University of Alberta

Silence and Voices:
Family History and Memorialization in Intergenerational Holocaust Literature

by

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For Pearce and Lewis

Abstract

As survivors age, soon there will be no living witnesses of the Holocaust. At this turning point in history, my research examines how, and for what purposes, family history has been recorded by members of multiple generations of Jewish families in France, Canada, and the United States. Within an intergenerational continuum, my research compares works in English and French by Irène Némirovsky, Élisabeth Gille, Denise Epstein, Mayer Kirshenblatt and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Simon Schneiderman, Daniel Mendelsohn, and Jonathan Safran Foer in order to assess the various ways in which members of different generations have grappled with the Holocaust and its aftermath, as well as how they have memorialized Holocaust victims, survivors, and their descendents in different textual forms. By situating the works that I have chosen within a larger memorial tradition, examining the changing nature of textual memorialization in the digital age, and assessing the pedagogical role of literary representations of Holocaust family history, my research addresses the implications of intergenerational Holocaust literature for contemporary readers and members of generations that are yet to come.

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Table of Contents

Introduction: The Textual Record 1

Part One: Family History and Memorialization in Intergenerational Holocaust Literature 4

Part Two: Texts in Context: Memorialization, Generational Categorization, Narrative, and Family History 18

Part Three: The Textual Record Revisited 51

Chapter One: Family History: Holocaust Victims and the '1.5 Generation' 53

Part One: Irène Némirovsky's Suite française 59

Part Two: Élisabeth Gille's Le mirador: mémoires rêvés and Le paysage de cendres and Denise Epstein's Survivre et vivre: entretiens avec Clémence Boulouque 90

Part Three: Conclusion 120

Chapter Two: Ways of Looking at the Past: The 0.5 Generation, Their Children, and the Second Generation 125

Part One: Mayer Kirshenblatt's and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust 134

Part Two: Simon Schneiderman's Preoccupied with My Father 165

Part Three: Conclusion 185

Chapter Three: 'Return' Narratives: The Third Generation and the Grandchildren of the 0.5 Generation 193

Part One: Daniel Mendelsohn's The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million 203

Part Two: Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated 229

Part Three: Conclusion 267

Conclusion: Off the Printed Page 272

Part One: A Digital World 274

Part Two: The Scholar and the Text, The Text and the Classroom 290

Part Three: Silence and Voices 305

Endnotes 307

Works Cited 320

Introduction

The Textual Record

"The time of horrors I leave for future worlds. I write because I must write – a consolation in my time of horror. For future generations I leave it as a trace" (Kruk, N. pag.).[1] So wrote Herman Kruk in 1944, in a diary that recorded his experiences in Warsaw, the Vilna Ghetto, and Estonian labour camps between September 1939 and September 1944 (N. pag., ix).[2] Kruk was born in Płock, Poland in 1897 and fled to Vilna during the Second World War (Harshav, Introduction xl, xliii). There, in "the Jerusalem of Lithuania," he established the Vilna ghetto library and worked to rescue books and manuscripts from the Nazis as part of "The Paper Brigade" (Harshav, Introduction xxix, xliv-xlv, Sutter 226). According to Benjamin Harshav, "[o]n September 17, 1944, one day before the liberation by the Red Army, Kruk buried his last diaries in Lagedi camp in the presence of six witnesses. The next day, he and most remaining Jews in Klooga and Lagedi were shot and burned on a pyre" (Preface xix, xlvii). After the war, Nisan Anolik, a member of that group of witnesses, retrieved Kruk's diary and returned it to Vilna (Harshav, Preface xix). Later, what had been recovered of this diary and other parts of Kruk's writing were "assembled and published in the original Yiddish by YIVO in 1961" (Harshav, Preface xix, xvii, xiii). After over four decades, The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania, edited by Harshav and translated into English by Barbara Harshav, was released (Harshav, Introduction xlvii). Not only is Harshav's work a testament to Kruk's belief in the possibilities of the written word and a heart-wrenching example of the textual records that

were created for future generations during the Holocaust, but it is also a fascinating example of the textual reconstructive process in which members of those generations have engaged. In Harshav's extensive Introduction, he discusses the difficulties associated with assembling the remnants of Kruk's diary that did not appear in the previous edition, as well as contending with the blanks in the text that resulted from the sections of the narrative that did not survive (Harshav, xlvii-li). Throughout my research, The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania has functioned as a striking reminder that what is written in a book is not the only story that is contained within a work – the events surrounding a work's creation, dissemination, and reception are also important parts of the stories it can tell (Young, Writing 37, 10, 38).

Kruk's diary is only one of the many types of written and visual records that were created in ghettos, concentration camps, and hiding places throughout Europe during the Second World War (Ezrahi 20-21). As Elie Wiesel writes in the Foreward to The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust, the Holocaust "left in its wake not cemeteries but books, nothing more than books: documents, albums, testimony, chronicles, intimate journals, and memoirs. That was all that remained – reams and reams of paper" (N. pag.). This "paper universe," contains, for example, the hundreds of drawings and paintings that were created by children in Theresienstadt, the writing of the *Oyneg Shabes*, a group of historians who documented life under Nazi rule and buried their writing underneath the Warsaw Ghetto, The Diary of Petr Ginz, which was uncovered in an attic in Prague in 2003, and Samuel Goldfard's diary from 1943, which was

published in The Diary of Samuel Goldfard and the Holocaust in Galicia in 2011 (Weisel N. pag.; "Note" vii-viii; Kassow 1; Pressburger 3-5; Lower 49-95, xi).[i3] All of these works are proof of the existence of individuals who perished in the Holocaust and a window into their unique experiences of the Second World War.

Over seventy years after the start of the war, as Holocaust survivors age, another kind of paper universe will soon emerge. "[A]s living memory passes into history," a "finite" archive of oral and written testimony, literary works, and interviews will one day be the only way in which future generations will gain access to individuals' experiences of the past (Hutton 72; Young, "Toward" 23; Young, Memory's 1; Doležel 169).[4] As Susan Rubin Suleiman contends, "we'll have to think about what will endure and continue to be meaningful to people who are not specialists," as well as what will be meaningful to those who are engaged in Holocaust scholarship ("Thinking" 291). Therefore, as we become increasingly "dependent on mediating texts for our knowledge," I have chosen to undertake this study in order to examine the complexities of creating, preserving, reconstructing, transmitting, and receiving intergenerational Holocaust family history in textual forms (Young, Writing 3). In this way, I will be able to explore how texts record layers of silences and voices for generations that are yet to come.[5]

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[i] I am grateful to to Dr. John-Paul Himka for introducing me to The Diary of Samuel Goldfard and the Holocaust in Galicia by Wendy Lower, Miejsce urodzenia directed by Pawel Lozinski, 2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß directed by Malte Ludin, Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine by Omer Bartov, and Ethics and Nostalgia in the Contemporary Novel by John J. Su. My sincere thanks also to to Dr. Karyn Ball for introducing me to Marianne Hirsch's idea of postmemory in Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory, to Dr. Wojciech Tokarz for introducing me to Danilo Kiš's short story "Encyclopedia of the Dead (A Whole Life)," and to Dr. Patricia Demers for drawing my attention to Daniel Mendelsohn's "On the Melancholy of the Classics: Berkeley Commencement Address, May 2009."

Part One

Family History and Memorialization in Intergenerational Holocaust Literaure

In this study, I will situate eight representative works by eight authors in an intergenerational continuum in order to explore the relationship between family history and memorialization in intergenerational Holocaust literature. These works are Suite française (2004) by Irène Némirovsky, Un paysage de cendres (1996) and Le mirador: mémoires rêvés (1992) by Élisabeth Gille, Survivre et vivre: entretiens avec Clémence Boulouque (2008) by Denise Epstein, They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust (2007) by Mayer Kirshenblatt and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Preoccupied with My Father (2007) by Simon Schneiderman, The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million (2006) by Daniel Mendelsohn, and Everything is Illuminated (2002) by Jonathan Safran Foer.[ii] While there is a large volume of Holocaust literature from which I could have chosen, I specifically selected these eight texts in order to define the parameters of my research. More than other books from each generational category that I considered, these works were the most germane to, and exemplary of, the themes of my study, as is demonstrated by the following seven points.

1) All of the works that I am examining were written within the last twenty years, or one generation. Therefore, while they explore life before, during, and after the Holocaust, this temporal constraint allows me to compare the

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[ii] A review of The Mirador: Dreamed Memories of Irène Némirovsky by Élisabeth Gille, translated by Marina Harss, has been accepted for publication. Shewchuk 2011. Jewish Book World. 29.4: 33.

responses of different generations to the Holocaust at this point in time. Further, since all eight texts are all relatively recent publications, they provide excllent opportunities to undertake original research and assess how literary representations influence our contemporary understanding of the past.[6]

2) The families of the authors of the eight texts that I have selected all came from what is now Poland or Ukraine, and currently live in France, Canada, and the United States. In Chapter One I will explore work by members of two generations of the same family who came from what is now Ukraine but lived in France during and after the Second World War, in Chapter Two I will explore work by members of two families who came from Poland to Canada, and in Chapter Three I will explore the work of members of two families who came from Ukraine and now live in the United States.[7] While these geographical constraints function as important means of allowing me to narrow down a potentially broad field, they allow me to undertake comparisons of Holocaust and post-Holocaust history in different national and linguistic contexts and demonstrate the diversity of Holocaust and post-Holocaust experiences in those countries as well (Suleiman, "Thinking" 280-283, 289-290).

3) The eight texts that I have selected provide opportunities for "interdisciplinary" comparisons (Young, Writing 1). As Amy Hungerford asserts, "[o]ne of the strengths of Holocaust Studies is its interdisciplinarity," a statement that can be seen to be relevant to my study

within the context of recent State of the Discipline Reports by the American Comparative Literature Association that have expanded the notion of comparison beyond languages and national literatures (188; see Young, Writing 1). For example, in Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism (1993), Charles Bernhiemer contends that, in part, "[t]he space of comparison today involves comparisons between artistic productions usually studied by different disciplines [… and] between various cultural constructions of those disciplines" (41-42). By examining the relationships between words and images, including paintings, drawings, and photographs, and between Literary Studies and History, I will be able to evaluate the ways in which the works that I have chosen invite interpretations from different disciplinary points of view.

4) Each of the eight texts in my study has an intergenerational structure in which the story what occurred during the Holocaust is simultaneously connected to the post-Holocaust story of those who are engaged in the act of reconstructing the past (Young, "Toward" 23). This layering of voices and perspectives is important conceptually for my research, as it allows me to examine how information is transmitted across generational categories in Holocaust scholarship, while assessing the limitations of those categories themselves. As such, in addition to the layering of texts and generations in my continuum, my analysis will also focus on the layers that are present within each work.

5) As Jonathan Safran Foer writes, "the origin of a story is always an absence," and each text that I am exploring focuses on an absence or loss that resulted from the Holocaust (Everything 230; Berger, "Unclaimed" 156). A comparison of the different ways in which each author attempts to use writing and images to fill in these "gaps" in their family histories and the "dark areas" in the "'official' historical record" will enable me to enter into the larger debate in Holocaust studies about memory and "postmemory," and the "public and private" spheres (Doležel 169; Iser, Implied 283; Iser, Act 194; McHale 87; Hirsch 22, 52; Ribbat 211).[iii][8]

6) Each text in my study is concerned with the fate of one family. I have chosen to focus on family history not only because families are an important organizing principle in the context of my intergenerational continuum (as Susan Rubin Suleiman observes, "on the whole, families are defined by distinct generations"), but also because, since I am interested in the creation and "preservation" of stories that often exist outside of the "'official' historical record," this perspective enables me to examine what can be "reconstructed" from personal memories and remnants of the past ("Thinking" 279; Jaillant 360; McHale 87; Eaglestone 130).[9] Often, private family archives contain information about individuals who would be included in the encyclopedia in Danilo Kiš's short story "Encyclopedia of the Dead (A Whole Life)" – those whose names are not "recorded […] in any other encyclopedia" but whose lives

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[iii] A review of Fiction and the Incompleteness of History: Toni Morrison, V.S. Naipaul, and Ben Okri by Zhu Ying has been accepted for publication. Jefferies 2009. Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée. 36.2: 225-27.

are shaped by historical events (43). As the narrator in Kiš's story states, the entries in this encyclopedia include not only "facts," such as "names, places, [and] dates," but also the descriptions of "human relationships, encounters, landscapes – the multitude of details that make up a human life" that are so often lost (42; see Mendelsohn, Lost 50-502; Mendelsohn in et. al. 122, 122-123). In the context of my research, I am interested in how, and for what purposes, family members are choosing to flesh out "facts" about their family history in different literary forms (Young, Writing 37).

7) Finally, in addition to an intergenerational continuum, the works that I have selected exist in a continuum between "fiction and nonfiction" and "memory and imagination" that is situated within the wider purview of ongoing "debates" about the complexities of "Holocaust representation" (Lang 72, 72-75; Franklin 17; Ribbat 199; Tal 83; Langer, "Confronting" 31; Hirsch, Family 23).[10] In Admitting the Holocaust, Lawrence Langer observes that traditionally:

> instead of Holocaust fictions liberating the facts and expanding the range of their implications, Holocaust facts enclose the fictions drawing the reader into an ever-narrower area of association, where history and literature stand guard over their respective territories, wary of the abuses that either may commit upon the other. (75-76; Behlman 57, see 60)

My research aims to evaluate these boundaries by examining literary works within a historical context and assessing the extent to which they can function as archival "evidence" of both the Holocaust and its aftermath (Young, Writing 29, see 37; Franklin 3). Further, in the different genres that I have chosen, which include testimony, memoirs, biographies and novels, I will be able to examine the implications of each author's choice to address the complexities of reconstructing and representing the stories behind the Holocaust's statistics.

Building on these seven points, I have chosen to structure this study as a series of case studies of individual books. A similar organizational pattern exists in previous analyses of literary representations of the Holocaust including Imagining the Holocaust by Daniel Schwarz and A Thousand Darknesses: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction by Ruth Franklin. Notably, James E. Young also utilizes this case study model when discussing Holocaust memorials in The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning and At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture. Employing this model and mode of inquiry will allow me to build on previous scholarship and engage with familiar themes in Holocaust studies in new ways.

In Chapter One, Family History, I will compare the writing of two generations of the same family who experienced the Second World War in France. Part One will begin with my discussion of Irène Némirovsky's final novel Suite française, which was written during the German Occupation of France (Kershaw 1; Bracher, After ix). A fictionalized account of Némirovsky's experiences in Issy-l'Evêque, Suite française remained unfinished when

Némirovsky perished in Auschwitz on August 17, 1942; notably, the book was published by Némirovsky's daughter Denise Epstein in 2004 (Kershaw 1; see Bracher, After xv). Notably, Suite française is one of very few fictional works that was written about the Second World War "at the very time that it was happening"; therefore, I have chosen to begin my study with this book because it provides a fascinating example of the tension that exists between Némirovsky's work as what Nathan Bracher refers to as "a literary text, a fictional composition," and the historical documents with which it has been framed (Kershaw 172-173; Suleiman in Golson and Suleiman 325; Kershaw 1, 170; Bracher, After xv; Kershaw 188-89). Part Two will analyze three works: Élisabeth Gille's Le mirador: mémoires rêvés and Le paysage de cendres, and Denise Epstein's Survivre et vivre: entretiens avec Clémence Boulouque. Both Némirovsky and Gille died before the publication of Suite française, and thus my layered examination of these four works creates a complex family "portrait" that takes into account both Gille's and Epstein's family history and the consequences of Némirovsky's posthumous fame (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 380-381; Kershaw 1, 192-194).[11]

I have chosen to begin my study with these four books because they complicate the generational categories that traditionally operate within Holocaust studies and provide an important foundation upon which the intergenerational structure of my study can be built. Traditionally, the first generation is defined as those who survived the Holocaust (van Alphen 474). Instead of being categorized from a moment of creation, as in Genesis, this generation is defined in relation to a destructive event (Weigel 265). Importantly, since Némirovsky perished in

Auschwitz, she is not considered to be a member of the first generation; instead, she is categorized along with the six million Jewish victims that died in the Holocaust for whom no generational category exists (van Alphen 474). To complicate this issue further, Suite française was published 59 years after the end of the Second World War in a post-Holocaust milieu. Accordingly, as Kershaw explores in Before Auschwitz: Irène Némirovsky and the Cultural Landscape of Inter-war France, Némirovsky's work challenges the reader to not only explore the situation in which she was writing, but also to assess how the reception of Suite française has been shaped by its publication at this point in time (7, 172, 185, 191).[iv]

Importantly, Némirovsky's daughters also defy traditional generational categorization. The second generation is traditionally defined as the children of the first generation; yet, as Suleiman contends in "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust," the children of those who perished or those individuals who were children during the Second World War occupy an interstitial space (van Alphen 474; 277). In addition, while both Epstein and Gille are members of what Suleiman refers to as the "1.5 generation," as their books reveal, the seven-year difference between them greatly affected their perceptions of the war (Suleiman, "Thinking" 281, 292, 294; "Chronology" 75, 86). By beginning my study with works written by "a victim of the Holocaust" and two members of the 1.5 generation, I will apply Suleiman's work on the complexities and assumptions of traditional generational categorization to the works that I am

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[iv] A review of Before Auschwitz: Irène Némirovsky and the Cultural Landscape of Inter-war France by Angela Kershaw has been accepted for publication. Shewchuk 2010. Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée. Forthcoming.

examining (Kershaw 186; "Thinking" 278-280, 288-289). I will also apply her advocation for the supremacy of the "individual" story and for the "privileging of the literary," which is built on her belief that "works of literary merit (however one interprets that term) have a greater chance to endure than others," to my evaluation of the role of literary texts in Holocaust memorialiation and education (Suleiman, "Thinking" 291).[12]

In Chapter One, Némirovsky, Epstein, and Gille use words to create a portrait of Issy-l'Évêque, their family, and their wartime and post-war experiences, while in Chapter Two, Ways of Looking at the Past, the authors that I will be studying combine words and images to create complex "portraits" of their families' stories (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Daughter's 380-381). In Part One, I will explore Mayer Kirshenblatt's and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's <u>They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust</u>, which is composed of over three hundred paintings in which Kirshenblatt depicts his life in Apt, Poland, before the war. Kirshenblatt's and Kirschenblatt-Gimblett's perspectives function as a transitional point in my continuum since they demarcate the boundary between those who did, and those who did not, witness the Holocaust. Kirshenblatt left Apt for Toronto in 1934 before many of his remaining family members were killed by the Nazis (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1, 169-171, 184-186). Therefore, Kirshenblatt is not a member of the first generation since he did not witness the war. As he states, "I am not a Holocaust survivor" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 169). However, since he did witness life before the Second World War

and the rise of Nazism, his memories are integral to our understanding of interwar Jewish life.

Building on Suleiman's definition of the 1.5 generation, I have categorized Kirshenblatt as a member of the 0.5 generation, which refers to those who did not experience the Holocaust but remember Jewish life in Eastern European before the Second World War. In the Introduction to From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry, Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin describe how, after the war, those who contributed to *Yizkor* books "grew in proportion to the size of the task and came to include townspeople who had left Europe long before the Holocaust" (15). Since each of Kirshenblatt's paintings is accompanied by a prose description written by his daughter, my study of They Called Me Mayer July will allow me to assess how members of that group, as well as their children, are continuing to contribute to the textual memorial tradition at this time (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 368).

By extension, Part Two of this chapter will explore Simon Schneiderman's Preoccupied with my Father. Schneiderman is a member of the second generation. Created by Schneiderman after the death of his father Yoel, Preoccupied with My Father consists of over twenty paintings that are accompanied by fragments of text in which the author explores his father's life in Warsaw and Montreal (2). A comparison of these two books by authors who did not live through the Holocaust presents an interesting opportunity for assessing the role of memory and postmemory in the reconstructive process.

Members of the third generation, who are the grandchildren of the first generation, will conceivably be the last group who will have a "living connection" to those who witnessed the Holocaust first-hand (van Alphen 473, Hirsch "Generation" 104; Hoffman xv; Berger, "Unclaimed" 150; Franklin 238-239). In Chapter Three, 'Return' Narratives, I will focus on how these ideas of memory and imagination are manifested in the representation of the physical "'return' journeys" that were undertaken by a grandchild of a member of the 0.5 generation, and by a member of the third generation, to the places that their families lived before and during the Second World War (Hirsch and Spitzer, Ghosts xvii, 10; Hirsch and Spitzer, "Would" 256). The first section of this chapter will explore Daniel Mendelsohn's The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million. Described as "part memoir, part reporting, part mystery, part scholarly detective work," The Lost is an account of Mendelsohn's attempts to find out the fate of his Great Uncle Shmiel Jäger, his Great-Aunt Esther, and their four daughters, Lorka, Frydka, Ruchele, and Bronia, in Bolechow, Ukraine (N. pag., 7). Framed within the context of his analysis of Jewish religious texts, Mendelsohn tells the overlapping stories of his six lost family members, the Bolechowers he encountered along his journey, and his own search to uncover the past. In addition to this layered narrative, The Lost also combines two different ways of witnessing the journey: the narrativized record that was created by Mendelsohn and the photographic record that was created by his brother Matt (Mendelsohn, "Six" 61; Kalman Naves, "Six" 58; Mendelsohn, Lost 509).

The second section of Chapter Three will examine Jonathan Safran Foer's debut novel Everything is Illuminated. At age 22, Foer travelled to Trachimbrod, Ukraine, in an attempt to find out about the experiences of his maternal grandfather during the Second World War (Foer, Harper). Possessing a picture of his grandfather and the woman who is believed to have saved him from the Nazis, Foer intended to create a non-fiction account of his journey; yet, when he reportedly found "nothing but nothing – a landscape of completely realized absence where the *shtetl* once had been," he chose instead to create a work of fiction in which the history of his family and the story of his search are woven together in three narrative layers that span over two hundred years (Mullan "One"; Varvogli 90; Eaglestone 128; Foer, Harper; see Foer in Mullan "Three").[13]

When read comparatively, the eight works that I have chosen provide an opportunity for examining the possibilities and limitations of written representations of the past. As such, the Conclusion of my study, Off the Printed Page, will situate my research into intergenerational Holocaust "family narratives" in two other contexts in order to frame my examination of textual memorialization in new ways (Sulieman, "Thinking" 287). Part One of this chapter, A Digital World, will examine the role of digital universe in Holocaust research and memorialization. For, just as another kind of paper universe will emerge when survivors pass away, it is necessary to evaluate how the digital universe is changing the ways in which we research, read, and archive information, as well as how future generations will memorialize the past. By extension, Part Two, The Scholar and the Text, The Text and the Classroom, will

assess the role of Holocaust scholarship within "the current memory boom," which will allow me to evaluate the pedagogical applications of my research (Whitehead 3). Placing my research in this context will enable me to reflect how authors' academic associations influence the ways in which they represent their family history and assess the consequences of how I became increasingly uncomfortable with exploring the lives of actual, often deceased, people through an objective academic lens as I progressed in my research. For although, as Dominick LaCapra asserts, "a goal of historical understanding is […] to develop not only a professionally validated public record of past events but also a critically tested, empirically accurate, accessible memory of significant events which became part of the public sphere," in this section, I will be able to assess how, and for what purposes, the literary texts can evoke a personal, affective response (LaCapra, Writing 95). In this way, I will explore the role that intergenerational family narratives can play in the way in which the Holocaust is studied and taught.

While each of the texts that I have selected could be approached from a variety of perspectives, as this outline reveals, the comparative examination that I am undertaking will focus on writing, textuality, and the book as a "physical" object in order to assess how a text can function as a "memorial space" (Young, "Memory" 78; Young, Writing 37; Young, Texture 7). As such, the primary questions that underscore my study are: What will happen to the stories of those who perished and the stories of those to witnessed the Holocaust when survivors pass away? What role has the textual tradition had in the way that authors have

chosen to "preserve and transmit" these stories (Goertz 34)? And, how has the textual tradition been adapted by members of different generations as a way of memorializing the past? In this first section of my Introduction, I provided a map of how my research will allow me to set about answering these questions. However, before moving on to examinations of the works that I have chosen, it is necessary to examine the scholarship upon which I will be building and the ways in which I hope to make an original contribution to the field. Since my research examines the role of memorialization in intergenerational Holocaust family narratives, in the next section of this Introduction, I will discuss each part of this equation in turn.

Part Two

Texts in Context:
Memorialization, Generational Categorization, Narrative, and Family History

In the wake of the gaping holes in the historical record that resulted from the Holocaust, the eight books in this study exist as evidence of the existence of individuals that perished and of the members of future generations for whom Herman Kruk wrote. For as Dominick LaCapra contends, "[t]he past is misperceived in terms of sheer absence or utter annihilation. Something of the past always remains, if only as a haunting presence or symptomatic revenant," such as the stories contained within these books, and the books themselves (LaCapra, Writing 49). Similarly, as Robert Kroetsch elegantly states in "On Being an Alberta Writer," "[w]here I had learned the idea of absence, I was beginning to learn the idea of trace. There is always something left behind. That is the essential paradox. Even abandonment gives us memory" (71). As such, in each of the families that I am studying, someone survived to record the story of his or her family or produce an heir that would record that story at a later date. Chaya H. Roth's statement in the Introduction to The Fate of Holocaust Memories: Transmission and Family Dialogues is indicative of this point:

> Many years ago I committed to tell our family's story. We were hiding then in the South of France, on August 26, 1942. As the youngest, at age seven, I knew a number of essentials about our family history but more was expected of me should we be caught in a roundup of Jews. That date, and my misfortune of being hauled off during a massive roundup in

> southern France and later released, were grounds for my vow. Today, as a child survivor of the Holocaust, aging parent, and grandparent, I still wrestle with memories of our years running, hiding, impersonating what I was not, and facing situations that threatened my family's life as well as mine. Though we have seen quieter times in recent decades, embraced the fruits of our families' postwar achievements, and experienced much joy and success, I still ache with the throbbing of my painful past and am impelled to wonder, 'What have I passed on to our children about the Holocaust?' and 'What will our children remember to pass on to theirs?' (1)

Consequently, although authors' motivations to make their family history public differs as a result of his or her unique experiences, this passage is exemplary of Marianne Hirsch's exploration of how "family [functions] as a space of transmission," and reveals how, like my study, many literary and academic explorations of Holocaust family history have become less concerned with what occurred during the Holocaust than how information about the Holocaust has been "*passed down*" ("Generation" 103; Young, Memory 11).[14] For, as Kugelmass and Boyarin contend in From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry, "[a]lthough burial and commemoration are the dominant motifs within the memorial books [that I will be examining in this section], several of them mention the desire to pass along something of the Eastern European Jewish heritage to coming generations" (35). Therefore, although my project may seem to be continually backward-looking, with each generation gesturing towards those who

came before, since it is concerned with both "memory and transmission," it is, in fact, also forward-looking and generative as the interplay between memorializarion, generational categorizarion, narrative, and family history demonstrate (Hirsch, "Generation" 104; see Kugelmass and Boyarin 17; see Hirsch, Family 247).[15]

Memorialization

The study of memorialization in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is, of course, not limited solely to the Holocaust. Recent books such as Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials and War Memory, edited by Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott, and War Memory and Popular Culture: Essays on Modes of Remembrance and Commemoration, edited by Michael Keren and Holger H. Herwig, have highlighted the memorial work that is being undertaken on events such as the First World War and the Rwandan genocide (Todman 23-40; McAllister "Rwandan" 185-200). In another such work, Terrain of Memory: A Japanese Canadian Memorial Project, in which Kirsten Emiko McAllister explores the memorialization of the Japanese internment in New Denver, British Columbia, the author states that a study such as hers:

> belongs to a growing literature on cultural memory [… that] has roots in [Maurice] Halbwachs' classic study on collective memory (1980) and [Paul] Connerton's work on social memory (1989). Both of these studies investigate the role of the practices and institutions of remembering in the

> reproduction of society. Rituals and social practices – whether funerals, commemorations of the war dead, or looking through family photograph albums – affirm a shared origin; they gather us together to affirm our communal ties. These events, practices, and institutions selectively identify historical figures and events that shape our collective identities, symbolize the values and goals we share, and form the basis for imagining and planning for a future together. (12)

As this statement makes clear, like Places of Public Memory and War Memory and Popular Culture, McAllister's work is concerned with how "memory shapes contemporary communities," an idea that is central to my study of the textual memorialization of the Holocaust as well (Terrain 6). However, within this growing corpus of literature to which McAllister refers, the most substantial body of work on Holocaust memorialization has been created by James E. Young; importantly, it was his identification of *Yizkor* books as the first form of Holocaust memorialization that shaped the initial stages of this study (Texture 7; Memory's 140). In books such as The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning and At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture, Young explores how, "[i]f societies remember, it is only insofar as their institutions and rituals organize, shape, even inspire their constituents' memories. For a society's memory cannot exist outside of those people who do the remembering – even if such memory happens to be at the society's bidding, in its name" (Young, Texture xi). Like Janet Jacobs' analysis of sites and structures of memory in Memorializing the Holocaust:

Gender, Genocide, and Collective Memory, Young's examinations of memorialization are often tied largely, but not exclusively, to the relationship between remembering and markers of memory in a specific place. For example, chapters in The Texture of Memory include "The Rhetoric of Ruins: The Memorial Camps at Majdanek and Auschwitz," "The Biography of a Memorial Icon: Nathan Rapoport's Warsaw Ghetto Monument," and "Yad Vashem: Israel's Memorial Authority," while in At Memory's Edge, Young explores the work of Shimon Attie, and Micha Ullman, Rachel Whiteread, among others, as well as the Maus series by Art Spiegelman (Texture 119-154, 155-184, 243-261; Memory's 62-89; 106-113; 12-41). As these examples demonstrate, the analysis of what Young refers to as "physical spaces," such as monuments, has often overshadowed work on aspects of the textual memorial tradition such as Maus ("Memory" 78). For example, in his book Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation, although Young explores a wide range of Holocaust literature despite chapter such as "On Rereading Holocaust Diaries and Memoirs," "Holocaust Documentary Fiction: Novelist as Eyewitness," "When Soldier-Poets Remember the Holocaust: Antiwar Poetry in Israel," and "Holocaust Video and Cinemagraphic Testimony: Documenting the Witness," his final chapter "The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning" focuses primarily on the memorialization that is occurring in "memorials [such as "monuments"] and museums" instead of in texts themselves (15-39, 51-63, 134-146, 157-171, 172-189, 172-173, 173). A notable exception is Young's discussion of the role of the *Yizkor* tradition in Tzvi Atmon's poem

"*Yizkor*" that explores the conflict in Israel (141-143). Within the context of my study, an interesting way of assessing how site-specific memorials or texts such as Spiegelman's Maus series "organize, shape, […or] inspire" memory is to compare memorials that were created by two of the artists that Young discusses in At Memory's Edge (Rachel Whiteread and Micha Ullman) with the textual memorials that are at the heart of my research (Young, Texture xi).

Rachel Whiteread's "Nameless Library," which was erected in Vienna's Judenpletz, and Micha Ullman's "Bibliotek," which is dug into the earth in Berlin's Bebelplatz, are two of the most famous examples of memorials that are designed to invoke (the absence of) the written word (Connolly; Azoulay). Whiteread's sculpture consists of a giant white box that is covered in shelves of books with their spines turned inward. On one side of the monument is a large sealed door that bars the viewer from entering the interior space in which the spines of the books would conceivably be visible (Connolly). In turn, Ullman's "Bibliotek" is a "50-square meter underground chamber […] more than 5 meters deep" that is lined with empty white bookshelves (Azoulay). Interestingly, in addition to their striking structures, the meaning of both Whiteread's and Ullman's monuments are deepened by the historical significance of the sites on which they were built (Young, Memory's 109). As Kate Connolly explores, Whiteread's "Nameless Library" was erected on the site of a synagogue that was burned in 1421 as a result of "[a] campaign of violent persecution by the Catholic Church [that] led dozens of Jews to commit suicide inside the synagogue, rather than renounce their faith. The building was torched on March 12, the same day

that Nazi troops were to enter Vienna 517 years later," an idea that is also examined by Young (Memory's 109) Similarly, Ullman's memorial is built on the site of the famous book burnings of May 1933, a fact that is reinforced by the now-famous inscription from Heinrich Heine's Almansor that appears on a plaque accompanying the memorial: "[w]here books are burned, in the end people will burn" (Azoulay). Through their representation of books (or lack thereof) Whiteread and Ullman point to the vast number of texts that were lost in the Holocaust and their importance in the memorialization of the Second World War. Yet their works also draw attention to many of the important differences between monuments and the books that are at the forefront of my research.

The first of these differences is that, while both memorials in fixed locations and books have a corporeal presence, each creates a very different relationship between the public and private spheres. For although an examination of "the ways in which historical meaning and memory are shaped in the dialogical relationship between memorial and visitor" can also be applied to the relationship between the book and the reader, the public and often communal act of viewing a memorial in the specific location is very different than the solitary act reading a printed page book in the location of the reader's choice (Young, "Toward" 41). In this way, while both monuments and books occupy a physical space, through narrative, books invite the reader to reconstruct the world within the text within their imagination, which necessitates that the imaginative space created for the reader, and the process of reconstruction that occurs at the point of reception, must also be taken in account (Segal 58).

