Combat Refuse

Fictions of Remembering

by

Eli Meixler
Class of 2013

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“Trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language.”

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Preface

On the Occasion of Remembering Auschwitz II

The first thing you notice about Poland is that it’s not exactly, well, concentrated. That’s a bad joke, I know, and perhaps even a reprehensible one. But it’s the only kind of joke we found during that eight-day week in February that my conservative Jewish high school senior class sojourned in Poland. It was important to keep our energy up, we were told before we left, and to be vigilant if our classmates looked like it was wearing on them. We would be standing outside for six to eight hours at a time, and it would be easy to get tired and dangerous to fall asleep. We traveled with orange Gatorade coolers full of tea, bite-size candy bars, and an inexhaustible quantity of sugar packets. Our meals were air-shipped to us from Israel; packets of powdered soup and tins of Salisbury steak were already waiting when we arrived in Lublin, Warsaw, Lodz, so that we could continue to observe Jewish dietary laws. We didn’t eat anything that came out of the ground we walked on.

So to say that we visited Poland would be misleading, or evading the truth. We had come not to see Poland, but rather a particular moment in Polish history, or perhaps more accurately, a history that had occurred in part in Poland. It’s a large country, nearly the size of France, we were told (in fact, the latter is nearly 140,000 square miles the larger; not that we missed the balance). You could say without exaggeration that we spent more time twisting in coach bus seats than we did in hostel bunk beds (the buses were also outfitted with a pair of television sets and a strong collection of
Holocaust films; the armor plating and bulletproof windows they did not acquire until we arrived in Israel a week later). But it would not be an exaggeration to say that we did not, in the most literal sense, “see” the Poland that availed itself of our eyes. Instead, we bore witness to a country of ghetto memorials and abandoned synagogues and endless miles of desolate countryside blasted clear of the irksome stuff of memory, of the Poland whose absence we had come to mourn.

Which is why I do not tell people that I’ve been to Poland, when it arises, as it infrequently does, in conversation. Save for a few moments spent gazing out a Warsaw hotel window, I spent just forty-minutes, the only block of “free time” scheduled for the week, in a Poland that was not our own historical construction. It was in the medieval square in Krakow, where by the light of gilded Baroque lampposts—no longer twinkling with gaslight, sadly—we jokingly attempted to barter one of our classmates for Polish memorabilia, tart red hats and scarves and t-shirts adorned with the white eagle of the Polish coat of arms. (We were unsuccessful. He returned home safely with us, and now studies at Wash U in St. Louis.)

My most salient memory from that week was not of the camps, but of a space between, in transit from Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II. There are three Auschwitz complexes outside the Polish rail junction Oświęcim. Auschwitz I is the most prominent, the notorious home of the “Arbeit Macht Frei” slogan, which had been recently reclaimed that February from the hands of teenage vandals and reinstalled above the entrance gate. It is also the most accessible of the three—its parking lots are well marked and constructed to accommodate the flow of tourism. A former Polish POW camp, Auschwitz I
was repurposed during the war as the unwelcome home to political dissidents. The prison wards we witnessed, three-story brick affairs, did not so much bring to mind war atrocities as a meticulously designed college campus. The camp has been refurbished; its documents now preserved behind two inches of glass, its galleries gutted to make way for landscapes of suitcases, cookware, broken shoes, human hair—three-story physical remainders of the site’s past life. It’s shocking, in this context, to find a windowless isolation cell buried beneath one of these buildings, while a knot of tourists sip juice boxes twenty feet above. A visitor’s center and pizzeria stand across the street.

Auschwitz II (Birkenau) is less approachable. The ride takes about twenty minutes from Auschwitz I, and there are no refreshments to greet the weary traveler. Nor are there informational brochures, audio-guide rentals, or local teenagers in color-coordinated polo’s. There isn’t much of a parking lot, really—we disembarked about a half-mile outside the camp in order to follow the railway tracks that still lie under a light sweep of snow. It was while traveling the road to Birkenau that a classmate of mine, Eli K.,¹ began to sing. And the reason this memory remains so firmly in mind is not so much that he sang, but what he sang. It was a hip-hop song, one of the popular singles of the moment. It was a song like any innumerable others, a song that was everywhere for three weeks and then suddenly absent, gone in perpetuity like every other expired article of popular culture. I don’t remember which song it was; I could list a hundred such songs, and each would be equally

¹ Last initials have been invented, more for differentiation than to protect the identities of those people who appear in the story. First names have not been changed, as their true trebling is already stranger than fiction.
true. But I do remember Eli K. singing, unabated and undiscouraged by the hostile silence of his classmates, the memories of Auschwitz still visible on their faces, through a half-dozen repetitions of the chorus.

I don’t particularly want to generate a discussion of the ethics of various ways of processing traumatic experience—we were coached repeatedly over that week that it was okay to laugh, if we felt the need to, and I think I may have staked my claim in that debate in the first sentence of these pages. What so deeply unsettled me about Eli K.’s behavior was not that he sang a racy song (albeit, under the singularly least appropriate circumstances), but that doing so, he rejected the incomprehensible horror that had plunged the rest of his classmates into silence. Confronted with the inconceivable trauma of systematic annihilation, Eli K. chose neither to examine nor to practice its unspeakability, as his classmates had. Instead, he sought to distance himself from the experience altogether, to deny both his experience of that trauma and its very claim to anything but his most immediate attention, to suggest that the memory, and, therefore, the consequences of that experience had dissolved mere minutes after it was no longer present in all its concrete irrefutability. His performance drew a line between the song and Auschwitz as short-lived entities; more than just demonstrating his own indifference, the song reduced the ongoing and morally problematic question of the Holocaust’s historical significance to a simple “No.”

It’s for this reason that I was finally so relieved when another Eli, Eli L., finally stood, and turning to face Eli K. at the back of the bus, uttered a single word that restored the unqualified silence in which we rode until we
discerned the leaden tower of Birkenau from the horizon and disembarked. I was relieved by the knowledge that I was not alone in my indignation, by the knowledge that when I myself was eventually drawn to the limits of my tolerance and stood up to demand Eli K.’s respect, as I have told myself that I am sure I would, that I would not have stood alone. But how long would I, the story’s third Eli, Eli the silent witness, have sat in silence? I do not know.

Hours later, after watching the sun recede over frozen train tracks and disappear down over the bell tower, and while listening to Billy Joel’s “Goodnight Saigon” on the bus ride back to Krakow, for the first time—and what would be the only time that week—I wept. Four days later, we landed in Ben-Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv.

Regarding his experience growing-up in Hungary during the Second World War, George Konrad writes, “In place of a childhood there is an absence, a story that has not been and perhaps cannot be fully told.”² Peter Haidu echoes this feeling of loss when he writes of the Holocaust as event “about which we can never know enough, about which we always already know far too much, that remains equally insistent and absent in the nightmare language of historical reality.”³ I would request that, while reading this project, the reader retain firmly in mind the terms by which these two writers, one a theorist of history, the other a historian of his own biography, address the Holocaust. It is precisely this coexistence of the necessity and

impossibility of representing the Holocaust—as a transhistorical located by its very absence or incomprehensibility, yet which persistently haunts the periphery of our definitions of modern cultures, histories, and identities—with which I have grappled, and it is under these conditions that I propose to undertake a process of historical representation, and to explore the possibilities and limitations involved therein.
Part I
FIELD TRIAGE

I

Every six weeks at Schnurmacher is haircut day, which means I spend all day in the Rec Room. I’m usually in the Rec Room anyway, but for today they set up one of the recliners on a little platform so it’s almost like a raised barbershop chair. All morning, the residents will line up outside the Rec Room, waiting for a haircut and chatting about nothing. Some of them bring magazines. A lot of them are in wheelchairs, anyway, so they don’t mind the wait. They’re the hardest to get onto the platform; one of the orderlies has to help me. I’m not as strong as I used to be. Usually it’s not much, a little clean up around the ears or a few centimeters off the top. Just enough for everyone to walk around the next few days asking if you got a haircut like it’s a clever thing to say. Their hair doesn’t grow in so thick anymore. I rarely use the clippers.

Today is haircut day, which means I’ll be on my feet all morning. I don’t mind, though. Someone has to do it, and my hands are still steady and I do a good job. It’s also the first of the month, which means new residents arrive. I usually get a little nervous on the first of the month; most of us do, the new residents included, of course. But today isn’t so bad because I can spend all morning in the Rec Room, giving haircuts and talking to Ralph. All afternoon, too, if I’m feeling strong. But after the first three or four trims I can see the cars pulling in, and the wheelchair-equipped van is unloading another wilted old man, and I get that feeling like my stomach is slipping away and I don’t know if I’ll be able to do it.
On April 21, 1955, I married my wife Marjorie. We purchased two Chevy Beauville station wagons and a split-unit in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, outside of Pittsburgh. Marjorie grew up listening to the Pirates in another little town nearby. We had one daughter, named Caroline, and then we started renting half the split-unit. Marjorie she left school to be a typist for a dentist’s office. She stopped listening to the Pirates.

Caroline and I watched them on TV in 1960, the first year Clemente won the pennant. We didn’t see him win it, though. We stopped watching, too. I started keeping the barbershop open late so she could go to college one day, and she started sitting out in the yard, staring at the houses across the street or the tire swing I strung up on the chestnut tree out back. She could sit there all afternoon, not even moving, as though she were afraid a hidden predator might notice if she moved. Her teacher called and asked if we had noticed peculiar behavior at home. Nothing out of the usual, we said. She had a good appetite. Except for the occasional bed-wetting she seemed all right. Except for the staring. Caroline was having a little trouble acclimating to the new environment, we were told. She was enthusiastic and cooperative and played nicely with the others. She complained about headaches but it was probably just nerves about making new friends. Nothing out of the ordinary for an only child. Soon after, the seizures started.

Ralph was a wide receiver for the National Football League for four years. Ralph says the average career for a receiver is three point seven two years. He’s told every soul at Schnurmacher. Three point seven two years. The most common cause of retirement in the National Football League is
injury. Often it’s the anterior cruciate ligament. The ACL supports the knee so it can move and work the way it should. It can be torn from the knee when it experiences lateral trauma. Like if a guy gets hit from the side by a defensive back. Or if he changes direction too quickly, stops too suddenly, jumps over a wall and starts running before he’s landed. In the wild, you would be in real trouble. On the football field, they bring out a stretcher and carry the guy off while he clutches his knee to his breast and screams. The human body is an expertly designed machine, but everything makes mistakes.

Clemente won the Golden Glove award for fielding twelve times. I raised my hand to Marjorie just once and three weeks later, on January 14, 1963, she traded in the blue Beauville for a used Buick Skylark, a real sporty little car. Bucket seats and vinyl insides, and just the speedometer and the fuel dial to tell you how fast you were going and how much more you could go. She drove it straight to her sister’s in San Francisco. I stayed in Aliquippa, thinking she’d call me long-distance and we’d talk about how things were going to be different and we were going to try to have another baby, or how she’d met another man in San Francisco, a man who wore blue suits with a little checkered napkin in the pocket, who had ideas about Cuba and Kennedy and Ho Chi Minh. Or that maybe she had another baby already. But she didn’t call.

I don’t even remember why I did it. But nobody’s perfect. And I’m sure I did my job the best anybody could, and that’s all any anyone can ask for.
Ralph’s knees are fine. That’s because the National Football League paid Ralph in case another guy got hurt and the team needed a replacement. But a team never needed Ralph, and after four years the National Football League decided they didn’t need him either, and then Ralph went back to being a mechanic. Caught more action under the auto-lift, Ralph says. Still got to watch all the games on the TV, too, he says and sucks from his juice box.

Now we play gin rummy in the Rec Room and talk about when Ralph was in the service. And Ralph tells me about the time he got VD from a tramp in Kaneohe Bay and missed Midway. Ralph laughs and pounds himself on the thigh. Damn tramp, he says. And we both laugh and then Ralph deals the cards and we both know he’s glad he missed Midway, dishonorable discharge and all. Because there’s a good chance he’d have been fish food. Instead we play gin rummy, or sometimes five-card draw, or we sneak up behind the couch and flick Sheldon on the ear until Marianne has to come and take him to the nurse, a babbling drooling mess, hand clapped over the ear and blood trickling down his chin, and tells us to knock it off, guys.

I was in the war, too, but Ralph and I never talk about it.

I told Marjorie I was a barber in the war. It wasn’t a lie. I was a barber in a little town near Krakow. Radziszów. Then the war came and I was what every man was. I did whatever needed doing. Sometimes that was to trim the enlisted men’s hair. And sometimes, when we were out in the villages, it was to shave heads. The staff sergeant liked it close on the sides and flat on top. That’s what he’d say to me: Close on the sides, flat on top. He had short bristly hair like steel wool. And after I’d wiped the razor clean with the
oilcloth from my custom kit and stored it next to my spare ammunition and
the sticks of cleaning wax and the dental hygiene pills, he would make them
dig each black spine out of the mud. Don’t let me hear you say the Leader
didn’t provide for you in your time of need.

And he’d laugh. A good head of hair and a full belly to keep you
warm.

I did my job the best I could. That’s all anyone can ask.

And when we were young Marjorie would come around the shop
where I worked on the corner of Elm Street and play in the chair while I
swept up and she would ask me to tell her stories about the Western Front.
And I would laugh. And she would pull the chair up and ask what was so
funny, Mister, and I would say that I didn’t know about a Western Front and
then we let the chair back and pretend my barbershop was a doctor’s office.

