external: we have a state, and a flag and an army: caught in their tragedy, they lacked all three.”


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317 Re-used with permission from Simone Schieber.
In recent years, particularly since 1985, the student of the Holocaust has come to include educational travel. These trips can fall under the jurisdiction of International March of the Living, local federations, schools or informal educational programming. The majority of participants on these trips fall in the 16-18 year-old age bracket.³¹⁸ This is a reflection on the majority of participants coming on March of the Living (which is geared primarily to eleventh graders) and other summer programs that take place the same year.³¹⁹ Although it is not the case that all, or even most, of the American high school Jewish cohort participates on a pilgrimage to Poland, these trips are far from peripheral. Around 3,000 students from North America go each year. Although often marketed as a historically educational trip,³²⁰ the emphasis is more on the Holocaust narrative and how it can be implemented to strengthen Jewish life. These informal educational experiences are a powerful tool for Jewish identity building. The trips are constructed in part to substantiate contemporary Jewish identity oppositionally against the background of indifference and hatred in war-time Europe. Within the construction of the programs, however, contemporary Poland (particularly in relation to Israel) comes to embody this terrifying world. Thus, within this educational sphere, the way perpetrator and bystander narratives are constructed greatly impact not only the understanding of the Shoah, but the participants’ understanding of themselves.


The presence and popularity of these trips is interesting. Many contemporary studies report that younger Jews no longer feel a sense of victimization forces them to stay within the community. These trips are thus an interesting comparison to this trend, because they continue to utilize this rhetoric of victimization to strengthen Jewish commitment and identity. This chapter will seek to explore how the use of this rhetoric of crisis plays out amongst contemporary Jews, removed by two generations from the Holocaust.

*The Trips: scope, mission, educational vision.*

The prevalence of Jewish educational travel is a relatively recent activity in the Jewish world. In the last two decades, travel has increasingly been used as a way to revitalize and renew Jewish commitment. While the most popular destinations are Israel and Eastern Europe, increasingly Federation, Hillel and other institutions sponsor trips to various destinations in order to connect North American Jews to international Jewish communities and reinforce American Jewish identity.

The history of the Holocaust-related trips is intimately tied to the history of communism in Poland. Due to the iron curtain, pilgrimage trips were not permitted until the late 1980s. March of the Living had its inaugural trip in 1988. The same year, the Israel Defense Force started to send delegations of high-school-age Israelis to the death camps. Initially, these trips were smaller in scope, bringing between 400-500 students per

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year. However, since the later 1990s, March of the Living has brought around 6,000 annually.\textsuperscript{324} This is a reflection of many factors. Globalization and economic changes made travel economically viable and highly desirable.\textsuperscript{325} There are many institutions within the community that successfully have been able to capitalize on the growth of the travel industry. These organizations have been used to provide Jews with intensive informal educational experiences. The elements of many of these trips, particularly those to Eastern Europe and Israel, both implicitly and explicitly construct these educative experiences in order to encourage a religious and communal commitment to Judaism.\textsuperscript{326}

The upsurge of popularity of pilgrimage (as they are called by many yeshivot and programs)\textsuperscript{327} trips, such as March of the Living and Birthright, could be tied to the growing contemporary concern with Jewish continuity.

The largest provider of these trips to Eastern Europe is the March of the Living. This international organization brings young adults from around the world to Poland and Israel over a set period of two weeks. This timing is done to ensure that Yom HaShoah is spent in Auschwitz and Yom Ha’Atzmaut\textsuperscript{328} is spent in Jerusalem. There are also adult and college student trips. March of the Living is far from the only program, however. Many camps and youth programming offer pilgrimages to Poland. Camp Ramah, the


\textsuperscript{327} Such as: USY “Pilgrimage,” Ramah Seminar’s “Pilgrimage to Poland,” Neveh Yeshiva’s “Heritage Pilgrimage,” and Yavneh Day School’s “Poland Pilgrimage.”

\textsuperscript{328} Hebrew: Israeli independence day
camping arm of the Conservative Movement, offers a week-long trip to Poland prior to Ramah Seminar in Israel (a six week program in the summer between grade 11 and 12). This is the same with United Synagogue Youth (USY) Pilgrimage. These three programs offer conjunction travel between Poland and Israel. There are many trips that just stay in Europe, however. Schools and yeshivot primarily offer these in eleventh or twelfth grade. One of the providers for trips at the college level is March of Remembrance and Hope (MRH). This is one of the only youth-oriented program which offers trips for both Jewish and non-Jewish students. However, even on MRH, the Holocaust is viewed through a very specifically Jewish lens – and in recent years, about 55% of the participants are Jewish themselves. MRH will not be explored here, however, because this thesis focuses on education directed towards American Jewish students at the secondary level. As a trip directed towards college students, it is outside the scope of this paper.

The high school trips discussed in this paper bring students to Poland and Israel with the intention of bringing Jewish teenagers to sites of the Holocaust “in order to understand the world that was destroyed and how Israel was established.” These trips aim to use the experience of being in Poland (often seen through the eyes of a survivor) to become ‘witnesses’ themselves. The hope is that this will lead to “revitalized

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329 A six week trip, by USY, that follows the same itinerary, one week in Poland and six in Israel. It is called USY Pilgrimage.
commitment to Judaism, Israel and the Jewish people." This indicates a strong Israeli component in the identity creation strategies of these educational trips.

While there are adult and young adult trips available, the desired cohort is those about to graduate from high school. The hope is that this strengthening of Jewish identity will encourage participants to make Jewish choices at the University level. Given that the importance of Jewish tradition and life is most commonly lost when students leave the familial home, these trips are intentionally timed to oppose that force.

There is an element of self-selection present. Often the participants who would choose to go are already relatively interested and committed Jews.

While this thesis recognizes, and will draw on some of the experiences of other trips, it will focus primarily on the March of the Living, as the largest and most diverse umbrella organization. It has brought over 200,000 people to Poland since its inception.

The Appeal and Value of Educational Trips to Poland

The March of the Living and similar trips have significant educational and emotional value. The Holocaust is such a significant part of contemporary life and history. For the Jewish community the importance of the Shoah cannot be negated or understated. The ways in which these programs are structured are both beneficial for the participants and the survivors that often accompany them. The participants are given

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National Chair, March of the Living. “Interview about March of the Living.” In person. 2 June 2010.

All March of the Living and March of the Remembrance and Hope trips are accompanied by one survivor per bus. March of the Living Participant, Salt Lake City. "Interview about March of the Living, Israel, and Day School." Telephone
an in-depth look at an important part of their own history. The survivors in turn are given the opportunity to share their stories and ensure the continued awareness of the Shoah.

Many madrichim and participants told me that they felt that going on the March with survivors was an important way of remembering and honoring them and their families. The presence of the survivors was particularly important for many participants, who felt that they were able to gain personal insight and “visualize the experience” in a way formal curricula did not allow them to. Furthermore, many reported a highly intensified sense of connection to the Jewish community and to Israel.

There is a strong educational and curricular component to the trip, which offers students an in-depth look at the events of the Holocaust. This, curriculum, which will be explored later, is at times problematic however.

Having experienced the trip personally many times, I believe it’s an important rite of passage and wonderful opportunity to engage with the Holocaust narrative on a much deeper level. However, as much value as there is to the trip, there are some inherent issues that should be explored.

**Itinerary**

Many of the trips, regardless of umbrella organization, follow the same basic itinerary. The places outlined below are not necessarily always visited in the specific order. Students usually fly directly to Warsaw. Many of the March of the Living trips leave on a Thursday night.\(^{337}\) One of the first experiences of the trip is spending *Shabbat* as a community. Often this takes places in Warsaw. For *Kabbalat Shabbat*,\(^ {338}\) if it takes place in Warsaw, students go to the Nozyk synagogue, the only pre-war synagogue in the city still standing.

The trips usually span three different cities and environs: Warsaw, Krakow and Lublin. In Warsaw itself, the trip revolves around the 1943 uprising. The walking tour usually includes a stop at *Mila 18*\(^ {339}\) and finishes at the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Memorial. In the Warsaw area, the primary areas of interest are the *shtetl*\(^ {340}\) of Tykocin and Treblinka death camp. Tykocin is of particular interest because it houses a pre-war synagogue.\(^ {341}\) The remnants of the town (which is still lived in, but not by Jews) still house visible remains of pre-war Jewish life. The visit to the town always ends with a trip to the death pits in the forest outside of the city, where almost the entire Jewish population was slaughtered in 1941. Treblinka is usually done on the same day due to its proximity. Treblinka is the site where the majority of Warsaw’s Jews met their end.