The second of these differences is that Whiteread's and Ullman's memorials evoke the scope of what was lost in the Holocaust in terms of absence. While many of the works that I have chosen use absence as a narrative device, through the very fact of their existence, and through the authors' representation of actual individuals, they frame the effects of the Holocaust in terms of loss (see LaCapra, Writing 63-85). In Writing History, Writing Trauma, Dominick LaCapra studies the differences between absence and loss, asserting that in "contrast to absence, loss is situated on a historical level and is the consequence of particular events" (64). Unlike the vast emptiness evoked by Whiteread and Ullman, the authors in my study describe the particularities of individual lives in order to undertake a kind of intergenerational "mourning" not only for deceased family members, but also for a way of life (LaCapra, Writing 69; Mendelsohn in Hartman et. al. 122, 122-123). As LaCapra asserts, "losses […] have to be specified or named for mourning as a social process to be possible," and through this acting of naming, the process of memorialization resists what he refers to as the "impossible, endless, quasi-transcendental grieving" that occurs "[w]hen mourning turns to absence and absence is conflated with loss" (Writing 69). In this way, each author in my study is interested in representing not only the point at which a loss has occurred, but also their own experiences of mourning that loss, which prevent the stories of the individuals they are representing to be swallowed up by the "incomprehensible" statistics that are so often used to represent the enormity of the Holocaust (Lang, Holocaust 17).

The third difference is that, while the books (or lack of books) in Ullmann's and Whiteread's works are silent, in the works that I will be examining, the authors explore the voices that are contained within texts. As Margaret Atwood asserts, writing has often been used to explore issues relating to mortality:

> because of the nature of writing – its apparent permanence, and the fact it survives its own performance […]. If the act of writing charts the process of thought, it's a process that leaves a trail, like a series of fossilized footprints. Other art forms can last and last – painting, sculpture, music – but they do not survive as *voice*. (158)

Since the voices to which Atwood refers can be found in words that were written down by now-deceased individuals, the testimonies that were given by survivors, and the narratives that were created by members of subsequent generations, this quotation foregrounds the fact that the works I am examining are representations of actual people who exist, or existed, in the world. In order to fully understand these implications of this idea, the role of books in the memorialization process must be examined in further depth.

Books have a central place in the Jewish tradition. As Jonathan Rose states in The Holocaust and the Book: Destruction and Preservation, books have "always been the foundation stone of Jewish theology, Jewish culture, [and] Jewish survival," and the written word has functioned as an important way of uniting the Jewish community across geographical and temporal divides (1). As such, coupled with the fact that "in literate societies, script and print are the

primary means of preserving memory, disseminating information, inculcating ideologies, distributing wealth, and exercising power," books were important targets for the Nazis during the Holocaust: "cultural archives were destroyed, records burned, possessions lost, [and] histories [were] suppressed and eradicated" as well (Rose 1; Hirsch, "Generation" 111). This targeting of print culture had devastating results – it has been estimated that "[o]ne [h]undred [m]illion" books were destroyed during the Second World War (Rose 1). Notably, although the Nazis' treatment of visual arts followed much the same pattern as their treatment of books and libraries, as Lynn H. Nicholas explores in The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War, due to their often substantial monetary value, an increased number of works of art were saved (125-131; Edsel 153-154).[16] However, it is important to note that many pieces have never been recovered or returned, and family members continue to make reparation claims (Lauder 6-7).[17]

In the face of this mass cultural destruction, the intimate act of putting pen to paper was an important way for Jewish individuals of "[l]eaving a trace of their existence for posterity"; therefore, while many books and works of art were destroyed during the Second World War, others were created as well (Toll, When xvii). According to Nelly Toll:

> Perhaps more than death itself, [… those in captivity] feared that most of the world would never know what they had endured and that those who were told would not believe it. With an urgent need to recreate their lives

> in order to leave a sign of their existence, they consciously left us their images [and texts] so that we would remember. (When xvi)

In this way, the author and artists connected to future, and often unknown, readers and viewers by way of the page (Atwood 125-126, 180).

After the Second World War, survivors continued to use words and images to ensure that the people and places that were targeted during the Holocaust would not be forgotten (Kugelmass and Boyarin 2). Perhaps the most widespread and immediate post-war act of written memorialization, and the most important for this project, was the creation of *Yizkor* (memorial) books (Kugelmass and Boyarin 1). Yet, as Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin contend in From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry, although they are the "single most important act of commemorating the dead on the part of survivors," they are "[g]enerally overlooked in writing about the Holocaust" (1). James E. Young describes the role of "memorial books" in "Memory and Counter-Memory: Towards a Social Aesthetic of Holocaust Memorials" thus:

> In keeping with the bookish, iconoclastic side of Jewish tradition, the first 'memorials' to the Holocaust period came not in stone, glass, or steel – but in narrative. The Yizkor Bukher – memorial books – remembered both the lives and destruction of European Jewish communities according to the most ancient Jewish memorial media: words on paper. For a murdered people without graves, without even corpses to inter, these memorial books often came to serve as symbolic tombstones […]. The scribes hoped

> that, when read, the Yizkor Bukher would turn the site of reading into a memorial space. In need of cathartic ceremony, in response to what has been called 'the missing gravestone syndrome,' survivors […] created interior spaces, imagined grave sites, as the first sites of memory. Only later were physical spaces created. ("Memory" 78; see Young, Texture 7)

Written largely by "nonprofessional" writers, *Yizkor* books describe prewar Jewish life and the individuals and communities that were destroyed, and often include "photographs and drawings" alongside the text (Bluestein x, ix; Hirsch, Family 246, 247, 248).[18] According to Kugelmass and Boyarin, these memorial books reflect an "intense valuation of historical memory as a vital act incumbent upon every Jew [… that is] a cornerstone of Jewish consciousness," an idea that Marianne Hirsch elaborates upon in Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory (Kugelmass and Boyarin 18).[19] She states:

> During the first wave of refugee emigrations from Eastern Europe to the West, following the pogroms in the early part of this century, a Jewish memorial tradition developed among diasporic communities, a tradition based on ancient and medieval Jewish practices of commemoration which may well serve as a resource and a model for children of survivors. The *yizker bikher*, or memorial books, prepared in exile by survivors of the pogroms were meant to preserve the memory of their destroyed cultures. The survivors of Nazi genocide built on this memorial tradition and prepared for subsequent generations similar memorial books devoted to the memory of individual destroyed communities. […] They contain

> historical accounts of community life before the destruction as well as detailed records of the genocide that annihilated those communities. They contain photographs as well as texts, individual and group portraits evoking life as it was *before*. They contain accounts of survivors' efforts to locate the remains of their family members in order to give them a proper burial, and they detail acts of commemoration devoted to the dead. (Hirsch, Family 246; see Kugelmass and Boyarin 18)

As the following chapters will demonstrate, this passage contains many ideas that will be expanded upon in this study; however, I will discuss a few of the most salient points here first.[20]

As Hirsch observes, historically, *Yizkor* books were "prepared in exile by survivors" (Family 246; see Kugelmass and Boyarin 6-12). As this quotation suggests, *Yizkor* books were created predominantly by and for people who had a familial connection to the places and people that had been affected by the Holocaust in a diasporic context. Owing to their portable nature, *Yizkor* books were an important way of connecting members of a diffuse community with a common past, and, for survivors who came through the war with very few personal possessions, they were also a material connection to the place from which they had come (Kugelmass and Boyarin 10). As Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin state in From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry:

> Whereas the early memorial efforts also had an international dimension – funds to create them were collected abroad; sacred soil or a fragment of a

> tombstone came from the town itself; ashes were brought from the crematoria – the *yizker-bikher* made it possible for the now widely dispersed survivors and émigrés to have a single memorial nearby. Such memorials did not supersede local efforts at commemoration; they bound communities together, recreating on paper the community of the past. (10)

As such, given that *Yizkor* books were not created, distributed, or read at the sites at which the events that the authors were memorializing had occurred, this point also draws attention to the depth of the geographical and psychological fissures that were created by the Holocaust. As I will discuss at length in Chapter Three, Kugelmass' and Boyarin's statement reveals how the portable nature of books and the solitary act of reading frees the reader from the necessity of physically returning to a specific site in order to memorialize the past.

In addition, according to Hirsch, *Yizkor* books "contain accounts of survivors' efforts to locate the remains of their family members in order to give them a proper burial, and they detail acts of commemoration devoted to the dead," a concept that is of the utmost important in the context of my research (Family 246). According to Kugelmass and Boyarin, "[f]ew Holocaust victims were ever given proper burial. They were burned in crematoria, thrown in mass graves when local ghettos were liquidated, starved or shot as refugees in the forest" (27). Therefore, if, as Alan L. Berger states, "[t]here can be no redemptive closure unless and until there is a proper burial," the creation of a memorial book functioned as "the establishment of a surrogate tombstone" ("Unclaimed" 153; Kugelmass and Boyarin 27; see Hirsch, Family 47; Young, "Memory" 78). This

idea can be seen to be of even greater importance when, as Kugelmass and Boyarin observe, “the term yizker-bukh hints at a connection to the earlier Memorbücher of Ashkenazic Jewry. Like them, the books’ main function is preservation of names and the recording of acts of martyrdom. Not surprisingly, many memorial books conclude with unadorned lists of such names” (25). As such, “[t]hese names [, which] are at the core of the entire commemorative effort,” allowed *Yizkor* books to function as a permanent record of the existence of the deceased, as I will discuss in Chapter Two (Kugelmass and Boyarin 34). Further, seeing as *Yizkor* books were created by living writers to memorialize deceased members of their community who could no longer speak for themselves, these lists draw attention to the inherently retrospective nature of memorialization and to the interplay between silence and voices that is central to my work.

Next, the fact that “memorial books contain photographs as well as texts” raises important ideas about the irrevocable rupture that was created by the Holocaust, an idea that Marianne Hirsch explores at length in her study of photographs in <u>Family Frames</u>; notably, the centrality of photographs in Hirsch’s examination of postmemory is one of the reasons that I included an exploration of the relationship between written and visual forms of representation in Chapters Two and Three (Hirsch, <u>Family</u> 246; see Kugelmass and Boyarin 34; see Hirsch, <u>Family</u> 18-20, 247; see Stark 201-202). This statement also draws attention to the fact that, since so many texts, photographs, and other sources of information were destroyed during the Holocaust, although the objects that survived have become invaluable resources, it is important to remember that they were once a part of

holdings in archives, libraries, and private collections to which we might no longer have access.

Finally, Hirsch observes how earlier memorial books were "based on ancient and medieval Jewish practices of commemoration which may well serve as a resource and a model for children of survivors" (Family 246). Despite Young's identification of *Yizkor* books as the first Holocaust memorials, and Hirsch's contentions that "they are spaces of connection between memory and postmemory," very little work has been done in the area of textual memorialization of family history, and very little critical work as been undertaken in order to examine how the textual memorial tradition has continued in an intergenerational context since the end of the Second World War ("Memory" 78; Family 247). Numerous scholars such as Helen Epstein, Susan Rubin Suleiman, Marianne Hirsch, and Adrienne Kertzer have explored the relationship between generations (Suleiman, "Thinking" 285; van Alphen 476; Hirsch, Family 246-248). More specifically, in Family Frames, Hirsch describes "Henri Raczymow's Tales of Exile and Forgetting [… as] a kind of memorial book" and in "Broken Records: Holocaust Diaries, Memoirs, and Memorial Books," Jared Stark categorizes works such as Art Spiegelman's Maus as "postmemorial books" (247; 201, 202).[21] Yet, to my knowledge, my study is the only one in which the idea of intergenerational textual memorialization has been elaborated at length. Therefore, it is my hope that, by beginning to fill in this gap in Holocaust scholarship, my contribution will be twofold. First, I aim to demonstrate how literary texts about Holocaust family history are part of a larger textual memorial

tradition and, in so doing, assess their commemorative and pedagogical roles. And second, by examining these texts in an intergenertational continuum, and by building on Susan Rubin Suleiman's work on the "1.5 generation," I aim to demonstrate how the creation of additional generational categories (such as the 0.5 generation and that of their children) are required to account for different author's positions within their family trees, the perspectives that different members of the same family bring to the representation of the Holocaust and its legacy, and the consequences of how the layering of those intergenerational perspectives influences both the author's and the reader's understanding of the past ("Thinking" 277). As such, by building on Hirsch's contention that these works "can serve as inspirations for other acts of memorialization by children of exiled survivors" and "paradigms for a diasporic aesthetics of postmemory," my research examines various forms in which members of multiple generations have created memorial books that are not for communities but for the authors' families, and assesses how *Yizkor* books have "serve[d] as a resource and a model for children of survivors" for authors from multiple generations as they undertake textual "acts of commemoration devoted to the dead" (Family 247, 246).

In addition to *Yizkor* books, after the Holocaust, survivors also began to create personal narrativized accounts (Stark 199-200; Schwarz, "Holocaust" 222). Importantly, these works are part of a literary tradition into which the books that I am studying also fall. In these accounts, survivors did not attempt to preserve the history of an entire community or place their stories within the context of the stories of others from their community; instead, they preserved their own

experiences of the war. Now often considered the cornerstones of Holocaust literature, these books include, perhaps most famously, the "memoirs of Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi" (Schwarz, "Holocaust" 222; Kershaw 180; Franklin 17). Written after Theodor Adorno's famous conjecture that "[t]o write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," books such as these presented the Holocaust in a largely realistic light (34; Schwarz, "Holocaust" 222; see Franklin 3, 4).[22] Yet, importantly for my study, not all literary works written by survivors fit within a factual construct. As Daniel Schwarz observes, André Schwarz-Bart's Le dernier des justes (1959), which is a "mythic[al]" account of a family over multiple generations, is a striking departure from the realism that dominated survivors' writing; significantly, it paved the way for texts such as Everything is Illuminated by Jonathan Safran Foer ("Holocaust" 222; Kershaw 180). As these examples and collections of first-generation testimony such as Lawrence Langer's Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory illustrate, while the first generation is defined by their common experience of survival, their different experiences of living through, and articulating their memories of, the Holocaust and its aftermath did not provide a homogenous foundation on which subsequent generations could build.

Now, over sixty year after the end of the Second World War, as the texts that have been included in recent issues of Jewish Book World demonstrate, there is no shortage of literature that is being published about the Holocaust and its aftermath by Jewish survivors and their family members in many different

genres.[v] According to Anne Whitehead, the author of Memory, the publication of works such as these are part of a larger "memory boom" in Western culture that has been influenced by "the painful legacy of the wars, genocides, and ethnocides that […] punctuated the twentieth century," "the influence of technology," and increased movement as a result of globalization (3, 2; see Lowenthal 6).[vi] As Whitehead observes, the "[d]isplacement" that resulted from many of these events in the 20th century has been "countered by a quest for roots (the contemporary fascination with genealogy is especially marked among immigrant and diasporic

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[v] Examples of these works that I have reviewed include include Saving What Remains: A Holocaust Survivor's Journey Home to Reclaim Her Ancestry by Livia Bitton-Jackson, Letters From the Lost: A Memoir of Discovery by Helen Waldstein Wilkes, The Life of Irène Némirovksy by Ovilier Philipponnat and Patrick Lienhardt, translated by Euan Cameron, Restitution: A Family's Fight for Their Heritage Lost in the Holocaust by Kathy Kacer, The Words to Remember It: Memoirs of Child Holocaust Survivors by the Sydney Child Holocaust Survivors Group, The Novel in the Viola by Natasha Solomons, and Treasures from the Attic: The Extraordinary Story of Anne Frank's Family by Mirjam Pressler with Gerti Elias, translated by Daniel Searls (35-36; 54; 17; 43; 37; 15; 44).
A review of Saving What Remains: A Holocaust Survivor's Journey Home to Reclaim Her Ancestry by Livia Bitton-Jackson has been accepted for publication. Shewchuk 2010. Jewish Book World. 28.2: 35-36.
A review of Letters From the Lost: A Memoir of Discovery by Helen Waldstein Wilkes has been accepted for publication. Jewish Book World. Jefferies 2010. 28.3: 54.
A review of The Life of Irène Némirovksy by Ovilier Philipponnat and Patrick Lienhardt, translated by Euan Cameron, has been accepted for publication. Jewish Book World. Jefferies 2010. 28.4: 17.
A review of Restitution: A Family's Fight for Their Heritage Lost in the Holocaust by Kathy Kacer has been accepted for publication. Jewish Book World. Jefferies 2010. 28.4. 43.
A review of The Words to Remember It: Memoirs of Child Holocaust Survivors by the Sydney Child Holocaust Survivors Group has been accepted for publication. Jewish Book World. Shewchuk 2011. 29.4: 37.
A review of The Novel in the Viola by Natasha Solomons has been accepted for publication. Jewish Book World. Shewchuk 2011. 29.4: 15.
A review of Treasures from the Attic: The Extraordinary Story of Anne Frank's Family by Mirjam Pressler with Gerti Elias, translated by Daniel Searls, has been accepted for publication. Jewish Book World. Shewchuk 2012. 30.1: 44.
A review of Two Rings: A Story of Love and War by Millie Werber and Eve Keller has been accepted for publication. Jewish Book World. Shewchuk 2012.
A review of A Portrait of Pacifists: Le Chambon, the Holocaust, and the Lives of André and Magda Trocmé by Richard P. Unsworth has been accepted for publication. Jewish Book World. Shewchuk 2012.
A review of The Wine of Solitude by Irène Némirovsky has been accepted for publication. Jewish Book World. Shewchuk 2012.
[vi] A review of Memory by Anne Whitehead has been accepted for publication. Shewchuk 2011. Inquire: Journal of Comparative Literature. 1.1 <http://inquire.streetmag.org/archive>.

populations) and a desire for mementoes of lifestyles that have been lost," as my study of Holocaust family history demonstrates (2).[23] Websites such as ancestry.ca are also indicative of this trend, as is a renewed interest in *Yizkor* books in North America. As Kugelmass and Boyarin contend:

> Despite the general public's lack of familiarity with the content of most memorial books, more and more people are making use of them. Scholars concerned with local history, or the history of certain movements and periods, often turn to these books for primary source material. Recently, the books have also found a growing reception among third- and fourth-generation American Jews interested in genealogy. The profusion of names in the books provides basic information on family history, while the larger narratives provide information on daily life, institutions, and personalities that was typically not conveyed by earlier generations committed to Americanization. As a result, a number of *yizker-bikher* have already or are now being translated into English. (Kugelmass and Boyarin 36)

In addition, Kugelmass and Boyarin observe that, in the 1980s, when <u>In a Ruined Garden</u> was released, "new memorial books [… were] being published each year": "where no book exist[ed], American children and grandchildren sometimes attempt[ed] to create one themselves" (1, 36).[24] Therefore, as I will demonstrate in the following chapters, it is these members of the second and third generations who are also creating family narratives that incorporate aspects of both the *Yizkor* and literary traditions that emerged after the war. These books, which are

concerned not with the communal preservation of the story of a *shtetl* but with the preservation of the story of a person or persons within a specific family, constitute an important continuation of the tradition of intergenerational Holocaust textual memorialization, even if the transmission of story of a *shtetl* becomes the site at which an intergenertational dialogue occurs (as in the case of <u>They Called Me Mayer July</u>). For although *Yizkor* books preserved the stories of individuals within the context of communities, in the texts that I will be studying, the stories of individuals are preserved within the context of the "chain of generations" that make up family trees (Kugelmass and Boyarin 43).

Generational Categorization

Since, as Kugelmass and Boyarin contend, "memorial books are the fruit of the impulse to write a testament for future generations," a tenet that is at the heart of both the structure and substance of my project, the nature of generational categorization also deserves to be examined in depth (17; Hirsch, <u>Family</u> 247). Generations are a foundational way of marking time in the Western tradition, as the "family registers" in the Old Testament make clear (Weigel 266). In "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust," building on the work of the sociologist Karl Mannheim, Susan Rubin Suleiman asserts that "what all of the attempts to define a historical generation have in common is the concept of a shared or collective experience, which in turn influences (or even as Mannheim suggests, 'forms') collective behavior and attitudes" (280). Within the

purview of Holocaust Studies, this concept of shared or collective experience is manifested in the way in which generations have been defined: those who survived the Holocaust are categorized as the first generation, their children are members of the second generation, and their grandchildren are members of the third generation, and so forth (van Alphen 473-74; Weigel 265; Suleiman, "Thinking" 277). One of the first books to explore the relationship between survivors and their children was Helen Epstein's Children of the Holocaust: Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors, which was published in 1979 (van Alphen 476).[25] Yet, as Ernst van Alphen states in "Second Generation Testimony, Transmission of Trauma, and Postmemory," in "the subtitle of Epstein's Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors, the term *generation* is not used. The parents/children relationship is not qualified in terms of continuity. The parents are survivors, but it is not suggested that their offspring also, by definition, are victimized by that legacy" (476). However, since the publication of Epstein's work, the terms first, second, and third generation have become entrenched in Holocaust Studies (van Alphen 476). Therefore, it will be important for me to examine how the kinds of causal relationships that underscore traditional generational categorizations (i.e. that the third generation must, by definition, be a direct descendent of a member of the first generation) are problematic within the context of my research (van Alphen 476).

First, as Suleiman notes, defining members of the same generation according to their shared experiences within a temporal construct fails to account for the other markers of identity such as "geographical location," "gender,"

"social class," and "language" that shaped how an individual experienced the Holocaust and/or its legacy ("Thinking" 289, 290). Accordingly, throughout my study, I will attempt to account for these variables in order to approach the Holocaust not as a monolithic event, but as a series of events that impacted individual lives in a wide variety of ways. For example, as I will show through my juxtaposition of Chapters One and Two, the way in which Jews in France experienced the Second World War was very different than how it was experienced by Jews in Poland, and those differences have influenced how the Holocaust is being memorialized to this day (Kershaw 185-186, 190-191; see Suleiman, "Thinking" 287, 289).

Second, the causal relationship between the three standard generational categories in Holocaust scholarship fails to account for the subcategories that can be found within these groups. To my knowledge, Suleiman was the first person to address this issue head on through her creation of the term "1.5 generation" to describe "child survivors of the Holocaust, too young to have had an adult understanding of what was happening to them, but old enough to have *been there* during the Nazi persecution of the Jews" ("Thinking" 277). In order to explore this area further, I have established two additional generational categories that I will examine in Chapter Two: the 0.5 generation, who did not witness the Holocaust but bore witness to pre-war European Jewish life, and their children, for whom, as I will discuss in Chapter Two, a logically consistent numerical designation does not exist. In turn, in Chapter Three, I will also problematize the idea of generations by exploring Daniel Mendelsohn's experience of attempting to

uncover his great-uncle's – not his grandfather's – fate during the Second World War (Mendelsohn "Six" 70; Mendelsohn in Hartman et. al. 108). Not only do these ways of reconsidering the standard categorization of generations in Holocaust Studies allow me to examine how people witnessed the war and its aftermath in a variety of contexts, but they also enable me to assess how, and for what purposes, members of different generations have decided to "preserve and transmit" information in different textual forms (Goertz 34). For, as these two limitations imply, while the Holocaust was a defining event in the lives of individuals, in the context of family history, it is part of a much larger network of events. Therefore, in order to explore the intergenerational ramifications of the Holocaust, one must explore the lives of individuals before, during, and after the Second World War.

Since textual records from the past can only ever be understood through the lens of the present, I structured this work as a generational continuum beginning with the victims of the Holocaust in the first section of Chapter One and ending with a member of the third generation in the second section of Chapter Three. When I undertook this study, I was surprised to discover that intergenerational continuums were not a more common structural device in Holocaust scholarship. While I had encountered generational continuums in literary anthologies such as Nothing Makes You Free: Writing by Descendants of Jewish Holocaust Survivors edited by Melvin Jules Bukiet, psychological studies of trauma such as The Holocaust in Three Generations: Families of Victims and Perpetrators of the Nazi Regime edited by Gabriele Rosenthal, and in works such

as Generations of the Holocaust edited by Martin Bergmann and Milton Jucovy and Children of the Holocaust: Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors by Helen Epstein, until the 2011 publication of A Thousand Darknesses: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction by Ruth Franklin (who is a member of the third generation), I had not come across a critical work that placed the literature of more than two generations in a comparative context (Suleiman, "Thinking" 287; van Alphen 476-477; Franklin 236).[26] Although Franklin does not discuss texts that are written solely by the descendents of Jewish survivors and victims or focus on the family unit as I do in this study, I was buoyed to see a framework that spans three generations enter critical discourse.[27] As such, it is my hope that, as time passes, other scholars will adopt this comparative framework as narratives by members of subsequent generations continue to emerge.[28]

Narrative

An important area of common ground between the eight works that I am examining is the way in which each of the authors creates a narrativized reconstruction of the past. For although many of the texts that I have chosen contain both words and images, in each work, the author memorializes his or her family history in a narrativized form. Notably, a "defining component of the memorial-book genre" is its use of "narrative as a means of observing and establishing living memory" (Kugelmass and Boyarin 19).[29] As "the events of World War II recede into time, the more prominent its memorials become," by

studying "[n]arration – storytelling – [which] is the relation of events unfolding through time," I will be able to assess how the voices of members of different generations have become layered as well (Young, Texture 1; see Young, "Memory" 80; Atwood 138).[30]

Now, more than six decades after the end of the Second World War, the study of Holocaust representation continues to be contentious academic terrain. From Theodor Adorno's assertion that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," the study of the transposition of survivor's traumatic memories into Holocaust testimony that Lawrence Langer explores in Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory, through the limitations of imagination that Langer discusses in The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination, the ethical limits of representation that Berel Lang examines in Holocaust Representation: Art Within the Limits of History and Ethics, and the future of representation that is explored in After Representation?: The Holocaust, Literature, Culture edited by R. Clifton Spargo and Robert M. Ehrenreich, an awareness of the distance between historical events and their textual representations has dominated many influential literary discussions of the Holocaust (34).[vii] Works such as these, and my own research, contribute to a line of inquiry that is often not about the Holocaust itself, but about how the Holocaust has been represented in different forms (Young, "Toward" 41; Young, Memory's 10). Therefore, prior to undertaking an exploration of how, and for what purposes, the representation of family history in the following chapters,

[vii] A review of After Representation?: The Holocaust, Literature, Culture edited by Clifton Spargo and Robert M. Ehrenreich has been accepted for publication. Shewchuk 2010. Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée. Forthcoming.

it is necessary to explore the implications of the narrativization of the past in greater depth.

The theorist whose extensive work on narrativization is most applicable to my discussion of the relationship between literature and history is Hayden White. According to Young, “since the facts of the Holocaust eventually obtain only their narrative and cultural representations, the interrelated problems of literary and historical interpretation might now be seen as conjoining in the study of ‘literary historiography,’” and it is White’s work that provides an interesting pathway by which to approach this complex area of research (Writing 1, see 7-10; see: Young, “Toward” 23-29). In the context of this study, White’s ideas about the “the fictive component in historical narratives” in works such as Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe, The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation, and “The Fiction of Factual Representation,” undermine the staunch division between fact and fiction that I referred to in Section One and problematize the boundaries between different types of narrativized representations of the past (White, “Historical” 301; see Ying 12-15). As White states in “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact”:

> this insistence on the fictive element in all historical narratives is certain to arouse the ire of historians who believe that they are doing something fundamentally different from the novelist, by virtue of the fact that they deal with ‘real,’ while the novelist deals with ‘imagined,’ events. But neither the form nor the explanatory power of narrative derives from the different contents it is presumed to be able to accommodate. In point of

> fact, history – the real world as it evolves in time – is made sense of in the same way that the poet or novelist tries to make sense of it, ie., by endowing what originally appears as problematical and mysterious with the aspect of a recognizable, because it is a familiar, form. It does not matter whether the world is conceived to be real or only imagined, the manner of making sense of it is the same. (301)

When approached from this point of view, imaginative representations of the Holocaust do not need to be considered solely with suspicion or contempt; instead, imagination can be viewed as a necessary part of the process of representing the past in a narrativized form (see Ying 12, 14, see 24-25).

In the works that I will be examining, in addition to using information from memories, written documents, and oral interviews, authors have used their imaginations to fill in the holes in their families' pasts. Similarly, as White contends:

> In their efforts to make sense of the historical record, which is fragmentary and always incomplete, historians have to make use of what [R.G.] Collingwood called 'the constructive imagination' which told the historian – as it tells the competent detective – what 'must have been the case' given the available evidence and the formal properties it displayed to the consciousness capable of putting the right question to it. ("Historical" 280)

While imagination can be a problematic force for historians who are attempting to verify and communicate facts and identify the causal relationships between events, it also draws attention to our "mediated" relationship with the past

(Hirsch, Family 22; Hirsch, "Generation" 107, 112; Belhman 60). In the context of my research into the literary representation of the Holocaust, however, imagination is perhaps the most interesting and generative area of research, for it is here that the choices that are made by the author within the narrative that they have created intersect with the choices that they made in order to create the text.[31] In this way, both the "story" that the author has chosen to tell and the "story" of how that story came into existence can come to the fore (Young, Writing 38-39; see Young, "Toward" 23; Young, Writing 37, 10; see Young Memory's 11). As Jonathan Safran Foer asserts, "[a]ll writing […] is autobiographical" – "[t]here is nowhere for it to come but from the author. Every character, every event – even if the book is set in Japan in 1400 BC – is autobiographical" (qtd. in Mackenzie). When viewed within this context, the presence of the imagination in a historical narrative, regardless of genre, provides a record of the author's unique engagement with the past.

In light of this issue, it is important to recognize how the intergenerational family narratives I will be studying will function as historical evidence for future generations. As Young asks in Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation, "[i]f memoirs were to be used as evidence, what kind of evidence will it be, and to what end will it be used," questions that can be broadened to also include fiction within the scope of my research (29; see 37). As I will demonstrate, literary representations of family history are an important way of preserving the stories of the people whose names would be included in the encyclopedia in Kiš's "Encyclopedia of the Dead (A

Whole Life)" and they can tell scholars a great deal about "the temper of the memory-artists' time [… and] their place in aesthetic discourse" (Young, Texture 2; Young, Writing 37, 10, 38-39). As my exploration of Irène Némirovsky's choice to fictionalize her experiences in Issy-l'Évêque during the Occupation and Élisabeth Gille's and Denise Epstein's choices to present their family history through the lenses of both fiction and non-fiction in Chapter One, the effect of Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's academic training on the form and content of They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust and Mayer Kirshenblatt's and Simon Schneiderman's choices to represent their family histories in written and visual forms in Chapter Two, as well as Daniel Mendelsohn's choice to weave the story of his search together with the stories of his lost family members and Foer's choice to create a fictional account of his return journey to Trochimbrod in Chapter Three demonstrate, I am interested not only in "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," but also in the ways in which the literary text can be regarded as a historical "artifact" (White; Young, Writing 37, 10, 38). As I previously discussed, Kugelmass and Boyarin explore how *Yizkor* books can be important sources when studying "local history, […] the history of certain movements and periods," and "genealogy" (36).[32] Accordingly, when the texts that I have chosen to examine are viewed not solely as literature, but also as primary sources, they will provide future generations with information about the Holocaust, its effects on the lives of the authors, and the role of narrative in the reconstruction of family history at different points in time (Young, Writing 37, 10, 38-39). In this way, the

works that I am studying demonstrate how, and for what purposes, those who did not witness the Holocaust are bearing witness to its aftermath.

Family History

I have chosen to explore family history in the last of the four segments in this section because it is the most limiting constraint that I have placed on the scope of my research. As Rubin Suleiman asserts, "on the whole families are defined by distinct generations" ("Thinking" 279). Therefore, although I could have studied memorialization, generational categorization, and narrativization in a variety of contexts, situating them within the purview of family history allows me to address the complex relationship between the stories of individuals and their families and how they have been passed down (see "Generation" 112-115).[33]

As the title of Daniel Mendelsohn's The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million suggests, examining the Holocaust in the context of family history allows scholars to grapple with the Holocaust's overwhelming statistics on a much more human scale. As Pryce observes:

> Traditionally, historians and social scientists have tended to focus attention on the aggregate, on large numbers; and they have attempted to identify the general patterns and processes affecting migrants and places. This is the macro level approach. In recent years, increasingly this has been found unacceptable for detailed work. […] it is now realized that

> some explanations of human behavior – not least in migration studies – are to be found at the individual or micro levels of investigation. (2)

For although the question that underscores individuals' research into their family history is "[f]rom where did I come?' in the post-Holocaust diaspora, attempting to answer this question can involve examining one's bloodline, as I will discuss in Chapters One and Two, as well as the connection to one's "ancestral homeland," as I will discuss in Chapter Three (Pryce 1; Foer, "Next" xiv; see Hirsch and Spitzer, Ghosts 10).[34]

For the purposes of this study, I am looking not at the history of the family (i.e. how the structure, role, and perception of the family unit has changed over time), but at the history of individual families and how their stories have been shaped by historical events in order to assess what contribution studying narrativized representations of family history can make to our understanding of the Holocaust and "its legacy" (Goertz 33). As Ruth Finnegan writes in the Prefaces to From Family Tree to Family History, From Family History to Community History, and Sources and Methods for Family and Community Historians: A Handbook, my research is examplary of how:

> scholars within a series of social science and historical disciplines are increasingly realizing the value of small-scale case studies, extending and questioning accepted theories through a greater understanding of local and personal diversities. Sociologists now look to individual life histories as well as generalized social structure; geographers emphasize the local as well as the global; demographers explore regional divergences, not just

> national aggregates; [and] historians extend their research from the doings of the famous to how 'ordinary people' pursued their lives at a local level. (ix; xiii; xii)

In this way, by "reconstructing the life patterns of ordinary people, [… and] viewing them as actors as well as subjects in the process of change," scholars are able to uncover layers of valuable information in the processes and remnants of everyday life (Hareven 13).