Eva arrived at Schnurmacher two months after the calls started. First
of the month. We were having turkey sausage and frozen peas and tapioca.
It’s my favorite lunch. I’m spreading apple sauce on little slices of sausage
because it reminds of when I used to go out and shoot a wild turkey and
Marjorie would butcher and grind the meat and stuff the sausages herself
with casings from the Morning Star Market. And then Marianne is pushing a
bundled old thing into the cafeteria, so small that it could be a child or a stack
of knit sweaters on top of brown slacks, and she’s telling everyone, Everyone,
this is Eva.
Marianne is Director at the Schnurmacher Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing. She tells people she feels like she’s Grandmother-in-Chief when she’s leading tours of the premises but she’s no older than forty-five.

Meanwhile Marianne is pushing Eva to where the knitting ladies sit, because from the stitching of the shawl thrown over her shoulders you could guess Eva crotched it herself, but she won’t stop looking at me. And I know I’ve seen her before. Ralph’s saying something about the anatomy of Hawaiian women and I go back to my bits of sausage but when I look up Eva’s still looking at me with a pair of bright gray eyes like two tent stakes, two sharp shiny stakes in the soft hollows of her face that haven’t seen another thing in forty years, and I know where I’ve seen her.

After the war there wasn’t anything left in Radziszów but burned bricks and empty cabbage fields. So I turned myself around and walked until I arrived in Jawornik. I tore the numbers off my jacket and got on a truck next to some dirty singing youths, children really, and we rode to Wadowice, where there was a train. And from there we rode to Ansfeldon.

And Marianne is dragging Eva around to meet just about everybody, but Eva’s kicking her feet in these little slippers, like the last things she wants in the world is to meet Sheldon, who’s eating his peas with his hands and making a mess, as usual, or Lorraine, who carries a picture of her grandson, who went to Princeton so she can show everybody how fine he looks in his gown. And they come past the table where Ralph and I always sit, and Eva leans over as they pass and she says, Close on the sides, flat on top?
And Marianne’s saying, Oh good, you’ve met some of us on your own. Stanley’s our resident barber, but I’ve already gone to eat my tapioca in my room.

I told Ralph that my hernia was acting up and he said he’d play cards with Sheldon instead and we both had a good laugh. A hernia is a shelf of muscle or organ or fat pushing through the wall that usually holds it in place. What I have is called a “sports hernia,” even though I’m not an athlete, which is when the muscle of the abdominal wall weakens enough that slips of fat start to work their way out.

Are you Czeslaw Jankovich? The calls ask.

Are you Czeslaw Jankovich?

It’s always the same man who calls. And I wait for the echo of his voice to wash into the metallic hum of miles of telephone cable along the highway, and I set the receiver down.

II
I stayed in Ansfeldon until the end of the frost. It was a long winter that year. Not that we knew exactly. We slept in army bunkers, but the beds frames were hacked up for kindling long before I got there. So we slept on a floor of straw, and in the morning those of us who had shoes brushed the straw away to the wall. Then we walked around the yard looking for people we knew, hugging our shoulders to our breasts for warmth under the empty Austrian sky. I was especially thankful for my shoes then. The ground was cold and
cruel under my toes, and you could see where stones had bitten the feet of the unlucky ones, the ones without shoes, without others to walk for them. I wasn’t looking for anyone I knew. I didn’t want to find anyone I knew.

But still I walked in the yard, because the doctors told us it was good to keep the blood from getting slow and thick. We ate potatoes and sauerkraut and brown peasant bread, and I remember the Austrians cursed us while we fed and called us Banater Graf because they thought we were Gypsies. There was never enough food. Often the children did not have enough to eat, and we would all lie awake at night in the barracks, swollen with sickness and hunger, listening to the cries rattling in their throats. Often I did not have enough to eat.

The doctor was young but he had calluses on his knuckles and wrinkles in his cheeks and thin shiny nails that looked like they had clear polish on them. Neurocysticercosis, he said, already out of breath. Neurocysticercosis is a food-borne sickness you get from pork tapeworms, *Taenia solium*. It’s usually only a problem on pig farms and slaughterhouses, but sometimes people get it from eating expired food, like milk or chicken breast or eggs. It works on the parenchyma, which is the practical part of the brain, the brainstem and the cerebellum and the pons, which I thought was a funny word for a little knob that makes a person sleep or dream or piss themselves. Pons. It sounds like a sugar pastry. I know all that now, now that I have time to read.

So I said to the Emergency Room Doctor, Which part is the parenchyma?
The main part, he said and he went running down the hallway to tell other people their daughters were dying. Caroline was five.

I didn’t see so much of Eva the first two weeks. But then I finished the orthopedics book so before I know it I’m walking around the halls in my slippers, even though I don’t know what I’m going to do if I see her. But I’m on my way to the Rec Room at 11:30, our usual time, and I can already hear the television down the hall. I turn the corner and through the glass door I see Ralph’s already shuffling the cards. He’s not alone. He’s sitting across from Lorraine, who has something in her lap, and they’re both listening to the woman in a wheelchair sitting next to them, and she also has something in her lap, yarn. Eva is knitting something out of blue yarn and Lorraine is knitting and they’re laughing and as I walk in I hear Ralph call, Welcome back to the land of the living, but I haven’t been anything like alive for a very long time.

If a hernia goes untreated, it can restrict the patient’s range of motion. It can also become very painful. Mine is kept under observation at Schnurmacher, but I called the infirmary to increase my dosage anyway, just to keep a paper trail. Then I stored the extra pills in a little baggie in the wooden box next to the medicine books. I label the bags keep a record of how often I call. The medicine books are from the old community college, before it closed. They were giving them away. Information is the best defense against a hidden enemy. The calls keep on, though.
Meanwhile my head is starting to hurt but I pull over a chair and sit and I take my cards. And now Eva’s not talking, she’s looking down in her lap and knitting with her lips set tight like a little knot, so I say, When did you get the chair?

Lorraine is complaining about her cards and about her other granddaughter, who’s in college out West somewhere and doesn’t call, and about her rheumatoid arthritis and the sweater she’s knitting for the one on the way, the next granddaughter, she laughs, not the next college, that would have to be an awfully big sweater, and I feel it starting to swell up inside and I want to jam the sleeve in her mouth so instead I turn to Eva and I say, When did you get the chair?

But she doesn’t answer. She’s knitting a long twisting loop like a scarf or a cable or a noose, and it’s a chalky blue color that makes my mouth dry so I ask Ralph if he has any army stories today and he says, No, not today, and goes back to his pineapple juice. And I say What’s the matter, No tales of heartwarming tramps and pregnant housewives conquered in roadside ditches, and he takes a sip of his juice and says, Not in the company of the ladies, Stanley, and Lorraine is as red as a cherry so I inform her that I was nursing a chronic sports hernia, even though I’m not an athlete, and that it’s from when I was a young man in the war and had to run farther than I’d ever run before. And I tell her that chronic means that it comes and goes, slipping on and on forever, even though I’m not a young man anymore and I’m certainly not in any war, and I can hear myself laughing and Ralph is saying, Stanley, It’s your turn, but it’s swelling up now, and I’m still talking to Lorraine, I’m saying, Want to hear how far I ran? But Lorraine doesn’t
answer, she’s knitting faster than ever and I laugh and say maybe she’ll finish
two sweaters before Granddaughter-on-the-Way is in college herself, and
Lorraine doesn’t laugh so I ask again if she wants to hear about how far I ran
but she doesn’t answer yes or no and Ralph says, For Chrissakes, Stanley, Cut
it out, and Lorraine starts to cry, and then I hear somebody say, I want to
hear, and it’s Eva. Tell us, Eva says. Tell us how far you ran.

And I can feel it slipping out because my gut is starting to burn, and I
don’t hear any of them but I hear myself, I’m saying, What do you want to
know and the jacks and clubs and spades are slipping across the table and the
fabric growing tight between my fingers, going hard and sharp as the fibers
pull tight and bite into my fingers and I can see Ralph’s talking but I can’t
hear what he’s saying because it’s all slipping away and I can feel the yarn
giving way and starting to split, and I’m yelling, Haven’t I suffered? Doesn’t
that count for something?

A cyst is a small bubble in an organ or tissue that isn’t supposed to be
there. Sometimes a cyst is full of liquid, and when it gets too full, it bursts and
floods the organ with bacteria. Sometimes, a cyst doesn’t burst. Sometimes,
it’s full of parasite larvae. Then it dies when the larvae mature and tear
through the thin walls of the cavity to find food. Sometimes that food is a
muscle, or a tissue. Sometimes, as for Caroline, it’s a brain.

Two nights ago, the call came again. Are you Czeslaw Jankovich?

And I waited until I heard the voice on the other end drown and
disappear in the waves of soft metallic buzz and it’s just our breathing, his
breath, short and violent like he’s been running and he’s trying to hide but he
knows there’s no use because whoever’s looking for him is going to find what
he’s looking for.

My name is Stanley, I say, and I set the receiver down.
Part II
SUBJ: Claims raised by Adam CZARTORYSKI re: 3 valuable paintings/
ENCL: 3 Photostat negatives

Dear Sir(s),

Your assistance in the following matter would be appreciated:

Mr. GEORGE HARDIG of your New York office advised me to contact you with respect to a statement allegedly obtained by your Bureau on April 23, 1944 (original correspondence enclosed) regarding to the possible location of a lost Raphael masterwork (“Portrait of a Young Man”). Mr. Hardig further informed me that any inquiry into the matter would be directed to the Washington Office.

I am contacting you acting on behalf of the Czartoryski family, claimants of the lost painting in question, which has been missing and presumed lost since an undetermined date during the Second World War. The statement of interest obtained by your office is of one PAUL KRIEGER, the contents of whose statement, I have reason to believe, may contain information pertinent to our investigation. As a month has elapsed without response since my last correspondence with your New York Office, I feel that the request of a facsimile of Mr. Krieger’s statement is conspicuously reasonable, and respectfully requested its transmission at your earliest convenience.

Thanking you in advance for your kind efforts and awaiting the results of your inquiries in due course, I remain, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

X
TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (163-627)  
FROM: BONN (163-20)  

June 25, 1961

SUBJECT: CLAIMS RAISED BY CZRTORYSKI FOR THE RESTITUTION Of [...]  

REF: Bureau File 5-15, dated 12-4-60  

The information from New York memorandum dated 2-14-61 regarding loss of cultural artifact(s) has been furnished to the Bundeskriminalamt (BKA – West German Federal Criminal Police) in response to the request enclosed above, dated 6-21-61 (English language translation enclosed).

Buffer 5-15 case brief enclosed, below, for your convenience. Request immediate reply Re: KRIEGER, PAUL.

LOST/MISSING CULTURAL ARTIFACT(S)  
BuFile: 5-15

CASE ABSTRACT

Since late autumn 1948, a number of claims received by OSS: European Central Office Re: the loss or seizure of cultural art/artifacts has convincingly indicated a widespread but unofficial policy carried out by NSDAP SS and Security Service, Wehrmacht, and sympathizers of the theft of pieces of artistic value for personal use.

Claim 0023JUW, dated December 4, 1960, declares several paintings formerly belonging to the late Prince August CZARTORYSKI, dec. August 14, 1944, to have been confiscated by the German authorities in Poland (Generalgovernment) sometime during the war. The paintings were believed to have travelled extensively during the conquest of France before finally resting at Neuhaus-am-Schliersee at the end of the war. Two of the paintings have since been recovered [Leonardo da Vinci’s Lady with an Ermine and an undisclosed Rembrandt]—the third remains missing. It has been identified as an oil composition, “PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN” by Raphael Santi, dated 1513-1514, approximately 28 inches by 22 inches and last estimated at the value (approximate) of £60 million.

Mr. Paul KRIEGER, formerly chief restorer to Governor-General Hans FRANK, stated that he examined the three paintings in question in the private chateau Meribel in St. Jean-de-Maurienne in winter
1944, at which time Mr. FRANK possessed them. Mr. KRIEGER claimed no knowledge of the current location of the painting, and stated that his experience with the paintings in 1944 was limited to his professional capacity of evaluating the paintings’ authenticity and suitability for transit East.

As of July 19, 1961, the records of the Manhattan Telephone Directory registered PAUL KRIEGER residing at 170 West 74th Street, New York City, New York, telephone number Endicott 2-2319.

Of additional interest: Joseph GALLAIS, NSDAP member no. 66249, was interviewed during multiple sessions in the fall of 1958 preceding his extradition to Poland. During his consultation with Operation of Special Services, Mr. GALLAIS asserted that he had witnessed the paintings in St. Jean-de-Maurienne, though he did not specify in what capacity. Mr. GALLAIS also claimed that the paintings were repossessed by Soviet forces, along with a collection of other artistic pieces of note. GALLAIS was killed in an automobile accident in January 1960 before extradition proceedings were completed; the offending party fled the scene before the authorities arrived, and was not identified.

COPY TRANSMISSION:
1 - Bonn - Enclosures (3) (163-20)
1 - New York - Enclosures (3) (163-29)
1 - Foreign Liaison Unit - Enclosures (3)

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A man steps around the corner and begins to ascend into the afternoon sunlight of 34th Street. He wears a grey flannel suit that long ago fell from fashion; a red carnation is pinned at his lapel. He drags his heels, a defect in his carriage apparent only to the most keen-eyed passerby, yet his gait is brisk and dutiful. His brogues are maintained in good order, though they are beginning to show the signs of an over-attentive brush, and he stops on the third stair to straighten an errand lace. His hair, now just visible over the lip of the stairwell about the ankles of the passing crowds, has grown thin and wiry; his moustache betrays the daily scrutiny of a nail clipper. The
newspaper beneath his arm is folded with consideration on the crease, consideration for both the quality of the paper and the writers whose handiwork it displays. The light salute his hat performs for a hurrying young woman informs the subway riders that he is not native to this part of the world.