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\(^{337}\) Trends seen through repeated experience. Sources: Day School Educated and Female March of the Living Participant (Boston) "Interview about March of the Living, Israel, and Day School." Telephone interview by author. February 31, 2011.; Day School Educated and Male March of the Living Participant (Boston). "Interview about Day School Education and March of the Living." Telephone interview by author. February 2, 2011.

\(^{338}\) Hebrew: “receiving of the Shabbat,” Friday night service.

\(^{339}\) Polish, address: command bunker of the 1943 armed uprising.

\(^{340}\) Yiddish: small town. Often the idealized old home of Jewish life.

\(^{341}\) Appendices, picture 1, page 150. Tykocin Synagogue.
There is no longer any camp left at Treblinka. The train tracks merely end in the forest. The place it used to be (as noted by some of the few people to escape it as well as wartime information) is now a landscape dotted by stones. These stones represent different towns Jewish victims were sent there from.

In Krakow, the itinerary is similar. Initial foci include Jewish life in Krakow. One of the most important destinations is the Rema’s (Moses Isserles) synagogue. This ancient synagogue’s building and cemetery stretch back to the 15th century. Many of the tombstones in the cemetery were ripped up and used to pave roads by the Nazis. Some of these tombstones have been reclaimed, and are now part of a vast wall that lines the outer limits of the shul. Within the city limits, the former site of the Plaszow labor camp is visited. This particular camp was made famous by the important role it played in the story of Schindler’s List. It is now a local park, which many visitors find disturbing.

Perhaps most importantly in the Krakow environ is the death camp Auschwitz. The visit to Auschwitz usually spans one day. In the morning, participants go to Auschwitz I, which was a forced labor camp for Polish prisoners and Jews, and today is primarily a museum. The majority of all trips, regardless of whether or not it’s specifically the March of the Living, include a walk from Auschwitz I to Auschwitz II (Birkenau), the death

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342 Appendices, picture 1, page 148. Stone, Radom, Treblinka.
343 Ibid.
344 Moses Isserles, an influential Ashkenazi scholar, is perhaps most famous for writing the Mappah, the Ashkenazic commentary on Josef Caro’s code of Jewish Law The Shulchan Aruch.
346 Appendices, picture 2, page 150. Rema’s synagogue, cemetery wall.
camp. This walk, the namesake of the March of the Living, is often considered the emotional high point of the trip.347

In Lublin, there are two primary foci: the Lublin yeshiva and the Majdanek death camp. The yeshiva was one of the largest and most important centers of pre-war Jewish learning. Majdanek was liberated before it could be destroyed, and therefore it remains the only death camp with most of its gas chambers and crematoria still intact. At the edge of the camp, there is a mausoleum which contains the remains of human ash found at liberation.

It is important to note that survivors accompany many of these trips (particularly March of the Living and March of Remembrance and Hope). This is a central emotional component. At each of these sites (the death and labor camps) there are specific ceremonies that take place. If the trip is accompanied by a survivor who survived a specific camp visited, at that site their story is told. Many of the survivors who are able to participate were children during the war. This, however, has the potential to provide heightened emotional reverberations because Another testimony may be read by a participant. A poem or song is usually included. Afterwards, the participants sing Ani Ma’amín, Am Yisroel Chai, and say the Mourner’s Kaddish.349 The visit to the site always ends with the singing of the Israeli national anthem, HaTikvah.350

Many trips combine a trip to Poland and Israel. After Poland, the participants then spend the second week in Israel. This includes visits to Jerusalem, an army base in the

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348 Hebrew: I believe. It’s a song that speaks about belief in the coming of the Meshiach. It is reported to have been sung by many people entering the gas chambers.
349 Jewish prayer for the dead.
350 Hebrew: the hope.
north, and the Golan heights. Very different from Poland, the focus of this part of the trip is much more light-hearted and fun-oriented. The heavy emphasis on the army and the state is in direct relation to the pervasive helplessness of the Jewish history in Poland.

*The Explicit: Educational Mission*

Holocaust pilgrimage trips have a very specific and structured educational mission. The intent is for the visitors to understand the events of the Holocaust and how they relate to the foundation of the State of Israel. Prior to going on the trip, the students attend a Shabbaton and receive a formal in-depth educational package about the history of the Holocaust and Israel. However, many participants report that these curricula were “less of a history lesson and more personal accounts of the Holocaust that would allow [them] to internalize what [they] were going to see.” The seven days in Poland are presented by the March of the Living as being a “grieving period.” The students are briefed ahead of time about the five stages of grief, and how they can expect to feel them at various points in the journey. By framing the program as such, the facilitators are creating an inherently emotional and visceral element to the formal education present.

The educational perspectives presented on these trips strictly adhere to the three ‘categories’ of people as defined by Hilberg. However, minimal information is given to state to the participants about bystanders and perpetrators before the trip, and almost none while actually in Poland. The exploration and definition of these roles are internalized by

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351 Day School Educated and Female March of the Living Participant (Boston) "Interview about March of the Living, Israel, and Day School." Telephone interview by author. February 31, 2011.
the group through a combination of situation, travel, and ceremony within Poland. This will be explored later in the ‘implicit’ education section.

Within the seven days in Poland, students come to understand the history of the Holocaust. The ‘big picture’ of the Shoah is presented to participants prior to the trip. While in Poland the Holocaust is often more locally and closely observed. The history day-to-day focuses on a specific place and narrative, depending on the destination.

These histories focus almost explicitly on the Jewish narrative. Divided into sub-categories, the educators seek to discuss “basic history, literature, the ghetto, Jewish resistance, the silent world, life in the camps, Nazi hunters, rescue, and personal testimonies.”\(^{353}\) Notably absent is discussion of the ‘other’ five million murdered victims of the Nazis, or perpetrators.

The way the Jewish narrative is constructed is complicated. The Jewish past and the Jewish present/future are juxtaposed. The people of the Jewish ‘past’ are the consummate victim group, unable to affect any substantial change to their fate as determined by others. The narrative of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising is presented as “they didn’t fight because they thought they could survive; they fought so they could determine how they were going to die.”\(^{354}\) This narrative is complicated by the focus on how this horrible history resulted in Israel. The Israeli narrative presented is that of the state being the ultimate guarantor for Jewish safety. These two perceptions of the Jewish people interact within these sites. The implications of this interaction will be discussed later in the ‘implicit’ educational section. Within the time in Poland, however, the focus is on

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\(^{354}\) Ibid.
Jewish victimhood. The shift to contemporary Jewish (Israeli) strength understandably happens upon arrival in Israel.

Prior to going on the March, students are presented with a historical curriculum. However, bystanders and perpetrators are given minimal educational background prior to the trip and almost none whilst actually there. The bystanders of note within the curriculum are the Vatican and Polish society. While there are some readings suggested with regards to America’s role as such, there is considerably less emphasis on the Western allies. This focus fits within the context of the destination of the trips. The curriculum asks questions that draw direct connections between the ambivalence of the church and the Polish landscape. One notable statement reads: “Throughout our visit in Poland we will see Catholic churches everywhere. Even the smallest town has a huge church. You will wonder how the Church could stand by idly when people (Jews) were being discriminated against, and ultimately killed?” This type of previous instruction sets the stage for the implicit understanding of both past and present Poland as a land of death, and implicitly ascribes guilt to the Poles.

There is one unit in the MOL curriculum that focuses on perpetrators. The stated objective of this unit is for the students to “understand the nature and uniqueness of the

357 Ibid.
Holocaust, the enormity of the war against the Jews, and the fact that the Shoah was perpetrated by human beings – mothers, fathers, church-goers, mechanics, doctors.\textsuperscript{360}

However, this section only outlines \textit{Mein Kampf} and early anti-Semitic thought and racial theory. There is a lack of explanation of the ways in which different groups in German society (aside from the leadership) reacted, complied, and fought against Nazi anti-Semitic policies.