With its emphasis on the local, familiar, and quotidian, and on role of the individual in the family unit and the community at large, the study of family history involves the examination of many diverse sources including "census enumerators' books, parish registers, [and] wills" (Drake 2). Yet, as more private sources and those of an ephemeral nature such as "oral history" and "[d]iaries and letters" demonstrate, the accurate reconstruction and verification of family history can be quite problematic since it is often difficult to obtain information about a person who lived outside of "living memory" or did not leave a comprehensive paper trail (Drake 2; Golby 104; Hutton 72; Young, "Toward" 23).[35] In this study, by exploring both the silences and the voices that are contained within the histories of families, I will draw attention to the gaps within and between the texts that I have chosen, and assess the motivations behind, and consequences of, the authors' attempts to flesh out the stories that the "official historical record" has often not preserved (McHale 87).

Part Three

The Textual Record Revisited

As my exploration of the four key elements of my research reveals, in the following chapters, through a layered examination of generations and genres, it is my hope that my research will contribute to an understanding how future generations will use textual records to understand the Holocaust. As Karein Goertz states in “Transgenerational Representations of the Holocaust: From Memory to Postmemory,” “[i]nterest has shifted away from the recording of historical facts to an exploration of how we remember and make sense of those facts today, several generations later” (33). In this way, by adding “the study of commemorative forms to the study of history,” as James E. Young does throughout his work, and by approaching “historical inquiry [as] the combined study both of *what happened* and *how it is passed down to us*,” as Young has proposed, I intend to evaluate not only the stories that are contained in literary works, but the stories of their creation, preservation, transmission, and reception as well (“Toward” 41; Memory’s 11).[36] By exploring the role of “received history” in the texts that I am studying, and examining how, as Young asserts, this approach to history allows for the creation of “double-stranded narrative that tells a survivor-historians story and my own relationship to it” (an idea that I will also apply to my own research in the Conclusion of my study), I will be able to evaluate how literary texts can function as works of art and as historical artifacts that call attention to the complexities of memorializing the voices of those who

came before us and of representing Holocaust family history in different textual forms (Young, “Toward” 23).

Chapter One

Family History: Holocaust Victims and the '1.5 Generation'

In the Introduction, I situated my study of the intergenerational textual preservation, transmission, and memorialization of family history in a historical and theoretical context. This opening chapter will apply the ideas that I discussed to four of the eight works that I have chosen to compare: Irène Némirovsky's Suite française, Élisabeth Gille's Un paysage de cendres and Le Mirador: mémoires rêvés, and Denise Epstein's Survivre et vivre: entretiens avec Clémence Boulouque.[viii] Unlike the following chapters, which will examine two works that are linked by the similarities between the authors' generational affiliations, the countries in which they were writing, and their families' countries of origin, this chapter will analyze books that were written by members of the same family in the same country at different points in time. In this way, my discussion of Némirovsky's Suite française, which was created by a Holocaust victim during the Occupation and published at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and three works by her daughters, all of which were written after the Second World War, will allow me to draw attention to layered nature of the historical record in a relatively closed system before applying my ideas in larger geographical and generational constructs in the chapters that are to come.

[viii] Translations from Irène Némirovsky's Suite française are from Sandra Smith's translation of the same name. Translations from Journal d'Hélène Berr are from The Journal of Hélène Berr translated by David Bellos. Translations from Élisabeth Gille's Le Mirador: mémoires rêvés are from The Mirador: Dreamed Memories of Irène Némirovsky by her Daughter translated by Marina Harss, while translations from Un paysage de cendres are from Shadows of a Childhood: A Novel of War and Friendship translated by Linda Cloverdale. Translations from Denise Epstein's Survivre et vivre: entretiens avec Clémence Boulouque and Nathan Bracher's "Éthique et esthétique dans le Journal d'Hélène Berr" and "Le fin mot de l'histoire: La Tempête en juin et les perspectives de Némirovsky" are my own.

Structurally, my choice to begin this study by analyzing a work that was created by a victim of the Holocaust and not a member of the first generation stems from the fact that, in order to understand the nature of postwar textual memorialization, it is necessary to first explore works that were created by individuals who did not survive the war. In his article "Broken Records: Holocaust Diaries, Memoirs, and Memorial Books," Jared Stark asserts that "the wartime writings of the [Holocaust's] victims," are "[n]ot only important historical sources, these documents expose […] the day-to-day impact of the as-yet-unnamed genocide in its unfolding. Rather than present the Holocaust as a past event with a known, inevitable outcome, these texts [… explore] what it […] mean[s] to witness the disaster from within" (194-195, 195). Therefore, despite the different geographic locations in which wartime diaries were written, and their authors' different ages, genders, and economic situations, they share a similar trait: they were created under the constant threat of death without the assurance that, if their creator were to perish, they would be found or preserved (Stark 195; see Suleiman, "Thinking" 280-281, 287, 289-290). As such, through their authors' "complex efforts to bear public witness" for future generations, wartime diaries are important records of day-to-day life that contain intimate details about individuals' thoughts, feelings, and experiences that would have otherwise been lost (Stark 195).

In Section One of this chapter, while I could have chosen to focus on a wartime diary, I decided to problematize the relationship between fact and fiction, an idea to which I will return in later chapters, by discussing Suite française

instead. Critics such as Susan Rubin Suleiman, Mary Anne Garnett, and Angela Kershaw have noted that, as Kershaw states, Suite française, like the diaries I referenced, "was written as events were happening by an author who was […] tragically implicated in them," which contributes to its "exceptionality" in that it is "one of a very few works of fiction about the Occupation period written contemporaneously with the events described" (Suleiman in Golsan and Suleiman 325; Garnett 351; Kershaw 190, 172, 1; Bracher, After 12). For this reason, in the context of the ongoing controversy surrounding the limitations of representation that I outlined in the Introduction, a study of Suite française raises important questions about the nature of witnessing and the way in which a literary text can function as a historical artifact.

Originally planned to be a five-part work, Suite française was left unfinished when Némirovsky died in Auschwitz in 1942 (Némirovsky, Suite 526; Kershaw 1). It was Némirovsky's intention that the first two sections, "Tempête en juin" and "Dolce," in which she examines the widespread exodus from Paris and life under the German Occupation in rural France, would be part of a larger work that would span the arc of the war (Némirovsky, Suite 530; Kershaw 182; Bracher, After x, xvi). In this way, just as Stark notes in his examination of wartime diaries that "[t]he traumatic impact of the Holocaust is transmitted not only through the content of the diary but also through ruptures in its form," his assertion that "[t]o grasp what these diaries transmit, we must also listen for what they cannot record – their missing days, their broken endings" can also be applied to Suite française (197). For, by focusing not only on "Tempête en juin" and

"Dolce," but also on the novel's appendices, which were included in place of the final three books, and on the other "paratextual" material that was included in the text, I will assess how Angela Kershaw's analysis Némirovsky's work both at the time in which it was written and the time in which it is read can shed light on the implications of the intergenerational construction and reception of Suite française (Jaillant 360; Kershaw 188, 7, 172, 185; see Young, Texture vii).

As the focus of Section One demonstrates, in the context of this study, I am interested not only in the production of textual records by victims of the Holocaust, but how, and for what purposes, those records have been used by members of subsequent generations as well. Hence, in Section Two of Chapter One, I will turn my attention to the post-war perspectives of Némirovsky's daughters Denise Epstein and Élisabeth Gille, who were twelve and five at the time of their mother's death. It is important to note that here, as in the previous section, I could have gone down a more conventional path and analyzed a memoir by an adult survivor. However, just as I chose to draw attention to different genres in Section One, I chose to problematize traditional generational categories by examining works by members of the "1.5 generation" in Section Two (Suleiman, "Thinking" 277). A comparison of Le Mirador, Un paysage de cendres, and Survivre et vivre, which deal predominantly with events that occurred when Gille and Epstein were children, or even before their births, and were written when the authors were adults in a post-Holocaust milieu, will allow me to examine in greater detail how the relationship between fact and fiction shapes our understanding of Némirovsky's life and Suite française. When situated in relation

to my discussion of Némirovsky's wartime writing, my analysis of these books will also lay a foundation for discussions of intergenerational textual reconstruction in the following chapters, be it Kirshenblatt's reconstruction of his childhood memories of interwar life in Poland, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's reconstruction of the interview process with her father, and Schneiderman's reconstruction of his father's life in Chapter Two, or Daniel Mendelsohn's and Jonathan Safran Foer's reconstruction of their return journeys to Ukraine and the life stories of their deceased relatives in Chapter Three.

The first book that I will be examining in the second section of this chapter, Le Mirador, is a biography of Némirovsky, while the second book, Un paysage de cendres, is based on Gille's experiences as an orphan during and after the Holocaust (Astro). Comparatively, the third book, Survivre et vivre, is a non-fiction account of Epstein's life, her memories of the war and of her mother, and of the consequences of her mother's posthumous fame (Kershaw 2). Notably, neither Le Mirador nor Un paysages de cendres was published before Suite française, and Survivre et vivre was published twelve years after Gille's death. When read in conjunction with her mother's and sister's writing, Survivre et vivre provides fascinating insight into how the relationship between public and private history impacts the preservation of family history in a textual form.

Gille's and Epstein's choices to publish books about their family history has meant that that history has been cast, for perpetuity, into the public sphere. As such, in this chapter, my exploration of the ways in which members of a single family have articulated their experiences in different genres will allow me to

examine not only how “the family [functions] as a space of transmission,” but also how textual memorials contribute to the construction of personal, familial, and national perceptions of the past (Hirsch, “Generation” 103). In this way, I will demonstrate the way in which literature enables authors to preserve their own voices while also conjuring publicly the voices of the dead.

Part One

Irène Némirovsky's Suite française

Born in Kiev in February 1903, Irina (Irène) Irma Némirovsky was "the only child of Anna Margoulis and Leonid (Leon) Némirovsky," a prominent banker (Philipponnat and Lienhardt, "Chronology" 60). In 1918, amidst the Bolshevik Revolution, the Némirovsky family fled Russia for Finland and Sweden before coming to France (Philipponnat and Lienhardt, "Chronology" 63). In the years that followed, while her father regained his wealth and status, Némirovsky settled comfortably into her new life, completing a degree in Russian literature at the Sorbonne in 1922, followed by a degree in Comparative Literature in 1924 (Philipponat and Lienhardt, "Chronology" 64, 68, 69). In 1926, she married Michel Epstein, three years before the birth of their first daughter, Denise, and three years before the publication of her breakthrough novel David Golder, in which she painted an unflattering portrait of the Russian-Jewish business man David Golder, his status conscious wife Gloria, and their greedy daughter Joyce (Philipponnat and Lienhardt, "Chronology" 72, 75, 76; Kershaw 7, 113-114). Following the novel's immense success, Némirovsky's achieved increasing literary fame in France, publishing numerous novels, short stories, and reviews (Kershaw 16, 27). Yet, it was not until in 1938, a year after the birth of her second daughter, Élisabeth, that Némirovsky is first known to have stayed in Issy-l'Évêque, the town where she would later write the novel that would bring her immense fame after her death (Philipponnat and Lienhardt, "Chronology" 88, 86; Kershaw 1). Following France's declaration of war, Némirovsky and her family

left Paris for Issy-l'Évêque and it was here that, in 1940, she witnessed "the mass exodus of the French toward the south of the country," an event that figures prominently in the first part of Suite française, and experienced the effects of the arrival of German troops, which forms the foundation for the second part of the text (Philipponnat and Lienhardt, "Chronology" 95; Kershaw 182; Bracher, "fin" 265-266; Bracher, After 9). The eerily prescient title of what was to have been the third part of Suite française, "Captivité," remained unwritten when Némirovsky was arrested in Issy-l'Évêque on July 13, 1942; she was taken first to the internment camp in Pithiviers and later to Auschwitz, where she died of typhus in August of that year (Némirovsky, Suite 530; Philipponnat and Lienhardt, "Chronology" 101, 102; Astro). Less than three months after her death, Némirovsky's husband was gassed upon arrival in the same concentration camp; however, before his departure, he entrusted the suitcase that held the manuscript for Suite française to his daughters who went into hiding for the remainder of the war (Philipponnat and Lienhardt, "Chronology" 105; Astro; Jaillant 360, 369).

Although Suite française was written during the Occupation, it was not published for more than "sixty years" (Kershaw 172; Jaillant 377; Bracher, "fin" 265; Bracher, After ix). After the novel's release in 2004, Némirovsky became the first posthumous recipient of the prestigious Prix Renaudot, and, as of 2008, Suite française had "been translated into thirty-eight languages and sold more than 1,300,000 copies worldwide" (Philipponnat and Lienhardt, "Chronology" 110; Kershaw 1-2; see Bracher, After ix-x; see Jaillant 359, 372). As Kershaw asserts in Before Auschwitz: Irène Némirovsky and the Cultural Landscape of Inter-war

France, "[t]he literary reputation of Irène Némirovsky has been made twice, at an interval of more than seventy years and therefore in two very different historical, social, and literary environments," an idea that will be central to my discussion of how Suite française has been constructed as a memorial text (7). For although the book was not the only work that Némirovsky created during the Occupation, nor the only book that was published after her death, and although other books by Némirovsky have been released, rereleased, and/or translated in the wake of Suite française's sizable success, perhaps because of that fact that Suite française was written during the Second World War, or because it remained unfinished at the time of her arrest, it has captured the popular imagination and renewed interest in her life and writing (Philipponnat and Lienhardt, "Chronology" 108; Kershaw 1-2, 172; Suleiman in Golson and Suleiman 325; Jailllant 361; Bracher, After x).[ix][37] In order to assess these ideas, by drawing on the work of Angela Kershaw, I will begin this section of Chapter One by undertaking a close reading of "Tempête en juin" and "Dolce," followed by an analysis of the book's "paratextual" material and an exploration of the plethora of contemporary biographical and critical information that has influenced interpretations of Suite française (Kershaw 188, 2-3, 185-194). In this way, the complex relationships between the textual layers that I am examining will come to the fore.

As Némirovsky's notebooks reveal, Suite française was originally intended to be a five-part work comprised of "Tempête en juin," "Dolce," "Captivité," as well as two final chapters that were tentatively titled "Batailles"

[ix] A review of All Our Worldly Goods by Irène Némirovsky, translated by Sandra Smith, has been accepted for publication. Shewchuk 2011. Jewish Book World. 29.4: 33.

and “La paix” (Némirovsky, Suite 530). Yet, as I mentioned, Némirovsky had completed only “Tempête en juin” and “Dolce” at the time of her arrest and these two sections comprise the first part of the twenty-first century publication that is entitled Suite française (Jaillant 364). Divided into 31 sections, “Tempête en juin” begins on Tuesday, June 4, 1940, the day after the first bombing of Paris, and follows a constellation of characters whose lives intersect as they flee for the French countryside and grapple with the personal, social, and financial consequences of the onset of war (Némirovsky, Suite 33; Bracher, After xvi; Kershaw 152; Bracher, “fin” 265-267; Bracher, After 37). The first characters that are introduced in “Tempête en juin” are some of the members of the Péricand family; they include Monsieur Péricand, the “conservateur d’un des musées nationaux,” his wife Charlotte, his wealthy and ailing father, and his sons Philippe and Hubert (Némirovsky, Suite 37; see Bracher, After 20-21).[x] In the sections that follow, Némirovsky also explores the experiences of Gabriel Corte, a wealthy middle-aged writer, and his mistress Florence, Charles Langelet, a porcelain collector, Maurice and Jeanne Michaud, who work at a bank in Paris, their boss Monsieur Corbin and his mistress Arlette Corail, as well as the Michaud’s son Jean-Marie, a soldier who has been injured in a train bombing and is being cared for in the French countryside by Cécile and Madeleine Sabarie (Némirovsky, Suite 112; Bracher, After 20-21, see 9-20, see 88-89; Bracher, “fin” 276).[38] As the sections of “Tempête en juin” unfold, Némirovsky connects these characters in a

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[x] The first characters that are introduced in “Tempête en juin” are some of the members of the Péricand family; they include Monsieur Péricand, the “curator of one of the country’s national museums,” his wife Charlotte, his wealthy and ailing and father, and his sons Philippe and Hubert (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 5; see Bracher, After 20-21).

complex network of events that allow her to examine how the exodus from Paris impacted the lives of individuals and how tensions in French society were manifested at the time (Kershaw 182; Bracher, After 31-32; Bracher, After xvii).

The most important way in which Némirovsky explores the individual and societal consequences of the events of 1940 is through her analyses of religion and, as Angela Kershaw and Nathan Bracher demonstrate, "class" (182; x, see, for example, Bracher, After x, xvi, 35, 42, 149-151; Bracher, "fin" 266-267). This is evident in the way in which the ideals of the Péricand family, who are described as having "une hérédité bourgeoise et catholique," are compromised during their journey to the countryside (Némirovsky, Suite 37; Kershaw 175).[xi] For instance, Némirovsky describes how, although Charlotte is involved with "des Petits Repentis du XVIe," when she is confronted with the prospect of having to share her family's food with the less fortunate on their travels, "[l]a charité chrétienne, la mansuétude des siècles de civilisation tombaient d'elle comme des vains ornements révélant son âme aride et nue" (Némirovsky, Suite 99; Kershaw 175).[xii] Similarly, when the family is forced to flee after a bombing, Charlotte is pleased that she has been able to safeguard "ses enfants, sa mallette [… et] les bijoux et l'argent cousus sur la poitrine," but she forgets Monsieur Péricand's father, who subsequently dies in the care of "les sœurs du Saint-Sacrement" (Némirovsky,

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[xi] This is evident in the way in which the ideals of the Péricand family, who are described as having "a middle-class, Catholic background," are compromised during their journey to the countryside (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 5; Kershaw 175).

[xii] For instance, Némirovsky describes how, although Charlotte is involved with "the Penitent Children of the 16th Arrondisement," when she is confronted with the prospect of having share her family's food with the less fortunate on their travels, "Christian charity, the compassion of centuries of civilization, fell from her like useless ornaments, revealing her bare, arid soul" (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 10, 48; Kershaw 175).

Suite 180, 181, 202, 194; Kershaw 182-183; Bracher, After 70).[xiii] In addition, although the elderly man bequeaths a large portion of his estate to "des Petits Repentis du XVIe," when Philippe, a priest, leads a group of boys from that establishment out of the city, they beat him savagely leaving him to die "dans l'eau jusqu'à la ceinture, la tête rejetée en arrière, l'œil crevé par une pierre" (Némirovsky, Suite 44, 62, 63, 222, 224; Kershaw 183; Bracher, After 21, 65-66).[xiv] And finally, when Hubert runs away from his family to join the army, instead of fighting, he ends up being seduced by Arlette Corail (Némirovsky, Suite 138, 153, 169; Kershaw 176; Bracher, After 20-21). Yet, selfishness and hypocrisy in "Tempête en juin" are not limited to the Péricands as Bracher explores at length in his discussion of Gabriel Corte in After the Fall: War and Occupation in Irène Némirovsky's Suite française and "Le fin mot de l'histoire: La Tempête en juin et les perspectives de Némirovsky" (44-57, 73-74; 268-274). When Gabriel Corte is forced to flee Paris, he observes in a sweeping generalization, "[q]uel cauchemar! Oh! la laideur, la vulgarité, l'affreuse bassesse de cette foule!" (Némirovsky, Suite 118).[xv] Similarly, when the manager at the Grand Hôtel in Paris relates to Corte how, "[d]es gens sont arrivés ici sans un pyjama, sans une brosse à dents. Il y a même un malheureux qui a été entièrement

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[xiii] Similarly, when the family is forced to flee after a bombing, Charlotte is pleased that she has been able to safeguard "her children, her overnight case, [… and] the jewellery and money sewn into her blouse," but she forgets Monsieur Péricand's father, who subsequently dies in the care of the "Sisters of the Sacred Sacrament" (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 102, 103, 118, 112; Kershaw 182-183; Bracher, After 70).
[xiv] In addition, although the elderly man bequeaths a large portion of his estate to "the Penitent Children of the 16th Arrondisement," when Philippe, a priest, leads a group of boys from the establishment out of the city, they beat him savagely leaving him to die "in water up to his waist, head thrown back, one eye gouged out by a stone" (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 116, 22-23, 133, 134; Kershaw 183; Bracher, After 21, 65-66).
[xv] When Gabriel Corte is forced to flee Paris, he observes in a sweeping generalization, "[w]hat a nightmare! Oh, the ugliness, the vulgarity, the horrible crudeness of these people!" (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 61).

déshabillé par une déflagration; il a fait le voyage depuis Tours, tout nu, enroulé dans une couverture et grièvement blessé," Corte replies, "[m]oi j'ai failli perdre mes manuscrits" (Némirovsky, Suite 240).[xvi] Further, Monsieur Corbin denies the Michauds a ride out of Paris in his car, yet later fires them for not reaching Tours (Némirovsky, Suite 84, 252, 263-264; Kershaw 175-176; Bracher, After 28). Only the Michauds and Jean-Marie's caregivers are presented in a compassionate and altruistic light (Bracher, After 9-20, 86-87). Therefore, as these examples demonstrate, by drawing attention to the stark divisions in the French class system (Kershaw asserts that "Némirovsky constantly underlines the idea that it is the fracturing of French society along class lines that makes collaboration a reality"), the selective implementation of Christian morals and compassion, the privilege that comes with wealth and status in a time of crisis, and the fickleness of fate (for example, in Section 29, Charles Langelet is run over by a car outside his home after returning to Paris), Némirovsky provides a cutting commentary on the priorities of individuals and French society at the outset of the war (184; Némirovsky, Suite 281; Kershaw 176, 183; Bracher, "fin" 266-267; Bracher, After 33-34, 35).

Dolce," which follows "Tempête en juin," begins on Easter Sunday and is centered on the home of Madame Angellier and her daughter-in-law Lucile in the town of Bussy in rural France (Némirovsky, Suite 307; Bracher, After xvi). As the title implies, "Dolce" has a much less frenetic pace than "Tempête en juin," and,

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[xvi] Similarly, when the manager at the Grand Hôtel in Paris relates to Corte how, "[p]eople have been arriving without pajamas, without even a toothbrush. There was one unfortunate gentleman who arrived with no clothes on. He was wounded in an explosion and made the entire journey from Tours completely naked, with only a blanket round him," Corte replies, "[w]ell, I nearly lost my manuscripts" (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 146).

although it is made up of 22 sections, since it focuses on a much smaller group of characters who interact in a single locale, its form and content are far less fractured as well. In "Dolce," Némirovsky explores the activities of everyday life under the German Occupation, centering on the relationships between the French population and the German regiment that invaded the town (Kershaw 184; Bracher, After xix-xx, 131). On one level, this relationship is quite formal. For example, Némirovsky outlines the strict regulations that are set out by the Germans: the French residents of Bussy are "interdit de circuler dans les rues entre neuf heures du soir et cinq heures du matin, interdit de garder chez soi des armes à feu, de donner «abri, aide or secours» à des prisonniers évadés, à des ressortissants des pays ennemis de l'Allemagne, à des militaires anglais, interdit d'écouter les radios étrangères, [et] interdit de refuser l'argent allemand" (Némirovsky, Suite 315).[xvii] Interestingly, no mention is made of Nazi regulations concerning Jews during the war (Kershaw 181). Yet, on another level, Némirovsky also examines the controversial personal relationships that form between the residents and the German soldiers, many of whom are billeted in French homes, an idea that is evidenced most strongly in the relationship between Lucile and Lieutenant Bruno von Falk who is assigned to stay with the Angelliers (Némirovsky, Suite 319; Kershaw 184; Bracher, After xx, xxi, 215). Lucile, whose husband Gaston has been captured while fighting, and with whom she had

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[xvii] For example, Némirovsky outlines the strict regulations that are set out by the Germans: the French residents of Bussy are "forbidden to walk down the street between nine o'clock in the evening and five o'clock in the morning; forbidden to keep any firearms; forbidden to 'aid, abet, or shelter' escaped prisoners, English soldiers, or citizens of countries that were enemies of Germany; forbidden to listen to foreign radio stations; [and] forbidden to refuse German currency" (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 198).

a strained relationship before the war on account of his relationship with his mistress in Dijon, finds emotional solace in her conversations with Bruno, to the dismay of her mother-in-law who locks herself away in protest (Némirovsky, Suite 322, 410-413, 440; Bracher, After 140, 180, 230, 249). However, Lucile and Bruno's interaction points to a larger tension in "Dolce" between the French residents' perceptions of the German soldiers as invaders and, as Bracher observes, their interactions with them as "men" (see After xix-xx, 156, see, for example, 156-158, 164, 164-165, 199-202, 209, 214-215, 217). The following series of thoughts by Lucile is indicative of this point: "C'est peut-être lui […] qui a fait Gaston prisonnier? Mon Dieu […] combien de Français a-t-il tués? Il est vrai que si la guerre avait tourné autrement, Gaston aurait pu, aujourd'hui, entrer en maître dans une maison allemande. C'est la guerre, ce n'est pas la faute de ce garçon" (Némirovsky, Suite 319).[xviii] Interestingly, though, Némirovsky also attributes the same uncertainty to the Germans when they depart from Bussy for Russia near the end of the second part of Suite française (Kershaw 184). She writes that:

> les Allemandes essayaient de devenir ce que l'on pensait d'eux: est-ce que ces gens se réjouissaient de les voir partir? Est-ce qu'ils leur souhaitaient à tous mort dans le secret de leur coeur? Est-ce que certains d'entre eux les plaignaient? Les regretterait on? Non entant qu'Allemands, entant que conquérants […], mais est-ce que qu'ils regretteraient ces Paul, Siegfried,

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[xviii] The following series of thoughts by Lucile is indicative of this point: "Maybe he's the one […] who took Gaston prisoner? My God, how many Frenchmen has he killed? How many tears have been shed because of him? It's true that if the war ended the other way, Gaston might today be entering a German house. That's how war is; it isn't this boy's fault" (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 201).

> Oswald qui avaient vécu pendant trios mois sous leur toit, qui leur avaient montré des photos de leurs femmes ou de leurs mères, qui avaient bu avec eux plus d'une bouteille de vin? (Némirovsky, Suite 504)[xix]

According to Kershaw and Bracher, for Lucile, these questions are largely answered when she is forced to choose her loyalty to her community and her country over her feelings for Bruno by hiding Benoît, Madeleine's husband, in her home after he shoots a member of the German regiment (184; After xx; Némirovsky, Suite 466; After 188, 199, 229, 236-238).

As these examples demonstrate, in line with the issues that I discussed in relation to religion and class in "Tempête en juin," the residents of Bussy do not take a united stand against the Germans that occupy the town (Kershaw 184). Instead, Némirovsky explores how each person's attitudes towards the occupying troops are influenced by their relationships, their loved ones' involvement in the conflict, and their memories of the previous war (Kershaw 183; see, for example, Némirovsky, Suite 409; see Bracher, After 156). Yet, nowhere is the idea of self-interest so keenly felt as in Bruno's description of how, when the German troops entered Bussy, the French residents were willing to turn against themselves. He states: "le jour même de notre arrivée, nous attendait un paquet de letters anonyms. Les gens s'accusaient mutuellement de propagande anglaise et gaulliste,

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[xix] She writes that: "they tried to work out what the French were thinking: Were they happy to see them go? Did they secretly wish they'd all get killed? Did anyone feel sorry for them? Would they miss them? Of course they wouldn't be missed as Germans, as conquerors […], but would the French miss these Pauls, Siegfrieds, Oswalds who had lived under their roofs for three months, showed them pictures of their wives and mothers, shared more than one bottle of wine with them?" (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 330).

d'accaparement des denrées, d'espionnage. S'il avait fallu entenir compte, tout le pays serait en prison!" (Némirovsky, Suite 409; see Bracher, After xix, 156-158).[xx] This observation reveals how, just because the Germans have left Bussy at the end of "Dolce," it does not mean that the decisions that were made by the French residents will not have lasting effects (see, for example, Bracher, After 205-209, 213). In this way, by exploring what Olivier Philipponnat has referred to as "the inglorious ambiguity of French public opinion under the Occupation," Némirovsky draws attention to what will be the lasting impact of the conflict on the lives of people from various classes while also considering the moral complexities of war (145).

As I discussed in the Introduction to this chapter, one of the things that has made Suite française so captivating for contemporary readers and academics is the fact that Némirovsky "had such a clear-sighted view of what was happening, at the very time it was happening" (Suleiman in "Suite"; see Kershaw 172-173; see Bracher, After 12). Therefore, although "Tempête en juin" and "Dolce" are works of fiction, it is notable that there are many points of intersection between the events that Némirovsky describes in "Dolce" and her experiences in Issy-l'Évêque. For example, not only were German soldiers stationed in the town, but the main hotel where Némirovsky and her family originally stayed when they came to the village was called "Hôtel des Voyageurs," which is the name of a hotel that is mentioned in "Dolce" (Philipponnat and Leinhardt 95, 88; Kershaw

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[xx] He states: "[t]he very first day we arrived […] there was a package of anonymous letters waiting for us at Headquarters. People were accusing one another of spreading English and Gaullist propaganda, of hoarding supplies, of being spies. If we'd taken them all seriously, everyone in the region would be in prison" (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 313; see Bracher, After xix, 156-158).

182; Némirovsky, Suite 316). Interestingly, in Chapter 21 of "Dolce," Némirovsky also describes a German party that took place at the château near Bussy, which is reminiscent of a party that Gille describes in Le Mirador; Olivier Philipponnat and Olivier Leinhardt also mention this party in their "Chronology of the Life of Irène Némirovsky" (Suite 495-503; Gille 332, 337-342; Philipponnat and Leinhardt 98). In fact, the ties between the real world in which Némirovsky was writing and the fictional world that she created in Suite française were so strong that Epstein has asserted that: "I knew the real name of each character, I recognized them all! There was only one I wasn't sure about, the porcelain collector, but Olivier Philipponnat and Patrick Lienhardt made the connection between that character and a very right-wing journalist of the time" (Epstein, "Interview" 41). It is significant, though, that Epstein has chosen not to make many of the names of these individuals public because, according to her, "they aren't very likeable, and […] because future generations shouldn't have to pay for the actions of their parents" (Epstein, "Interview" 45). Importantly, though, some of the identies have been revealed. For example, Epstein describes the identity of the Péricand family in the interview with Olivier Corpet and Emmanuelle Lambert from which the previous quotation is taken, and, as Nathan Bracher points out in "Le fin mot de l'histoire," Olivier Philipponat and Patrick Lienhardt speculate upon the identity of Gabriel Corte in La vie d'Irène Némirovsky (Epstein, "Interview" 45; Bracher 268; Philipponat and Liendardt 36). Therefore, while the name of one family does appear in Woman of Letters: Irène Némirovsky and Suite française, the lack of transparency about this

particular area of the book demonstrates the lengths to which Epstein has gone, in one sense, to maintain the veil of fiction that surrounds her mother's writing about the war (Epstein, "Interview" 45).

Considering the points of intersection between Némirovsky's experiences and Suite française, it is important to consider the consequences of her choice to write "Tempête en juin" and "Dolce" as works of fiction, instead of recording the events around her in a diary form (Jaillant 361, 371-372). For although Suite française shares many of the characteristics that Stark identifies in wartime diaries (not knowing if they would be finished, published, preserved, or read, and not having the opportunity to edit a work after the fact), fiction provides an author an important level of mediation, an idea that will become of even greater importance in the chapters that follow as subsequent generations become increasingly distanced, both geographically and temporally, from the war (195-197; Kershaw 182; Jaillant 371). For this reason, perhaps the best way to evaluate the differences between fiction and non-fiction descriptions of the Occupation is to compare Suite française with Journal d'Hélène Berr, a diary that was written during approximately the same period, since these books, and the lives of their authors, share many salient traits (Boulouque 15).[39] In her article "A Masterpiece Ripped from Oblivion: Rediscovered Manuscripts and the Memory of the Holocaust in Contemporary France," Lise Jaillant undertakes a comparison of these two authors and texts, exploring how "backstories and artifacts are as important as content with regard to these rediscovered writings" and how "Suite française and Berr's journal exemplify the importance of paratextual elements in

the production of international bestsellers" (361, 379, 359). Notably, Jaillant applies Kershaw's work in Before Auschwitz: Irène Némirovsky and the Cultural Landscape of Inter-war France in her article by exploring the significance of "paratextual elements" in the texts, and thus an examination of Jaillant's and Kershaw's perpectives on these two texts can reveal a great deal about how these works have been "marketed as moving Holocaust stories" and received in our time (Jaillant 366, 370, 371; Kershaw 188, 3; Jaillant 362, 373).