As the old man prevails over the last few stairs, he detects the unmistakable and insistent breath of cigar smoke. He pulls a handkerchief from his hip pocket and shields his sinuses with the frank and unaffected manner of those long accustomed to life in a modern city. Coming out onto the broad stretch of the avenue, he permits himself to enjoy the sensation of body-heated breath against his cheeks before replacing the tissue, now sullied with the memory, if not the trace scent, of the tobacco.

“Paul Krieger?”

The old man looks up to find his conduct through the middle of the avenue obstructed by the dark eyes of a large, rounded specimen, a man, to be sure, one whose ample distribution of flesh is magnified by his dim stature and the proliferation of glittering bands about his fleshy digits.

“Paul?”

Paul Krieger finds himself nodding, though his mind is fixed elsewhere, on the agitated white bead of spittle riding the large man’s lower lip, on the lunch with a museum curator for which he will almost certainly be late, on the morning’s impulsive verdict of a red flower over his customary purple. An unfavorable omen, to be sure. He wipes a film of sweat from the crest of his forehead with the handkerchief, and nods again. The man smiles.
“Well, I hope you’re not engaged this afternoon.

INT. – INTERROGATION ROOM – DAY

Interior. Small table and two straight-backed chairs. PAUL KRIEGER, approx. 60-70 years old, sits in one of the chairs. He is nearly bald, with thin rimmed glasses and an expensive-looking suit. He is agitated: drums fingers on table, wipes sweat from forehead with white handkerchief. A straw hat lies on floor beside him. High-key light.

Sound: VOICES, Off-screen. LOUD LAUGHTER. MERRIMENT. Drumming hands (N.B. Insert EXTREME CLOSE-UP?). Man is confused, terrified, uncertain. Wipes forehead. Opens wallet and removes a few cards on table. Driver’s License; AmEx; New York Public Library Card; Inter-museum Conservation Association Membership Card.

DOOR CREAK (N.B. High-angle re-establishing shot?) Three men stand in the doorway, all wearing hats — the police. QUIET LAUGHTER. DETECTIVE, mid-50’s, squat, balding, enters INTERROGATION ROOM, casting a shadow across the floor.

DETECTIVE

(throwing his hat and a file folder on the table)

Paul.

DETECTIVE snaps on overhead desk light. He looks down at PAUL KRIEGER. Smiles.

PAUL KRIEGER

(frantic, nervous. Rapidly:)

Mr. Detective, you’ll excuse my slight impatience, I’m sure, but I find it highly unusual that I have yet to hear of a single charge—

DETECTIVE

(leaning over table; smiles):

Mr. Krieger. Always a pleasure to meet a personality of so much interest to the Office of Special Services.

PAUL KRIEGER

(turns pale, shrinking in his seat)
I assure you, Detective, I know nothing you want to know about the war. No one knew. We all heard, but we did not know it until after the war, and we most certainly would not have stood by it. I am a French citizen, Detective—

**DETECTIVE**

I see you’re probably a pretty busy fellow. So I’ll try respect your time, as long as you agree to respect it to. Because I think you know something about a certain painting, and I can’t let you walk out that door until I know everything you do. So why don’t we forget this whole interview—

*(sits, smiles)*

And let’s call it a lunch date. Tell me everything you know about—

*(looks down at file)*

Joseph Gallais?

*Cut to Black*

4 February, 1944

I have spent the autumn traveling with company of a most peculiar sort. Though I am by this point quite accustomed to traversing long distances by rail (and have only the highest regard for the style and comforts of the Reich’s superb railway system), never before have I encountered a passage such as this. The standard passengers or sleeper cabins in which I passed the crossing to France appears to have completely disappeared from circulation. In its place, one finds cargo cars of every size and description, and each sheltering a most varied array of household furnishings that quite defy description. Since we embarked at St. Jean-de-Maurienne, I have shared the company of any number of writing desks and dining tables, leather-bound trunks full of bed linens and lace curtains of the finest character, not to mention the small mountains of boots, bedposts, toothbrushes and kitchen pans.
I have left these rolling homes untouched, unlike some sharp-eyed tramps I’ve noticed along the way. I’ve even seen a few of our less virtuous station guards unable to resist the temptations of a fine set of silver! But for myself, I have not been able to bring myself to touch even a single kitchen stool since a station conductor at Martigny informed me that the goods were confiscated from the homes of French Jews resettled to work in the East. Though I did enjoy a very comfortable ride to St. Etienne in a particularly handsome armchair (and I confess I may have entertained the idea of relocating it to my own drawing room!), I shudder now to remember that I availed myself of the use of a bit of perfumed soap to wash my face in Lyon—but we find ways to maintain a feeling of routine, and a gentleman must always be cautious about his appearance.

My compatriots would agree, it seems, though they have taken a very different sort of comfort from their duty. As I write, I am seated in a quite unobjectionable apartment some forty kilometers from Nuremberg (my prayers of thanks to the generosity of Governor Frank, who has so decently accommodated me!), but my heart aches for the poor tavern keeper below. What a ruckus there is in the dining room—it seems the entire Nuremberg SS brigade has received their leave tonight. Their secretaries pound a march upon the dining tables as the men auction away the winter coats and silver ladles of Nuremberg’s Jews for another round of beer. I smile at their merriment—for I cannot but image what those boys, barely eighteen years in age, have seen at the hands of the Soviets!—and I confess (if not to a soul but I) that I did share in a small snack of requisitioned crackers and sausage. The way they sing, swilling away stores of ale as if they will not see another
opportunity for cheer, and the way life is now, when one must embark on a minor adventure only to locate a stick of butter! It seems absurd to have thought—just a few short months ago!—that the Americans would come to Italy and Northern Africa. It’s a wonder that the tavern keeper doesn’t but smile and pour them another glass.

But for myself, I am consoled by the company of a working pen, and the presence nearby of the wrapped parcel, a mere meter across, that has remained my faithful companion. For in just three short days we will reach Bavaria, and soon thereafter the Führer’s own residence in Linz, where my traveling companion and I will finally part. To think that a simple writer such as myself—a critic of the pallet knife and oils—will have had the honor of personally delivering a gift to the Führer! It humbles my heart to know that when called upon to service, I faithfully aided the Führer’s designs (if only in the beautification of his holiday chambers). Enough! To bed with this tired body of mine. Another day in the company of the bureau drawers and desk lamps of strangers awaits me!

SECURITY SERVICE OF THE REICHSFÜHRER-SS
SS SD AMT. AUSLAND D—
CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS IN THE EAST
SD SECTION NÜRNBERG

From: Inspector, SD Nuremberg
To: Senior Group Leader, Security Police, Krakow

Regarding subject: JOSZEF GALLAIS

Subject failed to appear on the appointed train, which arrived on time in Munich, 11:52 A.M. 7 February 1944. Subject believed to have escaped over combat line
into Soviet territory. Commence covert search for GALLAIS with all assets as your office can afford – his successful capture is of extreme concern to the Office of the Reichsführer and should be conducted immediately.

Subject is believed to be in possession of one painting, which is of interest to officers of particular rank. You are enjoined to exercise the greatest care to ensure its security and prompt return to the borders of the Reich. Additionally be advised that GALLAIS is to be presumed a defector to the Bolshevik cause and a traitor to the Volk and Fatherland – do not spare any measures necessary in the execution of your operation and the retrieval of the painting.

The dining hall of Meribel still bore the signs of transit and assembly for which towering beams had been raised and a grand fireplace wrought in pale Egyptian granite. Yet this winter, the reception hall had not had the occasion to welcome Belgian diplomats as they warmed woolen toes, or to soothe the ice-bitten throats of Parisian vacationers as they conversed with Austrian neurotics over small glasses of kirsch. Bereft of the regular sounds of schoolchildren, outfitted in waistcoats and aprons of the finest cut and fabric as they tumbled between sunken armchairs, the hall slouched around the seasonal banquet staff with all the threatening grace and obscurity of an abandoned temple.

Yet the hall was far from vacant of human form. Centuries of the art and handicraft of Europe’s Old Masters, now mere forgotten detritus, littered the hall like so many forgotten handbags and handkerchiefs. Florentine Mannerist paintings hid behind embroidered sofas and Neoclassical goddesses stood in repose between the polished dining tables as though searching for an absent lunch date, or hesitating to reconsider the pursuit of
another slice of rum-soaked punschkrapfen. The immobile form of Paul Krieger, bent as he was in concentration, was easily lost in the disarray of stock-still congregation.

“Do you think our distinguished company might enjoy some refreshment?”

Mr. Krieger sought out the origin of the voice that resonated through the hall with some irritation. He was not long disappointed: the slender form of Josef Gallais appeared around a marble dais on which an eagle-shaped Zeus drank from Ganymede’s cup. Mr. Krieger puffed at the satin-clad specimen before him as it drifted across the breadth of the hall, trailing buttered crumbs of apfelstrudel from a delicate saucer. Checking the magnifying loupe embedded at his eye, Mr. Krieger returned to examining the Vermeer canvas on the table before him for the subtle signs of frailty or disrepair.

“Monsieur Krieger,” Mr. Gallais said as he executed a sharp pivot at the corner of a bookshelf loaded with antique earthenware to occupy the seat across from his indignant subject. “I must inform you that you make quite the sight in that outrageous device! Could this really be the eyewear the discerning gentleman of Vienna is sporting this season?”

Mr. Krieger mustered the full extent of his nonverbal powers to discharge a glance at his interrogator before turning his attention a fourteenth-century codex of Moses ben Maimon’s *Treatise of Logic*. Unperturbed, the object of Mr. Krieger’s censure sipped from the coffee he rediscovered on the dining table. Mr. Krieger snapped the manuscript shut and lay his handkerchief over the wooden cover to protect it from the shower
that issued from Mr. Gallais’ lips. “You are, no doubt, dimly aware” he began, “that you are in the presence of the greatest artistic minds of our Continent, for whom you might bear yourself in a manner some might misinterpret as respect!”

“Have you not heard news from the East?” Mr. Gallais cried, rising and brandishing his teacup like a parade baton, “The Red Army has been repelled to the gates of Stalingrad! We stand at the brink of a new order, Monsieur Krieger—a new history of the Continent! There will be new masters, a new Coliseum, a new Versailles!”

The great double entryway of the dining hall burst open, sending an explosive report through the galleries of the hall. Hans Frank, the emblem of the Governor-General at his chest, entered the hall leading a detachment of SS footmen. “Gentleman,” he called, “I’m glad you have had an opportunity to make one another’s acquaintance.” Mr. Gallais wiped the corners of his mouth as he hurried to catch the Governor at the center of the hall, but the later strode past him to a rather small, rather unobtrusive portrait of a young man in a fur coat. “The Reich Ministry here spoke in the highest regard of both of your professional competencies. But I am afraid we will not have time to enjoy one another’s company; the Führer is quite anxious to complete the renovation of his summer cottage.”

“It is just so, Herr Governor,” Mr. Gallais said, toeing around a bookcase to stand before the painting. “I was just telling the Herr Krieger about the Reich’s glorious architectural plan for the new European city.”

“Quite right, Monsieur Gallais,” Mr. Frank said. “But before Berlin is reborn in marble, the Führer requests the company of a few last pieces for his
personal retreat—call it artistic nostalgia, if you wish. It’s a curious choice, to my eye,” Mr. Frank added, as a pair of soldiers began to wrap the canvass in coarse brown paper. “But I suppose Ms. Braun would be less than pleased by the presence of some of the Führer’s more stimulating acquisitions.” He eyed Gallais, who had begun to stroke the thigh of a pensive nymph.

Mr. Frank circled the table; a thin dossier materialized in his hand.

“Monsieur Gallais you will find your travel visa and accommodations arranged. I have also taken the liberty to endow you with a small sum for your expenses—my colleague in Munich will see to your compensation upon your arrival. Now that’s settled,” he said, smiling as he signed the top page in the folder and deposited it in Gallais’ pallid fingers, “I suppose it would be a folly to inquire if I could interest either of you gentlemen in a game of chess.”

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TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (163-627)
FROM: BONN (163-20)

SUBJECT: CLAIMS RAISED BY CZRTORYSKI FOR THE RESTITUTION Of [---]

REF: Bureau File 5-15 dated 12-4-60

August 14, 1961

On June 28, 1961, personnel at the Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C., advised a representative of the Federal Bureau of Investigation that no information could be located for subject JOSEPH GALLAIS, date of birth 7-22-1894.

The files of G-2, United States Army Counterintelligence Records Facility, Fort Holabird, Maryland, were reviewed on August 3, 1961, and did record one Dr. JOSEF GALLAIS, born Saint-Nazaire, who was the subject of a favorable partial background investigation completed on September 15, 1950, by the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC), U.S. Army, Germany. This investigation was conducted for the United States Displaced Persons Commission (DPC), in connection with the subject’s application for an Immigrant Visa to the United States. At the time of
the investigation, GALLAIS was residing at Displaced Persons Camp Trutzahn.

At the time of interview, GALLAIS possessed a certificate from the MG Officer at the Ebensee Concentration Camp testifying that the former was an inmate of said camp and a victim of political persecution. GALLAIS claimed to have arrived in Germany in early October 1941 for diplomatic purposes, and as of December 1941 to be living in Dresden, remaining there until January 1945. He also advised that he had two brothers, not identified, who were presumed in Siberia. He stated his planned destination in the United States was to be New York. His sponsor was one PAUL KRIEGER, not further identified.