There is one section in the formal curriculum that describes the \textit{HJ}. It mentions the \textit{HJ} as a group in Nazi society whom was particularly vicious towards the Jews. This is accompanied by an anecdote outlining an \textit{HJ} interaction with Jewish students prior to their expulsion in 1936. “The \textit{HJ pimpfe} launched an attack on the Jewish platoon in the corner of the playground near the chestnut tree. Many ‘apolitical’ students joined them for that small, so recreational war. When the Jewish lines broke, they detached their prisoners to the middle of the playground, where, under the prudently detached eyes of the teachers, they amused themselves with them.”\textsuperscript{361} This anecdote encourages the understanding that even people who were not politically radicalized (in other words, who opposed Hitler) still possessed violent anti-Semitism. Thus, the understanding of perpetrators isn’t inherently tied to Hitler and the Third Reich. It implies that anti-Semitism was an ever-present part of that society. Thus, it allows the possibility of anti-Semitic underpinnings still being present within European societies.

Participants enter Poland with the idea that perpetrators were ‘ordinary men,’ but without a real definition of who they are and the steps that led them to become so. This


\textsuperscript{361} \textit{Ibid}. 
nebulous concept allows the people in contemporary Poland to become constructed as perpetrators themselves.

*The Implicit: Pilgrimage as Jewish Identity Formation*

The real strength of March of the Living and other pilgrimage trips is not in the explicit, formal education. It is found in the informal education that implicitly constructs modern teenage Jewish identity around the narrative of the Holocaust and Israel. The way in which this identity is internalized is through the creation and reinforcement of the traditional classifications. By creating nebulous, ill-defined and thus inherently threatening constructions of ‘Bystander’ and ‘Perpetrator,’ students come to understand themselves as ‘Victims.’ This is achieved through the emotional state and narratives present on the trip. This internalization of victimhood is reinforced and augmented through the schema of the program, which travels from exile to redemption. Throughout the trip, and upon return, the participants come to see themselves as both victims and witnesses, bearers of a tradition and a world that was lost. Thus, they are encouraged to make Jewish choices, as authentic embodiments of the destruction of the Jewish past and hope for the Jewish future.

The participants’ time in Poland is carefully constructed and highly intentionalized. The students have a relatively comprehensive history of the Shoah by the time they arrive in Warsaw. Their education has been predominantly centered around the experience of the victim. Often, the understanding of perpetrators and bystanders is very vague and implicitly and explicitly morally polar. Prior to coming to Poland, the

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education has been focused on the complicity and ambivalence of the Polish people. Their understanding of perpetrators is similarly morally simplistic. The curriculum doesn’t really encourage the participants to have any understanding of the position of these two groups, and what led to their support or tolerance of the Shoah. Many participants reported to me that the focus of the education was on the “Jewish experience” as opposed to the “historical facts about the Nazi government and their action.” The interaction of the students’ knowledge of the history of the Holocaust, their presence on Polish soil and at these death camps, and the testimony heard shape the students’ understanding of Poland as an inherently threatening landscape.

These educational systems are reinforced by the way in which time in Poland is ritualized. Jackie Feldman cites that these trips are predicated on the idea of “to touch and escape.” Many participants indicated that they felt a measure of “emotional vulnerability” while there. They are daily plunged into highly emotional situations, but afterwards they escape back to the relative safety and happiness of their bus, friends, and community. This reinforces not only the felt dangers of the world outside of the bus window, but also the warmth and strength of the kehillah. This experience often

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367 Hebrew: community.
reinforced a very acute sense of “Jewish camaraderie”\textsuperscript{368} that some participants reported as being unappreciated until that point. Many came to feel a sense of emotional connection to the people on their bus, which reinforced that same feeling of intrinsic connection with the larger Jewish community.\textsuperscript{369} The participants are visiting Poland, but their only interaction with the people and the landscape is through specific means. Participants, particularly on high-school level trips, are not permitted to experience Poland beyond the construct of the program.\textsuperscript{370} There are repeated warnings about the dangers of Polish society.\textsuperscript{371} Security guards are present at all points of time. March of the Living goes to significant lengths to ensure that the trip will augment the Polish economy only minimally.\textsuperscript{372} This is seen particularly in the way in which food is handled. Students are not allowed to purchase anything during bathroom or rest breaks.\textsuperscript{373} Furthermore, the program has its own warehouses and food production systems on Polish soil.\textsuperscript{374} This goes beyond simple \textit{kashrut} concerns. There are systems within Poland that provide kosher certification. They are not used, however, in an effort to not aid Polish economies. Thus, the participants stay within a specifically intentionalized bubble.

\textsuperscript{368} Day School Educated and Male March of the Living Participant (Boston). "Interview about Day School Education and March of the Living." Telephone interview by author. February 2, 2011.


\textsuperscript{370} Educational Director, Holocaust Museum, Midwest. "Thesis Interview." Interview by author. February 08, 2011.


\textsuperscript{372} Educational Director, Holocaust Museum, Midwest. "Thesis Interview." Interview by author. February 08, 2011.

\textsuperscript{373} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{374} \textit{Ibid.}
The construction of the bystander and perpetrator narratives is scripted to create a particular self-understanding of the participants. This is a result of the way Poland is understood by the students. The trip through Poland is focused on collective memory, in which memory is transformed from “an individual phenomenon into a collective one.”

One of the most commonly reported ‘take-aways’ from the pilgrimage experience reported is a deepened sense of personalization, internalization, and connection with the events of the Shoah. One of the ways this is accomplished is by asking each participant to participate on the trip in memory of someone. Although some participants may not have had a family member or friend personally affected by the Shoah, this experience helped “personalize the Holocaust and make it significant in their eyes.” This shaping of Jewish collective memory of one of the most horrific events in modern history encourages self-discovery and defines the boundaries of the Jewish collective.

By “searching for a world that was lost,” participants understand themselves as bearers of that tradition and that world. Being present in contemporary Polish society, they identify

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378 Ibid.


with the destruction of the past, and become (whilst there) both victims and witnesses in their own right.

The following week in Israel revolves around many of the same themes, although it is executed and understood in very different ways. Time in Israel is intended to be seen through the “prism of their Poland experience.” Thus, in the schema, Poland as the land of death becomes contrasted to Israel, the land of life and security for the Jewish future. Many participants spoke about a much different and deepened connection with Israel upon arrival. One in particular, who had a very deep pre-existing connection and love for the land of Israel, felt that after Poland “Israel was very amazing. Not just in the sense that Israel was simply a nicer experience, but the feeling of camaraderie developed in Poland transferred into our experience in Israel. We really saw how important preserving Israel was to the importance of Jewish continuity.” The primary foci in Israel are Jerusalem, former battle sites, and the IDF. Throughout the trip, there is heavy emphasis on Israel being the ultimate guarantor for Jewish safety. In each city visited, the history presented is often in highly militaristic terms. For example, in one 2009 trip, the visit to the mystical city of Tsfat was framed almost exclusively around the battles that took place there in the 1948 war. There is also a day where the group


383 Day School Educated and Female March of the Living Participant (Boston) "Interview about March of the Living, Israel, and Day School." Telephone interview by author. February 31, 2011.


385 Non-Day School educated March of the Living Participant. "Interview about March of the Living, Israel, and Day School." Telephone interview by author. March 20,
spends a day at an Israeli army base, usually in the Golan. Many reported that the *Yom HaZikaron* ceremony was one of the most important of the trip.\(^{386}\) It gave a very realistic dimension to the present concerns of the State of Israel, and the sacrifices made on a regular basis by its citizens.\(^{387}\) The highlight of the trip is a second march in Jerusalem, from city hall to the Kotel, emphasizing the disparity between the horrific past in Poland and the joy and strength of Israel.\(^{388}\)

Many participants reported to me that juxtaposition of Poland and Israel led a strengthened sense of Jewish identity. Although this was not true monolithically, many felt that even amongst their peers, there was a perceived recommitment to Jewish life.\(^{389}\) Although many indicated that the make-up of the trip didn’t foster a connection to Judaism as a religion, it greatly reinforced a sense of community, culture, and peoplehood.\(^{390}\) This was particularly felt in their perceptions on endogamy and intermarriage. A consistently reported take-away was a sense of the lack of cohesion in 2011.

\(^{386}\) Day School Educated and Female March of the Living Participant (Boston) "Interview about March of the Living, Israel, and Day School." Telephone interview by author. February 31, 2011.; March of the Living Participant, Salt Lake City. "Interview about March of the Living, Israel, and Day School." Telephone interview by author. March 20, 2011.