Journal d'Hélène Berr begins in April 1942, four months before Némirovsky's death, and ends in February 1944, a month before Berr was sent to Auschwitz (Berr 17; Philipponnat and Leinhardt 102; Berr 274; Job, "Vie" 286). Berr, who was born in Paris on March 21, 1921, and decided to stay in the city during the Occupation, died in Bergen-Belsen just "quelques jours avant la liberation du camp par les Anglais" in 1945 (Job, "Vie" 283, 284; Jaillant 360; Job, "Vie" 287; Jaillant 360).[xxi] Interestingly, like Némirovsky, Berr studied literature at the Sorbonne and thus she would also have been conscious of the implications of her choice to record her experiences in a written form (Philipponnat and Leinhardt 68, 69; Job, "Vie" 284; Bellos 4). Yet, the similarities between Némirovsky and Berr do not end there since, like Suite française, Journal d'Hélène Berr provides a record of the events of the Occupation "at the very time it was happening" (Suleiman in "Suite"; see Kershaw 172-173). As Nathan Bracher writes in "Éthique and esthétique dans le Journal d'Hélène Berr," "son Journal témoigne d'une rare lucidité sur le caractère exact de ce qui

[xxi] Berr, who was born in Paris on March 21, 1921, and decided to stay in the city during the occupation, died in Bergen-Belsen just "[a few] days before the camp was liberated by the British army" in 1945 (Job, "Stolen" 272; Jaillant 360; Job, "Vie" 287; Jaillant 360).

[… était] en train d'arriver aux Juifs dans ce Paris occupé," an idea that is echoed in Némirovsky's fictionalized representation of the Occupation in rural France (161, see 153).[xxii] Further, like Suite française, Journal d'Hélène Berr was published decades after its author's death (Job, "Stolen" 274; Jaillant 360-361).

Although a typed version of Berr's journal had been circulated among family members after the war, in 1992, Mariette Job, Berr's niece, set out to track down Berr's original diary, which was in the possession of Berr's fiancé Jean Morawieki (Job, "Vie" 288; Jaillant 364, 362). In 1994, Morawieki gave the manuscript to Job, who, in turn, donated it to the Memorial de la Shoah in Paris in 2002, just as Denise Epstein and Élisabeth Gille donated the manuscript for Suite française to the Institut Mémoires de l'Edition Contemporaine (IMEC) in 1995 (Job, "Vie" 288; Jaillant 367; Philipponnat and Leinhardt 110). Four years after the publication of Suite française, Journal d'Hélène Berr was published in France, and was so well received that Berr has been referred to as "the 'Anne Frank of France'" (Job, "Vie" 274-275; Jaillant 373, 361; Grice; see also Burke). Nevertheless, despite the similarities between these two works and the lives of their authors, as a result of the genres in which they were written, Suite française and Journal d'Hélène Berr are very different textual records of the Occupation of France.

As a fiction writer, Némirovsky created work for public consumption as a line from her notebook that is published in Appendix One in Suite française

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[xxii] As Nathan Bracher writes in "Éthique and esthétique dans le Journal d'Hélène Berr," "her Journal testifies to a rare lucidity in the exact character of what [… was] happening to the Jews in occupied Paris," an idea that is echoed in Némirovsky's fictionalized representation of the Occupation in rural France (161, see 153).

reveals (Kershaw 176; Jaillant 361). It reads: “ne jamais oublier que la guerre passera et que toute la partie historique pâlira. Tâcher de faire le plus possible de choses, de débats … que peuvent intéresser les gens en 1952 ou 2052” (Némirovsky 531; Kershaw 177; Bracher, After 8).[xxiii] In contrast, as David Bellos reminds the reader in the Introduction to the English translation of Journal d’Hélène Berr, “[t]his remarkable book is not a novel. It is a personal diary, not intended for publication” (1; see Jaillant 361). Therefore, while, for Némirovsky, “[l]e plus important ici et le plus intéressant est la chose suivante: les faits historiques, révolutionnaires, etc., doivent être effleurés, tandis que ce qui est approfondi, c’est la vie quotidienne, affective et surtout la comédie que cela présente[,]” Berr was concerned with creating a reliable record of the facts (Némirovsky, Suite 537; Bellos 5; see Jaillant 361).[xxiv] As Berr wrote in October 1943:

> Il faudrait donc que j’écrive pour pouvoir plus tard montrer aux hommes ce qu’a été cette époque. […] Seulement, je n’ai pas le temps d’écrire un livre. Je n’ai pas le temps, je n’ai pas le calme d’esprit nécessaire. Et je n’ai sans doute pas le recul qu’il faut. Tout ce que je peux faire, c’est de noter les faits ici, qui aideront plus tard ma mémoire si je veux raconter,

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[xxiii] It reads: “Never forget the war will be over and that the entire historical side will fade away. Try to create as much as possible: things, debates … that will interest people in 1952 or 2052” (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 351; Kershaw 177; Bracher, After 8).

[xxiv] Therefore, while for Némirovsky, “[t]he most important and most interesting thing here is the following: the historical, revolutionary facts etc. must be lightly touched upon, while daily life, the emotional life and especially the comedy it provides must be described in detail,” Berr was concerned with creating a reliable record of the facts (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 357; Bellos 5; see Jaillant 361).

ou si je veux écrire. (Journal 171)[xxv]

Importantly then, this statement, supports Kershaw's discussion of Ian Ousby's contention that "[s]ustained description, deliberate meditation and the literary *topoi* constructed from them come only in safety or in leisure after the event. There was little place for them during the occupation," reveals why Suite française is such a distinctive and problematic document in a post-Holocaust milieu (qtd. in Kershaw 172).[40] For, unlike Berr's diary, and the wartime diaries that Stark mentions, Némirovsky filtered her experiences through her imagination, creating a record not of her external environment and its emotional effects, but of what she saw in her "mind's eye" (Némirovsky, Suite 537; Foer, Harper). Consequently, while the facts that are contained in wartime diaries are often contingent upon the author's experiences and shaped to meet the needs of the author and their intended audience (Berr wrote, for example, that "[i]l y a deux parties dans ce journal, je m'en aperçois en relisant le début: il y a la partie j'écris par devoir, pour conserver des souviens de ce qui devra être raconté, et il y a celle qui est écrite pour Jean, pour moi et pour lui"), in Némirovsky's work of fiction, the emotional consequence of events and the narrative itself take precedence over the creation of an eye witness account (Bellos 4; Berr, Journal 197; Némirovsky, Suite 537).[xxvi] Therefore, in light of Theodor Adorno's assertion that "to write

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[xxv] As Berr wrote on October 10, 1943: "I must write to show people later on what these times are like. […] Only I don't have time to write a book. I haven't got the time and I haven't got the necessary peace of mind. Nor do I probably have sufficient distance. All I can do is write down the facts, which will help me remember if one day I want to tell or write about it" (Journal, trans. Bellos 159).

[xxvi] Consequently, while the facts that are contained in wartime diaries are often contingent upon the author's experiences and shaped to meet the needs of the author and their intended audience (Berr wrote, for example, that "[t]here are two parts to this diary, I realize on rereading the beginning: the part I write out of duty, to preserve memories of what will have to be told, and the

poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," which Nathan Bracher applies to his examination of Journal d'Hélène Berr in "Éthique and esthétique dans le Journal d'Hélène Berr," Suite française raises important questions about the role of "imaginative literature" before Auschwitz, and, as Kershaw demonstrates, draws attention to the complexities of "reading after Auschwitz" as well (34; Bracher 150, 153; Schwarz, Imagining 22; Kershaw 185; Franklin 3; see also Kershaw 194).

When I first conceived of this project, Kershaw's Before Auschwitz: Irene Némirovsky and the Cultural Landscape of Inter-war France, Bracher's After the Fall: War and Occupation in Irène Némirovsky's Suite française, and Jaillant's "A Masterpiece Ripped From Oblivion: Rediscovered Manuscripts and the Memory of the Holocaust in Contemporary France" had not yet been published. In fact, at that time, writing on Némirovsky was largely biographical, which left the door open for the critical discussion of Némirovsky's legacy and the close reading that I planned to undertake. Consequently, when Before Auschwitz, After the Fall, and "A Masterpiece Ripped From Oblivion" were released in 2010, although they approached Némirovsky's work in very much the way that I had intended, I was too far into my research, and Némirovsky was too integral a part of my generational continuum and too distinctive a piece of wartime writing for me to consider substituting another author's work for Suite française. Instead, I felt that Kershaw's, Bracher's, and Jaillant's publications affirmed the timeliness of my subject. I have chosen to focus Kershaw's ideas in this section in order to lay a

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part written for Jean, for myself and for him"), in Némirovsky's work of fiction, the emotional consequence of events and the narrative itself take precedence over the creation of an eye witness account (Bellos 4; Berr, Journal, trans. Bellos 183; Némirovsky, Suite 537).

foundation for my discussion of Némirovsky's daughters' writing in Section Two since her work takes an encompassing view of the many layers, both textual and paratextual, of Suite française (188).

According to Kershaw, one of the most important factors that has shaped the contemporary reception of Némirovsky's novel is the "paratextual material" that has been included in the text (188-189).[41] This material functions as the second layer of the book. Kershaw contends that in much of the writing on Suite française, the "novel has been accorded the authority of first-person testimony [… and] Némirovsky has been transformed into a witness," an attitude that has come about largely as a result of the conflation of the story within the text with the story of the author's life (190; Jaillant 361). The types of documentary and biographical material that are included in layers of paratextual material in the first edition of Suite française include a dedication by Denise Epstein, an image of a handwritten page from the manuscript for Suite française, a Preface by Myriam Anissimov, and two appendices. Appendix One is titled "Notes manuscrites d'Irène Némirovsky sur l'état de la France et son projet Suite française, relevées dans son cahier," while Appendix Two is titled "Correspondance 1936-1945" (N. pag., N. pag., Anissimov, Préface 11-30; Némirovsky, Suite 519-537, 539-573).[xxvii] Strikingly, this material, which I have listed in the order in which it appears within the original French version, contextualizes Némirovsky's writing both at the time at which it was written and in our time as well (Kershaw 7, 185).

[xxvii] Appendix One is titled "Irène Némirovsky's handwritten notes on the situation in France and her plans for Suite Française, taken from her notebooks," while Appendix Two is titled "Correspondence 1936-1945"[xxvii] (N. pag., N. pag., Anissimov 11-30; Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 341, 359).

Therefore, while this type of material is helpful for contemporary readers who may not be familiar with the nuances of France's wartime political situation or of Némirovsky's life, its inclusion also means that Némirovsky's works of fiction have been bookended by works of non-fiction that were included after the fact. Within this construct "Tempête en juin" and "Dolce" are no longer presented as anomalies in a sea of wartime diaries; instead, they are contained within the constructs of Némirovsky's life story, making them approachable, categorizable, and comfortably contained (Jaillant 360, 371). This idea is of particular importance given the fact that, although Némirovsky was persecuted for being Jewish by the Nazis, unlike Journal d'Hélène Berr, which catalogues the strictures which were faced by the French Jewish population, "Tempête en juin" and "Dolce" do not focus on the plight of Jews in France (Kershaw 178, 179-181; Jaillant 360, 371, 370, 376; Bracher, After xi-xii). Accordingly, by beginning my discussion with the appendices at the end of the book that were written at the same time as, and immediately following, "Tempête en juin" and "Dolce," and then turning to the material at the beginning of the book that was written after the turn of the twenty-first century, I will be able to explore how the writing of Suite française was shaped by Némirovsky's experiences, and how our contemporary reception of Suite française has been tempered by our knowledge of the Holocaust and Némirovsky's death as well (Kershaw 7, 172).

Through the inclusion of two appendices at the end of Suite française, the actual world in which Némirovsky was writing and the fictional world within the book intersect. Appendix One begins with the undated, though carefully chosen,

line, "[m]on Dieu! que me fair ce pays? Puisqu'il me rejette, considérons-le froidement, regardons-le perdre son honneur et sa vie," which calls attention to Némirovsky's biting social commentary and "sets the text clearly – and very personally – in the context of Vichy's persecution of the Jews" (Némirovsky, Suite 521; Kershaw 189; Bracher, After 6-7, 32).[xxviii] Further, although the entries in her notebook are in Némirovsky's voice, which creates a sense of continuity with the previous sections, the inclusion of her notes about changes that she considered making, the sources that she required for her research and the form and content of "Captivité" shatter the illusion that is created in "Tempête en juin" and "Dolce" (Némirovsky, Suite 525, 527-28).

As a complement to Appendix One, Appendix Two contains correspondence in which Némirovsky discusses the increasing restrictions on Jewish citizens at the time; importantly, this section also includes Némirovsky's husband's panicked correspondence after her arrest, as well as correspondence that was written by the children's guardian, Julie Dumot, and Némirovsky's publishers after her death (Némirovsky, Suite 541-573). Historical documents such as the "Loi sur les ressortissants de race juive" from October 1940 are also interspersed throughout this section, which situates Némirovsky's personal story in a wider historical context and draws attention to the fact that what Némirovsky was experiencing when she was writing Suite française was very different than

[xxviii] Appendix One begins with the undated, though carefully chosen, line, "[m]y God! what is this country doing to me? Since it is rejecting me, let us consider it coldly, let us watch as it loses its honour and its life," which calls attention to Némirovsky's biting social commentary and "sets the text clearly – and very personally – in the context of Vichy's persecution of the Jews" (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 341; Kershaw 189; Bracher, After 6-7, 32).

the story that she was telling in the text (Némirovsky, Suite 544).[xxix] Yet, it is Michel Epstein's letters, in which he draws upon details from his wife's life and writing in his attempts to make a case for her release, that are most poignant in the context of my work; he writes, for example, that "[d]ans aucun de ses livres (ils n'ont d'ailleurs pas été interdits par les autorités occupants), vous ne trouvez un mot contre l'Allemagne et, bien que ma femme soit de race juive, elle y parle des juifs sans aucune tendresse" (Michel Epstein qtd. in Némirovsky, Suite 555; see Kershaw 189; Jaillant 372).[xxx] As will become apparent in my discussion of the controversy surrounding Némirovsky's Jewish identity, when arguments such as these are included alongside Suite française, they create a specific set of assumptions for twenty-first century readers about how to approach the text (Kershaw 188; Jaillant 372). As Kershaw asserts, "[t]he inclusion of Michel Epstein's incredibly moving correspondence documenting his attempts to locate and rescue his wife lend an almost overpowering emotional force to the text as a whole" that overshadows the "critical detachment" that characterizes Némirovsky's work (Kershaw 189; see Bracher, After 9; see Jaillant 360, 363, 371-372). In this way, the inclusion of primary sources in place of Némirovsky's final three books ensures that, although Suite française achieves the narrative arc

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[xxix] Historical documents such as the "Law on Jewish residents" from October 1940 are also interspersed throughout this section, which situates Némirovsky's personal story in a wider context and draws attention to the fact that what Némirovsky was experiencing when she was writing Suite française was very different than the story that she was telling in the text (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 362).

[xxx] Yet, it is Michel Epstein's letters, in which he draws upon details from his wife's life and writing in his attempts to make a case for her release, that are most poignant in the context of my work; he writes, for example, that "[i]n none of her books (which moreover have not been banned by the occupying authorities) will you find a single word against Germany and, even though my wife is of Jewish descent, she does not speak of the Jews with any affection whatsoever in her works" (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 371; Kershaw 189; Jaillant 372).

for which Némirovsky was striving, on the whole, the focus of the book is firmly on her death (Kershaw 191).

Since the two appendices in Suite française are included at the end of the book, the reader encounters them once he or she has read Némirovsky's work of fiction. As a result, the story of the creation of the text is only revealed after the story within Némirovsky's text has been consumed. In contrast, Myriam Anissimov's Préface is positioned at the beginning of the book, and therefore it influences how the reader approaches the writing that is to come (11-30; Jaillant 371). As Kershaw reveals, "Anissimov [… is] herself a Jewish writer and the child of Holocaust survivors" and she examines Némirovsky's career trajectory, her Jewish heritage, her childhood in Russia, and the creation of Suite française through a post-Holocaust lens (188-189; see Jaillant 360, 371; Anissimov 11-30). Notably, when Sandra Smith's English translation of Suite française was released in 2008, the Preface was as "an edited version of the preface that appeared in the French edition," which demonstrates how the book was altered to suit its target audience (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 387; Kershaw 188-189; see Jaillant 360). It is also of note that, in the English edition, the image of a page from Némirovsky's manuscript is replaced with a map of occupied France, which situates Némirovsky geographically for foreign readers instead of visually drawing attention to the manuscript as an artifact, an idea that supports Epstein's contention that "each country has interpreted Suite française according to its own real life experiences" (Némirovsky, Suite N. pag.; Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith N. pag.; Epstein "Interview" 47).[42] It is significant, though, that both

versions of Anissimov's Préface end with a reference to Élisabeth Gille's Le Mirador: mémoires rêvés, which situates Suite française within the context of the next generation, an idea that is reinforced by Denise Epstein's dedication at the beginning of the book (Némirovsky, Suite 30; Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 395). This dedication draws attention to the fact that Némirovsky was a Holocaust victim and reminds the reader that it was not Némirovsky, but her eldest daughter, who brought the work to light (Kershaw 188). As such, when all of these paratextual layers are read together, it is obvious how, as Kershaw reveals, the material that has been grafted onto "Tempête en juin" and "Dolce" creates expectations for the reader that cannot be divorced from attitudes towards the Holocaust and Holocaust representation that exist at the time that the book was released (Kershaw 7, 172, 191).

As my discussion of Suite française has demonstrated, within the context of the textual memorialization of Holocaust victims, it is necessary to recognize how, in addition to being a vessel for particular content, a book is also a "physical [… object]" to which the story of a victim's life can be attached (Battles 10). For me, this idea was presented most strikingly in Lost Lives, Lost Art: Jewish Collections, Nazi Art Theft, and the Quest for Justice by Melissa Müller and Monika Tatzkow in which the authors focus on the life stories of numerous Jewish art collectors, many of whom perished in the Second World War. In this work, the biographies of the collectors are connected to the fate of the objects in their collections and the stories surrounding post-war reparation claims. In another work that is based on a similar premise, The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Hidden

Inheritance by Edmund de Waal, the author examines the life stories of multiple generations of his family members who owned a collection of Japanese netsuke. As I discussed in the Introduction, in instances where Holocaust victims did not have a marked grave, texts could function as “substitute gravestones” (Kugelmass and Boyarin 34; see Hirsch, Family 247). Therefore, just as Némirovsky’s manuscript ‘outlived’ its owner, after the death of many of the collectors that are featured in Lost Lives, Lost Art, the works in their collections have become the objects around which subsequent generations are able to weave the stories of their lives. In light of this idea, beginning my study with Suite française demonstrates how, when considering the ways in which a book functions as a textual memorial, its provenance and status as a material object must be taken into account (Young, Writing 37, 10, 38).

Upon this foundation, an important way in which Kershaw assesses the connection between the time in which Suite française was written and the time in which it is read is to evaluate the secondary sources that have been published about Némirovsky and her writing, particularly as they pertain to the controversy surrounding her Jewish identity before and during the Second World War (179-181; see Bracher, After xi-xiii). As I previously mentioned, at first, the works that appeared in response to Suite française, such as Le vie d’Irène Némirovsky, 1903-1942 by Olivier Philipponnat and Patrick Lienhardt and Irène Némirovsky by Jonathan Weiss, were predominantly biographical, which is not surprising given the paratextual material that was included in the text; notably, in-depth examinations of Némirovsky’s writing are noticeably absent from these books, a

shortcoming that has only been accounted for slightly in recent years by an influx of "articles" about Némirovsky's life and work (Kershaw 2; Bracher, After xi-xii). Woman of Letters: Irène Némirovsky and Suite Française, edited by Olivier Corpet and Garrett White, which was published to accompany an exhibition of the same name that I visited in New York at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in 2008, also reinforces this preoccupation with the link between Némirovsky's life and writing has a much more documentary tone than the previous sources that I mentioned (Kershaw 2; Jaillant 368, 369). In the context of these publications, it is evident how Angela Kershaw's attempt to address the consequences of the proliferation of "ideologically based criticism, both in our time and in [… Némirovsky's] own" by "work[ing] in the 'middle zone' between close textual reading and the analysis of larger cultural trajectories" in Before Auschwitz: Irène Némirovsky and the Cultural Landscape of Inter-war France is such a departure from the norm (Kershaw 2, 5). Notably, Nathan Bracher also undertakes close readings of Suite française in After the Fall: War and Occupation in Irène Némirovsky's Suite française and "Le fin mot d'histoire: La Tempête en juin et les perspectives de Némirovsky" (After xv). In After the Fall, Bracher contends that "[t]his attentive, detailed, and methodical reading of the primary text will avoid the common pitfall of fixating on one element while ignoring a host of others, and thus allow us to gauge Némirovsky's narrative representation of history," although both texts do view Némirovsky's work through a historical lens as their titles imply (xv, see 195). This is perhaps most evident in Bracher's assertion in "Le fin mot de l'histoire" that "[s]ans

revenir sur ces jugements biographiques pour le moins sommaires, nous nous emploierons dans le présent article à analyzer la représentation littéraire d'un grand événement historique: à savoir, a débâcle et l'exode massif de la population civile occasionnés par la déroute militaire de mai-juin 1940" (265-266).[xxxi] In order to understand the true significance of Kershaw's and Bracher's approaches, one must first examine the ideological criticism to which Kershaw refers.

As my discussion of Anissimov's Préface makes clear, the controversy surrounding Némirovsky's representation of Jews and her attitude towards her Jewish identity has overshadowed the analysis of much of her work (Kershaw 2, 188-189). In the Preface to Woman of Letters, Corpet and Marwell sum up this discourse in the statement, "[s]ince the publication of Suite française, a few critics have raised serious charges against Némirovsky, accusing her of self-hatred and even at times anti-Semitism. They note that she included no Jewish characters in Suite française, suggesting that she cared nothing for their fate" (15). Kershaw explores the ideas in this claim by including her observations on numerous critics' viewpoints on this issue in Before Auschwitz (178-180; see also Jaillant 370-371). Notably, Susan Rubin Suleiman responded to the kinds of perspectives that Kershaw addresses in "Suite française and Les Bienvellantes, Two Literary 'Exceptions': A Conversation," by asserting that "[a]s for readers who find it shocking – or even 'anti-Semitic' – that Némirovsky didn't include any Jewish characters in these volumes, they are entitled to their opinion. But it's kind of hard

[xxxi] This is perhaps most evident in Bracher's assertion in "Le fin mot de l'histoire" that "without returning to the brief summary of these biographical judgements, we will work in this present article to analyze the literary representation of a grand historical event: namely, the debacle and massive exodus of the civilian population as a result of the military defeat of May-June 1940" (265-266).

to blame an author for not writing about something!" (323; see Kershaw's discussion of Golson's and Suleiman's article 178-179). Suleiman's point is extremely telling since Némirovsky has been blamed both for her representation of Jews in David Golder and for the absence of Jewish characters in Suite française (Kershaw 100-101, 108-111; Suleiman in Golson and Suleiman 323-324). Yet, there could have been a plethora of reasons that Némirovsky chose not to discuss Jewish characters in "Tempête en juin" and "Dolce," including her attempts to distance herself from the religion for which she was being persecuted (as is evidenced by her choice to have her family baptized in the late 1930s), her inability to find a publisher for work as a Jewish author (as is evidenced by her choice to publish under pseudonyms in right-wing publications such as Candide and Gringoire), or a preference for turning the spotlight on "day-to-day collaboration" and complacency among the gentile population in France (as is evidenced by the opening line in Appendix One) (Kershaw 30-40; 178, 167; Philipponnat and Leinhardt 90; Jaillant 370-371; Némirovsky, Suite 543; Philipponnat and Leinhardt 96; Kershaw 184, 189; see Bracher, After 205-206, 213-214). For, just as the unfinished nature of Suite française draws attention to Némirovsky's death, the absence of Jews draws attention to the actions of the French population that led to opportunities for the persecution and deportation of Jews in France. Yet, whatever the reason for Némirovsky's decision, Judaism only becomes a significant factor in Suite française when Némirovsky is implicated in the text; the line "[i]l y a encore d'autres soucis tells que menance du camp de concentration, statut des Juifs, etc." in Appendix One is indicative of

this point (Némirovsky, Suite 521; Kershaw 181).[43xxxii] Kershaw's assertion, then, that "there is comparatively little biographical evidence, outside of her novels, as regards what Némirovsky actually thought about her Jewish identity and Jewish culture," and Weiss' statement that "Némirovsky's tragic end has obscured any real criticism of her work, as it has masked any real analysis of her attitude toward Jews," must be taken into account when evaluating her work (103; 161). In light of these opinions, when Corpet and Marwell argue that "hers is a Jewish story," it is necessary to note that it is Némirovsky's life story, not "Tempête en juin" and "Dolce" (aside from the fact, of course, that it was because Némirovsky was Jewish that she was unable to finish Suite française), to which this statement must refer (15).

In light of these arguments, Kershaw reveals how the twenty-first century conflation of Némirovsky's life and writing allows Suite française to function as a textual memorial. In a passage that is applicable to the other works that I will be studying and bears quoting at length, Kershaw states:

> The constant re-telling of Némirovsky's life story by critics and the excessively biographical reading of her fiction is a manifestation of what [Annette] Wieviorka calls the culture of intimacy, the need 'to return a name, a face, a history to each of the victims of mass murder', which dominates not only our memorialization of the Holocaust, but all our cultural representations. In one sense, the desire to remember Némirovsky

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[xxxii] Yet, whatever the reason for Némirovsky's decision, Judaism only becomes a significant factor in Suite française when Némirovsky is implicated in the text; the line "[t]here are still many other worries such as the threat of a concentration camp, the status of Jews, etc." in Appendix One is indicative of this point (Némirovsky, Suite, trans. Smith 341; Kershaw 181).

> in terms of the Holocaust is justified and appropriate: Suite française provides contemporary readers with another way of approaching the unapproachable. But in another sense, it is problematic. It risks enclosing Némirovsky within the single identity of the deportee, which some survivors have strongly resisted. In this context, it is easy to see how and why the transformation of Suite française into a work of Holocaust testimony has caused contemporary commentators to vilify Némirovsky on the basis that her novel does not talk about Jews. It is of course both fitting and important to honour Némirovsky's memory; it is not appropriate to disparage her for failing to live up to our twenty-first century expectations (191; see Wieviorka 140-143; see Jaillant 369-372).

For this reason, the persistent examination of the ambiguities surrounding Némirovsky's Jewish identity points to a larger need to classify her as a Holocaust victim and categorize Suite française as a historical artifact (Kershaw 191, 185; Bracher, After xi). In the context of the current "period of 'obsession' [that is] characterized by the proliferation of memorialisations of Vichy and the Holocaust," Kershaw contends that "Suite française is […] a *mémoire-rédemption*, as the reviews demonstrate: its publication was both a means of pricking France's conscience and of offering reparation," an idea that is even more poignant given the fact that Némirovsky's work was largely overlooked in France after the war (Kershaw 185, 191; Jaillant 359, 365, 366). Importantly, when applied in this context, while she contends that her work "is not a eulogy," Kershaw's discussion of Suite française reveals how, like paratextual material,

academic writing can also influence the way in which a book functions as a memorial text in the public sphere (5).

In the following section of this chapter, I will turn my attention not to how members of the public have responded to Némirovsky's story, but to how her daughters have responded in different textual forms. For although Kershaw responds to many of the issues surrounding the creation of reception of Suite française, in Before Auschwitz, she does not examine Gille's and Epstein's works at length (186-193). By addressing this deficit in the scholarship about Némirovsky's family history, I will be able to evaluate the public and private consequences of Némirovsky's daughters' decisions to preserve their mother's life story, and their own life stories, on paper as well.

Part Two

Élisabeth Gille's Le Mirador: mémoires rêvés and Un paysage des cendres and Denise Epstein's Survivre et vivre: entretiens avec Clémence Boulouque

In the first section of this chapter, by exploring Angela Kershaw's analysis of the differences between the time in which Suite française was written and the time in which it is read, I explored how the book has influenced the French public's perception of Némirovsky over six decades after her death (7, 172-194, 185-186). This second section, which situates Némirovsky's life, writing, and complex legacy in an intergenerational context, will explore this idea in even greater depth since Kershaw's work devotes only a few pages to the relationship between Némirovsky's writing and that of her daughters Denise Epstein and Élisabeth Gille (186-193). My investigation will begin with an exploration of Gille's and Epstein's experiences during the war and their tenuous relationship with their mother's manuscript over a period of almost seventy years. Building on these foundations, in order to situate my discussion of Le Mirador: mémoires rêvés, Un paysage de cendres, and Survivre et vivre: entretiens avec Clémence Boulouque within the larger context of my study, I will problematize how the first generation has traditionally been categorized. Finally, I will undertake an in-depth examination of Le Mirador, Un paysage de cendres, and Survivre et vivre, each of which comprises an important layer in the textual record of Gille's and Epstein's intergenerational family history, in order to evaluate not only how the textual memorialization of Némirovsky's public image has been influenced by her

daughters' writing, but how Gille has been memorialized in a textual form as well.[44]

In 1942, Epstein and Gille were arrested along with their father; however, while he was sent to Auschwitz, they were set free and remained in hiding along with the suitcase containing their mother's manuscript for the remainder of the war (Philipponnat and Leinhardt 105; Epstein "Interview" 33; Philipponnat and Leinhardt 105; Epstein, "Interview" 33-35; Jaillant 360). When the conflict ended, after having tried in vain to relocate their parents, they were turned away from the home of their maternal grandmother; in an interview at the end of the second edition of Le Mirador, Gille recounts how she told them that "[i]l y a des sanatoriums pours les enfants pauvres," and Epstein recounts this experience in Survivre et vivre as well (Epstein, "Interview" 36; 82).[45xxxiii] With "no family left," they were put in a "private Catholic boarding school in Paris" from which Gille was promptly expelled (Epstein, "Interview" 40; Philipponnat and Leinhardt, "Chronology" 105).

As this brief biographical outline reveals, a striking difference between Némirovsky and her daughters is the amount of information that is publicly available about their lives. Biographers such as Olivier Philipponnat and Patrick Lienhardt, as well as Jonathan Weiss, have reconstructed Némirovsky's life in great detail, while no such lengthy secondary works exist about Epstein and Gille (vie; Irène). In fact, most of the biographical information that I could find about

[xxxiii] When the conflict ended, after having tried in vain to relocate their parents, they were turned away from the home of their maternal grandmother; in an interview at the end of the second edition of The Mirador, Gille recounts how she told them that "[t]here are shelters for indigent children," and Epstein recounts this experience in Survivre et vivre as well ("Élisabeth" 238; 82).

Némirovsky's daughters came from their interviews and writing, demonstrating the extent to which, as largely private figures, they have been able to control their public images and their mother's image after her death (Gille only became a public figure after the release of her novels and Epstein has only become a public figure as a result of the posthumous publication of, and her choice to respond textually to, her mother's work). Therefore, one must be aware of the extent to which the posthumous publication and popularity of Suite française has meant that the form and content of Epstein's and Gille's stories, and, by extension, the story of their father (of which, to my knowledge, aside from his letters, no first person account exists), have been overshadowed by the widespread interest in their mother's life. As Marianne Hirsch states, *Yizkor* books "are acts of witness and sites of memory," and they are also "acts of public mourning, forms of collective Kaddish" (Family 246, 247). With this in mind, one is left to wonder, had Némirovsky not been a public figure, if Epstein and Gille would have chosen to write about their family history for public consumption at all.

As this idea suggests, for many years, Epstein and Gille had a tenuous relationship with the suitcase that contained Suite française. In a 2008 interview, Epstein recounts how it was not until "1955-56" that they opened the suitcase to retrieve some family photographs, and that it was later still, "1975 or thereabouts, perhaps it was even 1980" (a statement that reveals the unreliability of Epstein's memory), that they decided to go through what Epstein refers to as "that manuscript, that notebook" ("Interview" 37, 38; see Jaillant 364-365). When Epstein and Gille decided to donate Suite française to IMEC, Epstein set about

"transcribing" her mother's manuscript so that they could keep a copy for themselves; importantly, Gille, who had a successful career as an editor, was vehemently against publishing the manuscript at that time (Epstein, "Interview" 41- 42, 43, 42; see Jaillant 364, 367). In 1992, Gille released Le Mirador, which was followed by Un paysage de cendres in 1996, the same year as her death (Kershaw 186; Astro; Jiallant 366-367). According to Lee Jaillant, Gille "was instrumental in the rehabilitation of her mother" in the public sphere (367). Years later, Myriam Anissimov encouraged Epstein to publish Suite française and Olivier Rubenstein encouraged her to publish the material that appears in the appendices; as I have shown, their involvement had a profound impact on the shape of the text (Epstein, "Interview" 43-44, 44; Bracher, After ix). Then, in 2008, following the success of her mother's novel, Epstein published Survivre et vivre, in which she reflects upon her mother's legacy in the wake of Suite française (Kershaw 191). Within the context of my study, the layered nature of Gille's and Epstein's writing reveals how the legacies of individuals, and the stories of families, are constructed over time.

As the juxtaposition of Sections One and Two of this chapter demonstrates, a valuable way of assessing the relationship between Némirovsky's writing and that of her daughters is to account for their perspectives as victims and survivors of the Holocaust. Yet, in order to do so, one must consider the different ways in which Epstein and Gille experienced the war as children and reconstructed their memories as adults, for it is clear that Némirovsky's perspective on her family's life in Issy-l'Évêque would have been very different

than her daughters' understanding of the situation, just as Gille's and Epstein's perception of the events that they experienced would have changed over time (Suleiman, "Thinking" 282, 291). Similarly, Gille's and Epstein's understanding of their mother as a public and private figure would also have been very different as children than as adults. Consequently, although Gille and Epstein are members of the first generation, which is defined as those who survived the Holocaust, as children, they experienced the war, the persecution of Jews, and the lasting effects of trauma, in a specific way (Suleiman, "Thinking" 277-278).