The following descriptive data is contained in G-2 files:

Name: JOS(Z)EF GALLAIS
Birth Data: July 22, 1894, in Saint-Nazaire
Race: White
Sex: Male
Citizenship: French-Russian
Height: 7'1 in.
Weight: 152 lbs.
Hair: Black
Eyes: Gray
Marital Status: Divorced (Spouse not identified)

G-2 files contain a photograph of this individual, apparently taken in the year 1950, a copy of which is attached.
writer spoke with Informant IO recently as to the feeling in HONOLULU of foreign nationals following Japanese capitulation. Informant IO advised that he did not have knowledge of the sentiments of any émigré community in Honolulu regarding the imminent termination of the war. At this time Informant IO stated he could not say he was pro-American but that he did owe AMERICA a debt for his livelihood and respected its care for the artistic assets in its possession.

Inasmuch as no information of apparent value is being obtained from Informant IO this case is being CLOSED, but Informant IO’s profile and contact information will be retained for the purposes of future investigation.

—CLOSED—
Part III
AMERICAN FAMILY HISTORY

It’s been almost a month since we left camp at Gmina Trawniki, and some of the men seem to be having a better time of it. They sit around the fire at night and laugh and sing and play jokes—oatmeal in a fellow’s boot, a stone in another’s soup. They drink a huge amount of spirits—the generosity of the Fatherland seems to follow us to the far reaches of the Eastern Front—and every evening each one seems to find the spirit to extinguish pots of beans and potatoes, bowls of sauerkraut, and half a loaf of bread. I seem unable to do a thing but crawl under my blanket and suck at a bottle of schnapps. Some nights I can’t remember anything that’s happened since we left camp.

The training camp had many more buildings than we needed—wooden cabins of suspect craftsmanship, most of them—but the prisoners slept under the bare sky. They ate only salted fish, and though many barrels of water were kept in sight, only guards and volunteers and prisoners assigned to labor detail received water rations. We slept in bunks, three to a bed, so the SS men could have private quarters.

“Sounds like a good spot for a family vacation,” Lynne calls upstairs from the kitchen, presumably, where she’s lowering a trembling mound of pumpkin batter into the oven. Or dusting flour from her hands as she admires the floral accents she’s left on a hefty saucer of red velvet that was just minutes ago lifted from the baking pan, raspberry-red and steaming, or arranging a colony of garden-fresh mint around the next installment in what’s been an infinite succession of pitchers of lemonade. It’s not like I need to hover over her shoulder to notice that the lemonade has gotten sweeter.
with each glass. But even though it’s near the end of November, and even though I usually take coffee as if sugar plantations were a thing of the future, I’ve consumed the bulk of each pitcher, accepted a piece of each cake and pie. Because I’ve lost weight in Utah, Lynne claims, because I’m going to be needed to help Cheryl when the baby arrives. But mostly because of the feeling, one that I confess feels a bit perverse, that it might be helping her, somehow, and because the “company” for whom each confectionary in turn is justified, and whose name has been invoked over cardboard cartons of chow-mein every night for a week, have yet to make an appearance. And now it seems like Cheryl and I may be all she has left. She’s the one who’s been living in this house with him for the past six years, watching him decline, increasingly, it seems, alone. Turns out Grandpa didn’t have too many friends.

“So tell me about this Indian graveyard?” she calls, flicking through the “Getting to Know the ‘Reef’” Visitor’s Guide I picked up in the Park Information Center, presumably, as she escorts her fourth lemonade of the morning into the den to listen to the radio. I should just be glad those worn slippers haven’t found their way to Grandpa’s liquor cabinet—blackberry schnapps and Slivovitz wouldn’t help any of us, the lemonade included. I’ve stopped scolding.

“Fremonts, not Indians,” I reply from the attic, buried beneath a mound of forgotten birthday cards and worn medical textbooks and leather eyeglass cases, shells cracked and hinges pliant with use. The detritus of death. “And it’s not a graveyard, Lynne, they’re wall drawings.” I sweep it all into a garbage bag with one arm. Most of the birthday cards were from
Grandma, anyway. Downstairs, she turns up the radio: *Pat, I’d like you to meet little Christine Donahue*. Must be moving into the sunroom. I bind the garbage bag, tying together two handfuls of extra plastic, and fling it towards the staircase. Again, I remind myself to be thankful that she’s Greeting the Day. Armed with naught but a highball glass of lemonade. Cue laugh track. *Christine is three and a half years old.* Whip open another bag. Fill it with thirteen gallons of air and kick up a layer of ancient history. A week ago, in Utah, I’d have let it settle before getting down on my knees with a pair of tweezers. Now it works its way into the creases of my fingers, the first its tasted in decades, no doubt, and I start on the desk. I know this story already. *Christine wants to be a dental hygienist when she grows up, in her own words, “to help people.”* Standing five feet two inches and weighting a hundred and thirteen pounds, she is also an accomplished diver: she won two silver medals last June in Munich just four months after donating her kidney to a local child in need.

_The first day we were each issued a metal bowl and a spoon and a toothbrush and a razor and a pair of boots with an extra set of laces and a thin green uniform that made it very cold at night. The train came in the afternoon. After the able men were chosen for labor detail at the factory, the camp commanders told us to separate two hundred prisoners from those remaining. We took them out of the camp to Jaszczeów, where they were forced to dig three large trenches. The walk is about two hours._

_Some of my comrades couldn’t stomach it. I couldn’t. The SS commandant from the camp reprimanded us, asking what kind of Germans were we? He said, “He who cannot celebrate the joy of killing a Jew, a Bolshevik, a Gypsy, or a trade unionist_
is not a patriot. He is not of the Volk.” No one dared to point out to him that none of us were Germans; we were Poles, Ukrainians, Czechs, Belarusians. Some of us were Russians. Some had served the Soviets before we were arrested. We were all volunteers, Hilfswilliger. We wanted to go back to our homes, our families. We didn’t want to die.

“Not Indians,” Lynne repeats, padding back into the kitchen, presumably, by the by the patter of slippers against the parquet in the hallway. “Have you decided what their drawings are about?” The reluctant groan of a chair pulled across the tile.

“No yet,” I say, shaking the dust from a camel-colored trench coat and fighting not to reengage in the history lesson of the Fremonts that returns, without fail, to a justification of why I’m not doing something more “practical” with my fancy education, like starting a business, or getting a doctorate in a field with doctors. Particularly when Cheryl has a baby on the way. Lynne’s only two years older, but with a disturbing knack for making it feel like thirty-two. Anyway. The Fremonts—named retroactively, because their ruins were found in the vicinity of the very white and American town of Fremont—occupied the region around a river, also named Fremont, until somewhere around the thirteenth century. We’re not exactly sure when. In fact, there are a lot of things we don’t know about the Fremonts—how many they were, how they lived, and where they all went. These things are important—we could learn a lot about pre-Colombian American civilization, but I’m mostly interested in their rock drawings. And now, Pat, please say hello to little Johnny Sullivan. Johnny is only four years old but he weighs in at one
hundred and ninety-three pounds and he can bench-press the living room sofa.

Johnny is studying to be a microbiologist—

“Well it seems silly to spend three years looking at what some primitive people drew on a rock, if you want my opinion.” Blender. Maybe crab dip for the company today? “You think the teenagers who marked up that poor butcher’s place were leaving something for the future generations?” That’s is not to say that we don’t know anything. We do know that the Fremont River used to flood annually, and the local natives built irrigation networks to cultivate lentils, maize, and squash. The first American urban settlements.

“And it’s appreciated, as always.” Then there’s a severe drought in the 13th century. The Fremont settlements are abandoned. Or so the theory goes. The prevailing thinking follows that they were absorbed into neighboring cultures, the herders and hunters of the Great Plains, the Adobe tribes to the Southwest. But it wasn’t until uranium was discovered in Capital Reef National Park the early twentieth century that Native American civilization in Wayne County came to an end. Johnny is a state-ranked crossword puzzle champion in California whose dream is to go to space. He’s an honors student who writes his own puzzles in his free time, and he’s been working with his Dad to build a working miniature of a Model-T Ford.

I’d been looking at a few drawings in the Parowan valley. They’re petroglyphs, really, not drawings, which means that they’re etched into the rock. But much more importantly, that they represent something, something more than patterns or geometric shapes. Which is why I spent three months in Southern Utah, journaling and tracing and hoping to dig enough theories
about the vanishing Fremonts out of the bluffs to fill a dissertation before the
baby comes. A race against time. But mostly I just drank cup after cup of
green tea, letting my headache fill the locker I was renting at the Best Western
before giving up the Fremonts up to extraterrestrial abduction or smallpox
and calling Cheryl. Until the night I picked up the phone and heard the
cracks of static in the telephone line carrying Lynne’s sobs eighteen hundred
miles.

My carvings certainly aren’t unique—a lot of whorls and trees and
abstract shapes. But there are a few features of these drawings that make
them noticeable. Enough to be worth another look. Among these is a series of
eared, or horned, triangular-headed figures, which don’t appear in any other
etchings in the Southwest. The other is that these drawings, wherever they
appear, all over south-central Utah, appear thirty feet up the face of a cliff.

Now, when I say so, Pat, I want you to slug Johnny as hard as you can in the
stomach. Don’t be shy, really give him a wallop.

In order to persuade us to the killings, the commandant gave some of the
younger men wine and liquor. Then the SS men brought us some of the female
prisoners, stripped them naked and told us to choose whichever we wanted. After we
were finished, we were to kill them, each his own. Some of the men got drunk and
delirious, and they got carried away. They were able to do it. I couldn’t. It revolted me
to think of it and I said so. The SS men laughed at me and told me to go back to camp
and warm supper for the others. Some of them were no older than girls.

A few days later, an Obergruppenführer, Krüger, came from Lublin to inspect
the camp. Krüger arrived with a unit of the SS, all outfitted in smart black uniforms
with up-turned collars and heavy black boots, and he wore an Iron Cross, First Order medal around his throat and a long, curved knife on his belt. Many of the men envied the uniforms of the SS and talked about enlisting, but we all knew we couldn’t. Our men killed so many people, so many Poles and Russians and Jews, that the parade ground was red until the day we left, a week later.

Well, just so long as you don’t arouse some kind of curse,” Lynne says, turning up the radio again as she returns to the den, or so I gather by the squeak of her slippers on the kitchen floor. Click of the television, but no sound. Really lay in there, Pat. He can take it. She likes to watch the game shows on mute while she folds laundry. “Speaking of which, why don’t you take a break from desecrating Grandpa’s knick-knacks for a slice of cheesecake?”

I slip a bit unearthing a large traveling trunk, which clings to the floor with a layer of dust and sticky disuse. “No thanks, I think I’ll keep at it. Maybe I’ll find a souvenir.” He was a saver—the kind of man who planned trips to the petting zoo to coincide with the expiration date on the Saltines, because “only a fool would pay to feed a goat.” Look at him—a hundred and ninety three pounds. An All-State wrestler with a record pin-time of—

“I wouldn’t hold your breath,” Lynne calls. “You know what I’d do? Dump it all in the ground with him—a man and his junk together, at peace for eternity. That’s what they used to do, anyway, you know, the whatever-they-are.” And he’s just turning four next March.

“Burial mounds, Lynne.” The trunk is worn smooth and shiny; it’s glossy to the touch and slightly slippery. And heavy: twenty, maybe thirty pounds. At one point, it was engraved with a pair of wreathed initials, now
indecipherable. Are you sure, Rick? Oh, absolutely, Pat, the boy is more than man enough to handle it. Won’t hurt him a bit.

Inside it’s full of handkerchiefs, a flood of squares of every shade and fabric ever lost on a cutting room floor, linens stitched with floral garlands, bucolic felines, and stately monograms—thrift store merchandise. Really, Rick? Just, sock him? Typical of Grandpa. He always insisted there was no reason any sensible person went to the ballpark when the same game was available on TV. Just like that? Just like that, Pat. Don’t hold back now—

“But what about the Cracker Jack?” I would protest, seeing my fantasies of caramel-coated popcorn sticking to my fingers and mounds of splintered peanut shells between my feet evaporate in front of the old leather sofa. Let him show you what he’s got now—

“For forty-five cents? Better get that head checked,” he’d call behind the retreating little figure—outfitted in glove and Pirates hat—before opening a package of water biscuits and allowing the first to begin soaking under his tongue, knowing that in a few minutes it would be softened to a slightly sweet perfection and his grandson, whose naked thighs would never feel the bite of a sun-warmed ballpark bleacher, would be seated beside his elder sister, pounding a tiny fist into a useless glove and heckling the opponent’s pitcher. Oh, don’t cry now, Jimmy. That’s all right, Pat, give him another.

I’m about to agree, to head downstairs and claim my slice of cake, when I hear a small sound, nearly lost in the swirling gale of cloth. A metal clink. Are you sure? He seems awful upset about it. No, that’s nothing to worry about; another one will set him right up—I empty it onto the floor. A surge of many-colored cloth sweeps across the attic, ripples of cream-colored textile
soiled with black streaks of grease and motor oil. Just like that? Just like that, Pat. Give him one more home. And there, lying in the bottom of the trunk, alone against a wooden panel, was the source of the sound. I’m not sure, Rick, he looks pretty bad. Oh, he’ll be right as rain in a minute, here, let me show you—!

A small oval. Cheap metal, tin or nickel. Maybe zinc. A pin of some sort. Floral wreath around the edges. Definitely a pin. Intended to be worn on a lapel, perhaps, or held in a wallet. A sword driven down the middle, striking into a nest of snakes and burying its point in a grinning skull. And at its round hilt, an unmistakable symbol, a symbol that was embroidered on shoulder patches and scrawled on street corners and carved into the gates of Eastern temples half a world away and more, before being expelled and vilified and relegated to the realm of history books and court transcripts and horror stories about the evil of mankind, stories that continue to haunt speech and action and keep people up at night decades later and continents apart, stories that continue to be told because they’re true. A symbol in a sword.