\(^{387}\) Yeshiva-educated Day School student from New York City. "Interview about March of the Living, Israel, and Day School." Telephone interview by author. March 20, 2011.

\(^{388}\) Hebrew: Western Wall.


the Jewish community, and a real fear for the future, which “looked really grim.” Upon return, many felt a real palpable threat to Jewish continuity and security, and an overwhelming sense of Jewish “vulnerability.”

The juxtaposition of Poland and the Jewish state facilitates the internalization of a revitalized commitment to Judaism amongst participants. This is exemplified in the reaction of one participant to the singing of *HaTikvah*, the Israeli national anthem, at each site in Poland. Although she expressed that she knew some people had negative reactions to it, she “really [saw] the merit behind it, because of what *HaTikvah* and Israel represent. We’re in such a vulnerable state. *HaTikvah* is reminding us that we’re not wandering people with no state, no home. We have Israel, and we do have that sense of belonging at the end of the day, and that sense of belonging is in Israel.” The Holocaust becomes the ultimate justification for the state. This facilitates the creation of a definitive support base for Israel amongst American Jewry. Thus, through a combination of the horrible past and the tenuousness of the future, participants come to understand their vital role as Jews in 21st century America.

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393 Day School Educated and Female March of the Living Participant (Boston) "Interview about March of the Living, Israel, and Day School." Telephone interview by author. February 31, 2011.
Caveats

This analysis of the ways perpetrator narratives are constructed within institutionalized travel is by no means intended to be an exhaustive one. Nor is it intended to deny the efficacy of these programs. Given the Shoah was such a threshold event in the lives of contemporary Jews, a full understanding of it is absolutely necessary. There are many advantages to trips such as these. There are also many people for whom the experience is validating on a deeper level. These people appear to come, however, from more Jewishly committed families, for whom there is a much greater wealth of knowledge and pre-existing strong identity.

For example, one very Jewishly involved family sent two of their three children (the third was unable to attend). For them, the trip was used to augment a historical understanding of the events, and an appreciation of the community they already belonged to. Their high level of commitment to the Jewish people and Israel is far more nuanced and spiritual than some of their contemporaries. For members of this family in particular, the trip was very effective, but they admitted that they were “already Zionist.”395 They are some of many participants who spoke about how the experience revitalized and strengthened a commitment to Judaism. From my research, this I ascribe to the familial structure and existent connection. However, after the trip, many did say that this connection became a lot more “emotional” and “visceral.”396

395 Day School Educated and Female March of the Living Participant (Boston) "Interview about March of the Living, Israel, and Day School." Telephone interview by author. February 31, 2011.
Many of the people for whom this Holocaust narrative is most effective are those who come from more secular or unaffiliated families, who are seeking a new and revitalized connection to their past.\footnote{This is a trend that has historically influenced a secular connection to the Holocaust. Particularly cited in: Saidel, Rochelle G. \textit{Never Too Late to Remember: the Politics behind New York City's Holocaust Museum}. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1996.; however, within the research for this paper, it was often those who were coming from the more secular and disengaged backgrounds for whom the Holocaust narrative was most influential.}

It also needs to be remembered that Holocaust pilgrimages such as these offer specific narratives for a specific purpose. The curriculum and experience is structured to facilitate specific emotional and social outcomes, most importantly a revitalized commitment to Jewish life.\footnote{March of the Living. \textit{March of the Living 2011 International High School Brochure}. Accessed April 12, 2011. Http://www.motl.org/programs/highSchool.htm.} There are many other (and longer) programs like University and Gap-year programs that will go farther in depth about the rich Jewish history and culture. Trips such as March of the Living offer one layer of Jewish identity; this focus and limitation should be clearly stated to participants. Thus, the concern becomes when it’s the only trip, the only piece of identity that these students receive and internalize.

\textit{Implications}

There are many potential concerns about the way that pilgrimage trips to Poland and Israel revitalize a commitment to Judaism and Jewish identity. By using the dual narratives of Holocaust and Israel in order to ascertain a commitment to Judaism at the University level, these trips to Poland are inherently connecting this identity to anti-
Semitism and threat. The schema of these trips has the potential to both cultivate among participants a victim culture and an intransigent attitude with regards to Israel.

This identity creation strategy is very problematic however, because it potentially creates a limited understanding and connection to Judaism. The history of the Jewish people didn’t start with the occurrence of the Shoah, and it did not end with it either. The Jewish people has a history and civilization that spans thousands of years. Perhaps the popularity of these trips is founded on the fact that however hyperbolic at times, this lachrymose view of Jewish history isn’t entirely out of touch with reality. However, there is far more to Jewish life than the common denominators of the Holocaust and Israel.

By consistently using the rhetoric of crisis and victimization, these trips are missing a very vital opportunity to ensure a Judaism that is internally validating. This emphasis on anti-Semitism is externally reinforcing, providing reasoning other than the Jewish tradition to make Jewish choices. Both strategies have value, and any strong Jewish identity should have both. Were the trip, particularly in Israel, to focus on much more the spiritual and cultural aspects, this perhaps could be done. Instead, however, these pilgrimages sometimes appear to encourage people to practice Judaism out of a forced ‘obligation’ to the victims of the Shoah.

While this may be effective in the short term, the potentially issues inherent in this are palpable. For participants who do not have that strong familial and communal identity this is problematic. If Jews define themselves by how their enemies define them, at what point does that definition become the only way the boundaries of the community are structured?
Chapter Five: The Holocaust and Perpetrators in American Jewish Formal Education

*Perhaps never before has a Jewish community pinned so much of its hope for continuity – for the transmission of a strong Jewish identity to the next generation – on programs of formal and informal education.*


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By definition, formal Jewish education in America is a complicated concept. Although formal Jewish education has existed, in some capacity, for hundreds of years, it has taken on a completely different form in modern-day America. Enlightenment and modernization in Europe greatly altered traditional Jewish life before the rise of Hitler. Additionally, much of the traditional ways of life that remained were lost in the Shoah. When the remnants of the European Jewish population came to America at the end of the 1940s, Jewish education and identity formation changed irrevocably. The assimilation and secularization of the Jewish population into America weakened the traditional communal and religious ties that had historically served as the foundation for Jewish identity and self-understanding. ³⁹⁹ With the dissipation of religious life and communal involvement, schools often assumed the responsibility for the “identity training.” ⁴⁰⁰ This identity was far from simple, either. Formal education (here, referring primarily to curricula in the classroom) provided the basis for students to learn how to be both Jewish

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⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 2
and American, and what the intersection of those two identities could look like. As Jonathan Sarna says, “Jewish schools serve as the primary settings, along with the home, where American Jews confront the most fundamental question of American Jewish life: how to live in two worlds at once and how to be both American and Jewish, part of the larger American society and apart from it.” In Holocaust museums and institutionalized travel, we can understand the strong, scripted, narrative approach to Holocaust education. Novick in particular argues that leaders in the American Jewish world have “engineered a Holocaust consciousness among American Jews in order to promote loyalty to Israel and to revitalize Jewish identity.” However, he also admits that “one should never confuse the calculated public posture of Jewish officialdom with the ‘around the kitchen table’ feelings of American Jewry.” By examining the formal educational sphere, directed to American Jewish youths at the elementary and secondary level, one can achieve a more intimate understanding of how the Holocaustal narrative is constructed and intended to impact education and identity.

Formal Jewish Education in post-1948 America

Rona Sheramy defines American Jewish education as a “complex web of organizations, institutions, movements, ideologies and interests.” The National Jewish Population Study (NJPS) 2001 study revealed that 85% of the Jews surveyed had...
matriculated through formal Jewish education in some capacity.\textsuperscript{405} Formal Jewish educational settings include the traditional \textit{Talmud Torah} or \textit{Cheder}, synagogue supplementary school and intensive day schools. Between the 1940s and the 1960s, national enrollment in all Jewish schools tripled from around 190,000 students to 590,000.\textsuperscript{406} Presently, American Jews allocate approximately 1.5 billion USD per annum to the complex Jewish educational system that consists of “some 3,000 schools, 50,000 teachers and 1,000,000 students” between the ages of 3 and 18.\textsuperscript{407} This accounted for roughly 80-85\% of all Jewish children from 5-14.\textsuperscript{408} Jewish education in the U.S. has never had a formal umbrella organization that governs curricula and policies. Generally, each of the different denominations have established their own guidelines and standards.\textsuperscript{409}

\textit{Perpetrator Narratives in Formal Jewish Education}

The ways in which perpetrator narratives are presented in formal Jewish educational settings is a much more complicated task than in Holocaust museums or educational travel. There are hundreds of day schools around the country and there is little uniformity in either pedagogy or curriculum. However, this flexibility in curriculum

can be a stepping-stone to a more holistic and effective understanding of the perpetrator experience and the Holocaust itself.