Like Gille and Epstein, Chaya H. Roth, who was seven years old in 1942, and who went on to become an "Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry […] at the Medical School at the University of Chicago," was "in hiding" in France as a child during the Second World War (Acknowledgments xi; N. pag.; Introduction 1). In The Fate of Holocaust Memories: Transmission and Family Dialogues, Roth combines her personal perspectives with her academic training in order to address the questions "What have I passed on to our children about the Holocaust?' and 'What will our children remember to pass on to theirs?'" (1). It is within this context that she states:

> As survivors of the Holocaust, Gitta [her sister] and I had always seen ourselves as (hidden) child survivors, second to our mother's generation, which would relegate our children into the third generation and our grandchildren into the fourth generation. The literature, however, holds otherwise. All who survived the Holocaust are identified as 'first generation survivors,' whereas those who were born after the Holocaust

> are known as members of the second generation. This created a conceptual dilemma for us. As child survivors, Gitta and I identified ourselves as carriers of our survivor-mother and our father's legacies. […] To combine these generation functions […] into one conceptual category – that is, as one 'survivor' generation did not represent my experienced reality during the war, or thereafter. (8)

To my knowledge, the first person to explore Roth's idea that "the fusing of the parent and child identities into one generation glosses over many distinctions that need to be made between adult and survivors of the Holocaust" in an academic context was Susan Rubin Suleiman in her article "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors of the Holocaust"; notably, in this article she specifically makes mention of Gille (8; 292, 294). Here, six years before Roth, Suleiman examined the complexities of memory, testimony, and the categorization of generations in order to understand the unique perspective of "child survivors" ("Thinking" 277). She states:

> The decimal point is a bit of provocation. For if the 'second generation' is by now a familiar and fairly stable concept in Holocaust studies (the second generation, born in the immediate years after the war, are children of Jews who survived the Holocaust in Europe – strictly speaking, it is to this second generation that Marianne Hirsch's term 'postmemory' applies), the concept of the '1.5 generation' needs to be explained. My subtitle gives one quick summary: by 1.5 generation, I mean child survivors of the Holocaust, too young to have had an adult understanding

> of what was happening to them, but old enough to have been there during the persecution of Jews. (Suleiman, "Thinking" 277)

According to Suleiman, the experience of members of the 1.5 generation also includes many other factors including "age," "developmental stage at the beginning of persecution," "geographical location," and "social class and degree of cohesion of the family before persecution," which demonstrate the extent to which, like any other, this 1.5 generation is not a homogenous construct ("Thinking" 281, 289, 281, 289, 291). In the context of this chapter, this is evidenced most strongly in the age difference between Epstein and Gille (Philipponnat and Leinhardt 75, 86). According to Epstein, the "seven and a half years" that separated her and her sister meant that, while Gille maintained that she "had no memory of" their parents, in Survivre et vivre, Epstein is able to clearly describe aspects of her life with her parents in great depth ("Interview" 40).[46] Epstein also asserts that she and Gille "virtually didn't have the same past, because [… they] were separated very early on, right after the war," which supports Suleiman's contention that "[w]hat happened afterward: was the family, or at least part of it, reconstituted, or was the child a sole survivor" is another important factor that must be taken into account ("Interview" 40; "Thinking 290). By defining the 1.5 generation and asking, Suleiman destabilizes the "boundaries" of traditional generational categorization and reinforces the fact that, even within the same generational category, every survivor possesses a unique experience of life before, during, and after the war (Suleiman, "Thinking" 280, 281, 284). Further, by contending that "[p]erhaps we should speak not of a 1.5 generation,

but rather of a 1.3 or a 1.7 generation, depending on distance from adulthood," discussing the relationship "*between* children and adolescents," and delineating categories within the 1.5 generation by age, Suleiman draws attention to the diversity within generational categories as well ("Thinking" 281, 280-281, 282-283). As I demonstrated, the necessity for these kinds of questions and redefinitions of generational categories is evidenced the different experiences and perceptions of Epstein and Gille.

Despite Suleiman's work in this area, to my knowledge, thus far, no one has created a term to describe the type of memory that is specific to members of the 1.5 generation.[47] As Suleiman points out, and as I will demonstrate in Chapter Two, Hirsch created the term "postmemory" to describe the unique perspective of the second generation; however, members of the 1.5 generation, who experienced the war as children and reconstructed their memories of childhood as adults, also possess a unique type of memory that raises important questions about the way in which child survivors were able to accurately gauge events that were taking place around them, how they are able to recall and reconstruct their childhood memories, and the extent to which their understanding of their childhood experiences has been tempered by *post facto* knowledge about the Holocaust (Suleiman, "Thinking" 277, 290, 291). As such, my study is concerned with the complexities of what Suleiman refers to as "life stories and life narratives (stories as they are constructed and remembered)" ("Thinking" 282). In my analysis of the three texts that follow, I will explore how these issues impact the ways in which

two members of the 1.5 generation have chosen to preserve, transmit, and memorialize their family history in textual forms.

Le Mirador: mémoires rêvés is, at its core, an intergenerational examination of Némirovsky's life and of the long term effects of the war on Gille in the wake of her mother's death. Published twelve years before Suite française, on a macro level, Le Mirador is divided into two parts: "Irène Némirovsky Novembre 1929" and "Irène Némirovsky Juin 1942" (Gille 31-278, 279-408).[xxxiv] In the first part of Le Mirador, Gille examines Némirovsky's childhood in Russia, her father's increasing wealth, her relationship with her parents, and her education at the Sorbonne, while in the second part, she examines Némirovsky's experience as a mother, a writer, and Jew (31-405; Astro). Notably, Gille's choice to write these two parts in the first person gives her biography an autobiographical tone (Astro). Further, by contending with her mother's complex legacy, Gille also draws attention to her mother's inability to speak for herself. The opening passage of Part One is beautifully evocative of these points:

> J'ai toujours trouvé violente l'odeur des tilleuls qui, pourtant, est tendre, en littérature, et monte à la tête dans la douceur des soirées de fin d'été. Une odeur capiteuse jusqu'à l'écœurement, celle des places de village où la jeunesse tourne en rond le soir sous le regard endormi des vieux assis sur leur banc, les mains nouées autour de leur canne. Une odeur tranquille de province hébétée par la lourde chaleur du jour. La promenade de Charleville à la nuit tombée ou les jardins de Tourgueniev quand y

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[xxxiv] Published twelve years before Suite française, on a macro level, The Mirador is divided into two parts, "Irène Némirovsky – *November, 1929*" and "Irène Némirovsky – *June 1942*" (Gille, trans. Harss 9-144, 145-220).

> déambulent de jeunes femmes graciles au bras d'amants du siècle passé. Une odeur qui, à moi, m'a toujours donné des migraines et précipité le cœur dans des ruades incontrôlables. (Gille, Mirador 33)[xxxv]

On one level, this passage points to the very personal nature of Gille's writing about her mother, since the description of Némirovsky's physical reaction to linden blossoms establishes a level of intimacy between the writer and her subject. Yet, on another level, it also draws attention to the gaps in Gille's recollections of her mother and the holes in her understanding of her mother's life. For example, in the Postface, an interview that concludes the second edition of Le Mirador, René de Ceccatty describes Gille as "un témoin privilégié, mais en partie amnésique" and Gille replies:

> J'ai bâti un mur très solide et si j'ai réussi à mener une existence relativement équilibrée […]. Le prix de mon équilibre, c'était le refoulement. […] Le problème, c'est que de 1903 à 1930 je n'avais aucun document sur elle. Un jour, quelqu'un revenant de Kiev m'a dit que dans cette ville il y avait beaucoup de tilleuls et je ne sais pas pourquoi un lien s'est établi entre les tilleuls et l'asthme de ma mère. (416, 416-417)[xxxvi]

[xxxv]The opening passage of Part One is beautifully evocative of these points: "I have always found the fragrance of linden blossoms aggressive, though it is in fact quite tender, at least in literature, inebriating the senses in the mild air of late-summer nights. Heady to the point of queasiness, it is the fragrance of village squares where young folk walk around and around in the evening air beneath the heavy-lidded gaze of old men perched on benches, fingers knotted over their canes. A tranquil fragrance from the provinces, dazed by the oppressive midday heat. The fragrance of the promenade in Charleville at sundown or of Turgeniev's parks, where slender women from the last century cling to their lovers' arms. And a fragrance which has always brought on my worst migraines and driven my heart to gallop and thrash uncontrollably." (Gille, Mirador, trans. Harss 11)

[xxxvi] For example, in the Afterword, an interview that concludes the second edition of The Mirador, René de Ceccatty describes Gille as "*a privileged witness* [….]. *and yet one who'd forgotten a lot* …" and Gille replies: "I deliberately walled myself off – thanks to which I've been able to lead a relatively normal life […]. But the cost of normality was repression. […] A problem I had was that

As such, the opening passage of Le Mirador illustrates quite clearly how Gille's "mêmories revées" that are referred to in the book's title have been fashioned from shards of information that she collected over time.[xxxvii]

Némirovsky died when Gille was five years old. Therefore, since her memories of her mother would have been extremely limited, the scenes in Le Mirador had to have been imagined or reconstructed from other sources, an idea that is reinforced by the quotation by Georges Perec that is included in the opening passage and by the opening line of the Remerciements in which Gille states, "[c]e livre a été rêvé à partir d'autres livres"; notably, Suite française does not appear in this list of books (29-30, 409).[xxxviii] This idea is also reinforced by Epstein's statement in Survivre et vivre that "[s]on livre Le Mirador nécessitait non seulement une mémoire d'enfant mais aussi des recherches documentaries et en partant a la découverte des articles de l'époque, nous avons pu reconstituer son itineraire litteraire" (164).[xxxix] As this example demonstrates, and as I will discuss in subsequent chapters, one of the difficulties of studying family history in an academic context is verifying private sources. Since authors often speak about aspects of their family members' lives that are not included in the public record

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there was no documentation of her life from between 1903 and 1930. Then one day someone came back from Kiev and told me about all the linden trees there, and for some reason that made me think of my mother's asthma." ("Élisabeth" 236)

[xxxvii] As such, the opening passage of Le Mirador illustrates quite clearly how Gille's "[d]reamed [m]emories" that are referred to in the book's title have been fashioned from shards of information that she collected over time (trans. Harss).

[xxxviii] Therefore, since her memories of her mother would have been extremely limited, the scenes in The Mirador had to have been reconstructed from other sources, an idea that is reinforced by the quotation by Georges Perec that is included in the opening passage and by the opening line of the Acknowledgements in which Gille states, "[t]his book was imagined on the basis of other books"; notably, Suite française does not appear in this list of books (trans. Harss 7, 221).

[xxxix] This idea is also reinforced by Epstein's statement in Survivre et vivre that "her book The Mirador necessitates not only a child's memory but also documentary research and by discovering articles from the era, we were able to reconstitute her literary itinerary" (164).

and draw upon photo albums and letters that are not available in libraries or archives, they can have a great deal of leeway when representing their families' pasts. As such, in Le Mirador, it is very difficult to differentiate fiction from fact. For example, although it is "well-documented" "that Némirovsky[… had a] difficult relationship with her […] mother, Anna, or Fanny," Gille's description of Fanny begging her daughter to have an abortion after the conception of her first child is an event that I have seen described no where else, just as I was unable to corroborate Gille's discussion of Michel Epstein's drinking problem in Le Mirador (Kershaw 158; Gille, Mirador 315-316, 331-332). As such, it was impossible to discern if these details were figments of Gille's imagination or revelations of intimate family secrets. Therefore, as the opening passage of the book illustrates, in Le Mirador, it is only through Gille's unreliable "mêmories revées" that are referred to in the book's title that the reader is able to gain access to the intimate details of Némirovsky's life.[xl]

It is important that Gille also writes in a second voice in Le Mirador. Prior to the beginning of Chapter One, as well as after each chapter, she includes a short italicized passage that is written in the third person. In these passages, which range from "Mars 1937," when Gille was born (an event that she couldn't possibly have remembered), to "Octobre 1991," one year before the publication of the book, Gille describes formative moments in her life that relate to the Holocaust (Gille, Mirador 29, 407). They include her mother being taken away in July 1942, her and her sister's experience standing on a train platform looking for

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[xl] Therefore, as the opening passage of the book illustrates, in The Mirador, it is only through Gille's unreliable "[d]reamed [m]emories" that are referred to in the book's title that the reader is able to gain access to the intimate details of Némirovsky's life (trans. Harss).

their parents in September 1945, and visiting the remains of the Pithiviers camp in July 1962 (Gille, Mirador 85-86, 245-246, 375). Gille's choice to begin Le Mirador with her own birth also makes a strong statement about her intention for the text (Gille, Mirador 29). By situating her entrance into the world in the context of her absent mother's life, Gille ensures that their stories are inextricably entwined from the outset of the book. Similarly, in the last passage of Le Mirador Gille writes, "*[l]'enfant n'en est plus une depuis longtemps. À l'âge qu'elle a, elle pourrait presque être la mère de sa proper mère, qui a trente-neuf ans pour l'éternité*," which signals the way in which, by outliving her mother, it is Gille who has been given the opportunity to render her mother's life in a written form (407; see Kershaw 186-187).[xli] Poignantly, this idea is also reinforced in the book's last line, which reads, "*[s]es enfants, Denise et Élisabeth, arrêtées en meme temps que leur père, ont été sauvées,*" an event that also led to the preservation of the manuscript for Suite française (Gille, Mirador 408; Epstein, "Interview" 33).[xlii]

Le Mirador was published in 1992, twelve years before Suite française, yet, interestingly, Gille makes mention of many specific details about the manuscript in the text. For example, she writes, in Némirovsky's voice, "[a]près les long mois de réflexion que j'ai consacrés aux événements de cette époque, à la

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[xli] Similarly, in the last passage of The Mirador Gille writes, "*[t]he child ceased being a child many years ago. At her age, she could almost be the mother of her mother, who will remain thirty-nine for all eternity*," which signals the way in which, by outliving her mother, it is Gille who has been given the opportunity to render her mother's life in a written form (Gille, Mirador, trans. Harss 219; see Kershaw 186-187).

[xlii] Poignantly, this idea is also reinforced in the book's last line, which reads, "*[h]er children, Denise and Élisabeth, who were arrested with their father, were saved,*" an event that also led to the preservation of the manuscript for Suite française (Gille, Mirador, trans. Harss 220; Epstein, "Interview" 33).

fois pour écrire ma Suite française – dont le premier volume, Tempête en juin, raconte les débuts de la guerre, la débâcle, l'exode – et pour tenter de m'expliquer le désastre à moi-même" (Gille, Mirador 370-371).[xliii] Interestingly, Gille also writes, again in her mother's voice, "[j]e me dis, en écrivant Suite française, que je dois faire quelque chose de grand et cessar de me demander: à quoi bon? Il m'arrive trop souvent d'avoir peur pour mes livres plus encore que pour moi-même, de les imaginer détruits, à jamais effacés de la mémoire humaine," an idea that harkens back to the idea of the text as a mode of preservation for future generations that I discussed in the Introduction to this study (Mirador 396; see Stark 195).[xliv]

In addition to Némirovsky's identity as a writer, Gille also examines her mother's Jewish identity in Le Mirador, a move that predates the academic controversy that I outlined in Section One (302-304, 367-370; Astro). In this way, she demonstrates how her mother's choices about religion have had lasting consequences in her life, an idea that Epstein explores in Survivre et vivre as well (Gille, Mirador 343-44; 99, 105-106). An important example of how Gille deals with the issue of Némirovsky's religion is by drawing a connection between her mother's choice to have her family baptized as a result of her mother and father's inability to acquire French naturalization papers (Philipponnat and Leinhardt 90;

[xliii] For example, she writes, in Némirovsky's voice, "[a]fter long months reflecting on the events of our time and writing Suite française – the first volume, *Storm in June*, recounts the start of the war, the debacle, and the exodus – during which I have been doing my best to comprehend the disaster we are experiencing" (Gille, Mirador, trans. Harss 197).
[xliv] Interestingly, Gille also writes, again in her mother's voice, "[a]s I compose Suite Française, I tell myself that I must write something important and try to silence the voice in my head that asks: what's the use? All too often, I am even more afraid for my books than I am for myself; I imagine them destroyed, forever erased from human memory," an idea that harkens back to the idea of the text as a mode of preservation for future generations that I discussed in the Introduction to this study (Mirador, trans. Harss 211-212; see Stark 195).

Mirador 380-383). Gille writes, again in her mother's voice, "juste avant l'entrée des troupes allemandes à Prague, en février 1939, alors que les mesures prises chez lui par Hitler contre les Juifs s'alourdissaient encore et qu'en France le soulagement dû à la conférence de Munich s'estompait déjà, que j'ai opté pour le baptême" (Mirador 382-383).[xlv] Importantly, this statement exists in stark contrast to Gille's admission in the interview in the second edition of Le Mirador that "[j]e ne sais pas pourquoi elle s'est fait baptiser" (Postface 419).[xlvi] Viewed within the context of Gille's assertion that "on ne peut pas avoir le même attitude envers l'identité juive avant et après le nazisme," as a member of the 1.5 generation, Gille possessed the unique opportunity to reflect on her mother's motivations with knowledge that was acquired in retrospect (Postface 419).[xlvii] Since it was Gille's wish that Suite française would not be published, by releasing Le Mirador, she was able to control how her mother was perceived by a new generation of readers to a large extent (Epstein, "Interview" 42, 43; Kershaw 1, 186; Jaillant 364, 367).

As Kershaw observes, one important way of evaluating the way in which Gille's first book influenced readers' perception of Némirovsky's life and writing is by applying Kershaw's ideas about "[t]he paratextual material around Suite française" to "[t]he paratextual material in Le Mirador" in order to be able to

[xlv] Gille writes, again in her mother's voice, "[i]n February of 1939, just before German troops advanced on Prague and as Hitler's anti-Jewish measures in Germany were becoming more heavy-handed and the sense of hope produced by the Munich Conference was beginning to fade, I decided to be baptized" (Mirador, trans. Harss 204).

[xlvi] Importantly, this statement exists in stark contrast to Gille's admission in the interview in the second edition of The Mirador that "I have no idea why she decided to be baptized" ("Élisabeth" 237).

[xlvii] Viewed within the context of Gille's assertion that "you can't look at what it means to be Jewish the same way after Nazism," as a member of the 1.5 generation, Gille possessed the unique opportunity to reflect on her mother's motivations with knowledge that was acquired in retrospect ("Élisabeth" 237).

evaluate the role of the different layers in the text (188). The first edition of Le Mirador does not contain any paratextual material aside from Gille's dedication; notably, this is the only place in which Gille writes in her own first person voice throughout the text (N. pag.). Yet, the second edition of the book contains a Préface entitled "Mère et fille," by Rene de Ceccatty, in which he firmly establishes the textual link between Gille and Némirovsky as writers and as family members, and a Postface that consists of an interview between Gille and de Ceccatty that appeared in Il Messaggero in 1992 (7-23; Gille, Postface 415-422). de Ceccatty begins the Préface with the words:

> Élisabeth Gille attendit d'avoir dépassé cinquante ans pour se mesurer à sa mere. Consacrant son premier livre à la biographie d'Irène Némirovsky et le rédigeant à la première personne, elle montrait, sans detour, que ce qui, jusque-là, avait arrête sa carrière d'écrivain était bien ce sujet central et cette situation difficile: être la fille d'un écrivain. Mais de pas n'importe lequel: d'un écrivain fauché par la haine raciale, au faître de sa gloire. Il falait donc aussi pour Élisabeth décider d'affronter le problème de la Shoah. Et il lui fallait enfin accepter l'idée d'avoir servécu à sa mere, mais églaement d'avoir dépassé l'âge auquel Irène Némirovsky était mort, trente-neuf ans. ("Mère" 7)[xlviii]

[xlviii] de Ceccatty begins the Afterword with the words: "Élisabeth Gille waited until she was over fifty to measure herself against her mother. By deciding to devote her first book, The Mirador, to the story of Irène Némirovsky's life and by deciding to tell that story in the first person, she also made it clear that what had held up her own career as a writer for so long was the problem of having been a writer's daughter. And not just any writer, rather one who at the peak of her career had fallen prey to a murderous anti-Semitism. Which meant that Gille had to decide to confront the Shoah as well, while also coming to terms with the fact that not only had she survived her mother, who died at the age of thirty-nine, but she had outlived her." (227)

Within the context of my study this passage is important for many reasons. Note, for example, how de Ceccatty refers to how Némirovsky's legacy weighs on Gille both in terms of her identity as a writer and, like her sister, as a "Holocaust survivor" (Kershaw 193). Gille's survivor status is also of great importance since it draws attention to the difficult choice that exists for many "child survivors" between remaining silent and recording the stories of their very painful pasts (Jones 5). Ultimately, though, since the second edition of Le Mirador was published after Gille's death, the inclusion of de Ceccatty's biographical Preface and personal interview ensure that the text functions as a memorial for Gille just as Suite française would become a textual memorial for her mother in 2004 (Jaillant 366-367).

While Le Mirador was Gille's first book, Un paysage de cendres was her last. Published in 1996, Un paysage de cendres is divided into two parts that are separated by the moment at which the protagonist, Léa Levy, learns about the horrors that took place in the concentration camps in Eastern Europe where her parents were presumably sent (110-111). Written in the third person, Un paysage de cendres follows the friendship of Léa, a young Jewish girl, and Bénédicte Gaillic, whose gentile parents took part in the French resistance (Gille, paysage 80; Astro). As children, the girls meet in a convent where Léa is hidden and, after the war, when Léa's parents do not return, she is cared for by Bénédicte's parents, Jean-Pierre and Jacqueline Gaillac (Gille, paysage 19, 128). Yet, despite the fact that the girls share similar experiences, their paths diverge when Léa is unable to separate herself from the horrors of the war (Gille, paysage 144; Astro). For this

reason, Un paysage de cendres is an unsettling examination of the psychological effects of the Holocaust on a child's development and a strident commentary on the ways in which Jewish and gentile populations dealt with the aftermath of the Holocaust in France.

Gille's examination of the effects of the war on Léa centres on the trauma that resulted from her parents' deaths. Since Léa spent the war in hiding, she learns about the horrors of the Holocaust secondhand. Gille describes in Chapter One, for instance, that the nuns with whom Léa lived believed that "[l]a decision qui venait d'être prise par les autorités, celle de laisser les enfants suivre leur famille, n'était-elle pas dictée par une préoccupation généreuse? La Pologne passait pour un pays très catholique: les Juifs y seraient probablement bien traités" (paysage 22).[xlix] As such, when Sister Saint-Gabriel takes Léa to Hôtel Lutétia, where the survivors who returned to Paris were assembled, she is woefully unprepared for her encounter with a small boy whom Gille describes as "un cadavre" (paysage 95, 93, 107).[l] When Léa tells him that she is searching for her parents, he states that they were "[g]azés. Empoisonnés comme des rats. Brûlés dans un four. Changés en fumée noire. Pfuit, tes parents. Pfuit"; hauntingly, this is the closest that Léa ever comes to learning about the fate of her parents in the text (Gille, paysage 110).[li] As a result of this revelation, in Part Two, unbeknownst to

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[xlix] Gille describes in Chapter One, for instance, that the nuns with whom Léa lived believed that "[t[his recent decision by the authorities to let children go with their parents – hadn't it been made out of generosity? Poland was supposed to be a very Catholic country: the Jews would probably be well-treated there" (Shadows 11).

[l] As such, when Sister Saint-Gabriel takes Léa to Hôtel Lutétia, where the survivors who returned to Paris were assembled, she is woefully unprepared for her encounter with a small boy whom Gille describes as "a corpse" (Shadows 61, 60, 70).

[li] When Léa tells him that she is searching for her parents, he states that they were "[g]assed. Poisoned like rats. Burned in an oven. Turned into black smoke. Poof, your parents. Poof";

Bénédicte's parents, who do all they can to shield Léa from the truth about the Holocaust, she becomes consumed with finding out about the past (Gille, paysage 136-137). Léa listens to the "Programme National" and to the "Messages de recherches des prisonniers et déportés," collects information about "le procès Nuremberg" and "le menu les expériences médicales de Josef Mengele dans le bloc 10 du Stammlager d'Auschwitz," and keeps a detailed account of "toutes les affaires de collaboration jugées à Bourdeaux depuis la fin de la guerre," going so far as to lie about her identity to secretly attend the trials (Gille, paysage 138, 140, 147, 148, 150).[lii] For this reason, despite her attempts to explore her Jewish identity, the knowledge that Léa accumulates about the Holocaust is so damaging that Gille describes her as "n'était qu'une terre brûlée, un paysage de cendres, circonscrit dans les frontières fuyantes d'une forme humaine par la force magnétique de cet aimant que représentait pour elle Bénédicte" (Gille, paysage 196-198, 185).[liii] When Bénédicte is killed in a car accident at the end of Part Two, Léa is left on her own to make an important choice: the book ends with a fugitive member of the "Parti communiste algérian" knocking on her door (Gille, paysage 200, 198, 201).[liv] In this way, just as Gille provides a scathing look at the

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hauntingly, this is the closest that Léa ever comes to learning about the fate of her parents in the text (Gille, Shadows 72).

[lii] Léa listens to the "Programme National" and to the "Bulletin Board for Prisoners and Deportees," collects information "about the Nuremberg trials" and "the medical experiments of Josef Mengele in Block 10 of the Stammlager at Auschwitz," and keeps a detailed account of "all the cases of collaboration tried in Bordeaux since the end of the war," going so far as to lie about her identity to secretly attend the trials (Gille, Shadows 91, 93, 98, 100).

[liii] For this reason, despite her attempts to explore her Jewish identity, the knowledge that Léa accumulates about the Holocaust is so damaging on her psyche that Gille describes her as "no more than scorched earth, a landscape of ashes, enclosed in the shifting boundaries of a human form by the magnetic force emanating from Bénédicte" (Gille, paysage 134-136, 126).

[liv] When Bénédicte is killed in a car accident at the end of Part Two, Léa is left on her own in the world with an important choice: the book ends with a fugitive member of the "Algerian Communist Party" knocking on her door (Gille, paysage 138, 136, 138).

psychological effects of the Holocaust and at France's collective inability to cope with its aftermath, she also warns the reader about the importance of being aware of contemporary issues and of not being consumed by the past, an idea that Gille also explores in the interview at the end of the second edition of Le Mirador (Postface 417). As such, Gille is concerned with how the personal responsibility of engaging with injustices in one's own time intersects with how she felt betrayed as a child by her mother and by France.

As the details that I have discussed from Un paysage de cendres demonstrate, just as there are many intersections between the events of Némirovsky's life and the events in Suite française, there are many parallels between Un paysage de cendres and Gille's life as well. Yet, as de Ceccatty asserts:

> En écrivant comme un roman un récit en grande partie autobiographique, Un paysage de cendres, elle poursuivait ce projet en germe dans Le Mirador. Certes, elle devait, dans son dernier livre, modifier de nombreux elements de sa vie et Lea n'est pas le double d'Élisabeth. Elles ont en commun certains traits de caractère […]. Mais, à strictement parler, les événements racontés sont romanesques. Il s'agit d'une mise en scène romanesque d'un matériau autobiographique librement réinterprété. ("Mère" 9-10)[lv]

[lv] Yet, as de Ceccatty asserts: "By casting the largely autobiographical Shadows of a Childhood as a novel, Gille returned to the project that had begun to take shape in The Mirador. Inevitably the book alters the details of her life. Lea, the main character, is not identical to Élisabeth, though they have much in common […]. But strictly speaking the book is a work of fiction, a free variation on autobiographical themes, with the language, structure, and style of a novel." (Afterword 228)

By blurring the boundaries between memory and imagination, Gille draws attention to her mother as both a public and a private figure and to the complexities of rendering her and her mother's stories in a written form. Further, while de Ceccatty remarks how, in Un paysage de cendres, "[d]ès la première phrase, un réplique, Élisabeth Gille rendait homage à Irène Némirovsky, puisqu'elle lui emprunait l'incipit de David Golder, le roman auquel sa mere dut sa gloire"; unlike in Le Mirador, the biological mother figure is otherwise absent from Un paysage de cendres ("Mère" 10).[lvi] In this way, although Kershaw contends that "thanks to the literary career of her younger daughter, Élisabeth Gille, Némirovsky was not completely forgotten," in both of her books, through her ability to bring her mother to life only in her imagination and on paper, Gille points to the depth of her experience not of absence, but of loss (186; LaCapra, Writing 64-65).

As the final line of Le Mirador ("[*s*]*es enfants, Denise et Élisabeth, arrêtées en meme temps que leur père, on été sauvées*") demonstrates, although Gille was left orphaned by the war, she survived along with her sister (Gille 435-36).[lvii] Yet, aside from being mentioned briefly in Le Mirador, Epstein is largely absent from Gille's texts (see, for example, 29, 275, 281, 315).[48] As I discussed earlier in this section, according to Epstein, the age difference between her and her sister, and the fact that they were separated immediately following the war,

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[lvi] Further, while de Ceccatty remarks how, in A Landscape of Ashes, "[f]rom the very first word of the book, an interjected 'No,' Gille was nodding to Némirovsky. David Golder, the novel that made her mother famous, begins the same way"; unlike in The Mirador, the biological mother figure is otherwise absent from A Landscape of Ashes (Afterword 228).
[lvii] As the final line of Le Mirador ("[*h*]*er children, Denise and Élisabeth, who were arrested with their father, were saved*") demonstrates, although Gille was left orphaned by the war, she survived along with her sister (Gille, trans. Harss 219).

meant that they had very different lives (Epstein, Survivre 133). Consequently, a comparison of Le Mirador and Un paysage de cendres with Survivre et vivre demonstrates how different voices and perspectives can exist within the same generational category and within the same family, and also how memories and stories can change over time.

Survivre et vivre: entretiens avec Clémence Boulouque was published in 2008, twelve years after Gille's death, and four years after the release of Suite française. Divided into eight chapters that consist of an extended interview between Epstein and Boulouque, Survivre et vivre is a work of non-fiction, unlike the books that I have examined by Némirovsky and Gille. When asked by Boulouque why she had never tried to write, Epstein answered, "ma vie personelle n'avait rien d'exceptionnel" (Survivre 133).[lviii] Yet, as Kershaw claims, "[i]n Némirovsky's case […] the 'author function' has been split between two individuals: Epstein's presence ensures visibility, whilst Némirovsky's radical absence as a posthumous success allows her 'transcendence' to remain intact" (193). Therefore, after the publication of Suite française, it was in the role of author that Epstein was forced to respond.

Although Epstein is the only surviving member of her family of origin, as the third woman in two generations of her family to publish a literary work related her family's fate during the Second World War, in Survivre et vivre she often covers familiar ground from her own perspective. For example, in Chapter One, "Les jours heureux," Epstein recollects her childhood experiences and describes

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[lviii] When asked by Boulouque why she had never tried to write, Epstein answered, "my personal life was never exceptional" (Survivre 133).

specific family photographs that are not included in the text (Survivre 24-26). In this way, unlike in Woman of Letters, in which numerous photographs of Epstein's family are presented along with captions, the reader is made aware that Epstein is in control of the reader's access to her family's past (see, for example, Corpet and White 18-32). Similarly, in Chapter Two, "La guerre," Epstein describes her "premières impressions a Issy-l'Évêque," which draw attention to the marked difference in the perspectives between Gille and Epstein as a result of the age difference that I discussed (Boulouque qtd. in Survivre 59).[lix] Yet, like Gille, Epstein is also concerned with her life after the war, and with the effects of trauma and memory on her life (Survivre 78-99, 122-141; Kershaw 191). In Chapter Three, "Après-guerre," for example, she recounts how she discovered that the family's apartment had been occupied by new tenants and describes visiting the Hôtel Lutetia in hopes of finding information about her parents, scenes that are also included in Un paysage de cendres (Epstein, Survivre 80, 83; Gille, paysage 89-91; 93-111). Here, Epstein, who defines herself as Jewish, also reveals the ways in which the ambiguity surrounding her mother's Jewish identity takes on a new urgency in the wake of Suite française (Survivre 106, 105, 125-26, 127-129). Similarly, in Chapter Six, "Garder la mémoire," Epstein emphasizes the importance of her speaking engagements with children in light of France's current political climate and the issues that were raised by the text (Survivre 122-123, 128, 124-126). By contextualizing her memories, and by commenting on the

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[lix] Similarly, in Chapter Two, "The War," Epstein describes her "first impressions of Issy-l'Évêque," which draw attention to the marked difference in the perspectives between Gille and Epstein as a result of the age difference that I discussed (Boulouque qtd. in Survivre 59).

memorialization process, Epstein reflects upon how her personal identity, and the identity of the country as a whole, has been affected by the Holocaust.