Krüger had been informed by the commandant that I and some of the others had refused to kill the prisoners. He called the Hiwi together. We stood in a sharp U-formation on the parade ground, our boots sinking into the dark red mud. He berated us, saying that those who could not kill Jews, Gypsies, and Bolsheviks were traitors to the Fatherland and the Volk. He then asked who of us felt that we could not do the killing. Several men called out in answer, men who, like me, had refused to consort with and murder the Jewish girls. I did not call out.

Krüger pulled one man out of the formation, a man I knew from my village in Białka, a mason. He asked him, "What kind of a man are you if you cannot kill a Jew
or a Bolshevik?" The man answered that he was ready to give his life for the Führer at any time, and that he would be able to kill an enemy for the defense of the Fatherland, but that he did not like killing unarmed people, especially women and children.

Krüger laughed so loud his voice rang through the camp, much louder than the dimpled supper bell. He said that this, too, was a battle, that the Jews, the Gypsies, the Bolsheviks and the Partisans were not people but beasts and it was the duty of all Germans to clear Europe of this pestilence, and whoever refused to assist us was as much an enemy of the Führer and the Reich as they were. Krüger paused then and called one of his men. They conferred for a moment, and the man left the parade ground. We stood outside in the wind for fifteen minutes, maybe twenty, waiting.
Pipe-Bomb Death

By ALBERT J. PAREK

PARTNERS

Tscherni Soobzokov's home on 14th Street, in a working-class neighborhood, is empty and boarded up. Splinters of wood and bits of broken glass remain on the front porch, signifying a pipe bomb explosion last month.

Tscherni Soobzokov, 61, who had just moved to 14th Street, was caught in the blast. He was hit in the face and chest when a pipe bomb exploded. His body was found in the street, and the police were called.

The blast occurred at 6:29 A.M. on 14th Street, near the Soobzokov family's home. The explosion was heard several blocks away. The building was completely destroyed.

Tscherni Soobzokov was a well-known figure in the community, and his death was a shock to his friends and family. He had been active in local politics and had been a supporter of the Democratic Party.

The investigation into the explosion is ongoing, and the police are working to determine the cause of the explosion. The family is mourning the loss of a beloved member.
CHILD’S PLAY

That’s Lukas, there. Didn’t I say? Where? Dark hair. Oh, I see. Looks a little big for that sandbox, doesn’t he? Slow student? No, I wouldn’t say so. No. His arithmetic is good. Spelling, art; he responds well to the collage activities. Handwriting is atrocious, but, hey, he’s only eight. Most of their handwriting is still a mess. Still some phonetic approximations, leaving out vowels, missing silent letters. The baby cries “T-E-E-R’s,” that sort of thing. Pretty typical for his age. Is there a question of cognitive impairment? Oh, no, he just has trouble keeping his mind on this side of the planet.

And how long has it been? Sorry? Since the accident. Oh, since—about five weeks. And—not a word? Not a word. The grandmother says he’s been quiet at home, too. No violent incidents? Well, about a week ago he broke Jackson’s coil pot and there were some tears, but then they both took a tumble and laughed it off. Was he close to his grandfather? Don’t know. Lukas doesn’t talk about him in class. Wrote about his grandmother for a “My Hero” take-home assignment last week—no surprise there—but didn’t mention grandpa at all. What did they end up writing in the police report? Blocked exhaust. Residual accumulation. Yikes. Better get my mini-van checked out. I’m not sure. His grandfather was pretty well known. Built that mega-mosque downtown, near where that old dry cleaners used to be. You think so? In Paterson? Who knows. Well why don’t we make an appointment for Lukas at my office next Thursday during recess? Sure, I’ll let his grandmother know.
Everywhere he goes, Lukas is remembered. Mr. Lippey waves him in from behind the window in the drugstore, asks after his grandmother’s health and sends him home with a Charleston Chew. Lukas thinks he looks like a dandelion. The contractor who built the mosque on the corner of Ruckman Street—his grandfather’s mosque—offers a palm like a waffle iron, tells him how much the community appreciated his Opa’s support. This Lukas has heard before. But he listens when the man tells him that his grandpa used to take him along to the site, when the mosque was going up and he was no larger than a chestnut, with coffee for the workers. This Lukas does not remember. The butcher who, six weeks ago, used to extend his palm, face up, for Lukas to meet, who used to remove his streaky plastic gloves and let the boy feel the dense knob of muscle at the base of the thumb, now refuses payment, carves a Thanksgiving turkey for easy baking and sends the boy running home, a neat bundle of wax paper hugged against his chest like a football, a baby, a bomb. Sends his regards to Lukas’s grandmother, who presents the boy with a five-dollar bill and sends him back. The butcher laughs, sends the boy to the deli for Yoo-hoo’s and then lets him sit on the counter while he demonstrates the proper technique to french a rack of pork ribs.

Does he play with the other children, the guidance counselor asks. Sometimes. Not always. He doesn’t want to play on the playground, the soccer field, the foursquare courts? None of it appeals to him. I’ve caught him reading Robinson Crusoe in the coat closet three or four times since the accident. Slow reader? On the contrary. I think he’s re-reading. Doesn’t he
have any friends? Oh, sure. Imaginary? No. No, I shouldn’t think so. Does his mother know? Know what? All of this, the sandbox, the self-isolation, the scrubbing the dirt in his fingers—why is he doing that? Doing what? With the dirt.

His hands itch. They didn’t always, but now they burn under a patchwork maze of small bumps, blisters, and ridges—aroused and tender to the touch. The nurse said he had some sort of mild skin disorder. A short woman, Lukas remembers, with a web of black-gray hair. Not a gentle woman. An attentive woman, hardened by the years of raising her children on a municipal salary. She moved quickly, Lukas remembers, swabbing the grit from between his knuckles with the expert and impassive diligence with which a hen investigates the soggy earth for kernels of grain. Not like his Oma, who massages moisturizer in between his fingers, turns his hands like they were swathed in a pair of lace gloves.

Eczema? Psoriasis? That’s the one—Psoriatic arthritis. The grandmother has it too, apparently. And the sand? Friction helps the itching, must be. He’s a smart boy. Can that be good for it? Who knows—I’ll try to give him some moisturizer when recess ends. His grandmother left a little bottle of medicated Aloe Vera, but he hates it. Rubs it off along the edge of the desk. Real mess for the janitors.

What Lukas likes best: when Oma tells him about life after the war, about the sands of Jordan, the statues the size of buildings, the ship voyage so long it seemed like they would spend the rest of their lives at sea, until one day they were suddenly in New York. Lukas likes the idea of sailing halfway
across the world. He likes looking through the old photos, tracing the shape of Mama’s dress with his finger in the faint pictures that curl from the stiff browned pages of the album. In some of them, she’s no taller than Oma’s knees.

Lukas remembers feet in the middle of the night, Opa yelling over the phone at someone named Ron, and Oma spitting in the corner as she knits a lime green hat Lukas will shove into his backpack as soon as he gets on the school bus. He remembers The Senator, a man with white hair and white teeth, in a suit that looked cold to touch. He remembers The Senator’s laugh—short and quick, like a hiccup—and Opa’s smile as he talked about building the mosque on Ruckman Street, as he told The Senator and his friends—all white teeth and wide foreheads and shiny fingernails—that he wanted an office. Opa had an office—at the top of the Empire State Building. Lukas had seen pictures of the building. Opa promised to take him for his birthday. You could see their house from the top, Opa said.

Another thing Lukas remembers: every few weeks, a brown Chevy sedan, and a man in sweater that looks like oatmeal, carrying a big reel-to-reel tape recorder. Oma carrying trays of mint tea to the study, wearing a strained smile as she offers the man a glass by the handle that fit around the teacups like a metal skirt. Quiet music and Opa’s loud, stumbling laugh, and the smell of his pipe. Being drawn onto Opa’s lap to look at the photo album with the man and the tape recorder: Opa in the desert, wearing a gray army uniform and smiling with a man with a long beard. Opa with the man wearing white robes and holding hands. The whole family in front of the
Empire State Building, making faces for the camera. Mama too, holding Marco by his ankles like a prize-winning fish. Without Lukas, of course. Mama lying in bed, smiling and looking sweaty and tired, like she was just running. The last picture of Mama, Oma always says, before The Doctors put her to sleep and Lukas silently came into the world. Such a peaceful baby, she always says. Then her eyes get wet and she shakes her head, closes the album and makes tea while she listens to the radio. Her name was Lea.

And have you noticed any emerging patterns in Lukas’ behavior? Does he frustrate easily? Seek competition from his peers? Escalate to hysterics? Sometimes he gets a little overwhelmed. Overwhelmed? He’ll get irritable if the swings are occupied when he wants a turn, or if all the balls are claimed at recess. He likes to play with the basketballs alone. He’ll jump and hurl the basketball down as hard as he can, see how high he can make it bounce. But he listens when I pull him aside and talk to him about sharing with the others, after he stomps it out. Pardon? You know, he runs off and has a bit of a tantrum, kicks over a few anthills, has a juice, and right as rain!

Lukas remembers a party. He remembers helping Oma make marzipan sweets. He remembers being careful, as told, when he wiped the little plates before Oma decorated them with little tarts, and he remembers cars lined up outside the house, gray, brown, red. He carried the plates into Opa’s study and got lost almost immediately, the noise of glass and laughter and legs of The Senator’s friends, like rows of smokestacks, gray, blue, black, while hands reached down to take a sweet, stroke his hair. He remembers
Opa’s voice and all the men holding their glasses up—not flowered teacups, this time—and he thinks he remembers crying, though he’d rather not. A wet kiss on his forehead, running out around the garage, and his grandfather’s blue Cadillac. Crawling across the long backyard, heaving gasps and mud stained knees, calming down to an even trot, stalking rabbits beneath the brush, his vision blurred by tears and rain, and rabbits far too quick to permit his game, anger, desperation, rage, rocks flung from a tiny fist. Seated, crying, all in vain.

Also in the backyard, a few weeks later: scabbed palms and a new chemistry set. Sitting the test tubes in a neat, clear line against a tree, feeling grown-up and proud—so delicate! Could it really be a set for children?—as his fists grind soft rocks and bits of chalk. A few drops from an unmarked brown bottle, a crumbled water biscuit, and a splash of perfect mud, sucked into a plastic syringe from the small pool he carves in the earth. He fills the tubes with dust and prayers, swirls each in turn, capped with a thumb, inspects the floating particles against the sun. But he knows, as he stores his gloomy brews in empty hotel shampoo bottles, that they will be no help raising Opa from the study couch.

No, Lukas is not right as rain. He does not like to run with Jackson anymore at recess, and during lunch he crushes his graham crackers into a mound of dust but does not eat. He’s begun to wet the bed again—demanded an oath of secrecy from his grandmother, his first words in weeks—and can’t sleep through the night. Not since he woke up early one April morning to a
half-remembered clap and found the driveway and garage had been repainted black. Eight-weeks later and the garage is still the wrong color. Now he stays up later than Marco—in secret, of course—peering through the blinds, waiting to see if it will happen again. If they’ll come back. Every morning he wakes up with a jump, and knows that they didn’t, and hears the same groan of the neighbor’s garage, and hears his grandmother call his siblings to breakfast, and knows that another day arrived, and his Opa isn’t coming back.

Across the playground: Jackson stands beside a wall, arms waving like a leaf in flight. Beside him, Willie lofts a tennis ball. Lukas drives his palms under the sand. He rubs his hands, watches the grains tumble down the slope: an earthquake in a box. Jackson calls, undeterred; Willie beats out a march against the wall. Lukas finally obeys. He climbs from the box, offers Jackson a nod of thanks as he rubs the last coat of sand between stinging knuckles. Jackson explains the rules while Willie throws, felt tears in tiny tufts against green concrete. The ball is thrown, and the race is on: each boy, in turn, has one bounce to return it to the wall. Second bounce: no good, the moment’s is lost, and the loser takes his place beside the great green block. Everybody takes a turn. Yours first, says Willie, and lets it hurl.

Lukas watches the ball jump off the wall, watches it curl towards the earth and soar back skyward. He stumbles back, finds the closing shadow, feels a burning stab as crusted fingers bite into soft felt yellow. He hears Jackson whoop—a grin breaks across his face—he wheels around, poised to return fire. Then he spies Nate, a boy one year younger, seated alone beside a
tetherball pole. Lukas takes careful aim and lets it fly—the missile lands an inch below the target’s eye. A sharp eruption and the quarry’s gone, the blast site still as before the war. Willie recovers the ball, smiles as he commends Lukas’s aim, and prepares to start the game again. But Jackson mentions a rule’s been broken: the ball bounced twice before touching home.

Now it’s Lukas’s turn to smile as he takes his place, palms clenched at his sides, eyes shut to the boys that stalk the wall. He feels the welcome lick of wind about his ears, smells the wet life of grass smudged into his knees. Nate’s cries roll across the empty field, and in his mind’s eye Lukas can see the teacher’s grim approach. He smiles wider, remembers Opa’s promise, thinks of the needle filled with mud from his grandma’s garden. He sets his shoulders and takes a breath, waits for the hint of breeze amid his hair, and silent lunge of whirring pain.
Afterward: On History and Narrativity

The stories that precede these pages are not, in the strictest sense, true. Nor is any a pure or perfect fiction, a historical “lie,” so to speak. Rather, they engage in the particular exercise in storytelling that surrounds events such as the Holocaust, events that transcend the boundaries of normative experience and therefore defy conventional techniques of historical representation. The impossibility of encapsulating an experience, whether “true” or fictional, of the Holocaust—“an event unprecedented in its brevity and extremity, somehow disconnected from past and future”—has been noted elsewhere. Any serious attempt to do so will be forced to reconcile the ethical limitations of writing an incomprehensible history fundamentally defined by trauma with the poor few narrative tools available at hand.