Formal education is the sphere in which, I feel, there is the most positive movement taking place. I will be discussing three educational facilities in the Boston area to discuss this shift. First, I will look at an Orthodox girls school in Newton for students 14 to 18 years old. The curriculum employed displays perpetrators, victims and bystanders in a very morally stratified way. Then, I will look at the curriculum of Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO), a non-profit educational entity directed towards teaching the Holocaust and human behavior in Jewish and non-Jewish venues. As a result of the independence FHAO has from the established Jewish community, they are able to offer a more nuanced perspective and understanding of the perpetrator experience. Finally, I will look at Gann Academy, a pluralistic day school in Waltham.

**Beit Midrash**\(^{410}\) for Girls Case Study

Beit Midrash is an all-girls Orthodox Day School located in Newton, MA, for students aged 14-18. It caters to the more observant part of the Jewish population that resides in that area. It was founded in 2001. The head of the school is a Rabbi originally from Brooklyn, who studied for his *smicha* in Israel.\(^{411}\) It is a small school, with only 34 students. It is part of the extensive Beit Midrash school system, an ultra-Orthodox high school for girls. While these schools are affected by geographical situation, often their curricula are relatively uniform.\(^{412}\) Beit Midrash starts to teach their students about the

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\(^{410}\) Name changed.

\(^{411}\) *Smicha*, Hebrew: rabbinical school certification.

\(^{412}\) Rabbi. "Beit Midrash." Personal interview. 11 Nov. 2010.
Holocaust in the eleventh grade. There is a grade twelve Holocaust elective as well. They use the curriculum designed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, D.C.

The USHMM curriculum focuses on Jewish life and death. It makes the effort to feature Jewish life prior to the outbreak of the war. From there, the curriculum focuses on personalizing the events of the Shoah. The curriculum generally follows a chronological time line. It moves from pre-war Jewish life to Germany 1933-1939, the Evian conference, the outbreak of the war, Operation Barbarossa, Einsatzgruppen actions and the Holocaust in the Baltics, the ghettos, the death camps, resistance, D-Day, the deportation of the Hungarian Jews, death marches, liberation, DP camps, and resettlement. Each section in history is seen through personal narratives. Similar to the way USHMM is constructed, the curriculum follows a number of people throughout the Shoah. Most of them die prior to liberation. Some of the narratives are provided by well known and influential people, such as Anne Frank, Elie Wiesel, Gerta Weissman-Klein, and Helen Waterford. The curriculum also uses less-well known stories and biographies.

The ideological components of the school form the framework for the teaching and reception of the USHMM curriculum. Being an ultra-Orthodox community, the teachers, students, and overall educative experience reflect this *hashkafa.* Ultimately, the way the Holocaust is taught is impacted equally by the choice of curriculum and the religious beliefs of the community.

With this emphasis on the Jews as victims in the USHMM curriculum, there is very little room for comprehensive perpetrator and bystander narratives. The curriculum

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413 Hebrew: World-view. In Orthodox circles, can also refer to ‘theology.’
is also shaped by the influence of the school. Although the USHMM curriculum doesn’t explicitly ever say this, it is important to note that within many Charedi414 educational systems, the Jewish victims are all seen as ultra-Orthodox themselves.415 This is done through an emphasis on shtetl life and narratives of Orthodox victims and survivors.

Perpetrators in this curriculum are defined as Nazi leadership, the Einsatzgruppen, the SS and camp guards. There are individuals designated as such within the personal narratives, such as Jurgen Stroop, the commander in charge of putting down the Warsaw ghetto revolution. Interestingly, the residents of the town of Jedwabne are situated within the bystander narrative.416

The HitlerJugend as an organization is almost completely ignored. They are mentioned in passing in the “Germany 1933-1939” section, as a youth group under Nazi rule. The crux of the HitlerJugend narrative, for our understanding, is its educational system. However, the only mention of the moral and intellectual education under Nazi rule is a brief blurb on The Poisonous Mushroom,417 a common children’s storybook.

One of the new curriculum resources released by USHMM is entitled “The State of Deception”. However, it almost completely disregards the plethora of propaganda directed towards the German youth, a telling choice. The Nazi party made a deliberate choice to engage the youth population. 1932, the year prior to Hitler’s election, the Nazis

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414 Hebrew: ultra-Orthodox.
416 Jedwabne was a town in Eastern Poland whose residents destroyed almost the entire Jewish community without Nazi involvement. The history of this event was documented in Jan Gross’ book Neighbors.
ran a very successful campaign based on empowering German youth. Nazi leadership declared that: *Nationalsozialismus ist organisierter Jugendwille* (National Socialism is the organization of the will of youth). The *Hitlerjugend* was the largest, and often most fanatical, division of the Nazi party. For the USHMM collection of Nazi propaganda posters to almost completely disregard this key sector is indicative of the same curricular blind-spot.

The curriculum draws on two primary external sources with regards to perpetrators and bystanders: Daniel Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* and Jan Gross’ *Neighbors*. The emphasis on the Goldhagen text instead of Browning’s *Ordinary Men* indicates the perception of perpetrators this curriculum encourages. Goldhagen’s book emphasizes a latent “eliminationist anti-Semitism” prevalent in German society. He states that German society was inherently destined to commit the Holocaust. By doing so, he effectively removes choice or agency from the German people. He finds the society as a whole collectively guilty. The choice to employ this text is also logical within a Charedi school. The ultra-Orthodox community is a faith-based one in which all occurrences are divinely ordained and influenced. Human agency isn’t a major factor in the Charedi hashkafa, and often all actions and events are attributed to God. The introductory lesson about the Holocaust at Beit Midrash was framed through a pesuk from *D’varim* (D’varim 31:17-20). This reads: “Then my anger shall be kindled

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421 Hebrew: Section of Torah
against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, are not these evils come upon us, because our G-d is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned into other gods.\(^{422}\) The Holocaust is thus framed in highly religious and divine terms. In that respect, the Goldhagen book (although written from a secular standpoint) fits in within the framework of history allowed by the community.

In using Gross’ text to frame the bystander experience, the curriculum suggests that many bystanders are actually perpetrators themselves; they are just given the ‘bystander’ title due to their not being German. Victims in this curriculum are primarily defined as Jews. Although there is some treatment of other groups, such as gypsies and the mentally ill, their narratives are peripheral.\(^{423}\) They are not granted their own section in the curriculum. The mentally disabled come under the “Germany 1933-1939” section, when the T-4 program\(^ {424}\) is discussed.\(^ {425}\) However, the T-4 program is not necessarily promoted as horrific in and of itself; it is presented as a precursor to the Jewish destruction. The gypsies are discussed within the context of the “death camps” as another group that became ensnared within the system. There is a quote from Primo Levi in the curriculum regarding the screaming he heard coming from their block the night they were

\(^{422}\) Torah, D’varim 31:17-20.
\(^{424}\) T-4: Euthanasia program directed against mentally and physically handicapped Germans.
liquidated. While these other groups are treated with sympathy, it is clear that this curriculum treats the Holocaust as a primarily Jewish tragedy.

Overall, the absolutist classifications are indicative of the way that these groups are treated both in Jewish day school settings and in Holocaust museums (like USHMM). It is a highly Jewish representation. This is compounded by the specifically-Charedi lifestyle and educational mission. Simone Schweber, through her work in a Lubavitch day school, asserts that these students are encouraged to look upon perpetrators and bystanders as inherently evil and inhuman themselves. This poses some significant difficulties, with regards to moral education and understanding of the Shoah.

Morally, holding an entire society as collectively culpable is problematic, particularly with regards to Holocaust education. Jews were held as collectively guilty by the Germans. One of the moral lessons to draw from the Shoah is to not discriminate or make collective judgments against an entire group of people. However, the thesis of an inherent German “eliminationist anti-Semitism” does the exact opposite. Promoting that point of view encourages the same kind of value judgments Jews are committed to working against.