However, in the context of my study, it is the final two parts of Survivre et vivre, "Élisabeth," and "Avec Suite française," that bear the greatest weight (Epstein 133-141, 142-157). Epstein begins "Élisabeth" with the words:

> Il est difficile de parler d'une sœur dont on a été séparée par la vie si longtemps. Nos deux trajectories ont eu du mal à se croiser. Nos deux douleurs qui se confrontaient perçaient difficilement le mur du passé. Avant même Suite française, c'est par l'éctriture que nous nous sommes retrouvées et sommes devenues de vraies sœurs, en faisent revivre ensemble nos parents. (Survivre 131)[lx]

Her comments in this quotation reveal the tension that is implicit between Epstein's memories of her family members and the public preservation of their life stories in a textual form. For although Epstein states that as a result of Le Mirador, "je retrouvais une sœur," when asked by Boulouque, "[r]etrouviez-vous aussi une mère avec Le Mirador," she replied, "[n]on, je la partegais. Malgré la meilleure volonté du monde, on peut reconter un mode de vie, un façon de s'habiller, des petites manies, mais traduire la tendresse, la chaleur, c'est impossible! C'est aussi intransmissible qu'un désespoir qui ne peut qu'être individuel" (Survivre 135-136).[lxi] In turn, in "Avec Suite française," Epstein is

[lx] Epstein begins "Élisabeth" with the words: "It is difficult to speak of a sister because we have been separated for so long. Our two pains confronting each other made it difficult to pierce the wall of the past. Even before Suite française, it is by writing that we found ourselves and became real sisters by reviving our parents." (Survivre 131)

[lxi] For although Epstein states that as a result of The Mirador, "I found a sister" when asked by Boulouque, "did you also find a mother with The Mirador" she replied, "no, I shared her. Despite the best intentions in the world, one recounts a way of life, a way of dressing, the little manias, but

able to describe in her own words how the manuscript for Némirovsky's novel came to light and the personal effects of the book's success, including her experiences returning to Issy-l'Évêque (Survivre 142-143, 145-146, 148-150, 154-155). Yet, she also acknowledges how, "Suite française vit maintenant avec ses fautes et s'il y a un regret à avoir c'est qu'Élisabeth n'ait pas vu revivre sa mère. Elle avait commencé le travail, c'était un geste d'amour important, je l'ai continué …" (Epstein, Survivre 141).[lxii] However, in these ways, since neither Némirovsky nor Gille were able to respond posthumously to the publication of Suite française, these chapters emphasize the extent to which Epstein has been given the opportunity to have the final word – unless of course, her children or Gille's children someday decide to write a book.

Just as Angela Kershaw and Lise Jaillant explored the importance of paratextual material in Suite française and Journal d'Hélène Berr, and I analyzed the paratextual material that is present in Le Mirador, the paratextual material that appears in Survivre et vivre is also central to cementing the relationship between Némirovsky and her daughters (Kershaw 188; Jaillant 379). Perhaps nowhere in Survivre et vivre is the intergenerational connection between Némirovsky and Epstein so strongly cemented as in the tagline that appears on the front cover of the book: "La fille d'Irène Némirovsky Temoigne" (Kershaw 193; Survivre).[lxiii]

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to translate the tenderness, the heat, it is impossible! It is also impossible to transmit a despair that can only be individual" (Survivre 135-136).

[lxii] Yet, she also acknowledges how, "Suite française lives now with its faults and if I have a regret it is that Élisabeth did not see her mother revived. She started the work, it was an important gesture of love, I have continued it …" (Epstein, Survivre 141).

[lxiii] Perhaps nowhere in Survivre et vivre is the intergenerational connection between Némirovsky and Epstein so strongly cemented as in the tagline that appears on the front cover of the book: "The Daughter of Irène Némirovsky Testifies" (or as it is translated by Kershaw "(*Irène Némirovsky's daughter bears witness*))" (193; Survivre).

Here, Epstein is cast for perpetuity as the daughter of Némirovsky, not as an individual in her own right (Kershaw 193). As previous examples from Suite française and Le Mirador have demonstrated, this intergenerational connection is also presented in other paratextual material in the book. For example, the first line of the description on the back cover of the text reads, "Denise Epstein est née en 1929, année de parution de David Golder, le premier succès littéraire d'Irène Némirovsky," and Epstein chooses to begin the text with an epigraph by her mother that was written after her arrest in July 1942 (Survivre N. pag.).[lxiv] Notably, this connection is also evident in the "Avant-propos" by Boulouque in which he begins with the words "[s]a mère," and in Epstein's dedication for the book (11; Survivre N. pag.).[lxv] Therefore, as the last lines of Survivre et vivre, "[j]e ne voudrais pas conclure ces quelques pages sans parler de cette Mémoire recherchée par ma sœur Élisabeth Gille et rappeler dans cet historique ses deux mangifiques livres, Le Mirador et Un paysage de cendres. Ces deux ouvrages sont indissociables de l'œuvre de notre mère, Irène Némirovsky," reveal, in her work Epstein examines the lasting consequences of the intergenerational textual relationship between her and her mother and the intragenerational textual relationship between her and her sister as well (Epstein 164-165).[lxvi]

[lxiv] For example, the first line of the description on the back cover of the text reads, "Denise Epstein was born in 1929, the year of the release of David Golder, Irène Némirovsky's first literary success," and Epstein chooses to begin the text with an epigraph by her mother that she wrote after her arrest in July 1942 (Survivre N. pag.).

[lxv] Notably, this connection is also evident in the Foreward by Boulouque in which he begins with the words "[h]er mother" and in Epstein's dedication for the book (11; Survivre N. pag.).

[lxvi] Therefore, as the last lines of Survivre et vivre, "I do not want to conclude these few pages without speaking of the memoir researched by my sister Élisabeth Gille and remembering in this history her two magnificent books, The Mirador and A Landscape of Ashes. These two works are not dissociable from the works of our mother Irène Némirovsky," reveal, in her work Epstein examines the lasting consequences of the intergenerational textual relationship between her and

The form of Survivre et vivre differentiates the book most from Epstein's sister's and mother's works. As the word "temoigne" in the tagline on the front cover demonstrates, Survivre et vivre is part of the testimonial tradition (in which Kershaw also situates Suite française) wherein survivors' stories are preserved so that they will be accessible after their deaths (Survivre; Kershaw 193, 190).[lxvii] Testimony, which is inherently retrospective and reconstructive, is closely associated with the first generation, and, by extension, with the 1.5 generation as well (Kershaw 190-191). Notably, though, the image on the cover of the first edition of Survivre et vivre, in which Epstein is presented as a very old woman, is a stark contrast to the description of Epstein as Némirovsky's daughter and it reinforces the idea that, like the stories of the first generation, the stories of the 1.5 generation must be collected quickly before they are irrevocably lost.

Another important aspect of the testimonial tradition that is relevant to Survivre et vivre is the interaction between the speaker and what Robert N. Kraft terms the "listener," as the subtitle of the book "entretiens avec Clémence Bouloque" suggests (327; Epstein Survivre).[49] Since the questions that are asked by Boulouque influence what information is collected, and since the reader is not told if the questions were agreed upon ahead of time or if some subjects were off limits, Survivre et vivre draws attention to the limitations of the testimonial tradition that extend far beyond the reliability of an elderly interviewee's memory,

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her mother and the intragenerational textual relationship between her and her sister as well (Epstein 164-165).

[lxvii] As the word "testifies" in the tagline on the front cover demonstrates, Survivre et vivre is part of the testimonial tradition (in which Kershaw also situates Suite française) wherein survivors' stories are preserved so that they will be accessible after their deaths (Survivre; Kershaw 193, 190).

an idea to which I will return in Chapter Three. The interview process is also usually oral in nature, with testimony being recorded in an audio or video form (Young, Writing 157). Yet, in Survivre et vivre, Epstein's and Boulouque's exchange has been rendered on paper and the reader is not given any information about what kind of editing took place. Therefore, while it can be assumed that some editing and organization of the material occurred since each chapter is defined thematically, and since each chapter begins with an overarching statement by Epstein, this point draws attention to the extent to which Survivre et vivre is a subjective enterprise like the fictional works that I previously discussed. As such, since Le Mirador, Un paysage de cendres, and Survivre et vivre are all are examples of textual renderings of Gille's and Epstein's life stories, a comparative examination of the legacy of Némirovsky's daughters raises important questions about the consequences of how the story of one family can be told in many different forms.

Another way in which this idea is manifested is through the translation of Gille's and Epstein's writing. In the following two chapters, I will be examining books that were written in English by North American authors in which they deal with their, and/or their families', Eastern European pasts. In contrast, since Gille and Epstein lived through the war in France and wrote their works in French, their books were initially marketed to a very different audience than They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust, Preoccupied with My Father, The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million, and Everything is Illuminated. That being said, although Suite française

was published in English in 2006, it is notable that English translation of Gille's and Epstein's works has lagged significantly behind. Although Shadows of a Childhood: A Novel of War and Friendship, the English translation of Un paysage de cendres was released in 1998, The Mirador: Dreamed Memories of Irène Némirovsky by her Daughter was not published until 2011. Significantly, Survivre et vivre has not yet been translated into English, despite having been published in 2008. As such, English readers do not have access to the layered intergenerational family narrative that surrounds Suite française. In addition, thus far, to my knowledge, all of Némirovsky's books have been translated into English by Sandra Smith, while Shadows of a Childhood was translated by Linda Coverdale and The Mirador was translated by Marina Harss (Shewchuk, Rev. of Wine; Kershaw 2). Accordingly, while all of Némirovsky's works have been translated by the same person with the same voice, the same cannot be said of Gille's *oeuvre*, which reveals how the translation is another way in which books can mediate a reader's access to the past. And finally, the inclusion of different paratextual material in the French and English versions creates a very different context for readers of the works.

In this section of Chapter One, through a layered examination of Gille's and Epstein's writing, I explored how, and for what purposes, two members of the 1.5 generation have reconstructed the stories of their mother's life and their own lives decades after the war. In this way, I supported James E. Young's assertion that:

> As insistent as the survivor-memoirist is on establishing evidence of the crimes against him and his people, in the end it might be said that, like the diarist-victim who documented his own activity as a diarist, the memoirist documents nothing more persuasively than his own existence after the Holocaust. The survivor's literature thus becomes testimony not so much to the deaths at Auschwitz but to his life after Auschwitz. (Writing 37, see 30)

For, by examining how Gille and Epstein represent the similar circumstances that shaped their lives (the death their parents, their experiences in hiding, and their possession of the manuscript for Suite française), and the circumstances that set them apart (their post-war trajectories, the publication of Suite française, and the death of Gille), my comparison of Le Mirador, Un paysage de cendres, and Survivre et vivre reveals the way in which the experiences of members of the same generational category, or even the same family, are not homogenous, and how textual memorials can function as important evidence of how the Holocaust has been understood and remembered at different points in time (Suleiman, "Thinking" 291).

Part Three

Conclusion

In this chapter, through a comparison of the wartime writing of Irène Némirovsky and the postwar writing of her daughters Élisabeth Gille and Denise Epstein, I explored the relationships between fact and fiction, and memory and imagination, in the textual preservation of Holocaust family history. Yet, before I can conclude this area of my study, it is also necessary to situate the ideas that I have discussed within the larger debate surrounding Suite française in order to lay a foundation for my analyses of different types of Holocaust literature in the chapters that are to come.

As I mentioned in Section One, although Suite française was written during the Occupation, it was not published until 2004. As such, there has been much speculation about the classification of Suite française as a Holocaust text (see Jaillant 370-372). In "Suite française and Les Bienveillantes, Two Literary 'Exceptions': A Conversation," Richard J. Golson addresses this issue by noting how "[s]ome critics […] charge that the publicity surrounding the publication of Suite française, in which the work is characterized as a kind of 'Holocaust story' because of the author's fate, is both misleading and fraudulent" (322-23). Susan Rubin Suleiman responds to Golsan's summary by stating, "I certainly wouldn't call Suite française a 'Holocaust story'! Maybe one or two reviewers have made that mistake, but anyone who knows anything about history knows better. Suite française is a great novel about the first year of the German occupation of France, June 1940-June 1941" (323). On one level, I agree wholeheartedly with Suleiman.

As I demonstrated in Section One, if one undertakes a close reading of “Tempête en juin” and “Dolce,” and divorces their content from their author’s fate, then, of course, Suite française cannot be said to be about the Holocaust. In fact, from her vantage point in southern France, Némirovsky could have had no inkling of the scope and power of the killing machine in Eastern Europe that would consume both her and her husband, and to retroactively impose our knowledge of the Holocaust and of her fate in Auschwitz on Némirovsky’s writing is to distort her vision of the Occupation at the time at which it took place (Kershaw 171-172, 194; Bracher, After 253, xi, 11-12, 165-166). As Lee Jaillant writes:

> Indeed, both the CDJC [‘Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine’] and the Museum of Jewish Heritage offer a framework through which to read the manuscripts [of Hélène Berr and Irène Némirovsky]. Berr and Némirovsky’s writings are presented as ‘Holocaust stories,’ as tragic tales left by Jewish women before their extermination (Corpet and White, 15). However, this labeling is highly problematic. Can the term ‘Holocaust’ qualify Suite française and Berr’s journal, texts written before what became known as the Holocaust? (369-370, 367; see Bracher, “Éthique” 150).

Yet, David Bellos contends in “France and the Jews,” “just as [“it was”] impossible for Hélène Berr to know what Auschwitz meant [, …] it is impossible for us not to know” (290; see Bracher, After xiv, 3, 166). Therefore, to take a New Critical approach to Suite française is to fail to account for when and in what form the book was published (Kershaw 4). For, although “Tempête en juin” and

"Dolce" are about the Occupation, when one considers the book's "broken ending[…]" and the way paratextual material was used in an attempt to fill in the gaps, on the whole, as my discussion of Kershaw's work reveals, Suite française is most certainly about the Holocaust and our relationship with the Holocaust at this time (Stark 197; Kershaw 185-194; Jaillant 371). As Jaillant contends:

> The preface and the appendices set the text in the context of the persecution of the Jews, while the novel itself remains silent on the Jews' situation. Indeed, the paratext tends to subsume the novel under the Holocaust diary genre. In the absence of a *real* diary, the notes and letters give an account of Némirovsky's difficulties, week after week, month after month. […] Instead of a novel on the French Occupation, we are given to read a 'Holocaust story': the story of a brilliant writer unable to escape her tragic destiny. (371, 372; see Bracher xi)

As such, although I discussed critics' responses to the fact that there are no Jewish characters in Suite française, Olivier Corpet's and David Marwell's assertion that "[i]n spite of the concerns that have been raised and despite the attacks, we remain confident that Némirovsky's story is indisputably a Holocaust story; she was deported to Auschwitz, where she perished," is supported by reading Suite française alongside Némirovsky's daughters' works (15; Jaillant 369, 371). For, as I discussed in Section Two, Epstein's and Gille's stories and the story of the manuscript have become inextricably entwined. Therefore, as a result of the complex nature of this argument, I agree most strongly with Kershaw's assertion that it "is both important and valuable to recognize Némirovsky's identity as an

Occupation writer, as a Holocaust writer, and as a literary success in the twenty-first century" (171; see Jaillany 370).[50] For it is in this way that one can assess the consequences of how a single text can mean different things to different people at different points in time.

The controversy surrounding the definition of Suite française as Holocaust literature raises important questions in the context of my study, for, although I refer to intergenerational Holocaust literature in the title of my study, in each chapter I test the boundaries of that term. In this first chapter I discussed literature that was written during the war by a victim of the Holocaust and literature that was written after the war by child survivors in order to demonstrate how my definition of intergenerational Holocaust literature includes works that were written, and resulted from author's experiences, in concentration camps and ghettos in Eastern Europe, as well as works that stemmed from authors' experiences of displacement, concealment, and persecution in other parts of Europe as well (Suleiman, "Thinking" 289-290). In the following chapter, I will explore literature that examines the loss of a way of life that existed in Poland before the Holocaust and the irrevocable damage that was done to Schneiderman's family as a result of the Holocaust, despite the fact that neither of the books that I will be discussing explore the Holocaust itself in depth. Finally, in Chapter Three, I will examine works by two authors from the United States who went in search of the stories of their deceased family members in other parts of the world. Therefore, my definition of intergenerational Holocaust literature takes into account works that were written during or about the years in which the

Holocaust occurred and that were written in or about the places in which the slaughter occurred. Yet, it also includes works that deal with the effects of the Holocaust on members of different generations in different locations at different points in time. Within this framework, in this chapter, by examining the tensions between a series of overlapping layers of stories – the story within Suite française, Le Mirador, and Un paysage des cendres, and Survivre et vivre, Némirovsky's, Gille's, and Epstein's life stories, the story of what happened to the manuscript for Suite française after Némirovsky's death, and the stories of the paratextual material that has been included in the texts – I assessed how, and with what consequences, Némirovsky's family's story has been passed down.

Chapter Two

Ways of Looking at the Past:
The 0.5 Generation, Their Children, and the Second Generation

In the previous chapter, I examined the relationship between the textual records that were created by victims of the Holocaust and the postwar texts that were created by members of the 1.5 generation. Within this comparative construct, I was able to evaluate the role of fiction in wartime writing and explore the ways in which the memories of the dead were filtered through the 1.5 generation's experiences of the Second World War. This chapter will explore the perspectives of members of three generations who did not directly experience the Holocaust: the 0.5 generation, who witnessed Jewish life in pre-war Europe, and their children, as well as the second generation who were born to survivors after the war. A comparative examination of these three perspectives will allow me to evaluate how aspects of the memorial tradition established by the first generation has been adapted by members of subsequent generations in order to reflect their unique points of view. In turn, just as I explored the relationship between witnessing and memory in Chapter One, in this chapter, by juxtaposing the work of a member of the 0.5 generation, his daughter, and a member of the second generation, I will assess the roles of memory and postmemory in the textual representation and reconstruction of the past.

The four works that I explored in the previous chapter were connected by the authors' familial relationships. Here, the tie between the texts, Mayer Kirshenblatt's and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's <u>They Called Me Mayer July:</u>

Painted Memories of Jewish Life in Poland Before the Holocaust and Simon Schneiderman's Preoccupied with My Father, is the authors' families' experiences in Poland and Canada. As a member of the 0.5 generation, Kirshenblatt was raised in Apt (Opatów) and came to Canada in 1934, while his daughter was born in Canada in 1942 (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 359). Conversely, Schneiderman is a member of the second generation; his father lived in Warsaw before the war, and he was born in 1947 "in a DP [Displaced Persons] camp outside Munich, Germany" and came to Canada in 1951 (Preoccupied 5; Lipman; Preoccupied 19). They Called Me Mayer July, which consists of scores of Kirshenblatt's paintings, a narrative that was written collaboratively with his daughter, and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's Daughter's Afterword, is a record of Kirshenblatt's memories of life in prewar Apt and he and his daughter's experiences after the war (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1-357; 359-85). In Preoccupied with My Father, which includes less than thirty paintings and drawings and a fragmented narrative, Schneiderman traces the story of his father Yoel Schneiderman's life from prewar Poland to his death in Canada in 2002 (Preoccupied 5, 3, 6, 2). The juxtaposition of these two works, one that is incredibly comprehensive, and one that is startlingly spare, illustrates how Kugelmass' and Boyarin's observation that "[t]he memorial books are structured on a continuum from simple acts of naming to highly elaborated narrative" applies to the works that I am studying as well (34). Other points of intersection between these two books include the fact that they were both published in 2007, which allows me to examine the different ways in which members of three

generations reflect on the past at the same moment in time, and the parent-child relationships that are at the core of each text. Yet, in the context of my research into the textual memorialization of Holocaust and post-Holocaust family history, one of the most important connections between They Called Me Mayer July and Preoccupied with My Father is the way in which Kirshenblatt, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, and Schneiderman have reinterpreted and adapted the first generation's textual memorial tradition in their works.[51]

They Called Me Mayer July, which is an almost encyclopedic rendering of Mayer Kirshenblatt's childhood experiences in Apt, is reflective of the layered history of individual communities that is recorded in *Yizkor* books. Similarly, Preoccupied with My Father, which begins with a dedication to Schneiderman's family members who did not survive the war and do not have marked resting places, gestures towards "the lists of names" that traditionally "conclude most [memorial] books" (Preoccupied 1; Schneiderman, Interview; Kugelmass and Boyarin 34, 25). In addition, like the authors of *Yizkor* books, who were "nonprofessional" authors, Kirshenblatt taught himself to paint at the insistence of his wife and daughter in order to be able to visually represent his memories of his childhood in Apt, while Schneiderman, who is a lawyer in Toronto, "studied painting with instructors […] and part time at the Ontario College of Art" (Bluestein x; Kugelmass and Boyarin 6; see "About Holocaust"; Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 361-362, 363; Lipman). Finally, like *Yizkor* books, which were created in the diaspora after the war, They Called Me Mayer July and Preoccupied with My Father were created

retrospectively and include information about not only prewar life and the effects of the Holocaust on the authors' families in Poland, but the effects of the Holocaust on those living in Canada as well (Kuglemass and Boyarin 10; Hirsch, Family 246).

As these ideas suggest, another important point of intersection between the works that I have chosen is the visual and written aspects of the texts. Just as Holocaust victims created written records, as I discussed in relation to the work of Irène Némirovsky and Hélène Berr, Jewish victims also created visual records during the Second World War. These forms of visual representation, examples of which can be found in I Never Saw Another Butterfly edited by Hana Volavková, Without Surrender: Art of the Holocaust by Nelly Toll, and The Living Witness: Art in the Concentration Camps and Ghettoes by Mary S. Constanza, were an important way in which Jewish Holocaust victims recorded their experiences on paper (Toll, When xvii, xvi). In turn, the combination of written and visual elements was also an important part of the first generation's memorial tradition, as the inclusion of both text and photographs in *Yizkor* books make clear (Hirsch, Family 248). Therefore, in addition to the narrative elements of their texts, in They Called Me Mayer July and Preoccupied with My Father, by choosing to represent their memories in visual forms, Kirshenblatt and Schneiderman draw attention to the subjectivity of memory and the impossibility of comprehensively reconstructing a "world," be it that of Apt or Schneiderman's deceased father, that can no longer be captured by a photographer's lens (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 51; see Hirsch, Family 20).

Within this context, Kirshenblatt's paintings provide a counterpoint to collections of prewar photographs of *shtetls* in Poland. Famous examples include Roman Vishniac's A Vanished World, which includes his portraits of Eastern European Jews in the 1930s, Isaac Bashevis Singer's A Day of Pleasure: Stories of a Boy Growing Up in Warsaw, in which Singer combines 19 short stories about his youth that includes family photographs and photographs taken by Vishniac one generation before Singer lived in Warsaw, and Image Before My Eyes: A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, 1864-1939, which includes hundreds of photographs from the YIVO [*Yidisher Visnshaftlekher*] Institute for Jewish Research in New York. Yet, in contrast to the black and white images in these texts and in the *Yizkor* book for Apt, Kirshenblatt's paintings capture the energy and vitality of prewar *shtetl* life "in vibrant color" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 370). As a member of the 0.5 generation, since Kirshenblatt came to Canada before the war, and learned of the deaths of his family members who remained in Apt secondhand, the memories that he transmits to his daughter and to his readers are largely not of trauma and suffering, but of the day to day life of Apt (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1, 184-185; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 369). In this way, Kirshenblatt attempts to show that "[th]ere was a big world out there before the Holocaust" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 353). Yet, it is important to note that, unlike the aforementioned photographic records, the visual component of They Called Me Mayer July was not captured before the Holocaust through a documentary lens. Instead, since Kirshenblatt's paintings were created decades after the war with the benefit of hindsight and in

the context of the postwar nostalgia surrounding *shtetl* life, they raise important questions about how members of the 0.5 generation and their children can reconstruct prewar life.

For the second generation, who witnessed neither the Holocaust nor Jewish life in interwar Europe, the issues that are raised by Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's work are even more pronounced. The second generation's "particular relation to a parental past," which has been theorized as "'absent memory' (Fine 1988), 'inherited memory,' 'belated memory,' 'prosthetic memory' (Lury 1988, Landsberg 2004), 'memoire trouee' (Raczymow 1994), 'memoire des cendres' (Fresco 1984), 'vicarious witnessing' (Zeitlin 1988), 'received history' (Young 1997), and 'postmemory'" reflects their connection to, and distance from, an event which occurred before they were born (Hirsch, "Generation" 105; see Hirsch, Family 22-23). In my discussion of Preoccupied with My Father, from these many terms, I have chosen to focus predominantly on Hirsch's concept of postmemory, and, later, on Young's concept of received history: postmemory is built upon Hirsch's assumptions that "family [functions] as a space of transmission" and that photographic images are the primary means by which factual information about the Holocaust has been passed down, while received history provides insight into the layered nature of the texts that I am studying (Young, "Toward" 23; Hirsch, "Generation" 103; Family 1-15; "Generation" 115-117; Young, "Toward" 23). The relationship between these two ideas can be most clearly seen in Mariane Hirsch's and Leo Spitzer's Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory, in which they state:

> In the effort to capture the effects of the past on the present and of the present on the past and to trace the effects of the 'telling' on the witness and the listener, our book exemplifies what James Young has called 'received history.' It explores 'both what happened and how it is passed down to us.' And in that process it explores the holes in memory and knowledge that puncture second-generation accounts – accounts motivated by needs and desires that, at times, rely on no more than speculative investment, identification, and invention. (xix)[lxviii]

In addition, both postmemory and received history provide an interesting conceptual underpinning for my discussion of how a member of the second generation has chosen to transmit information about their family history using both writing and the visual arts.

As both Hirsch and Young explore, the first texts to be widely recognized for using words and images to express the "generational distance" and "deep personal connection" that characterize the postmemory of the second generation are Art Spiegelman's Maus I: A Survivor's Tale. My Father Bleeds History and Maus II: A Survivor's Tale. And Here My Troubles Began (Hirsch, Family 12-13, 23-40; Young, Memory's 12-41; Hirsch, Family 22). The Maus series, which was the first set of graphic novels to be published about the Holocaust, has been heralded by Alan L. Berger as "the most controversial and the boldest of second-generation writing" (260; see Ribbat 204). Here, Spiegelman draws on the testimony of his father Vladek, an Auschwitz survivor, and examines both his

[lxviii] A review of Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer has been accepted for publication. Jefferies 2010. Jewish Book World. 28.2: 33.

parents' wartime experiences and his process of creating the books (Hirsch, Family 26). Through these two narrative layers, in which Jews are represented as mice and the Nazis as cats, Spiegelman self-reflexively grapples with the limitations and consequences of representing the Holocaust as a child of survivors who was born after the war (Schwarz, Imagining 288-289; Hirsch, Family 25-26).[52]

Since the publication of Maus, a handful of other works by members of the second generation that combine written and visual material have emerged. Notable examples include Mendel's Daughter: A Memoir by Martin Lemelman, in which the author combines a transcription of his mother's testimony about her life in Poland under Nazi rule with his drawings and family photographs after his mother's death, and I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors by Bernice Eisenstein, in which the author grapples with her experience growing up as the child of Auschwitz survivors in Toronto in the 1950s (5, 3; N. pag.). From this handful of texts, I have chosen to examine Preoccupied with My Father, since Schneiderman's written and visual representation of his father's life provide an interesting counterpoint to Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's relationship in They Called Me Mayer July.

In this chapter, by examining the work of a member of the 0.5 generation, his daughter, and a member of the second generation, I will assess how, "[b]y bringing different formal qualities to bear on memory, every 'memorial text' generates a different meaning," and a different perspective on the past (Young, Texture viii). Examining the layers of voices within They Called Me Mayer July

and Preoccupied with My Father will enable me to assess not only how members of different generations have incorporated the memorial tradition of previous generations into their work, but also how memorial texts function as records not only of the places and people that they were meant to memorialize, but of the people who created them as well (Young, Texture 2).

Part One

Mayer Kirshenblatt's and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's
They Called Me Mayer July:
Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust

Apt (Opatów) is located in Poland (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 359). First settled by Jews in the sixteenth century, when Mayer Kirshenblatt, who was born in Apt in 1916 and came to Canada in 1934, undertook "return journey[s]" to Apt "around 1990 and again in 1995," he observed that "[a]fter five hundred years of Jewish habitation […], there was not a single sign that Jews had ever lived there" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 16; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Mayer"; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 359; Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 352, 354).[53] As he noted, the cemetery had been turned into a "park" and "a few small trees [grew] where the synagogue once stood" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 355).[54] In light of this transformation, Mayer Kirshenblatt's and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust is an important example of ways in which Kirshenblatt's memories of Apt in the prewar period have been preserved for, and transmitted to, future generations in a textual form.

In this section of Chapter Two, I will explore the three layers that make up They Called Me Mayer July and analyze the voices contained therein. The first layer consists of paintings and drawings that were created by Kirshenblatt (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1-357, 391-397). The second layer, which was written collaboratively by Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett as a

result of over forty years of interviews, is made up of the narrative that accompanies Kirshenblatt's paintings (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1-357; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 368-69, 359). Finally, the third layer consists of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's Daughter's Afterword, in which she self-reflexively examines her family history and her role in her father's reconstructive process (359-385). By examining each of these layers in turn, not only will I be able to situate They Called Me Mayer July within the larger memorial tradition that I outlined at the outset of this study, but I will also be able to evaluate how, and for what purposes, the voices of members of two generations interact within one work.

Kirshenblatt began painting in 1990 at the behest of his wife, Doris Kirshenblatt, and his daughter, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, who wanted to be able to visualize the world in which her father lived as a child (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1-2; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 361-364). According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, her father's memories of Apt in the interwar period had always had a visual component; as she states in the Daughter's Afterword, "I knew, not only from the interviews but also from my childhood, that he was endowed with an unusual visual intelligence. When words failed, he instinctively turned to pencil and paper" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 362). As such, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett actively encouraged her father "to paint from memory without worrying about 'technique'" in order to preserve and express what he saw in his "mind's eye" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 362; Foer, Harper).

At his daughter's request, the first image that Kirshenblatt created was of the kitchen in his childhood home (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 3-4; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 363). In this work, Kirshenblatt presents characteristic aspects of a standard kitchen, such as shelves lined with dishes and a table, yet he also depicts his mother in the background cooking at the stove and features himself in the foreground playing the violin (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 3; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 363). It is evident from the composition of this painting that Kirshenblatt's depictions of Apt are inseparable from his memories of his family and of his own life, and it is understandable, then, that his subsequent paintings depict similar subject matter to, and are composed in much the same style as, this original work (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 4-5; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 380). Interiors of domestic, commercial, and religious spaces, as well as street scenes predominate Kirshenblatt's *oeuvre* and, perhaps even more importantly, there are no landscapes or still lifes anywhere in the book; instead, like "Kitchen," other than his instructional drawings such as "How to Make a Willow Shoyfer," every one of Kirshenblatt's paintings features a single person or, more often, people in a group (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 297; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 381).

Kirshenblatt represents the Apt of his youth as a flourishing and complex community full of actual people who are engaged in the activities of daily life. As Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin note in From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry, "for the most part those people who worked

together on [… *Yizkor*] books recognized that every religious and political faction, every individual from the town rabbi to the assimilationalist lawyer to the ragtag water carrier, had been an essential part of the town's genius" (23). Kirshenblatt follows strongly in this tradition in his paintings by featuring various members of the community, from the organ grinder entertaining a crowd, to the water-carrier with his load, the cooper and rope maker practicing their trades, the bagel-seller selling her wares, men praying, and his family eating a meal (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 381; Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 21, 28, 29, 41, 92, 43, 53, 55, 175).[55] Yet, he does not shy away from depicting the less idealized aspects of *shtetl* life or from painting himself, or his Jewish neighbours, in an unflattering light as well (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 370). According to Kugelmass and Boyarin, like Kirshenblatt, the authors of *Yizkor* books were "not blind to the seamier aspects of life, although those aspects are invariably subsumed within a positive image of the Jewish community" (22). Therefore, while Kirshenblatt does present an overwhelmingly positive image of Apt, despite accounting for some of the negative aspects of his own experiences (as he says of the time at *khayder*, for example, "[b]asically, I was robbed of my youth") and the devastating results of the Nazis' presence (see, for example pages 169-171 and 184-185), the same cannot be said for his representation of individuals, as the titles of many paintings make clear (Kirshenblatt 261, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 381). These paintings include "Jadzka the Prostitute Shows Off Her Wares at the End of Market Day at Harshl Kishke's Well," "The Kleptomanic Stuffing a Fish Down Her Bosom," "Malekele *Drek* Fell Into the Latrine/Man

Cleaning Public Toilet," "The Illegal Slaughter," "Accused of Murder, the Carpenter is Taken Away to Jail," and "The Mafia at the Bootlegger's House" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 123, 127, 85, 114, 215, 144). As these titles suggest, the most important ethical and historical consequences of Kirshenblatt's decision not to engage in explicit self-censorship occurs in paintings in which his subjects are named (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 370). In "Caught in the Act," for example, Yankele Zishes is depicted fleeing from the house of his mistress amidst a crowd of onlookers; since Zishes is not named anywhere else in the book, he is defined and memorialized in relation to this event (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 271, 270-272). Like a *Yizkor* book, They Called Me Mayer July might be one of the only places in which someone who perished in the Holocaust is described; consequently, by associating individuals who might be absent from the official historical record with a singular and sometimes negative quality that was selected by Kirshenblatt, or by leaving figures "unnamed," the book plays an important role in shaping how they will be remembered over time (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 381; Doležel 178).[56]

While, as I have noted, in either the title or the accompanying narrative, Kirshenblatt often names the subject of his paintings, yet in works in which large groups are featured, such as "Saturday Afternoon Stroll in the Town Square," "*Sefer Torah* Procession," "*Simchas Torah*," and "Saturday *Bar Mitzvah*," although all of the subjects are depicted with distinct facial features and outfits, they are not individually identified (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 18, 8-9, 36-37, 69, 69; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 381). In this way, these

individuals, who may or may not be actual people, are rendered visually indistinguishable from the named and historically verifiable individuals in the book. Interestingly, this issue is also present in Preoccupied with My Father, as Schneiderman's depiction of the "*Shiva* visitors" on page 49 reveals.[57] In They Called Me Mayer July, the issue of naming is complicated further by the fact that, in the narrative that accompanies his paintings, Kirshenblatt sometimes refers to people who are not depicted visually in his works. On page 27, for example, he describes Laybl Zylberberg, who "lived a few doors away" and survived the concentration camps only to be "shot by Poles who were afraid he might want his property back" when he returned to Apt (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett). Yet, to my knowledge, neither Laybl nor Yosl Zinger, who buried Laybl and later related the story of Laybl's return to Kirshenblatt, are depicted visually in the text (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 27). This issue is also complicated by the fact that many of the figures with whom Kirshenblatt populates his images are not people that he knew firsthand. The titles of the following paintings, which depict events that took place before his birth or after his departure from Apt, are exemplary of this point: "The Black Wedding in the Cemetery, ca. 1892," "King Kazimierz the Great Entertaining His Jewish Girlfriend Esterka," "Reading Psalms Before the Expulsion, 1942," "Expulsion from Opatów, 1942: Execution of My Grandaunt and Family," and "Execution of Grandmother on the Road to Sandomierz, 1942" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 14, 15, 61, 170; see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 375-376). Therefore, although Mayer's paintings provide him with an important vehicle for rendering his memories on paper, as

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett observes "different parts of the story are told in different ways in different media to form a whole that is greater than could be achieved in words or images alone," creating conditions in which his "*felt* facts" cause the boundaries between fact and fiction and memory and imagination to become extremely blurred (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 382, 375-376, 374).