My project, as I will argue, has thus compelled me to assume a position akin to that of the historian, whose normative task is to extract a comprehensible narrative out of an overabundance of historical data. I realized very early in the process, however, that the stories I wrote could not have been written in a traditional, linear style. They could not have been written from the position of a third-person narrator that approached any semblance of omniscience (or even comprehension, which itself would toe the line of obscenity), nor could they offer a simple representation of chronology in which the events of the past exhibit an ethical (or even legible) bearing on

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the present or the future. The content of this project demanded a deviation from the conventions of style and genre.

This project also therefore does not conform to customary definitions of “fiction” or “reality,” both of which, I would argue, involve considerable ethical and aesthetic perils when applied to representing the Holocaust. Rather, my project is one of mediated historiography, in which I became, in Froma Zeitlin’s words, a “vicarious witness” in my attempt to explore a sensitive way of representing the Holocaust, and thereby access its abiding historical and cultural significance.5 My full rationale for pursuing such a project insists on a bit more elaboration, and will require that I mobilize a range of arguments about the representation of the human experience, moving from those that would seek to govern the ethical boundaries of narrative history and historiography, to a brief discussion of psychoanalytic discourses of trauma and repression, before closing with a consideration of the project of representing, or writing, trauma.

First, however, it seems appropriate to offer the reader an account of the circumstances that led me to pursue such a particular project of creative writing and historiography. The narratives that precede this essay are all based to some degree on the research I conducted at the National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, Maryland (hereafter, NACP) in August 2012 with the financial support of an Olin Grant. My stated intention for the grant was to investigate the legal protection of known Nazi war criminals during the opening decades of the Cold War. This intriguing and

deeply troubling episode of U.S. history has only been revealed with any
detail in the last decade, as the relevant documents have been declassified
and reviewed. I sought to ascertain the manner in which this episode
transpired; whether it was an institutional policy of the State Department that
allowed thousands of Nazi war criminals to live with relative ease and
comfort in the United States, or a haphazard (and deplorable, one might
argue, with no little legitimacy) succession of individual decisions and
political investments, impossible moral gambles, and personal favors.

I did not come to a conclusion on the question of legal culpability over
the course of those weeks. Furthermore, I had intended to unearth a number
of personal biographies, compromising portraits of ambivalent diplomacy
that would challenge the way I evaluated the U.S. State Department. In this
endeavor, too, I was not quite successful. Instead, I found myself ensnared in
a certain archive, Case Files Released Under the Nazi War Crimes and
Japanese Imperial Government Disclosure Acts (compiled ca. 1947 - 1994,
documenting the period ca. 1907 – 1994). I did discover an extraordinary
number of personal histories, far more than I could have envisioned, each
related with disarming ingenuousness and a breathtaking specificity of detail.
Yet I also discovered that each file contained unreliable and often redundant
testimonies, opportunistic character assassination embedded in unverifiable
intelligence, and no fewer than half a dozen official “personal profiles,” each
of which claimed historical authority. My notion of writing a coherent, self-
contained “personal biography” would be virtually impossible; it was unclear
such narratives existed at all.
The narratives included in this project are taken in large part from those I encountered at NACP. They have been twisted, repurposed, and rewritten; in some cases they appear nearly undistorted, while in others the “sources” are evident only as a creative influence, a concrete detail, or an enframed recollection. Even where they have been discarded in favor of the products of my imagination, this experience remains the foundation of my attempt to construct personal histories of the Holocaust as an event that transcends national, ethnic, and generational boundaries, and that continues to make its presence felt, decades letter, and thousands of miles from the parade-grounds in Poland.

1. The Human Document

Perhaps the first question to pose at this point (and the first question I posed myself) is: if one’s intention is to compose a narrative history of a historical event, an event not so very far removed from the present, what is to be (or should be) the role of witness testimony? Would not the most serious and responsible project seek to engage with the event itself as a living experience, as it occurred in a present, rather than merely as the past? It would be reasonable to assume that the writer of such a project would appeal to the experiences of witnesses of that event itself, or even directly conduct interviews, and that those interviews might constitute the most valuable research assets to such a writer. Such testimonies could be precious, not only due to their scarcity, but also by allowing the writer to achieve a degree of empathy for the experiences of the event in question, and therefore, to write a more sensitive and informed history.
It is a valid question, and an extremely important one for a project of narrative history. Indeed, this question takes on even more potency as I find myself in the privileged and peculiar historical position of belonging to the last generation that will be able to interview survivors of the Holocaust and the Second World War. But the purpose of my project is not the documentation of witness testimonies of the Holocaust, either for the sake of historical preservation, or for that of achieving some sort of textual verification of the event itself (although unfortunately such work continues to be needed). Rather, what was most intriguing to me was my own mediated act of “witnessing” the historical event, and how the account I reconstructed of it would be, by necessity, fundamentally reliant on the impossibility of objectivity.

My de-emphasizing of witness testimony is hardly without precedent. Renato Serra, among others, observed that a historical “document” is not an objective expression of historical reality. “A document can only express itself,” Serra writes, adding that every, “testimony is only a testimony of itself; of its immediate context (momento) of its origin, of its purpose.” If we substitute the “text” of a human witness for Serra’s historical “document,” then any act of bearing witness is invalidated as a representation of a historical fact. Even Claude Lanzmann, director and narratorial intelligence of the monumental 9½-hour Shoah (1985), has claimed that his film, which is

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exclusively composed of witness testimonies, is not a documentary, but rather a “fiction of the real.”

The human, as a subject of experience and an archive of memory, is a categorically unreliable historical document; “first-hand” testimony, in fact, does not even offer a single account of an event, but an account as one individual remembers it. If “testimony” does not bear explicit witness to anything but itself, the act of witnessing, then it cannot validate its referent, the historical event, as having occurred as remembered. And this position becomes increasingly unstable—and morally ambivalent—when the historian or writer of narrative history enters the realm of the repressed or unremembered memory, of experiences that do not want to be remembered. The value of the witness as a faithful representation of history becomes ever more suspect when that history approaches or breaches the limits of regular human experience. As Cathy Caruth explains, traumatic experiences are often encoded in memory by their very absence, thereby creating the “possibility of a history that is no longer straightforwardly referential” to self-contained historical events, a representation that is “aimed not at eliminating history but at resituating it in our understanding.”

This is not to suggest the impossibility of a “reality,” of events as they happened, but merely to express the manifold uncertainties implicated in any effort to access such a reality. In this thesis, I attempted to retain a sense of an impenetrable reality, even while pursuing a project of fiction, by framing each

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story with an excerpt of archival records, My intention is that these images will stand as insistent claims to an inscrutable historical reality that very well may not exist, but against which all other historical narratives are assessed. Indeed, a complete eradication of this reality, even as no more than a nominal intellectual touchstone, would collapse “history” into the realm of fiction. Yet I was, and remain, quite resigned to the impossibility of comprising any historical event, let alone an intercontinental world war and genocide, as a singular narrative. My experience at NACP amply demonstrated that witness testimony of an event such as the Holocaust—even one compiled and verified by the federal government—could only hope to offer a compromised account of history.

It was, therefore, necessary to dispossess these accounts of representative authority and fully recognize the difficulties involved in identifying an objective and unadulterated “reality” of the Holocaust. By engaging in the process of representing such a traumatized history in the absence of an authoritative historical record, I began the long process of exploring the relationship by which, as Dominick LaCapra claims, “art poses provocative questions to history.”

Fiction offers an effective means of accessing that with which history struggles; unencumbered by the same ethical proscriptions, fiction is endowed with a facility to transcend the immutable principles of historical “fact” in favor of the logic of style and form that allow it to penetrate the emotional experience of a history. By engaging in such an act of representation, however, I subjected myself to a barrage of ethical anxieties, and exposed myself to potential condemnation. Yet LaCapra

LaCapra, “Lanzmann’s Shoah,” 98.
writes, it is precisely the location of those ethical limits of representation that define and distinguish a historical lie, or an act of aesthetic insensitivity or recklessness, from a “fiction of the real.”

It would be profitable, at this point, to review some prominent notions of the ethical limitations of writing history, and identify those limits by which I defined my project.

2. Imaginary Truth

Saul Friedländer proposes the existence of two interrelated “crises of representation” implicated in claims to “truth,” or historical reality, by historical narratives. Hayden White refers to this process of transcribing a legible narrative onto a series of historical incidents as “historical emplotment.” This method of “emplotting” history is the very same undertaken by a historian or cultural theorist in the process of “writing” a history, and, as such, is an extraordinarily significant one; it creates, from anecdotal or discrete events, a comprehensible account to which we can ascribe meaning.

According to Friedländer, the first “crisis” of narrativizing history is epistemological, that is, the inconsistency in what is defined as “pre-established factual events” on which a history is based, or the failure to adhere faithfully and comprehensively to the representation of those facts. Yet even a meticulous commitment to a systematic historical record, according to Friedländer, is not ethically secure. The historical record, with its

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10 LaCapra, “Lanzmann’s Shoah,” 96.
density of technical language and statistic-heavy discourse may allow even
the most conscientious writer or reader, deadened by the absence of an
organizing narrative, to evade a communion with the truth (and horror) of
the past.\textsuperscript{13} Friedländer’s two-volume history of the Holocaust, \textit{Nazi Germany
and the Jews}, avoids this dilemma by divorcing the personal and particular
dimensions from his wider narrative of military history and geopolitics of the
Second World War. Friedländer juxtaposes the relation of historical events
with a study in “micro-history” of the persecution of the European Jewry. His
history thus carefully avoids the problematic tendency that emplotment
poses, according to White, to thematize history by imposing “story-
meanings,” or “plot types” (the tragic, epic, comic, and the like). This type of
narrativization subordinates history to its means of representation; its
emphasis is on the legibility of narrative, rather than fidelity to the historical
record.\textsuperscript{14} As my project makes no claim to historical accuracy, however, and is
indeed opposed to the possibility of a “historical reality,” I would like to turn
my attention to White’s second crisis of representation, that of ethics.

The question that naturally arises in White’s “ethical crisis” of
historical emplotment of the Holocaust is: what kinds of narratives of this
history may be responsibly and conscientiously emplotted? Does the nature
of the events themselves accredit only one type of narrative, or set absolute
limits on emplotment? Can the Holocaust, White asks, be responsibly
fictionalized—as it has been many times—or represented in any of the other
literary “modes, symbols, plot types, and genres our culture provides for
\textsuperscript{13} Friedländer, \textit{Reflections on Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death}. (Bloomington:
Indiana University Press, 1993), 89.
\textsuperscript{14} White, “Historical Emplotment,” 38.
'making sense' of such extreme events in our past?" Or, as Berel Lang claims, is only “the most literalist chronicle of the facts of genocide,” capable of a claim to “truth?"\textsuperscript{15}

The answer, according to White, lies in the medium of historical emplotment itself, one it shares not only with fiction, but with all literary representations: language. Unlike scientific texts, which employ a technical language to identify quantifiable, or even just verifiable phenomena, history operates in a “so-called natural or ordinary” language in order to portray a story. This language of narrative, according to White, is perceived as a “neutral ‘container’ of historical fact, and therefore a mode of discourse ‘naturally’ suited to representing historical events.” Historical narratives, as such, may be assessed as “linguistic entities” akin to scientific quantities, signifying “real” events that need only to be written for their “truthfulness” to be revealed and recognized.\textsuperscript{16}

The process of emplotment deviates from this ideal of historiography, White suggests, in that it does not employ narrative language as a “neutral container” of quantifiable, or even legible, accounts of the past. Instead, he writes, emplotment offers an “interpretation of the facts [emphasis original]” of a historical chronicle by subordinating “factual statements” to the formal qualities of narrative.\textsuperscript{17} More vital to White, and to my project, however, is his proposal of a pair of rhetorical oppositions of historical emplotment, which serve to differentiate historical “interpretation” from “the facts” of a historical chronicle. White posits the distinction between “real” and “imaginary”

\textsuperscript{15} White, “Historical Emplotment,” 38, 43-46
\textsuperscript{16} White, “Historical Emplotment,” 37.
\textsuperscript{17} White, “Historical Emplotment,” 39.
narratives, and between “true” narratives, which involve a critical examination of the facts of a historical event, even if the narrative details may deviate from it, and properly “false” narratives\(^\text{18}\)

Within this framework, my project offers a series of fictionalized narrative emplotments that are “imaginary” in terms of the mechanics of plot and character, yet “true” in that they are bound by a fidelity to a “real” history—or, in my case, the various “realities” that I encountered at NACP. The individual figures and the details of plot in “Field Triage” and the past tense “recollected narrative” of “American Family History” are not “real” insofar as they are not narrativizations of specific individuals and “lived”

\(^{18}\) White, ““Historical Emplotment,”” 39. Phillip Roth’s *The Plot Against America*, or any such work of fictional historical revisionism, may stand as an exemplary “false” emplotment. Friedländer’s *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, alternatively, may be construed as both a “real” and a “true” story, in that it proceeds from a systematic analysis of historical data while incorporating personal micro-histories of everyday life, a form of writing that came to be known in Germany during the 1980’s as “*Alltagsgeschichte*.” Chapter 4, for example, slides between personal experiences and engagements with the acceleration of the war in the East, assimilating the human centrality of the “true” story into a wider analysis of military and geopolitical history that constitutes the “real.” The chapter begins:

On September 29, 1941, the Germans shot 33,700 Kiev Jews in the Babi Yar ravine near the city. As rumors about the massacre spread, some Ukrainians initially expressed doubts. “I only knew one thing,” Iryna Khoroshunova inscribed in her diary on that same day,” there is something terrible, horrible going on, something inconceivable, which cannot be understood, grasped or explained.” A few days later, her uncertainty had disappeared...In the meantime, the war in the East was entering its fourth month. For Dawid Rubinowicz the unleashing of the German attack was merely a noisy event at first: “It was still dark,” he noted on June 22, “when father woke us all up and told us to listen to that terrible din coming from the north-east. (Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945*. [New York: HarperCollins, 2007], 197-198). Friedländer’s history is a monumental achievement, not only for the breadth of knowledge it contains and the stylistic ease with which it narrates its history, but because he harnesses the emotionally compelling dimensions of an *Alltagsgeschichte* while eschewing the fictionalization or thematization of narrative material. The work remains faithful to the historical chronicle even when his focus is turned toward the particular.
experiences in the historical record. They remain “true,” however, because they are emblematic of, and indeed take their raw materials from numerous recorded experiences of Nazi war criminals and collaborators who were subjected to a process of acculturation to violent atrocities before moving into hiding in the United States in the postwar period. Similarly, “Child’s Play” imagines the experience of Tscherim Soobzokov’s grandson in the months following the assassination of the former Waffen-SS officer, but uses that event as source-text and narrative motivation to explore a “real” experience of child trauma and the “language of unspeakability” that frequently surrounds discussion of the Holocaust. The exception is “Combat Refuse,” which comes closest to the incarnation of a “real” narrative, in that it incorporates (actual, but amended) federal memoranda in the narrative representation of a real event, the theft of Raphael’s Portrait of a Young Man, but fictionalizes the progression of plot. In doing so, it offers an imaginary interpretation of a history event as it (may have) occurred for any number of similar incidents of art theft, and thus strives to evade sliding into a properly false narrative.