By eliminating the HitlerJugend narrative from the retelling of the Holocaust, educators are also missing a key opportunity to teach their students important lessons about moral education and American values. Education is a normative concept. It is directly tied to the value systems that we wish to espouse. When studying this idea of morality, the Volksschule is an interesting comparative case study. Those who were reared in Nazi Germany were prime examples of the impact of moral education. The

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morals that they were presented with as being normative included: their genetic and social superiority, a dismissive contempt for Jews and other “subhumans,” that physical dominance was far superior to intellect, and that they must be always willing to prepared to fight and die for Hitler and Germany.\textsuperscript{427} This is a value system that inherently bred violence. It made war inevitable. This is an important lesson. We often look at Nazis and create value judgments based on our moral norms. For older Germans, who were not educated in the \textit{Volksschule}, this is perhaps justified. However, it is different for children. How can we find them culpable when they were simply taught a different set of morals? They were failed by their elders. Failing to address this issue keeps the moral clarity of the Holocaust absolute, but at the expense of a more nuanced reality.

This exclusion also raises some concerns regarding a gap in understanding of the complexities of the Shoah. This curriculum eliminates both the \textit{HitlerJugend} narrative, and the explanatory narrative of other perpetrator groups. The \textit{HitlerJugend} narrative is not central in terms of the timeline and understanding of the Holocaust. Its exclusion falls as problematic morally. However, by not giving voice to conventional perpetrators, such as the \textit{Einsatzgruppen} or the SS, the curriculum promotes a fundamental gap in understanding. By focusing primarily on the victim narrative, it encourages students to view themselves as victims. The removal of human agency from the Nazis lends a sense of inevitability to the Jewish victimization and the Shoah.

This curriculum used at Beit Midrash doesn’t ask \textit{why} on a regular basis. Why was German society susceptible to the Nazis? Why did these people come to view a policy of mass murder as acceptable, even desirable? Why was there a shift from the

Einsatzgruppen to the Death Camps? By not asking these questions, they are removing choice from the Holocaust. This is increasingly augmented within this particular religious setting. By seeing all history through a specifically divinely-influenced lens, the reasoning for the Holocaust becomes almost unnecessary. The curriculum and teachings are employed to explain, but always with the caveat of Hashem\textsuperscript{428} being ultimately responsible for all actions. There are some ultra-Orthodox groups that assert a level of human responsibility for the Shoah, claiming that the movement of Jews away from Orthodox practice angered G-d into causing the Shoah. That said, even this inclusion of human responsibility is still predicated on a divinely-caused Holocaust. This interaction elicits many interesting questions about how to teach the idea of responsibility in a world where human agency is of minimal importance.

The juxtaposition of the curriculum and the setting removes the opportunity for students to understand how the Shoah came to pass. It removes the ability for students to effectively be able to determine ‘warning signs’ in their own societies. But most of all, Holocaust education has long been centered around the primary ‘motto’ of the Holocaust: “never again.” By not asking “why” regularly, it facilitates the inability to truly understand the events of the Shoah. And if you can’t understand it, you’re promoting the possibility of repetition.

\textit{Facing History and Ourselves Case Study}

Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO) is an organization founded in 1976. It was founded in response to a lack of any coherent curriculum with regards to the Holocaust.

\footnote{428 Hebrew: G-d}
Even in 1976, 15 years after the Eichmann trial, the Shoah was still not taught effectively in American educational settings. In public schools, it was generally not talked about. Jan Darsa, the director of the Jewish Educational division of FHAO in Brookline, MA describes the Shoah as being a ‘footnote’ in the textbook’s section on the Second World War. Comparatively, in Jewish educational spheres, Holocaust education seemed to be a laundry-list of scare tactics. Darsa describes it as “learning about it in the worst way.” They were taught about it entirely from the victim perspective, about the tragic events that befell European Jewry. Often very graphic movies (including the footage used at the Nuremberg Trial) were utilized to substantiate this.

Since its inception, FHAO has challenged this curricular perspective. It is primarily geared towards non-Jewish settings. They had been working under the assumption that Jewish students were getting the Holocaust education, albeit badly, in Jewish day and supplementary schools. Therefore, they felt it necessary to concentrate their reach on the public school system. However, in the last number of years they have started to work more in Jewish educational spheres. Its primary textbook, The Holocaust and Human Behavior was written in 1987. This curriculum is, at its base, a program about prevention. It is about ‘empowering kids’ to use their voice. Its primary function is to get to the bottom of what it means to be a citizen in a democracy, and how to use democratic process to ensure equality. As such, the victim narrative falls relatively low on the importance list. The narratives most commonly used to communicate this idea are

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430 Ibid.
431 Ibid.
the perpetrator, bystander, and ‘upstander’\textsuperscript{432} histories. The primary historical area in this curriculum is Germany 1933-1939. The main focus is the question of how a society stripped its citizens of its democratic rights and principles.

The *Hitler Jugen* narrative plays a large role in this. FHAO uses the work of Alfons Heck, both in terms of his book *A Child of Hitler* and the documentary *Heil Hitler: Confessions of a Hitler Youth*. The aim is to get the children to think about the societies in which they live. Most children in contemporary Western societies don’t have an ideology to which they strictly adhere. This was the reverse in Nazi Germany. By using the *HJ* narrative, a curricular creator feels that students can more effectively relate to life under Hitlerian rule.

In the nineties, FHAO started doing a lot of outreach to the Jewish community. Initially they were using the same material as they were in the public school system. Very quickly that changed. FHAO created an enhanced curriculum for Jewish schools that framed their curriculum in Jewish values, and focused more on the Jewish experience. However, they have tried to distance themselves from the ‘Jews as victims’ history. Instead, they do a large section on pre-war Jewish life, and different Jewish identities throughout the war. There is also a large section on resistance, and expanding the narrow definition of such. Instead of just viewing resistance as armed, they also promote more subversive and subtle forms, such as the creation of Jewish underground newspapers, soup kitchens, orphanages, and social systems in the ghettos. They also are starting to develop a curriculum on Jewish religious life (another form of resistance) in the camps.

Through this curriculum, they are able to expand to greater issues of Jewish identity, Jewish peoplehood, Israel-Diaspora relations, and what it means to be a member of a minority in Diaspora countries.

Overall, FHAO has successfully been able to present a far more nuanced history of the Holocaust. When seen in comparison to the curriculum used at Beit Midrash, the overall intention of the curriculum clearly differs. FHAO, because it was not designed for Jewish students, has been able to distance itself from a more politicized representation of the Holocaust.

An important facet of FHAO, however, is the way it is starting to make significant inroads into the Jewish community. Its more pluralistic and citizen-centered mentality provides a very different view of the Holocaust. It also provides a set of positive moral lessons which can be drawn from the Nazi era and Nazi society.

Many Jewish educators reported during the research for this thesis about the positive impact that FHAO has had. FHAO has expanded geographically, spanning 40 states. It has also now moved into Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Their influence was discussed in many schools and amongst many educators, including the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. Only in the last decade has FHAO started to work in the Jewish community, so their potential influence remains to be seen.

Gann Academy Case Study

Gann Academy (formerly known as The New Jewish High School) is one of three Jewish high schools in the Boston area. Located in Waltham, it identifies itself as pluralistic. As such, it is a community school that tries to envelop all religious and secular perspectives. The director of the History Department was educated at Yeshiva University, an Orthodox university in New York City.

Gann Academy instructs its students on the Holocaust in the first semester of twelfth grade. This is partly due to scheduling – the final school year is the first time there is room in the curriculum to teach this material. Departing from other available curriculums, the head of history has modeled the Gann history department in the last decade around the curriculum of FHAO.

At Gann, the course is almost entirely perpetrator and bystander focused. There is almost nothing on the victim narrative. The core focus of the curriculum is that to teach history is to teach choice. He feels that the way that the Holocaust is taught in traditional settings, it removes human agency – from both victim and perpetrator. He has sought to change that at Gann, by focusing entirely on the choices that perpetrators and bystanders made.

The primary textbook he uses is FHAO’s *Holocaust and Human Behavior*. The other authors he summons to substantiate this are Koonz, Niewyk and Spielvogel.  