As the issues that I have discussed demonstrate, They Called Me Mayer July is not an objective portrait of Apt. Therefore, for the sake of verification, it is important to note that other visual records of the town exist. For example, the town's *Yizkor* book, which was published in Tel Aviv in 1966, and includes contributions from individuals in "Israel, Canada, and the United States," contains numerous portraits with captions, as well as pictures of pictures and descriptions of locations such as "'The Market'" that are described and painted by Kirshenblatt (Apt N. pag., 6, 9, N. pag.; Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 71, 91-92). Similarly, in They Called Me Mayer July, Kirshenblatt notes how "in the 1920s," Erlich, the only photographer in Apt, "made studio portraits of town characters [… and] also took snapshots of them on the streets" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 23). An important illustration of how Kirshenblatt's memories of Apt are in fact incomplete is that he did not know of these photographs, which "were published in the *rotogravure* section of the Yiddish daily *Forverts*" in New York, and which include images of "some of the [… people that he] painted, such as Bashe Rayzl, one of the town crazies," until after he had undertaken his work (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 23). A fascinating area of future investigation would be to compare Kirshenblatt's

paintings with both of these sets of photographs in order to be able to evaluate Kirshenblatt's memories and his representations of actual people from Apt from another point of view.

In addition to creating a record of the people who inhabited Apt, in They Called Me Mayer July Kirshenblatt also focuses on their way of life (see Kugelmass and Boyarin 22-23). Examples of this idea can be found in the "synopsis for the English-speaking reader" of the *Yizkor* book for Apt; they include "The Town and Its Environs" by Moshe Grinstein that contains subheadings such as "The Christian Population of Apt," "Apt's Surroundings," and "The River" and "Apt – The Town and Its Jews" by Joseph Rosenberg, that contains subheadings such as "The Old Synagogue," "The Zionist Organization," and "The Merchants' and Artisans' Association" and "Daily Life" (Publication; Grinstein 7, 8-9, 10; Rosenberg 11, 13, 15). Similarly, Kirshenblatt includes depictions and descriptions of the organizations and institutions that were an integral part of Jewish life, such as the "General Zionist Organization" and the *khayder* (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 21, 261-262). On a smaller scale, he also includes instructional drawings and paintings that depict how to create objects that were a part of everyday life such as a *dreydl*, a shoe, a brush, and a willow *shoyfer* that I previously mentioned, many of which would have either stopped being made in Apt in the absence of the town's Jewish population or would now be mass produced (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 146, 249, 163, 297, 354; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 374, 372). In this way, like the authors of *Yizkor* books, Kirshenblatt attempts to preserve the way of life that

was lost along with Apt's Jewish inhabitants during the war (see Kugelmass and Boyarin 1, 12-15).

As a member of the 0.5 generation, although he did not witness the Nazi occupation of Poland, Kirshenblatt's perceptions of the people, places, and customs in Apt have been filtered through both a prewar and a postwar lens. Therefore, as the above examples demonstrate, although Kirshenblatt is concerned with documenting what life was like before the Holocaust, he does so with the knowledge of what was lost. As Jared Stark observes in his discussion of the textual memorial tradition, "[i]n their efforts to reconstitute the world of the *shtetl* in its totality, [… they] serve less to provide a historically nuanced or accurate picture of Jewish life […] than to register the ways in which the Shoah cut short a tradition and history in process, producing an irretrievable, frozen image of the Jewish past" (201-202). This observation can also be applied to They Called Me Mayer July, for, despite his attempts at nuance and accuracy, since, as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes, time rarely passes in his paintings, Kirshenblatt also presents a frozen image of Apt and himself (Daughter's 380). According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, following an illness in 1975, Kirshenblatt began collecting clocks and it is notable that this idea of "hoarding time" is also present in his works (Daughter's 361). As she states:

> Whatever their relation, the paintings and stories treat time differently. The Mayer of the paintings is almost always of the same indeterminate age, rarely younger or older, always a school boy in blue. True, Mayer appears as a baby in a cradle in the scene of his mother after she gave birth

> to his brother, but this is exceptional. Many of the paintings are inscribed 'Opatów, 1934,' including scenes that occurred repeatedly over the course of many years, as if to say that the clock stopped in 1934, the point beyond which there would be nothing to remember. Virtually all of Mayer's seventeen years in Poland seem to be compressed into the year of his departure; even a domestic scene that includes his father, who left Poland in 1928, is dated 1934. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 380)

The temporal fixity that is described in this passage is illustrated by visual fixity as well as is demonstrated by the fact that Kirshenblatt's subjects are "almost always standing" and are "often [positioned] front and centre" on the page (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 381). Yet, aside from the image in which he paints himself as a baby, a scene that he could not have possibly remembered in such detail, as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett astutely points out, it is the fact that her father always paints himself as an adolescent boy wearing the same "school 'uniform'" of blue and white that is most important in the context of my discussion of his work (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 380; Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 6-7; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 374). In paintings such as "Boy with Herring," "Walking Malkele Home," "Laybl Tule, the Flour-Porter," "Overnight in the *Khayder*, Mother Bringing Me Food," "Going Home from the Zionist Training Camp, 1930," "Helping the Blacksmith," "Apprenticing to the *Kamashn*-Maker," and "Boy with a Hoop," Kirshenblatt always looks the same (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 6, 203, 45, 267, 311, 303, 398, 399; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 374). Although this consistency makes him

easily identifiable, it also means that he does not represent himself at different stages of life or in different roles (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 380). Hence, in Kirshenblatt's paintings time stands still, with both Apt and Kirshenblatt positioned perpetually on the brink of irrevocable change (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 380).

Within the context of my discussion of memory and memorialization, the visual uniformity of Kirshenblatt's paintings also has other more far-reaching consequences. Of his enterprise, Kirshenblatt states:

> I consider myself a storehouse of memories. My project is to paint prewar life in a small Jewish town in Poland. That's what really interests me. The way I paint is important, of course, but the most important thing to get is the subject. I have to get a subject. I think about it. I remember. It just comes to me. The subjects I decide to paint are those that have a story to tell. I draw mainly from my memory. I also paint stories I heard from my Apt friends or read in the Apt chronicles, the memorial book for my town. Regrettably, I have very little imagination. I don't dream or, if I do, the dream is nothing I can paint. I can only paint what I lived through. I can only paint what is in my memory and in my head. (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2-3)

As this description demonstrates, the storehouse of information about Apt from which Kirshenblatt draws has been accumulated over time, making "his idea of memory […] capacious enough to include legends that he heard as a child or read in the Apt memorial book [… or] events he never witnessed but only heard about,

notably the execution of his parents' families by the Nazis" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 375-376). By depicting scenes from various sources (orally transmitted eyewitness accounts, books, legends, and his own observations) in the visually uniform manner that I discussed, Kirshenblatt reinforces the fact that the subject matter that he presents is woven together by the story of his own life. In light of my discussions about the implications of reconstructing one's memories of being a "child witness" and reconstructing childhood from an adult's perspective in the previous chapter, the layered nature of Kirshenblatt's understanding of a specific historical period raises important questions about the accuracy of his representations of Apt (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 374). For not only must the reader question the extent to which Kirshenblatt is able to recall the volume of information that is presented in <u>They Called Me Mayer July</u> and correctly interpret the scenes that he observed as a child, he or she must also be wary of the extent to which the layers of information that have been mapped onto Kirshenblatt's memories have altered his perceptions of his childhood home.

In his paintings, Kirshenblatt attempts to account for his childhood perspective through the use of scale. As he states, "in my early paintings, the rooms are so huge and I am so small" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 3). Yet, in the narrative that accompanies his work, Kirshenblatt acknowledges his childhood perceptions of those around him and his use of scale has affected the accuracy of his work. For example, of "Passover *Seder* at My Paternal Grandfather's" he remarks:

> I painted the *seder* scene more than once. In the first painting, I made my grandfather big because he was the head of the house, even though he was actually a small man. When I repainted this scene, I made my grandmother much bigger. I sit near my grandfather, because I am the oldest grandchild on both sides. […] When I visited Ilza several years ago and knocked on the door of my grandfather's house – Polish people now live there, and they let me in – I was really shocked at how small the kitchen was. I remember it being huge. I said to myself, 'My God! Is that it?' (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 175)

Further, while in "Passover *Seder* at My Paternal Grandfather's" Kirshenblatt is depicted as very small, in "Boy With Herring," although he is wearing the same uniform as the previous image, he takes up almost one-third of the canvas (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 175, 6). Since Kirshenblatt's size and his relationship with the world around him would have changed throughout the seventeen years he lived in Apt, and since he does not use scale consistently in his works, it is an inaccurate tool with which to measure Kirshenblatt's representations of the passage of time.

In light of these inconsistencies, the best way to account for the passage of time in Kirshenblatt's paintings is to recognize that they were not created all at once. In this way, it is possible to distinguish his images not according to the subject matter but according to his technique. As Kirshenblatt observes:

> The paintings I make today are a lot different from when I started fifteen years ago. First and foremost, I do not thin out the paint as much as I used

> to. The colors are more powerful. I use more primary colors. I also use a lot of earth colors – raw sienna, burnt sienna, raw umber, burnt umber. I also try to avoid painting flat. I try to give my pictures more depth and perspective. I put more distance between people in the front and people in the back. I make the ones in the front bigger and the ones in the back smaller. The faces are more detailed. There is more contrast. (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 4)

Further, a photograph is created through the interaction of a photographer and his or her subject at a specific point in time; however, through the act of painting, Kirshenblatt is able to "paint over and over again on the same canvas to get it right" or, as his representation of the *seder* makes clear, create multiple representations of the same scene (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 4, 175). Yet, unlike the documentary Shtetl, in which director Jack Kuper captures Kirshenblatt's canvases at various stages of completion, in They Called Me Mayer July, the viewer is only presented with the final product, which strips away the transparency from Kirshenblatt's creative process. The viewer must be aware, then, that although Kirshenblatt's paintings allow his memories to occupy a publicly accessible "physical space[,]" their composition is determined as much, or perhaps more so, by the aesthetic choices that were made the moment of recall than by the moments at which the events that Kirshenblatt depicts actually took place (Young, Texture 7).[58]

As Shtetl reveals, painting is a solitary act, and thus the voice and point of view that is presented in images in the first layer of the book belongs to

Kirshenblatt alone. However, although Kirshenblatt created the images in the first layer, it is not always clear in which order the images and the text in the second were created making the relationship between Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's "collaboration" in this layer entirely transparent (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 368). Within this in mind, it is important to note that Kirshenblatt-Gimblett states that the narrative that accompanies the images in They Called Me Mayer July came about as a result of the "collaboration" between her and her father over the course of many years (Daughter's 368, 359, 361-362).[59] For just as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has asserted that in They Called Me Mayer July the "different parts of the story are told [...] in different media to form a whole that is greater than could be achieved in words or images alone," in the second layer, the same could be said of the perspectives of the 0.5 generation and their children as well (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 382). Trained in Folklore, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett "began interviewing [... her] father in 1967," exactly "forty years" before the publication of They Called Me Mayer July (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 361, 359, 378). In these interviews, she employed a similar methodology that she used in her doctoral dissertation Traditional Storytelling in the Toronto Jewish Community: A Study in Performance and Creativity in an Immigrant Culture. Here, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, who is now a "University Professor" at "New York University," "preferred to keep the interview as close to casual conversation as possible and to let the informant talk freely around a topic. [...] For several topics, [... she] prepared a checklist of points [... she] wished to cover. Otherwise, [... her] policy was to

encourage the informant to 'describe'" (Barbara; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Traditional 8). An example of how this system was used in They Called Me Mayer July can be seen on page 365 of the Daughter's Afterword and her description of how, by loosely structuring their conversations as "an imaginary walk" through Apt, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett enabled her father to "call forth the memories attached to each of the city's topographical features," which he could both paint and describe, a technique that is echoed in Kugelmass and Boyarin's description of survivors' acts of recall (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 370-371;12).[60] In these ways, Apt was able to function as a "memory place" for Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 370). Yet, like her father's aesthetic choices in the first layer of the text, her involvement in the processes of recall and reconstruction has important implications for the form and content of the book.

The first of these implications concerns the overall structure of They Called Me Mayer July. Although the book is subtitled Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust, it is divided into four main parts ("My Town" (8-133), "My Family" (134-257), "My Youth" (258-341), and "My Future" (342-357)) that encompass, in part, the history of Apt, Kirshenblatt's maternal and paternal family histories, and he and his daughter's return visits to Apt approximately six decades after he left (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 16-20, 172-173, 187-188, 254-257). Under these broad headings, the structure of the book is "episodic" and does not adhere to the "teleology of historical writing," which reflects the overlapping nature of Kirshenblatt's

memories and the thematic structure of their interviews (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 368; Flüdernik 82). Yet, it is also important to recognize that the structure of They Called Me Mayer July incorporates many aspects of the memorial tradition that are identified by Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin. The annotated map of Apt that is included at the outset of the book, the "substantial account of the history of the town from the time of its first Jewish settlement" that is included in "My Town," the "folkloric and linguistic collections of customs relating to particular holidays, sayings characteristic of the town, even lists of particular individuals' nicknames and explanations of how they acquired them" (a detailed examination of how Kirshenblatt acquired the nicknamed Mayer July is included on the first page of the book), and the account of Kirshenblatt's disappointing experience when he "returned" to Apt many years after the war in a section entitled "A Heavy Heart," are some of the examples of this phenomenon (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett N. pag., Kugelmass and Boyarin 2, 5; Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 8-133; Kugelmass and Boyarin 6; Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1; Kugelmass and Boyarin 28-29; Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 354-357"). Since this information was compiled by two generations of one family, not by multiple members of the community, the scope and context of what is included in these sections is determined by Kirshenblatt's memories and by the questions that his daughter chose to ask. In this way, They Called Me Mayer July is a record of the place from which Kirshenblatt's family came and of how Kirshenblatt's memories of Apt have been transmitted over time.

The second implication of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's involvement in the creation of They Called Me Mayer July can be seen in the relationship between words and images in the book. Kirshenblatt's observation that the narrative "reads like a novel" leads the reader to assume that, in order to create a coherent and cohesive narrative, there is an element of imagination in the text (qtd. in Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 368). It is important, then, that Kirshenblatt's and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's narrative serves both to explain and to undermine the memories that are rendered visually in layer one. An excellent example of where aspects of a painting are clarified and enhanced by the narrative is Kirshenblatt's self-portrait "Boy With Herring" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 5-7; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 374). In a passage that spans over a page, Kirshenblatt describes not only his characteristic blue and white outfit, explaining that it was "the unofficial uniform for boys from non-Orthodox homes who attended the Polish public school" and tracing the name of the wide collar to "Juliusz Slowacki, a nineteenth-century Polish poet," but he also discusses the role of herring in the diet of Jewish families in Apt, describing in great depth how it was both prepared and eaten (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 5, 7). In contrast, the narrative element of They Called Me Mayer July also draws attention to the inconsistencies and inaccuracies in Kirshenblatt's paintings and to the way in which his images are not faithful reproductions of his memories of Apt; for example, of "*Shoyket*: Slaughtering Chickens," Kirshenblatt notes, "[t]here were no houses, no trees, no bushes there, just a fence around his property. There were a few blades of grass. I added bushes for the sake of the painting" (Kirshenblatt

and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 103, 102). Accordingly, just as the relationship between the text and "Boy With Herring" causes the reader to question the extent to which Kirshenblatt's memories have been tempered by his postwar experiences and by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's questions, the relationship between the text and "*Shoyket*: Slaughtering Chickens" forces the reader to speculate upon the consequences of juxtaposition of the different ways in which Kirshenblatt has chosen to record his memories in the book and the order in which the text and images were created (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 376; see Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2-3)

The third implication of Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's relationship is evident in the voice that runs through They Called Me Mayer July. Although this first person narrative in this layer echoes the perspective of Kirshenblatt's paintings, it is not, in fact, Kirshenblatt's voice; instead, it is the carefully constructed voice of Kirshenblatt's and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's "collaboration" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 368). According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett:

> to say that They Called Me Mayer July is 'entirely in Mayer's voice' is not the whole story because the text is anything but a monologue. Quite the contrary: it is profoundly dialogic. […] In They Called Me Mayer July, the voice of the text is the voice of our collaboration. There were many other ways we could have composed the text. I could have told Mayer's story in the third person. I could have written in my first person voice and quoted him. I could have preserved the form of the interview. Or, in the manner of

> Charlotte Salomon, we could have matched a sequence of images to a sequence of discrete texts. We chose instead what anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff calls the 'third voice,' which she explains as follows: something new, a 'third person,' is created 'when two points of view are engaged in examining one life.' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 369-369)

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's choice to use a 'third voice' blurs the boundaries between the perspectives of the 0.5 and their children through the creation of the perspective of a fictional third person (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 369). While, at times, the seams in their collaboration are evident (for example a passage on page 96 reads, "[d]uring the summer, farmers brought their butter to market in an enormous leaf (I think it was a milkweed leaf, but my daughter says it must have been a horseradish leaf)"), by and large, the third voice makes it impossible for the reader to discern how information was transmitted, what questions were asked, how the answers were given, and what changes occurred during the writing process so that Kirshenblatt's memories could be presented to the reader in their final form (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett). On the one hand, this choice is noteworthy in the context of other intergenerational memoirs such as Spiegelman's <u>Maus</u> series, Barbara Ruth Bluman's <u>I Have My Mother's Eyes: A Holocaust Memoir Across Generations</u>, and Leslie Gilbert-Lurie and Rita Lurie's <u>Bending Toward the Sun: A Mother and Daughter Memoir</u> where the perspectives of two generations are kept separate either through dialogue or discrete sections of the text since, in <u>They Called Me Mayer July</u>, the use of the third voice signals how a new perspective is gained by each generation through

the transmission and synthesis of information about the past.[61] Yet, on the other hand, the third voice is problematic because, by omitting the explicitly dialogic element of the interview process that is present in works such as Denise Epstein's Survivre et vivre: entretiens avec Clémence Boulouque, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett erases any evidence of how the text came into existence. For unlike the testimonial tradition in which the questions of the interviewer and the answers of the interviewee are both recorded, in the second layer of They Called Me Mayer July all transparency is lost (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 368). For example, although Kirshenblatt-Gimblett relates how, during the editing process, "Mayer would fill in the gaps, puzzle over inconsistencies, clarify points, or elaborate descriptions," going so far as to "telephone his Apt friends in Toronto and New York, especially his childhood buddy Maylekh Katz," this process, as well the voices of those who aided him, are not explicitly present in the book (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 368). From the perspective of future generations who could use this text to undertake genealogical or scholarly research, the lack of differentiation between the voices of members of different generations makes They Called Me Mayer July a problematic and unreliable source of information.

In light of these issues, it is important to note that the first person voice in the Daughter's Afterword that concludes They Called Me Mayer July belongs solely to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. Born in 1942, two years after the marriage of her parents who met in Canada in 1940, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett was raised from 1947 to 1955 in a Jewish neighbourhood in Toronto (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's

360).[62] After completing her PhD in Toronto, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett studied Folklore at the University of California, Berkeley; for her, Folklore was a field that “valued what was extraordinary in ‘ordinary’ people, celebrated the oldest members of the community, and appreciated their accumulated wisdom, deep memory, and creative capacities late in life” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter’s 361). While, as They Called Me Mayer July demonstrates, the study of Folklore enabled Kirshenblatt-Gimblett to explore her parents’ stories and “prepare for their aging,” it also allowed her to situate her work within a larger context (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter’s 361). As she notes, “ [a]n entire generation of Yiddish folklorists perished in the Holocaust,” and it was with an intent to “bridge” this “chasm” that Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has undertaken much of her research: she is the co-author of the Introduction to Awakening Lives: Autobiographies of Jewish Youth in Poland before the Holocaust edited by Jeffrey Shandler, the co-editor of Image Before My Eyes : A Photographic History of Jewish life in Poland, 1864-1939 with Lucjan Dobroszycki, and the author of Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, Heritage (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter’s 361, 370). Since, as a child of a member of the 0.5 generation, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett can only access information about interwar Poland and the Holocaust in a “mediated” manner, it is significant that in her Daughter’s Afterword she self-reflexively views her family history and the history of Apt largely through this academic lens (Hirsch, Family 22; Hirsch, “Generation” 107, 112).[63] For the purposes of this investigation, I have chosen to

focus on three areas that Kirshenblatt-Gimblett discusses, the third voice, return journeys, and autobiography, since they are the most germane to my research.

As I mentioned, in the context of the numerous intergenerational memoirs that I read as part of this study, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's choice to present the narrative in the second layer of They Called Me Mayer July in the third voice is both distinctive and deliberate. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett states:

> When I say that They Called Me Mayer July is entirely in Mayer's voice, I mean to distinguish this book from such works as Art Spiegelman's rightly celebrated Maus, which is structured around the 'story of the story' – that is, around the process of creating the work. […] This is decidedly not the case in They Called Me Mayer July: here, the story is the story. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 368)

Yet, as my comparison of the three layers of They Called Me Mayer July reveals, this is not entirely true, since the third voice is not the only voice that is present in the text. Although the first and second layers foreground the world of Apt before the war, not the world in which the act of preservation occurred, in the third layer, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett presents the story of the story through her personal and academic commentary. Here, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett not only describes how the interview process came about and how it took place, she also examines They Called Me Mayer July in a larger context by comparing it to Denis Diderot's Encyclopedie and autobiographies at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Studies, as well as incorporating academic terminology and theory from authors such as "Mikhail Bakhtin and Gerschon Legman," and Roland Barthes (Kirshenblatt-

Gimblett, Daughter's 368, 376, 379, 372, 378). Interestingly, the images in this section also point to the story behind the story, as the inclusion of "Kitchen, the Very First Drawing" that preceded Kirshenblatt's paintings of this scene and handwritten pages by Kirshenblatt reveal (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 363, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 366-367). Hence, while Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes that her father was an observer of Apt, she is also an observer of her father, and, through her academic work, an analyst of their relationship as well (Kirshenblatt Gimblett, Daughter's 361, 380).

One important way of distinguishing between the perspectives of the 0.5 generation, who experienced *shtetl* life before the Holocaust, and their children, who knew of it only through images and stories, is to examine their different experiences on "'return' journeys" (Hirsch and Spitzer, Ghosts 10; see Hirsch and Spitzer, "Would" 257). Through Kirshenblatt's paintings and stories, Kirshenblatt-Gimblatt was able to return to Apt in her imagination; however, physical return journeys create a more tangible connection between memory and place (see Varvogli 89). As I mentioned in the Introduction to this study, "survivors [who undertook return journeys after the Holocaust] generally came to realize how total the rupture with the past had been," an idea that Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explore in a subsection of "My Future" entitled "A Heavy Heart" (28-31, 29; 345-357). Although Kirshenblatt asked her father to accompany her to Poland about 1981, they did not go together until 1990 and 1995, and Kirshenblatt noted how on his initial visit he observed that many changes had taken place:

> On entering Apt, the first place that I wanted to see was the place where I use to live. It was gone. Most of the block had recently been demolished. […] New houses were in the process of being built. […] When I was a boy, there were horses all over the place, but no more. The population changed, the situation changed. In the town we had industry; now I could see no industry whatsoever. Opatów had become a sleepy bedroom community for people who worked elsewhere. […] I don't know if the mills were still operating, but the soap factory was gone, as were all the Jewish trades. There was no sign of the shoemaker or tailor. (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 354)

Similarly, of his "second visit" he states: "The young man I met on the street escorted me to the Jewish cemetery. The townspeople had removed tombstones spanning the past five hundred years and used them to make floors for pigsties and stables. […] There was hardly a sign that this area had ever been a cemetery, let alone a Jewish cemetery" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 354, 355-356). In light of this erasure of the Jewish way of life in Apt and of the Jewish memorials that were evidence of generations of habitation, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett was able to access the Apt of her father's childhood through his images and stories (Daughter's 370-371). As such, by comparing the way in which Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett return to the Apt of Kirshenblatt's youth through his images and stories and the results of their physical return journeys, the urgency and importance of their textual enterprise is enforced (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 5, 353; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 362).

In the website that supplements They Called Me Mayer July, another implication of Kirshenblatt's return journeys is explored, which clearly illustrates the difference between the solitary act of viewing Kirshenblatt's paintings in They Called Me Mayer July and the "performative" act of viewing them in a public space (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Destination 3). Kirshenblatt's wife originally began displaying her husband's artwork in their home (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 364). Over time, his audience expanded and his paintings were exhibited in such institutions as the "Judah L. Magnus Museum, Berkeley" (2007), "the Jewish Museum, New York" (2009), the "Galicia Jewish Museum," the "Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam" (2010), and at the "Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw" (2011) ("Exhibitions"). Yet, perhaps the most important exhibition of Kirshenblatt's paintings to date took place in Apt in 2008 ("Mayer's"). In his hometown, the reaction to this exhibition was so strong that, in May of that year, for "the first time" the citizens of Apt "commemorated the deportation of the Jews from the Opatów Ghetto to their death in Treblinka 66 years ago" ("Mayer's"). By bringing the world of Polish Jews in the *shtetl* back to life, if only on paper, Kirshenblatt influenced how the Holocaust was collectively remembered and memorialized in the place that it occurred.[64] Notably, Slawomir Grünberg's film Paint What You Remember (*Namaluj co pamiętasz*), documents Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's experiences touring Apt, speaking to residents, and exhibiting Kirshenblatt's work. When Grünberg's film premiered in Canada in 2010, in a striking gesture of intergenerational continuity, Kirshenblatt's granddaughter Shawna Silver spoke at the event ("Canadian").

Within this intergenerational context, it is important to note that They Called Me Mayer July is also a memorial for members of Kirshenblatt's family. For example, he describes how his elderly maternal grandmother was shot "on the march out of Apt to the labor camp in Sandomierz" because "she could not keep up the pace" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 170, 171). He also both depicts and recounts how his father's "whole family [… who were] interned in a ghetto in the town of Szydlowiec" were killed after it was "discovered that [… his] uncles had been hiding out with the partisans" in a forest nearby (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 186). Kirshenblatt states: "They lashed my [paternal] grandmother to a tree, and before her very eyes, they shot her entire family. Then they shot her. That's how my father's family was exterminated" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 186). Yet, importantly, Kirshenblatt does not focus only on the deaths of his family members; instead, he provides a great deal of genealogical information and details about their lives. For example, of his maternal grandmother he writes, she was "called *di grobe* Shoshe, Fat Shoshe, because she was short and heavy. Her married name was Wajcblum, her maiden name was Gutmacher, and her Jewish name was Shoshe Mayer Makhls, which means Soshe the daughter of Mayer Makhl" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 137). Similarly, of his paternal grandfather, who lived in Drildz and died in 1903, he states:

> Yankl Kirszenblat (they called him Yukl) […] was small in stature and very gentle, like my father. A prominent citizen in the Jewish community, Yukl took pride in taking us to the synagogue on Friday nights and

> Saturdays. He smoked *Plaskie* cigarettes (*plaski* means flat in Polish), with golden tips. They were expensive. […] His short gray beard – he trimmed it – was always brown, with gold flecks. (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 173)

In addition to detailed descriptions such as these, Kirshenblatt also visually depicts his deceased family members engaged in the activities of daily life: his grandmother Soshe sitting in front of her family's store and his paternal grandfather's family sharing a *seder* meal (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 138, 156). By preserving details and memories of everyday life, Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett ensure that while They Called Me Mayer July is a memorial book both for the place where Kirshenblatt grew up and for his family members as well.

Another important way of assessing the consequences of the intergenerational relationship between Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is to explore the role of autobiography in They Called Me Mayer July. According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett:

> If, as Elizabeth Bruss states, "There is no intrinsically autobiographical form," what kind of autobiography is They Called Me Mayer July, particularly when Mayer asserts, as he often does, that his project is about Apt, not about himself, and that all such towns were pretty much the same? This kind of autobiography, which gives precedence to the world in which Mayer lived, is what I am calling extrospective; others have called it autoethnographic because of its strong documentary impulse and focus

> on daily life. […] Given that all autobiographies are relational and that they can take any form, They Called Me Mayer July may not look like Rousseau's Confessions, but that does not make it any less autobiographical. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 376-377)

Yet, she also acknowledges that "[i]t has been said that all portraiture is self-portraiture, and They Called Me Mayer July is no exception. It is at once the portrait of a town, its inhabitants, a boy who delighted in their idiosyncrasies, and the man he became, and perhaps even the daughter with whom he collaborated" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 380). Therefore, through the layering of voices and perspectives, They Called Me Mayer July is at once a biography of Apt (told by Kirshenblatt in his paintings and by Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in their collaborative narrative), a biography of Kirshenblatt (told from his daughter's point of view in the Daughter's Afterword), an autobiography of Kirshenblatt (told by Kirshenblatt in his paintings and by Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in collaborative narrative), and an autobiography of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (told by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in her Daughter's Afterword). This recognition of the extent to which one text can create a record of both the author and his or her subject points to an important aspect of *Yizkor* books, wherein the names and stories of the authors and editors are often preserved along with the names and stories of those people that are being memorialized (see, for example, Kugelmass and Boyarin 38). Similarly, the authors of sections the *Yizkor* book for Apt, such as Moshe Grinstein and Joseph Rosenberg sign their names to their work (7, 11). In this way, since the names of

the living are preserved along with the names of the dead, just as Kirshenblatt created a memorial for a vanished world, after his death, They Called Me Mayer July has become a record of his own life as well.

Mayer Kirshenblatt passed away in 2009; "[i]n the words of the Polish-Jewish writer Piotr Rawicz, when the survivor dies or his memory fails him, his hometown 'dies for a second time,'" yet as Kirshenblatt asserts in the concluding chapter of They Called Me Mayer July, "I will be gone, but the book will be here" ("Mayer"; Ezrahi 21; Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 353). In this section of Chapter One, as my comparative examination of the three layers in the text reveal, although a record is created for future generations through the act of textual preservation and transmission, the generative possibilities of lived experience are also lost. For, when asked by his daughter how he had amassed such a vast knowledge of life in interwar Apt, Kirshenblatt credited his vast storehouse to the fact that he "played hooky" from school, and it is noticeable that his preference for experiencing the world rather than learning about it from texts underscores the entire book (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 372; Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1). From Kirshenblatt's involvement in the daily life of the *shtetl*, to his creation and exhibition of paintings about Apt, to the intergenerational interview process, and the return journeys that were undertaken by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and her father, They Called Me Mayer July is based on Kirshenblatt's and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's experiences of living in the world. Yet, after the publication of They Called Me Mayer July, and after Kirshenblatt's passing, for members of future generations, their richly textured process of

intergenerational collaboration has also become frozen in time. In the next section, my examination of the way in which Simon Schneiderman created a textual record of his father's life after Yoel Schneiderman's death, will explore the implications of this relationship between lived experience and textual memorialization in even greater depth.

Part Two

Simon Schneiderman's <u>Preoccupied with My Father</u>

Simon Schneiderman's father Yoel was born in Warsaw in 1907 and lost his "first wife and daughter" in the Second World War ("Yoel"; <u>Preoccupied</u> 1). He and Schneiderman's mother, who "[w]ed in a DP camp," brought their son Simon to Canada in 1951 (<u>Preoccupied</u> 19; Lipman). As a member of the second generation, unlike Mayer Kirshenblatt, Schneiderman, who was born in 1947, did not witness prewar Jewish life, nor did he experience the Holocaust first hand (Lipman). Therefore, when Yoel passed away in 2002, Schneiderman's "living connection" to his father's wartime experiences and his deceased family members was irrevocably lost (Hirsch "Generation" 104; Hoffman xv).