Pierre Vidal-Nanquet goes a step further in conflating the work of historical emplotment and fiction, which he locates precisely in the act of “writing” history. According to Vidal-Nanquet, the historian “produces space and time,” in the act of writing a historical narrative, and thus engages in a process of world-creation analogous to that of the writer of fiction.¹⁹ This definition of the historian has come quite a distance from classical notions of

historiography in recognizing history’s indebtedness to the creative process of narrativization. It does not, according to this perspective, require a great rhetorical leap to construe my project as one of historiography, as an exercise of adopting the role of the historian in an effort to emplot a “real” narrative, albeit an “imaginary one,” on a resistant historical record.

3. A Whiff of Suspicion

Froma Zeitlin describes the precarious moral position of the author of a Holocaust emplotment, whose work is always “surrounded by a whiff of suspicion, if not potential scandal.” Fiction, Zeitlin notes, is frequently subordinated to the moral security of historiography as less reliable, “a weaker kind of testimony.” More gravely, however, fiction is also condemned as a “misleading discourse that continually risks the unforgivable error of conflating ‘verisimilitude’ with reality.” It is the danger of misrepresenting fiction as “reality,” and therefore allowing the latter to be “exploited or appropriated, domesticated or trivialized, falsified or aestheticized” for personal profit, that creates an aversion to the “historical fiction” as an exploitative genre. This risk is particularly urgent to an event such as the Holocaust, when the extremity of the “reality” at hand is at risk of being deemphasized as merely an expedient subject for formal experimentation, “for a surge of the imagination, for a use of aesthetic effects, for a

20 Notable among such theories is that of Henri Griffet, an eighteenth-century French Jesuit historian. Griffet likened the role of the historian to that of a legal justice, verifying the reliability of textual “witnesses” in order to reconstruct a faithful account of events as they occurred. Ginzburg, “Just One Witness,” 85-86. 21 Zeitlin, “New Soundings,” 174.
demonstration of literary brilliance and the power of one’s intellect.” It is this insecurity that has justified the segregation of fiction from history, for the fear that the former, once admitted into the consecrated realm of historiographical discourse, allows reality to be “desanctified,” subordinated to the ego of the author, or worse, erroneously reclassified as fiction.

Yet Zeitlin acknowledges the “indispensable role that the imagination must play” to supplement memory when the latter is entrusted as the sole author of the historical record. She goes on to concede, in a supremely pragmatic manner, that fiction will only become exponentially more important as the last survivors perish and the Holocaust “inevitably passes into history as a trauma both remembered and not remembered, transmitted and not transmitted.” To this prognosis I would add that fiction has offered an extremely useful means to explore the “anomalies, enigmas, and dead ends met with in discussion” of the Holocaust, and to overcome the language of unspeakability that so often pervades its representation. Because fiction is not limited in terms of form or content in the same manner as the “real” story, it has offered writers and historians the opportunity to develop “a new form of historical reality.” This form of realist fiction allows the writer of historiography to experiment with style and language in order address events that violate standard notions representation. As such, it also presents a challenge to the ensconced conventions of nineteenth-century literary realism, wherein “realism” denotes not only a naturalistic representation of space and

time, but also of the past and present as component pieces of the continuous process of history. Fiction may therefore function to exorcize the exceptional event from the ongoing flow of history; it allows history, and its bearing on human ethics and experience, to be examined in isolation from the assumptions of prevailing narratives.

The narratives that constitute this project were composed within this ethic, which White terms “cultural modernism,” of applying the linguistic or formal experiential properties of fiction to the composition of personal histories. The stories are structured around fragmentary or disrupted narration, which is dispossessed of the organizing intelligence a single stable and focalizing narrator, which normally functions to mediate and create meaning out of narrative events. The purpose of such a formal construction is perhaps clearest in “American Family History,” in which the bifurcated narration works to reveal the rupture between the knowledge of the contemporary narrator and his European predecessor’s experience of the Second World War. This dual narration serves to emphasize the inaccessibility of the wartime experience to a modern American consciousness, which has constructed a meaning out of the past—interrupted by the increasingly violent interpolation of a National Lampoon Radio broadcast—that is categorically dissociated from the history that remains unavailable. It is only the material reminders of the geographic and cultural displacement at the center of the modern American heritage that are able to transcend, and thereby identify, this gulf of narration.

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This fragmentary narration serves a psychological function in “Field Triage” and “Child’s Play,” to which I will return below, in order to explore the operation of traumatic experience and the difficulty of storytelling when the past is incomprehensible, or even actively repressed. Though the stories are each organized around a central character, each exhibits a discomfort recalling their personal histories. Unable to make sense of the events they have experienced, Stanley and Lukas resort to exercises in cataloguing the behaviors and routines in which they seek psychological security from the traumas to which they compulsively and inevitably return. In their respective failures of recollection and narration, these stories lend expression to the challenge of writing history in the absence of an authoritative historical record. On a stylistic level, however, they also invert the traditional role of the narrator to reconstruct and organize a narrative, recoiling from the reminders, both internal and external, of a history that remains both psychologically and historiographically inaccessible.

The narrative structure of “Combat Refuse” exhibits the most thorough deconstruction of narration, rejecting both the structural unity of traditional narration as well as its ultimate goal: the creation of meaning. The story is composed of eight narrative segments—including federal correspondences, internal memos, a diary entry, a screenplay scene,27 and two sequences of

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27 The screenplay scene constitutes a caricature of the archetypal police interrogation, a crucial narrative technique employed in the opening act of the film noir in order to motivate the recollection of narrative information. The production history of the film noir bears noting, as well: critical consensus locates the beginning of the American film with the films of European émigré directors Michael Curtiz, Josef von Sternberg, and Fritz Lang (who fled Nazi intimidation). By the Second World War, certainly, the crime-thriller was entrenched as a popular genre following the success of Citizen Kane (Orson Welles, 1941) and
third person, focalized narration—which occupy various degrees of mediation between the story and the form of narration. These segments sequentially approach the narrative authority and reliability of a singular narrator, yet they ultimately fail to coalesce into a linear, self-contained plot. Instead, what is left is a cacophony of voices, which offer claims to narration but fail to tell a story, becoming, in essence, an exercise in not telling a story. “Combat Refuse” thus constitutes a formal experiment in retelling a history that is devoid not only of narrative but also of witnesses, or a history in which the only witnesses have been silenced, repressed, or lost.

It might be said that the narratives of these pieces are quite spare, even to the point of inviting the description “minimalist.” The pieces also betray a consistent generational gap: the events they represent, for the most part, are confined historically to the Second World War and a period between the 1960s and mid-1980s. I designed the four narratives with these related absences in order to express, within the form of fiction, the dilemma of the very process of writing history. Indeed, each narrative enacts the impossibility of explicating a history of the Holocaust, of rendering it comprehensible and conveying it to another generation, in a failed exercise of parenthood. In “Field Triage,” this failure is one of a psychologically traumatized collaborator, who is deprived the opportunity to rewrite his own history, and in doing so, his identity, in the experience of raising a daughter. In “Combat Refuse,” the pertinent schism is one between a European cultural

Shadow of a Doubt (Alfred Hitchcock, 1943), but by the early 1960s, the cycle had descending into self-referential parody and “neo-noir” (Welles’ Touch of Evil [1958] is often cited as the last “true” noir film). It is this latter cycle that the scene emulates, though its premise—the escape from Nazi persecution—was a central interest of the early film noir.
predecessor and an emerging utilitarian modernism, which naively fails to recognize the humanistic values and codes of meaning that defined the former’s greatest achievements even as it seeks to appreciate and improve upon them. In “Child’s Play” and “American Family History,” then, the failure is of a silent generation to act as witnesses to history—both to its personal experiences of horror as well as its universal experiences of cultural dislocation—to an orphaned third generation, which is forced to create its own understanding of a history from which it is psychologically and narratively divorced. What is left, in place of historical narratives that have not been transmitted, is a fragmentation of identity and consciousness, a fracturing of form and causality in which the storytellers remain silent and the listeners are forced to reconstruct an imperfect history themselves.

According to Friedländer, however, this sort of nonlinear representation of history and narrative is susceptible to degenerate into the elements of “kitsch,” a contradictory and morally tenuous aesthetic that foregrounds a possible idealization of reality in the face of the historical record (and has therefore lead to fetishized notions of “Nazi chic,” as in the popular Kander and Ebb musical Cabaret). Friedländer denotes this revisionist tendency by a severe “aesthetic frission,” between the tonal harmony of kitsch and the thematic centrality of death and destruction. Instead of an engagement with the historical chronicle, “kitsch” exhibits a profusion of symbolism and a preoccupation and aestheticization of the material minutiae
of historical experience (Hitler’s lifelong difficulty matching socks to suits is among Friedländer’s primary examples).28

Friedländer confesses to the attraction of such circumstantial details of individual memory, which he terms “the ephemeral,” and into which his autobiography does at times depart to offer the reader more evocative (or at least legible) imagery. Yet he maintains the ethical imperative of effacing “the ephemeral” from a serious text of historiography, in which excessive attention to such detail not only allows a text to evade confrontation with “the essential,” that is, the thematic “truth” of historical experience, but threatens to corrode the “nucleus” of the historical chronicle with which it engages.29 He claims that this obsession with the “faltering and ephemeral” seeks to exorcise the violence of the past by maintaining its distance from the present reality, and therefore, its comprehensibility.30,31 Yet I would argue that the manipulation of “the ephemeral” can also be an extremely useful instrument in the practice of a crucial aspect of emplotting the Holocaust, and in which “the ephemeral” marks the very notion of incomprehensibility: the representation of trauma.

4. The Return of the Repressed

An informed study of traumatic experience is not only vital to a project of Holocaust Alltagsgeschichte, but also an essential means of investigating the very nature of a phenomenon that resists representation. As such, it will be instructive to turn here to a brief discussion of some prevailing theories of

28 Friedländer, Reflections on Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death, 26-27, 16-17, 63.
29 Friedländer, When Memory Comes, 95-96.
30 Friedländer, When Memory Comes, 69
trauma and traumatic memory. Pierre Janet defined memory as the central organizing system of human cognition, cataloguing experience into “ever-enlarging and flexible meaning schemes.” Janet also distinguishes between habit memory, or “implicit memory,” a process of reaction to environmental conditions that humans share with animals, and “narrative memory.” The latter, a distinctively human faculty, integrates stimuli into preexisting meaning schemes in order to interpret experiences. The “traumatic” experience, then, according to Janet, is that which withstands integration into the normal channels of memory, causing it to “become dissociated from conscious awareness and voluntary control,” and to resurface in the form of a flashback or repetitive reenactment.  

Contemporary cognitive research identifies three memory schemes, or organizational modes of mental experience that the human mind develops as it matures: somatosensory (inactive), perceptual representations (iconic), and symbolic and linguistic. Trauma, an event that violates normal mental organization, has also been frequently associated with “speechless terror;” it is an event that transcends normative linguistic orientation, and is therefore encoded in memory on the somatosensory or iconic level, in sensations, behaviors, or flashbacks. It is an experience of cognitive disturbance, marked by an inability to create meaning out of experience, which occurs some time after a precipitating event. The experience of trauma, according to Cathy Caruth, is therefore marked by a paradox: it is an event that is “never

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32 Onno van der Hart and Besel A. van der Kolk, “The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma,” in Trauma: Explorations in Memory Memory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 159-160.
fully experienced as it occurs,” yet persists, often for years. Trauma demonstrates a history that “literally has no place;” it is an event that cannot be located in a linear or rational conception of time, either in the past, or in the present, in which its insistent reenactments and psychological consequences are not fully understood.34

Trauma “both urgently demands historical awareness,” writes Caruth, at the same time that it “denies our usual modes of access to it.”35 It is therefore a forceful analogue to the process of emplotting the Holocaust, which is itself a phenomenon that lacks precise historical limits, in terms of political, economic, cultural, and psychological traumas.36 Indeed, Friedländer claims that “no mythical framework” has yet arisen in the Jewish imagination in order to “work through” the traumas of the Holocaust, and much of the art and literature that addresses it are defined by the absence of memory or redemption.37 It is this sense of history as unresolved personal trauma that I sought to explore in the first and last constituents to this project, “Field Triage” and “Child’s Play.” The former is primarily occupied with the resurgence of repressed memories that defy historical rationalization, as well as the manner in which feelings of guilt problematize the subject’s narrative of the past and torments their experience of the present. “Child’s Play,” alternatively, seeks to represent the formative stages of trauma, the

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34 Caruth, “Recapturing the Past,” 151.
35 Caruth, “Recapturing the Past,” 151, 153.
36 Diner, “The Destruction of Narrativity,” 78
37 Saul Friedländer, “Trauma and Transference” in Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 120-121
experiences of psychic and physical repression (often, in children, manifested in asocial behavior) of an experience that resists comprehension.