Similar to the USHMM curriculum, he uses personal narratives in order to connect his students to the Holocaust. However, while the USHMM curriculum promotes the use of

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Jewish narratives, he almost exclusively uses those of Nazis. He factors in those in the SS system who were clearly sadistic – and doesn’t try to derive reason from their actions. However, he draws heavily from post-war interviews with Jurgen Stroop (the German commander fighting the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising), a number of Einsatzgruppen, and Franz Stangl, the commandant of Treblinka. By using these narratives, he explores the issue of choice. He also makes sure to emphasize the ‘structuralist’ point of view, noting the change from the mobile killing squads to the death camps, primarily as a result of the negative psychological ramifications on the SS.

The HitlerJugend, however, is still not a part of the curriculum. This, for the head of the history department, does not have ideological motivations, but rather a function of a lack of available sources. This is also an issue that needs to be addressed. Constructing a complete narrative of the HJ experience is difficult. They are a generation that wished to forget and be forgotten as quickly as possible. Any interviews that many have given with regards to their wartime experience cannot necessarily be regarded as transparent. Few are willing to implicate themselves for any wrongdoings in their past. Although they were children, their namesake inevitably taints them. Hitler is easily one of the most hated figures in collective memory.

The head of history has made some deliberate choices with what he feels is the best curriculum through which to teach his students. There were a number of motivations for his choices. First is an awareness of the dangers of the power of the Holocaust as a symbol in contemporary Judaism. He feels that to teach the Holocaust with the victim narrative almost exclusively is an invitation for the students to construct their self-image to reflect the way the Nazis saw them. His other reason is that he wants the Holocaust to
be a subject the students can personally relate to. And he believes that his students *are much more related to the perpetrators than the victims.* These are children who are empowered in their own society. They have social, intellectual and material capital. They have every opportunity open to them. They have no shortage of personal agency. This is a very bold curriculum idea, particularly within a Jewish setting. He feels that this curriculum has had a positive influence on the students. The head of history’s primary form of measurement is a pre and post class survey regarding feelings and knowledge about different perpetrator, victim and bystander groups. He indicates that he is able to measure a much greater sense of the Holocaust and the perpetrators and bystanders that allowed it to happen.

**Yom HaShoah**

It is important to note that outside of the classroom (in most Jewish day schools), in some school-wide events, the moral simplicity returns. This is particularly relevant in *Yom HaShoah* ceremonies. These ceremonies take place in most (if not all) Jewish day schools. While there is variation between different schools, there are some basic components that appear to be present across schools interviewed. The majority of Yom HaShoah ceremonies invite a survivor to speak about their experiences. In a number of Orthodox day schools, often grandchildren of survivors are invited to light candles. The song *el malai rahamin*[^436] is sung. In many accounts, the themes of the day are juxtaposed against the *Intafada.*[^437]

[^436]: Hebrew: Jewish song of mourning.
[^437]: Hebrew: Popular Palestinian uprising. There were two, 1987-1993 and 2000-2005. It was characterized by violence enacted against Israeli civilians.
These ceremonies are a reflection of the way the Holocaust narrative is employed on a public and institutional level. In these ceremonies, religious and national parallels are drawn to the event. The undercurrents of ‘in every generation they tried to destroy us’ is part of a worldview of Jewish history oft-expressed, in chagim like Passover\textsuperscript{438} and Purim.\textsuperscript{439} Also, by connecting the narrative to the Intafada, it reinforces the indelible connection between the occurrence of the Holocaust and the foundation of the State of Israel. By specifically using the story of the Intafada itself, the danger of contemporary anti-Semitism is reinforced. The Yom HaShoah ceremonies shift from the (often) more nuanced Holocaust education from the classroom and employ the Holocaust rhetorically to reinvigorate Jewish identity, commitment to religious life, and ties to Israel.

\textit{Contextualizing Day Schools}

Of these three settings – Holocaust museums, educational travel, and formal Jewish classroom education - I feel that day schools in general are starting to make positive advancements around Holocaust education. I feel that this is a reflection of two things: i) the autonomy granted to both individual schools and teachers, and ii) a pluralistic understanding of Jewish ethnic identity. Many of the educators felt concern for the ways in which programs like March of the Living encourage a sense of victimization and marginality.\textsuperscript{440} Many educators I met are also of a younger generation. Being in their

\textsuperscript{438} Passover (Hebrew: Pesach), ritualizes the slavery in Egypt, the attempted destruction of Jewish continuity, and the ultimate divinely-facilitated exodus of the Jewish people.

\textsuperscript{439} Hebrew: ‘lots,’ ritualizes the attempted destruction of the Jewish population in the Persian empire. The community was saved at the last minute by the ingenuity of Queen Esther.

\textsuperscript{440} Educational Director, Holocaust Museum, Midwest. "Thesis Interview." Interview by
20s and 30s, they are of the generation that is reported to have distanced themselves from such a strong sense of “tribalism.”[^441] This is reflected in the teachings of organizations like FHAO and Gann Academy. Holocaust museums and trips like the March of the Living are far fewer in number and more influenced by the financial and political capital of the established Jewish and survivor communities. However, day schools are able to determine curriculums on their own terms, and construct narratives and history in different (and often more nuanced) terms.

Chapter Six: Looking Back and Looking Forward

One cannot treat the Holocaust as sacred history and also insist that it became a lesson and warning for public discussion as well as an integrated part of our school curriculum. And throughout much of the debate about the Holocaust there is this attempt to have it both ways; to have it unique, and yet to have it as only the last example of two thousand years of persecution; to teach it as a moral lesson, and yet to make it so particular that no one else can use it. These are contradictions that must be resolved.

- Henry Friedlander, Toward a Methodology.

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Irwin Cotler wrote a piece recently regarding the seven lessons that must be learned and internalized from the Holocaust. These range from the importance of remembering, to the danger of “state-sanctioned incitement to hatred,” to educating the next generation of Jews. His article joins the pantheon of writing about the eternal lessons that one can, and should, draw from the occurrence of the Shoah. The imperative to define some sense of morality and lesson from the Holocaust complicates the way in which it is taught and transmitted to Jewish youth. This determination shapes not only the memory of the events themselves, but also the roles of the different people within history. Presently, the Holocaust is employed as the bearer of not only moral imperatives, but also important lessons to ensure Jewish continuity. One of the most important reasons why perpetrator narratives are constructed the way they are is because of this determination to

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444 Ibid.
keep the memory of the Holocaust a sanctified and an indelible symbol for the Jewish youth.

If Holocaust education is to be determined by the moral imperatives one can understand from the Shoah (not that it should be), it follows that these perpetrator histories offer very important lessons themselves. This concluding chapter will explore some of the benefits for inclusion and my recommendations for doing so, and then contextualize this educational blindspot within the larger issue of Holocaust education and remembrance.

Benefits of Inclusion

While there are some very real concerns with regards to including perpetrator narratives in Holocaust education, there are many benefits for the inclusion as well. First, a real analysis of how people came to feel that the perpetration of these crimes was acceptable will provide a more integrated understanding of the Holocaust and a fuller range of human behavior. The perpetrator narrative can be terrifying in its banality. Ultimately, Nazism was an exaggerated manifestation of the worst in our human nature: racism, fear, arrogance, and the need for domination. It arose from familiar circumstances: economic depression, war, and the need for external blame. The introduction of a charismatic leader, and a completely reformed and finely honed educational and propaganda system created the very Nazis many Jews are now reluctant to give voice to. What is feared most about the perpetrator narrative is the potential conclusion that given the right circumstances, *it could have been anyone*. As much research has proven, many of the people whom participated in the Shoah were regular
people.\textsuperscript{445} This must be acknowledged and understood by the community in order to effectively counteract against any potential repetition. Presently, Jewish students are not being effectively prepared to understand and recognize warning signs. Having little exploration of the methods and motivation, youth are not being equipped with the tools to make the oft-repeated motto of ‘never again’ a reality. Awareness that students themselves could also – in certain situations – be perpetrators themselves is an important insight.

The inclusion of perpetrator narratives will also create a more holistic understanding of the Holocaust. Moving away from a strictly “Jewish” understanding of the Shoah, I feel, will help in the removal of the pervasive sense of victimization inherent in the narrative. Considering the very real fear of Jewish continuity present within the contemporary American community, it is imperative that youth are given compelling reasons to make Jewish choices. I feel this is predicated on a perception of ownership on behalf of the Jewish youth. Jewish education should focus as well on what Jewish observance and tradition can bring to the students life. It is important that educational systems promote both aspects of Judaism that are internally validating and externally reinforcing.