Caruth notes that the traumatic experience is characterized by a “vivid and precise return” of the repressed memory, a pathological repetition that forces the victim to confront not only “the [historical] truth of the event,” but also “the truth of its incomprehensibility.” 38 It is for this reason that both “Field Triage” and “Child’s Play” exhibit a fascination—an obsession, even—with discrete and tangible objects. In order to convey the unspeakable nature of the repressed trauma—what Friedländer would term “the essential”—I adopted a form in which the experience of trauma is only legible in its absence from or abrupt and violent resurgence into the narration. Friedländer writes that “working through ultimately means testing the limits of necessary and ever-defeated imagination.” 39 The narrative consciousnesses through which both stories are focalized offer a catalogue of the material property of memory—the tennis balls, playing cards, pressed slacks, clipped hairs—of “the ephemeral,” which signifies “the essential” by virtue of its very absence from the text. In this way, my intention with these two stories is to offer a kind of exercise in the mechanics of trauma: “Child’s Play” represents the early stages of grief and dissociation that will ultimately, through repression and repetition, become the psychological collapse of memory and history in “Field Triage.”

Friedländer also posits that the repression of memory is creates an intractable conflict between “individual common memories,” those specific to

39 Friedländer, “Trauma and Transference,” 132-133.
an individual experience and capable of “restor[ing] the self to the normal pre- and post-camp routines,” and “deep memory,” or “collective, social memory,” which is capable of persisting in cultural narratives, unresolved, for decades. Interviews with Holocaust survivors support such a duality of memory, but also, by extension, of identity. Survivors’ testimonies often blend narratives of the past and the present, where “past meaning schemes,” feelings of doubt, humiliation, and guilt characterize and define the survivor’s experience of the present.

Friedländer claims that the most significant challenge for a historian of the Holocaust is the process of reconciling these two claims to memory. For the historian, according to Friedländer, “working-through” entails observing the ethical imperative to render as “real” an account as individual memories will allow without relenting to the “temptation of closure” that deep memory prohibits. Closure, then, represents an irresponsible avoidance or omission on the part of the historian, a failure to completely confront “what remains indeterminate, elusive, opaque,” or incommunicable in the experience of (personal and collective) trauma. A conclusion that so manufactures closure, particularly one that is applied to a history of trauma, fails to recognize the essential indeterminacy not only central to the experience of trauma, but also to the nature of history and historical narrative.

Each of the narrative installments of this project denies a rational representation of time and experience; each is also marked by the absence of narrative closure. These stories are inscribed with the impossibility of closure

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40 Friedländer, “Trauma and Transference,” 119.
42 Friedländer, “Trauma and Transference,” 130-131.
because on the levels of narrative form and content, they operate in, and are suffused with, the experience of trauma. For many victims of trauma, the precipitating event appears in history “not on a sequence but on a simultaneity.” To ascribe closure to such a narrative, therefore, is to ascribe an artificial structure of meaning on an experience that has yet to be properly situated in a cause-effect relationship with history, an experience that, “if it can be told at all, it is still a (re)experience.” It is precisely this historical dislocation that continues to motivate discussions of the ethics of representing the Holocaust nearly seventy years after the Nazi “Final Solution” came to a halt. If nothing else, it is clear that any serious attempt to engage with the Holocaust historiographically must accept its “fundamental irreconcilability” with our notions of morality, memory, and experience, and therefore eschew the narrative logic of closure.

The stories comprised by this project therefore end precisely at points of departure—a face recognized, a trail lost, a medal discovered, a ball thrown—at which the repressed history of trauma threatens to breach the limits of memory and demand recognition and (violent) reconciliation. They are moments not of conclusion, but of the breakdown of narration, the stasis that precedes eruption. These endings point not to an undefined and unspeakable past, but to an unknown and unforeseeable future that will be defined by an unacknowledged trauma. Yet these stories are also fundamentally personal stories; as Janet has proposed, “memory itself is an

43 Van der Hart and van der Kolk, “The Intrusive Past,” 176-177.
44 As I quoted in the preface to this project, the Holocaust “remains equally insistent and absent in the nightmare language of historical reality.” Haidu, “The Dialectics of Unspeability,” 293.
45 Diner, “The Destruction of Narrativity,” 78
action: essentially, it is the action of telling a story.”46 Any project of representing traumatic memory, even of an event as staggering in breadth as the Holocaust, is also ultimately a project of reclaiming the narrative, and the identity, of an individual silenced by an incommunicable experience.

It is for precisely this reason that the process of emplotting personal histories is so crucial to reconciling the profound dislocation between individual memory and collective or cultural narratives. This process is indeed all the more urgent not only when the event or experience in question is one marked by acute and extensive social, cultural, political, and spiritual traumas, but when the terms of its representation has served as the very foundation (or repression) of individual and cultural identity. As I hope my own personal process of “pseudo-witnessing” has demonstrated, the process of personal historiography offers formal and stylistic strategies to address and enact the unresolved crisis of representing a history is defined precisely by the unknowable or incommunicable. Yet such emplotments also serve the equally important role of giving voice histories that may otherwise remain silent, repressed by the dominance of prevailing cultural narratives or the debilitating mechanics of psychological trauma. These narratives can explore the very inaccessibility and incomprehensibility of history, the memories and identities that are lost unless they are written, unless those histories are told.

46 Van der Hart and van der Kolk, “The Intrusive Past,” 175.
Bibliography

What follows is a list of the works I consulted over the course of the past year in the preparation and composition of this project. Though not every work included below has made its way into a notation in the preceding pages, they have all been important in introducing me to established methods and theories of addressing my subject, and to providing me with a background in the historical data of that subject. I have broadly divided the list by the type of sources, as each informed a different part of my project. The list is organized as follows: primary materials, federal documents, and testimonies from NACP; scholarly reviews and internal reviews and assessments commissioned by the State and Justice Departments, also from NACP; secondary, scholarly, and literary texts; and film (including both documentary and narrative films). My hope is such a list may give the reader a sense of the texts and traditions of thought that I consulted and assimilated in my own consideration and development of the subject.

The photographs that precede Parts I-III of this thesis were taken during the course of my research at NACP. The two newspaper articles that precede Part IV were located online, through the Olin Library Microform Archive Historical Newspapers: New York Times (1851-Current File). Full references for the documents are below:


Part II: Photo negatives of 3 paintings (Raphael Santi’s Portrait of a Young Man, Unknown Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci’s Lady with an Ermine); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts, compiled 1942 – 2004; RG 65, Class 163, File 11033, Section 001, NARA Box# 001, Location 230 86/19/01.

Part III: Personal correspondence addressed to Viorel Trifa; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts, compiled 1942 – 2004; RG 65, Class 009, File 62592, Section 001, NARA Box# 001, Location 230 86/03/01.

Part IV:
Primary Archival Material:

Jerome Brentar, “The Strange Case of John Demjanjuk.” Transcribed by employee of FBI Cleveland Branch. Cleveland: Airtel to FBI Director, Washington, D.C., June 20, 1984. National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 105, File 335639, Section 001, NARA Box # 133, Location 230 86/10/06.

Files related to Andrija Artukovic; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 100, File 361810, Section 002, NARA Box # 074 & 075, Location 230 86/12/06.

Files related to Robert D. Chisholm/Herbert Erasmus Moy; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 017, File 9220, Section 001, NARA Box # 001, Location 230 86/03/01.

Files related to John Demjanjuk; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 095, File 276086, Section 001, NARA Box # 002, Location 230 86/10/06.

Files related to Eduard Fishel (including Eduard Fishel, “Contribution to the Guidance of Missiles); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 105, File 010752, Section 001, NARA Box# 113 & 114, Location 230 86/15/06

Files related to Radislav Grujicic; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 105, File 073149, Section 001, NARA Box# 168, Location 230 86/16/07.

Files related to Josef Mengele; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 105, File 098306, Section 004, NARA Box #074, Location 230 86/14/07.

Files related to Hugo Perls; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi &
Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 105, File 047210, Section 001, NARA Box# 167, Location 230 86/16/06.

Files related to Redzone Project/Operation Paperclip; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 105, File 008090, Section EBF 0863, NARA Box# 113, Location 230 86/15/06.

Files related to Arthur Rudolph; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Criminal Division; Office of Special Investigations; RG 60, Class 151, File 0131, Section 001, NARA Box# 001, Location 230 86/18/07.

Files related to Fredrick Wilhelm Scherer (Czartorsky lost paintings); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 163, File 06029, Section 001, NARA Box# 001, Location 230 86/19/01.

Files related to Helmut Schreiber; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 105, File 047588, Section 001, NARA Box# 167, Location 230 86/16/06.

Files related to Tscherim Soobzokov; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 105, File 071208, Section BULKY 07, NARA Box# 167, Location 230 86/16/06.

Files related to Tscherim Soobzokov; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 105, File 071208, Section BULKY 13, NARA Box# 168, Location 230 86/16/07.

Files related to Wassyl Stroncickj (Czartoryski lost paintings); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts, compiled 1942 – 2004; RG 65, Class 163, File 11033, Section 001, NARA Box# 001, Location 230 86/19/01.

Files related to Valerian Trifa; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi
& Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 009, File 62592, Section 001, NARA Box# 001, Location 230 86/03/01.

Files related to Viorel (Valerian) Trifa and Boleslavs Maikovskis; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 095, File 223031, Section 001, NARA Box# 002, Location 230 86/10/06.

Files related to Waldner Weiler; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Investigative Records; Classified Files Released Under Nazi & Japanese War Crimes Disclosure Acts; RG 65, Class 105, File 052705, Section 001, NARA Box# 167, Location 230 86/16/06.

Scholarly Sources from Archives:

Excerpts from a series of internal scholarly reports commissioned by the Central Intelligence Agency of American Cold War intelligence operations in Europe and authored by Kevin C. Ruffner, CIA historian on staff at the CIA Directorate of Intelligence, and Donald P. Steury, CIA Officer in Residence at the University of Southern California.


Secondary and Scholarly Material, Memoir, and Fiction:


Browning, Christopher R. “German Memory, Judicial Interrogation, and Historical Reconstruction: Writing Perpetrator History from Postwar Testimony.” In Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the ‘Final Solution,’ edited by Saul Friedländer, 22-36.


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Film:

(The title of the preface to this thesis has been taken from the title of a South Korean film, On the Occasion of Remembering the Turning Gate (Hong Sang-soo, 2002). I felt that this title contained a certain indescribable, evocative quality that defied any simple definition of the time and location of the act of narration, and was therefore appropriate to my essay. I do not know if the film’s original title [“Saenghwalui balgyeon”] signifies any such feeling in Korean.)

I also viewed a number of films that address themes central to my project, such as issues of representation and narrativization of the Holocaust, in the course of my research for the Olin Fellowship and this thesis (as well as, it must be noted, in my coursework for FILM 325 National Cinemas: Eastern Europe). While these films did not constitute a crucial theoretical foundation for my thesis, they were nonetheless instructive when viewed as narrative texts that grapple with the problems of representing trauma, memory, and history, and the problematic oppositions between national or cultural narratives of history and personal memories of the Holocaust. I have included a brief list below of the most notable films, which span generic categories of documentary, fiction, and memoir.

The notation is as follows: Title (“English language translation,” Director, Year of Release, Countries of Production).

*Apt Pupil* (Bryan Singer, 1998, United States, France)

*Europa, Europa* (Agnieszka Holland, 1990, Germany, France, Poland)

*Der Untergang* (“Downfall,” Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2004, Germany, Austria, Italy)

*Die Blechtrommel* (“The Tin Drum,” Volker Schlöndorff, 1979, West Germany, France, Poland, Yugoslavia)

*Hiroshima mon amour* (Alain Resnais, 1959, France, Japan)
In Einem Jahr Mit 13 Monden (“In a Year of Thirteen Moons,” Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1978, West Germany)

Jakob, der Lünger (“Jacob, the Liar,” Frank Beyer, 1975, East Germany, Czechoslovakia)

La vita è bella (“Life is Beautiful,” Roberto Benigni, 1997, Italy)

Le chagrin et la pitié (“The Sorrow and the Pity,” Max Ophuls, 1969, France, Switzerland, West Germany)

Lili Marleen, (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1981, West Germany)

Mephisto (István Szabó, 1981, West Germany, Hungary, Austria)

Nuit et brouillard (“Night and Fog,” Alain Resnais 1955, France)

Ochbod na korze (“The Shop on Main Street,” Ján Kadár, 1965, Czechoslovakia)

Ostre sledované vlaky (“Closely Watched Trains,” Jirí Menzel, 1966, Czechoslovakia)

The Pianist (Roman Polanski, 2002, France, Germany, Poland, United Kingdom)

Sorstalanság (“Fateless,” Lajos Koltai, 2005, Hungary, Germany, United Kingdom, Israel)