\textit{Recommendations for Inclusion}

There are certain feasibility and political issues when determining how exactly Jewish educational settings can appropriately address the perpetrator narrative. There are few people of the Nazi era who are willing to come forward to talk about their

experiences. As a result, there are very few testimonies that can be used to construct a comprehensive narrative. That being said, there are many academic books and sources (listed in the historiography section) that can be employed. This lack of many comprehensive testimonies is not a sufficient reason to merit Nazi exclusion.

Within the three educational settings discussed, there are ways to effectively construct these narratives. The perpetrator narrative as a whole should primarily be constructed so as to offer an understanding of how people both participated in, and allowed, this to happen. Educators should offer an in-depth analysis of how the Nazi state capitalized on social problems and vulnerabilities present in German society to gain power. This would provide students with a better understanding of how societies and governments can degrade into violence so quickly. There is a wealth of psychological material\textsuperscript{446} that teachers can employ to demonstrate to students that the line between person and perpetrator can be unfortunately thin. The HJ narrative in particular should focus on the Nazi educational systems. By providing an in-depth analysis of the ways in which the HJ were taught, contemporary students can get a better understanding of how moral education is conveyed, how they can be critical consumers of it, and their own civic commitments can evolve from their education.

The perpetrator story, particularly that of the HitlerJugend, can very effectively be recast into American values. These important ones, such as the inalienable rights of the individual, and restraint on the power of government, are both values that Nazi Germany abrogated. These children were reared and educated to be submissive to

government and to have no concept of individuality and individual right. By situating the HJ narrative in a comparative context, it could potentially offer validation of American exceptionalism and moral power. This, of course, would be particularly effective in the Holocaust Museum setting. However, all Jewish education in the U.S. by definition involves mediating the boundary between specifically American and specifically Jewish identities. This narrative could potentially play a large role in the validation of that civic identity.

The HJ narrative can also be incorporated when dealing with contemporary issues and social problems. For example, the issue of child soldiers might be examined through the HJ story. Child soldiers are becoming a problem endemic to a number of (particularly African) societies. These groups elicit a huge amount of international compassion. The HJ narrative can be employed here to make these issues more personal and relevant to specifically Jewish students.

Overall, the perpetrator narrative (and the HJ narrative in particular) can be shaped and included to allow Jewish students to understand issues present in contemporary society, and the civic responsibility and rights required to protect an open, tolerant society.

*The Bigger Picture*

While this thesis is focused on the way in which Holocaust narratives are constructed and utilized in three specifically Jewish educational settings, it calls into question some of the broader issues in the way the Holocaust narrative is employed. By examining the way in which the HJ narratives are constructed and understood, I hope to
bring to light a fundamental gap in Holocaust education. Within very few educational settings is there an effort to understand the reasoning behind the people whom carried out the Shoah. One person interviewed actually reported that, after 12 years of Jewish education, that I should “face it, in the Jewish educational system that we currently have, very few people would consider looking into the perpetrator narratives. Why would they?”

The issues however go far beyond the ways in which students are encouraged to understand the Nazi state. The place that the Holocaust has assumed in American secular and Jewish communities is directly tied to present communal concerns. I call into question the validity of using such a horrific, and unexplainable, event to transmit moral and Jewish imperatives to youth. The ways in which students understand the events and the people are often drawn along strictly morally polar lines. This tendency to draw some sort of lesson from the Shoah, and the need to keep its memory sanctified and Jewish, doesn’t encourage real understanding of the events as they actually unfolded. Considering how powerful and pervasive the Holocaust has become across Western society broadly, this gap in understanding is potentially problematic.

The community also needs to be mindful of the ways in which the Holocaust is used with regards to the fears about youth disengagement from Israel and the Jewish community. Given the ways in which contemporary Jewish generations are distancing themselves from perceptions of victimization and marginalization, this continual use of the rhetoric of crisis could have very dangerous implications. Connecting Jewish identity to anti-Semitism, and encouraging students to make Jewish choices as a result of that, is

447 Day School educated modern Orthodox Jew from New York. "Interview about Day School and Yeshiva Trip to Poland." Interview by author. February 02, 2011.
not an identity that easily coalesces with the position of the American Jewish community. Furthermore, it perhaps is one that will not transmit well to the next generation. Considering the very real concern for Jewish continuity, I feel that the rhetoric of crisis may not be the best way to move forward with the rising generation.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to offer an in-depth analysis of how Holocaust education will change over the next number of decades. The reality is, however, is that very soon there will be no survivors left. This educational system, which is so heavily dependent on personal testimony and witness, will be irrevocably altered. At that point, it will be interesting to see whether this heavy emphasis on sanctification remains in their memory, or whether the emotional and visceral connection can be intertwined with a heavier emphasis on historical understanding and events.

Conclusion

This thesis opens with a famous Elie Wiesel quote which reads: ‘it is not about politics, it is about good and evil, and we must never confuse them.’ This argument has largely defined Holocaust memory in the past sixty years. This insistence on the Nazis as inherently evil and barbaric, sadistic and pathological, in contrast to the Jews, who are the emblematic symbol of universal human innocent suffering has been at the foundation of most Jewish Holocaust curricula. The truth is much less simple. While the inclusion of perpetrators may be a threat to the moral absolutism, that does not mean that they should be excluded. The lack of acknowledgement of moral grey areas in the Holocaust is part of an effort to shape the memory of the Holocaust. This is

counterintuitive to actually understanding the events. By simplifying and reducing, by not giving a voice to the Nazis, Jewish educational settings are not only perpetuating the victim culture. They are also effectively reducing their own efficacy by promoting a one-dimensional and shallow understanding. The survivor and Jewish communities have dedicated countless hours and days and years to the preservation of the memory of the Holocaust. Yet the refusal to give voice to the perpetrators means that those receiving the majority of their knowledge from certain curriculums do not have a thorough sense of who carried it out and their motivations. Thus, students are not taught how to be aware of the warning signs in future. By refusing to allow a display of the complexities of the perpetrator narrative, these settings are in effect promoting the possibility of repetition. By including these narratives, this is not a desanctification of Holocaust memory. It is merely an acknowledgement that there are moral grey areas in everything, and that this is the reality and legacy with which we must cope and live.
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CHAPTER THREE

Sefer Torah: MJHNYC

Torah Scroll from Czechoslovakia that survived the Holocaust and is now considered the emblamatic artifact for the Museum of Jewish Heritage in NYC.
HitlerJugend artifacts: MJHNYC

These artifacts (clockwise, from left), the popular board game *JudenRaus* (Jews Out!), HJ knapsack, and HJ medals, are part of the Museum of Jewish Heritage’s display on the Hitler Youth.
Two examples of the ways in which the Holocaust is displayed on the second floor of the Museum of Jewish Heritage, NYC. Right, is the exhibit on the six death camps, with each connected to a person who died there. Below is towers of photos of Jews in the Shoah.
Permanent Exhibit: IHMEC

Left, label explaining the racial policy of the Nazis against the Slavs. Below, label at the entrance to the section on the Holocaust.
Permanent Exhibit: IHMEC

Two labels, showing the “USHMM” sign, showing the derivation of the information and artifact.

Jan Karski during his mission to the United States to inform Allied leaders about Nazi policy in Poland, including the mass murder of Jews. Washington D.C., 1943.

USHMM.

I find my death may join of those who, perhaps even extreme moment, could say who are still alive in Poland.


USHMM.
Above:
Computers
for skits.

Left:
Example
of
quotes on
the walls.

"The time is ALWAYS right to do what is right."
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
Left and Below:
Examples of Skits and situations Employed by the IHMEC Miller Family Youth Exhibit.
CHAPTER FOUR: Pilgrimage Trips to Poland

Radom Stone in Treblinka Death Camp, outside of Warsaw.

March of the Living, Auschwitz, 2009
Tykocin Synagogue, with prayers written on the walls.

Tykocin Shtetl, near Treblinka.

Rema’s (Moses Isserles) synagogue, Krakow.

Cemetery wall, composed of former Jewish tombstones dug up by the Nazis.