As Schneiderman's life story demonstrates, the second generation occupies a unique position in the generational continuum that I have outlined in this study: while they are defined by their "distance" from the Holocaust, they grew up with a direct connection to the first generation that will never again be matched (Hirsch <u>Family</u> 22; Hirsch "Generation" 103-104). Throughout her work, Marianne Hirsch examines the characteristics of the second generation and the "belated" effects of the Holocaust (Ribbat 204; see Hirsch, <u>Family</u> 22). For Hirsch:

> Second generation fiction, art, memoir, and testimony are shaped by the attempt to represent the long-term effects of living in close proximity to the pain, depression, and dissociation of persons who have witnessed and survived massive historical trauma. They are shaped by the child's

> confusion and responsibility, by the desire to repair, and by the consciousness that the child's own existence may well be a form of compensation for unspeakable loss. Loss of family, of home, of a feeling of belonging and safety in the world 'bleed' from one generation to the next, as Art Spiegelman so aptly put it in his subtitle to Maus I: My Father Bleeds History. ("Generation" 112)

According to Ellen S. Fine, the second generation is "haunted by the world that has vanished; large gaps exists in their history, and they desire to bridge this gap, to be informed about what occurred, to know something about members of their family who perished. However, […] the past eludes and excludes them" (Fine 43; see also Hirsch, Family 22). Consequently, for Hirsch, this "hinge generation," which is deafened by "the silence, [of] their parents and relatives […] who transmit the wounds of genocide, and not the memory," approaches the past with "the need not just to feel and to know, but also to re-remember, to re-build, to re-incarnate to replace and repair" ("Generation" 103; Fine 43; Family 243). Upon this foundation, in this second section of Chapter Two, by assessing his creative attempts to re-remember his family history and his inability to repair the painful fissures in Yoel's life, I will explore the tension between Schneiderman's postmemory of the Holocaust and his memory of his father.

At only 58 pages, Preoccupied with My Father begins with a dedication to Schneiderman's parents as well as to his extended family members who perished during and immediately following the war (Schneiderman 1). As I discussed in the Introduction to this study, traditionally *Yizkor* books "conclude" with "lists of

names of the dead" which function as a record of the existence of members of the community and "fulfill the commandment to remember" (Kugelmass and Boyarin 34, 25). By beginning the book with a list of the names of his deceased relatives who "would not have had any place in the universe that recognized their existence," Schneiderman situates Preoccupied with My Father in the memorial tradition; for, as Mary Hynes asserts, for many of the people that are listed in the dedication, the "piece of paper [that begins the book is …] the only place in the universe where a life is acknowledged to have been lived" (Schneiderman, Interview; qtd. in Schneiderman, Interview). In their discussions of Holocaust memorialization, both Jared Stark and James E. Young cite passages from Polish *Yizkor* books that refer to this phenomenon of "symbolic tombstones" (Young, "Memory" 78; see, also, Hirsch, Family 247). In The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning, Young quotes a passage from a *Yizkor* book which reads: "The memorial book which will immortalize the memories of our relatives and friends, the Jews of Pshaytsk, will also serve as a substitute grave. Whenever we pick up the book we feel we are standing next to their grave, because even that the murderers denied them" (7). In "Broken Records: Holocaust Diaries, Memoirs, and Memorial Books," Stark quotes a similar passage from the *Yizkor* book for Koriv, which reads: "No graves have been left of all those who were slain. And the surviving Koriv Jews will not be found on Koriv soil in Poland. […] Beloved and precious martyrs of Koriv, we bring you to burial today! In a yizker-bukh, a memorial volume! Today we have set up a tombstone in memory of you!" (202).[65] It is important to note, though, that while Schneiderman

draws on the textual memorial tradition of the first generation, the composition of the dedication reflects his status as a member of the second generation.

Perhaps the most salient way in which Schneiderman draws attention to the relationship between postmemory and memory in Preoccupied with My Father is by dedicating the book to the memory of Holocaust victims in his family, as well as to his parents who survived the war (1).[66] Although he does not refer to his parents by name in the dedication, Schneiderman's inclusion of Holocaust survivors alongside victims demonstrates how, just as the first generation memorialized those who perished in the Holocaust, it has fallen to the second generation to memorialize the members of the first generation as they pass away (Preoccupied 1). This transition into a new period of mourning and memorialization is supported by the fact that, of the fifteen people referred to in this dedication, Preoccupied with My Father centers solely on Yoel's life and death. For example, while many of Yoel's family members who died in the Holocaust are referred to in the book, they are often presented in the context of Yoel's story with only a single distinguishing fact (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 5, 9). Notably, Schneiderman is as selective about figures from his own life as well; for example, although Schneiderman dedicates Preoccupied with My Father to the memory of both of his parents, his mother's name is never mentioned in the text (1).[67] Therefore, unlike Kirshenblatt, who fleshes out his subjects, Schneiderman draws attention to how the gaping holes in his postmemory of the Holocaust and his preoccupation with his father have shaped his representation of the past through the act of memorializing his father's life on paper. For, as Rosemary

Sullivan contends in "Writing Lives," "[b]iography is an act of revenge against death, a rebellion against the impossible fact that a life can disappear so easily – all the energy, passion, humour that constitute an individual life can one day simply stop. By definition, then, biography is an elegiac art; is a gesture of remembering" (367). Yet, by concentrating solely on Yoel's life and death, as well as on his relationship with his father, Schneiderman also points to the plethora of Holocaust stories that have not been, and may never be, recorded, and reveals the lasting consequences of an author's choices about how the story of a life is told.

Although members of the second generation did not witness the Holocaust, they did, and continue to, bear witness to the aftermath of war. Therefore, as the dedication to Preoccupied with My Father reveals, within the context of my research, Ziva Amishai-Maisels' contention in "The Complexities of Witnessing," that "[b]eing a witness is not as simple as it sounds: the artist must choose not only *what* to depict, but *how* to depict it," can be applied not only to Holocaust victims and members of the first generation as I discussed in Chapter One, but to the 0.5 generation, their children, and the second generation as well (25). As such, in this section of Chapter Two, in order to address the consequences of these choices, I will examine three interconnected layers of Preoccupied with My Father: Schneiderman's paintings and drawings, his written narrative, and the biographical information that concludes the book. While I will discuss each of these three layers in turn, as I did in my examination of They Called Me Mayer July, it is important to note that, unlike Kirshenblatt and

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's largely collaborative creative process, Schneiderman published Preoccupied with My Father after his father's death.

In Preoccupied with My Father, Schneiderman includes over twenty paintings and drawings, almost all of which depict his father. Loosely organized around the chronology of Yoel's life, from his time in Warsaw before, during, and after the war, to his emigration to Canada, and the period leading up to and following his death in Montreal in 2002, many of Schneiderman's images are populated with dead people and depict scenes that happened before his birth (see, for example, pages 4-5, 8-9, and 16-17) (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 5-10, 16-17, 18-19, 26-36; Schneiderman, "Yoel"). In this visual portion of the text, by combining the perspectives of his postmemory, memory, and imagination, like Kirshenblatt, Schneiderman makes an important comment about the nature of the reconstructive process, which I will analyze in the context of four major aspects of his work.

First, in a written work, an author can choose not to describe certain traits about the actual person, such as their eye colour or hairstyle (Doležel 178). Since these details were not explicitly described, a reader is able to fill them in in his or her mind's eye while recognizing that they are not historical facts (Doležel 169-171). Yet, the very nature of visual representation necessitates that, even in a scene that he did not witness, Schneiderman must visually account for details such as these in his work. For example, in his depiction of the murder of his mother's first husband Adolph Gutman, while Schneiderman confirms in the accompanying narrative that Adolph was "stabbed," he does not corroborate any of the other

aspects of the image, such as the number of assailants (three) or where the event occurred (Schneiderman states on page 16 that it was "in Warsaw" after the war, but no more information is given about what looks to be the street or alley in which it appears to take place) (Preoccupied 17, 1, 16, 17, 16). Similarly, while Schneiderman could have modeled Adolph's facial features on family photographs, it can be assumed that the facial features of his assailants, the clothing worn by all four figures, and even the presence of a small white dog in the background of the image are products of Schneiderman's imagination (Preoccupied 17). By representing an actual event that he did not witness in the same detailed manner that he represents a scene such as his father's funeral at which he was presumably present, Schneiderman draws the reader's attention to his or her inability to accurately distinguish between fact and fiction in his work (Preoccupied 42-43).

Second, Schneiderman uses different media and colour palettes to depict different aspects of his father's life. For example, the images of Yoel sitting with his sisters Leah and Gita, Schneiderman's brother's Chaim, Binam, and Meyer, the murder of Adolph, Schneiderman family's arrival in Canada, and Yoel's mugging in 1994 are all drawings that have a hazy, translucent quality that calls to mind the passage of time (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 4-5, 8-9, 16-17, 18-19, 22-23). Yet, in certain images that depict scenes from Yoel's youth, and in the images leading up to and following his father's death, Schneiderman uses more saturated colours. For example, the image that directly follows the portrait of Yoel and his sisters is a painting of Yoel as a gymnast that contains vibrant shades of

pink, yellow, and blue paint, and Schneiderman's portrait of his father on his death bed incorporates deep red and yellow pigments as well as ragged lines of thick black ink, which call to mind the immediacy and pain of death (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 7, 37). As a result, Schneiderman is able to highlight that fact that the scenes in Preoccupied With My Father did not happen in the same place or at the same time and were not witnessed by the same set of eyes.

Third, while Yoel's life is the subject of Preoccupied with My Father, Schneiderman chooses not to focalize his experiences through his father's eyes. In fact, some of Schneiderman's images of his father are presented from the visual equivalent of the third person, an aesthetic choice that also extends to his representations of his childhood self. As I have discussed in relation to the works of Élisabeth Gille, Denise Epstein, and Mayer Kirshenblatt, reconstructing childhood memories from an adult's point of view calls into question the reliability of the author's memories (see Suleiman, "Thinking" 290-291). In the context of Preoccupied with My Father, this idea is reinforced by the fact that, by creating the book after Yoel's death, Schneiderman is able to situate, and thereby attribute meaning to, seemingly unrelated events within the larger contexts of both his life and that of his father.

Fourth, the scenes that are depicted in Schneiderman's paintings and drawings do not adhere to the ontological parameters of the actual world. Described as "expressionistic," Schneiderman's images depart from realism and foreground the role of imagination in his work ("Launch"). Expressionism, which flourished in Germany in the early 20th century and was "extinguished" by the

Nazis, has been defined as “a general term for a mode of literary or visual art which […] presents a world violently distorted under the pressure of intense personal moods, ideas, and emotions: image and language thus express feeling and imagination rather than represent external reality” (Bassie 8-10, 11; Baldick). Like the lovers and the old man in Marc Chagall’s “Over the Village” and “Over Vitebsk,” Schneiderman allows his figures to defy the laws of physics: in a painting depicting the destruction of Yoel Schneiderman’s world on page 12, people tumble through the air and seem to be swallowed by a deep blue ocean from which giant mermaid-like fins emerge (77, 79; Preoccupied). Schneiderman’s figures also transcend the boundaries of life and death: Yoel Schneiderman is depicted propped on his elbow starring directly in the presence of the *Shomer* in the image on page 40, just as he is shown sitting on top of his coffin listening to a lecture after he has died in the image on page 51 and 52 (Preoccupied). In these ways, Schneiderman demonstrates how, while his imagination can transcend the temporal and physical boundaries of the actual world, he is unable to create a definitive or objective portrait of his deceased father, his relatives who died in the Holocaust, or the world of prewar Poland in which they lived.

Just as Schneiderman chooses to visually represent the arc of his father’s life in just over two-dozen paintings and drawings, the narrative in Preoccupied with My Father is fragmentary as well. Unlike the paintings in They Called Me Mayer July, which are titled and indexed, the images in Preoccupied with My Father are unnamed; therefore, their connection to each other, and the reader’s

ability to identify the people represented within them, is often dependent upon the one or more lines of sparse text that accompany almost every image in the book. In Preoccupied with My Father this text is always presented separately from the image it describes, often on the opposite page, and on a plain beige background; notably, it is also written from Schneiderman's point of view. By describing this event in the first person, and, by contextualizing it within the context of his own life, Schneiderman emphasizes the fact that he is representing Yoel as his father, not in terms of the other familial roles he occupied in his life such as a husband, brother, son, or father to his deceased daughter (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 1; Schneiderman, "Yoel"). The emphasis on this father-son relationship demonstrates that the way in which the story of a life is told depends as much on the choices of the author as on the experiences of the subject. For, while Preoccupied with My Father is a biography of Yoel, it is, at the same time, an autobiographical account of the effects of the Holocaust on his son.

In order to solidify, and also complicate, the relationship between himself and Yoel, in Preoccupied with My Father Schneiderman entwines their voices and points of view. Two places where this phenomenon can be observed are the untitled poems that appear on pages 14 and 15, and on pages 24 and 25, neither of which are accompanied by images (Schneiderman, Preoccupied). The first poem follows the two lines of text in the book that refer to the Holocaust: "Then the winds shifted and the seas rose" and "My father's world and everyone in it disappeared" (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 10, 13). Similarly, the second poem follows Schneiderman's depiction and description of his father's mugging

(Preoccupied 22-23). In the first poem, Schneiderman's point of view is firmly reflected in the way in which the poem's imagery connects to other areas of his text. For example, the line "where did you fall" calls to mind the image of bodies falling on page 12 and the questions that are asked about the fate of those who perished in the Holocaust connects the poem to the dedication at the outset of the book (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 15, 1). Yet, despite the fact that each poem is signed "S.S.," these questions could also just as easily be being asked by Yoel, which is an important comment on how the gaps in Schneiderman's family history are transmitted over time (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 15, 25). In the second poem, Schneiderman examines how the violence that Yoel experienced in his life was not confined to the Holocaust, as is evidenced by use of the word "survived" in reference to his father's mugging (Preoccupied 23). Notably, Schneiderman also draws attention to this idea by placing the image of Adolf's stabbing, which occurred after the war, immediately following the first poem (Preoccupied 17, 16). Support for a reading in which the first person voice in the second poem represents Yoel's point of view can be found in the fact that, just as the poem states that the narrator "cannot see the wild dog," Schneiderman represents the attack as occurring from behind (Preoccupied 25). Yet, this line could also refer to Schneiderman's own reflection on the fact that he could not protect his father from the attack. Therefore, by using poetry to reflect on his father's experiences of violence in these different contexts, Schneiderman moves away from the factual descriptions of people and events that predominate his

prose narrative and reflects upon the role of art in capturing the emotional impact of traumatic events.[68]

Another important way to analyze the voices in each of the two poems in Preoccupied with My Father is to examine the languages in which they are written. In both cases, the poems are spread over two pages; on the first page, each poem is written in Yiddish in the Hebrew alphabet, while, on the second page, each poem appears in English and transliterated from Yiddish (Schneiderman 14-15, 24-25). In The Life and Death of a Polish *Shtetl*, Gene Bluestein reveals that he undertook a translation of the *Yizkor* book for Strzegowo so that "younger members of [… his wife's] family," who were unable to read the book in Yiddish, would "know something about this period in their family's history," an idea that I will discuss at length in the concluding chapter (ix, x). Similarly, in Preoccupied with My Father, by including selections of poetry in translation, Schneiderman reveals the linguistic, temporal, cultural, and geographical distance between himself and the English-speaking Canadian reader for whom he is writing, and Yoel's world.

Another more direct way in which Schneiderman incorporates his father's voice into the narrative in Preoccupied with My Father is through fragments of a letter and dialogue in which Yoel addresses his son. The letter draws attention to the fact that Yoel is not a native English speaker and points to how rarely the reader is given access to Yoel's perspective on the events that Schneiderman describes (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 29). For example, on page 26, Schneiderman refers to how his parents moved to an old age home (Preoccupied).

Yet this letter, which appears three pages later, complicates this simple statement by showing that the choice to move had lasting personal consequences for Yoel (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 29). Similarly, the sole piece of dialogue in which Yoel addresses Schneiderman in Preoccupied with My Father, which is about his emasculating experiences in the hospital, also supports the idea that Schneiderman is unable to capture the psychological impact on his father of the historical facts that he includes in the book (35). In these two instances, by presenting a written document that is part of Schneiderman's family's personal archive that cannot be publicly verified and a fragment of a conversation that was orally transmitted and is therefore subject to the fallibility of memory, Schneiderman points to the difficulties of preserving and reconstructing his father's perception of the events in his life.

Just as the interplay of voices is an important aspect of Preoccupied with My Father, silence is also an integral part of the text. In the examples that I have just discussed, Schneiderman draws attention to gaps between the selected facts that he presents. Yet, perhaps the most literal gap in Preoccupied with My Father is the blank page that precedes the biographies at the end of the work (Schneiderman 55).[69] Numbered in sequence with the other pages in the book, this page is presented opposite a painted version of the image of Yoel and his sisters that appears on page 4 (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 54). In the absence of a description, the reader is not given any context for the image and is left to wonder if the painting and its placement in the book is a reference to how, in Scheiderman's family, Holocaust victims and members of the first generation

have now both passed away. Therefore, in the context of Preoccupied with My Father, this blank page reminds the reader of how, after reading Schneiderman's fragmentary narrative, there is still so much about Yoel's life that he or she does not know, and how, without Schneiderman's explanations of his paintings, their larger meaning would be lost.

Another important point of omission in Preoccupied with My Father is the use of the word Holocaust. In a 2009 review for Jewish Book World, Molly Beth Dublin noted that the Holocaust is "never actually … name[d]" in Preoccupied with My Father (20). While Yoel does mentions the "Montreal Holocaust Memorial Center" in the passage that is included from his letter to his son, it is significant that Schneiderman only uses this term in reference to a form of memorialization (Schneiderman, Preoccupied 29). In a 2008 interview, Daniel Mendelsohn, made a similar comment about the role of the Holocaust in The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million that largely applies to Preoccupied with My Father as well. He states:

> I have said this many times – and I wonder if anyone is actually listening – I never conceived of this as a book about the Holocaust, and I don't think of it as being about the Holocaust. (Except obviously that it has to be.) It's a book about a family. It's about thinking about your family and what that means: family ties, uncles, cousins. And closeness. What it means to be close: Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, siblings. (Mendelsohn, "Six" 62; see also Mendelsohn in Hartman et. al 109).

In Preoccupied with My Father, by demonstrating that it was not the Holocaust that killed his father, but that shaped his life, and by focusing not on the lives that were cut short by the Holocaust, but also on his father's slow decline through old age and into death, Schneiderman reveals how, from different generational perspectives within a single family, both he and his father were affected by his father's past.[70] In this way, Schneiderman created a book that is not "about the Holocaust," but, instead, "about the artist's vicarious memory of the Holocaust" and his experience of its ongoing effects (Young, Memory's 10).

Following the blank page in Preoccupied with My Father are short biographical statements about Schneiderman and the book's designer Paul Hodgon (Schneiderman 56, 57). As a counterpoint to the dedication at the outset of the text, which lists the names of the deceased, Schneiderman's biography draws attention to the memorial work that is being done by those who have been left behind. Like the passages in the rest of the book, this statement, which is written in the third person, is accompanied by a black and white photograph of Schneiderman as an adult that is very different from the two vibrantly coloured paintings of the artist as a child that appear in the Preoccupied with My Father (Schneiderman 56). Hodgson's biography also reminds the reader that, although Schneiderman was responsible for the images and text in Preoccupied with My Father, his paintings and drawings were likely formatted, ordered, and resized to fit into a book form, thereby creating another layer of mediation between his family history and this textual artifact (57). Hence, in this final layer, by describing his creative process and drawing attention to the distance between this

more documentary mode of visual representation and his expressionistic paintings, like Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in her Daughter's Afterword, Schneiderman draws attention to the distance between the past and how it has been represented in the text.

As all of the books that I am examining in this project demonstrate, a textual record that is created after the death of a family member shapes how an individual is remembered by future generations. As my analysis of the extent to which Suite française can be categorized as Holocaust literature in Chapter One and my exploration of the different textual and generational layers that exist in the eight works that I have chosen to discuss reveal, intergenerational Holocaust family narratives record how the effects of the Holocaust have played out over time. Importantly, though, since the story of one generation layered onto the story of a previous generation in this kind of textual record, it is necessary to analyze literary representations of Holocaust family history in a larger intergenerational continuum in order to reveal the complex interplay between the types of memory that exists across generations and to compare the contributions that members of individual generations have made to their families' pasts. In this way, the study of the memorialization of Holocaust family history can account for the consequences of how members within different positions within the family unit have chosen to record their family history, while also drawing attention to the possibilities and limitations of their perspectives and of the textual record itself.

In order to understand nuances of these ideas in relation to Schneiderman's reconstruction and representation of his family history, it is

necessary to compare Preoccupied with My Father with another of Schneiderman's narrativized renderings of his father's life. Like Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, whose Lives Lived column about her father ran in The Globe and Mail on February 1, 2010, Schneiderman submitted an obituary to the Lives Lived section of The Globe and Mail after his father's death ("Yoel"). While each of these texts is firmly rooted in the memorial tradition (Schneiderman begins each work with Yoel's name and dates of birth and death), Schneiderman draws attention to the gaps in his postmemory of the Holocaust and memory of his father in different ways (Preoccupied 2; "Yoel"). Further, by comparing two textual memorials that were created by the same person, the gaps that exist between textual representations that were created by members of different generations (such as Némirovsky and her daughters or Kirshenblatt and his daughter), by members of the same generation (such as Némirovsky's daughters), and by an individual can come to the fore. In this way, the textual memorialization of family history can be revealed to be both an outcome and a process and the importance of listening to many voices (of both different family members and the same individual as it has been recorded at different points in time) is reinforced. For, as a comparison of Preoccupied with my Father and Schneiderman's obituary for Yoel in The Globe and Mail reveals, the way in which a person is represented in a textual form is influenced not only by the shape of that person's life and by the shape of the life of the author, but also by the choices that the author makes (in terms of what facts to include and how to convey the complex emotions that surround interpersonal relationships) as a result of the medium in which a text is

published and the intended audience for the text (see Kershaw's discussion of the work of Pierre Bourdieu 3, 8-9). These representations give the reader different perspectives on the memorial subject and the author, while drawing attention to the "finite," and often unreliable, nature of the textual record and to the extent to which an author's choices influences the reader's understanding of the past (Doležel 169). For example, at the beginning of The Globe and Mail obituary Schneiderman writes, "I grew up as an only child but I was not my father's first child. His first child, like his first wife, died in the Second World War. Probably Auschwitz, or Treblinka or Sobibor. Somewhere lonely and terrible" ("Yoel"). When reading this passage, it is noticeable that in Preoccupied with My Father Schneiderman refers to Yoel's first wife Hela and their daughter Lillian by name, while in the obituary he does not; conversely, in the obituary, Schneiderman speculates upon their places of death, while in the book he does not, thereby demonstrating that the same author can represent the same life story in different ways (1; "Yoel").[71] Yet, an area of ambiguity in Preoccupied with My Father that is clarified in The Globe and Mail obituary concerns Yoel's experiences during the Second World War. In contrast to the sparse references to the war in Preoccupied with My Father, in the obituary Schneiderman outlines what happened to his father in greater depth and also elaborates upon the psychological effects of these experiences on Yoel ("Yoel"). By presenting such different and limited details about Yoel's life, Schneiderman points to the impossibility of ever being able to comprehensively and accurately record both the emotional nuances and the facts of his father's life and death.

In a 2007 interview, Schneiderman discussed how, as a child, he was struck by the way in which the survivors he knew were unable or unwilling to talk about the traumatic experiences they endured (Interview). For him, the first generation occupied a "land of forced anonymity," which made it the responsibility of the second generation to ensure that his "family's history didn't disappear anonymously" (Schneiderman, Interview). However, as I discussed in this second section of Chapter Two, for the second generation, the responsibility to memorialize the deceased extends not only to those family members who passed away during the Holocaust, but also to those members of the first generation who lived through the Holocaust and are passing away now. It is significant, then, that in Preoccupied with My Father, Schneiderman asserts that, during his lifetime, his father "refused to mourn in any ritualized way, as if to do so would settle once and for all the question of [… his family's] death" (39). Yet, as both Preoccupied with My Father and The Globe and Mail obituary reveal, Yoel was passionately engaged with learning; in his Lives Lived column, Schneiderman describes his father as oscillating between "the polarities of panic and intellectual curiosity" ("Yoel). By choosing to write about his father's life and death, Schneiderman created a memorial for his father and his father's family that honoured Yoel's passion for learning and printed texts and also allowed Schneiderman to attempt to put the dead to rest (Preoccupied 52; "Yoel"; Interview). In this way, by acknowledging how memorials are created about the dead, by and for the living, it is evident that Preoccupied with My Father

functions as a record for future generations of the effects of the Holocaust on both Yoel Schneiderman and his son.

Part Three

Conclusion

In this chapter, through a comparison of <u>They Called Me Mayer July</u> and <u>Preoccupied with My Father</u>, I was able to assess how members of three generations adapted elements of the first generation's textual memorial tradition in order to preserve their family history in visual and written forms. Unlike Chapter One, in which I examined works by two generations who witnessed the Second World War, in this chapter, I analyzed the perspectives of members of the 0.5 generation, their children, and the second generation who experienced pre-war Jewish life in Poland and/or the aftermath of the Holocaust in Canada. Traditionally in Holocaust Studies, the distinction between memory and postmemory has been made along generational lines: the memories of the first and 1.5 generations are the foundation of the testimonial tradition, while postmemory is associated with the second generation and its belated experience of the Holocaust. Yet, my analysis of different layers of voices and perspectives highlighted how different types of memory have been tied to different generational categories. Therefore, in this Concluding section, I will assess the relationship between these types of memory and their effects of memorialization in further depth.

As I demonstrated in this second chapter, as the temporal distance between the Holocaust and the present moment increases, and studies of memory have expanded to include the perspectives of members of subsequent generations, new issues have arisen about the nature of witnessing and remembering. For example,

although they did not witness the Holocaust, members of the 0.5 generation bore witness to life in Eastern Europe and to life in the diaspora after the war. Accordingly, members of this generation may have the same memories of life before the war as members of the first generation, yet, like members of the second generation, they learned about the events of the war in a "belated" and "mediated" form (Hirsch, Family 22).[72] Kirshenblatt states, for example, "I found out how my father's family perished from a letter sent to my father right after the war by someone who had witnessed the atrocities. I was there when my father got the news" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 184). In keeping with Marianne Hirsch's adoption of the "prefix post," a possible label for the unique perspective of the 0.5 generation is prememory ("Generation" 106; Family 22; van Alphen 486).[73] While Johnnie Gratton uses the term "*pre*memory" in "Postmemory, Prememory, Paramemory: The Writing of Patrick Modiano" in relation to Hirsch's term postmemory, he does so to describe "a memory that goes back beyond one's birth," which is a different sense than in which I am using the term (42). However, his use of the terms "*pre*memory" and "*para*memory" do show how different categories of memory can be created using postmemory as a base (Gratton 39-40, 42, 44). In the context of how I am using the term prememory, unlike the second generation, which only possesses memories of life after the Holocaust, the 0.5 generation's prememories would necessarily be filtered through their postwar experiences. The term prememory delineates not only how this type of memory is specific to members of this generation, but how it influences the perspecives their children, such as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett,

and, as I will explore in my discussion of Daniel Mendelsohn's The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million, their grandchildren as well (Mendelsohn, "Six" 70; Mendelsohn in Hartman et. al. 108).

Another complexity associated with labeling the perspectives of the different generations arose when I tried to assign a numerical value to the generational category that is occupied by the children of the 0.5 generation. Originally, I had intended to label them the 2.5 generation in order to denote how their modes of memory are similar to the second generation, however Susan Rubin Suleiman refers to "the son of a child survivor" as a member of "the 2.5 generation" in "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust" (292). While Suleiman's category is a logically consistent numerical assignation, it does point out that there is no number left for the children of the 0.5 generation (such as Barbara Kirshenblatt) or their grandchildren (such as Daniel Mendelsohn), since all of the categories and subcategories between one and three have already been taken (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 359; Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 352; Mendelsohn, "Six,"; Mendelsohn in Hartman et. al 108). Accordingly, throughout this study I have referred to this group as the children of the 0.5 generation to draw attention to the limitations of generational categorization.[74]

In light of these issues, it is important to note that, while the second generation's postmemories of the Holocaust came about as a result of their experiences of learning about the Holocaust and bearing witness to their parents' experiences after the war, members of the 0.5 generation also learned

"belated[ly]" about the Holocaust, and, in turn, the children of the 0.5 generation also learned from their parents about life before the war (Hirsch, Family 22; see Ribbat 204).[75] In this way, "[i]nstead of suggesting that in the late twentieth century [and now the early twenty-first century] remembering the Holocaust might in some sense be 'over,' postmemory signifies a new stage of remembering the events" and a study such as mine reveals why subcategories of postmemory must now be introduced as well (Ribbat 204). In my view, it is reductionist to only explore the postmemory of the second generation, since this perspective orients their entire life and frame of reference in relation to the Holocaust. As Marianne Hirsch, who is a member of the second generation, asserts, "[t]o grow up with such overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one's birth or one's consciousness, is to risk having one's own stories and experiences displaced, even evacuated, by those of a previous generation" ("Generation" 114; Hirsch and Spitzer "Would" 261; Hirsch Family 244; Hirsch "Generation" 107). Similarly Eva Hoffman, who is also a member of the second generation, writes that "[t]he formative events of the twentieth century have crucially informed our biographies, threatening sometimes to overshadow and overwhelm our own lives" (25; Hirsch, "Generation" 106). While titles such as Preoccupied with My Father and I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors seem to keep the second generation within the grasp of the Holocaust, as my examination of Preoccupied with My Father reveals, while the Holocaust is undoubtedly a defining event in the life of a member of the second generation, it is not the only one. For example, within the context of Schneiderman's relationship with his

father, the death of his half-siblings during the war, the experience of immigrating to Canada, the psychological effects of his father's experiences, his father's mugging and death (which frame violence and mortality in a context other than the Holocaust), and the choice to create a textual record of his father's life all carry weight (Preoccupied 1, 19, 20, 23, 26; "Yoel"). Therefore, while Schneiderman attributes singular characteristics to many of the people listed in the book's dedication, in order to problematize his ability to comprehensively reconstruct the story of his father's life, it is my belief that scholars must be careful not to reduce the family members of Holocaust survivors that they are studying to their relationship to a single event.

Within this framework, there are two interesting and non-exclusionary ways in which the study of memory could continue to grow. According to Hirsch, "postmemory is not an *identity* position but a *generational* structure of transmission deeply embedded in […] forms of mediation," or, put another way, "a *structure* of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience. It is a consequence of traumatic recall (unlike post-traumatic stress disorder) at a generational remove" ("Generation" 114, 106). Within this structure, one way in which the study of memory could continue to evolve involves the continued layering of perspectives, as Christoph Ribbat's use of the term "'post-postmemory'" in his discussion of Everything is Illuminated implies (213). On the one hand, this continual process of layering different generations' voices and perspectives creates a much larger layer of records of their experiences, yet, on the other, it also necessitates that the present moment is

defined in relation to the past. For, as Hirsch contends in "The Generation of Postmemory," postmemory is part of a "particular end-of-century/turn-of-century moment of looking backward rather than ahead and of defining the present in relation to the past rather than initiating new paradigms" (106). As a result, another way in which scholars could approach memory is not in terms of remembering, but of forgetting instead (see Mendelsohn in Hartman et. al. 115-116). Traditionally, forgetting has had negative connotations in relation to the Holocaust, since it could be associated with denial and the repetition of events, or as Berel Lang notes in relation to silence, as "acquiescence or, in some circles, lack of interest" (Lang, Writing 111; Schwarz 22; see Ying 16; see Young, "Memory" 87; see Young, Texture 5). Yet, Anne Whitehead argues in the last sentence of Memory, "forgetting, paradoxical as it may seem, constitutes a crucial if not essential element in the future trajectory and direction of 'memory' studies," an idea that is echoed by Michael Bernard-Donals in Forgetful Memory: Representation and Remembrance in the Wake of the Holocaust (57; see Bernard-Donals 3-6).[76] For Whitehead, it is important to question not only if "we delegate the responsibility for remembering to the memorials and museums we are so keen to erect" but also the extent to which "some measure of forgetting is a necessary requirement for personal and civic health" (153, 157). Daniel Mendelsohn and Eva Hoffman also address this issue in "Memoirs of Return" in the following exchange:

> DM: But what I mean is that […] the culture, in order to progress into its own future, cannot remember all the things that happened in their

enormity and detail every minute of every day or else they can't have a *present*.

EH: Can I just quickly say that I'm not suggesting forgetting. I'm suggesting in a sense, a move from memory to history, a memory with all its identifications.

DM: Right, but that's what I call commemoration. (Hartman et. al 123)[77]

Echoed in this exchange is the idea that is at the heart of my project – how the passing of "living memory […] into history" defines our relationship to the Holocaust at this point in time (Hutton 72; Young, "Toward" 23).[78] Thus, by exploring the kind of commemoration to which Mendelsohn refers, I can evaluate how, while *Yizkor* books function as "acts of witness and sites of memory" in which those who perished in the Holocaust are memorialized, the texts that I am studying bear witness to the passing of those who witnessed the Holocaust and life in prewar Europe and memorialize the members of those generations as well (Hirsch, Family 246). As Mendelsohn asserts, "[t]hat's how cultures move into the present. They commemorate in an organized way" (Hartman et. al. 122). As such, my research draws attention to the extent to which, if those who have come before them are given "a proper burial" through textual memorialization, future generations will not forget the atrocities, but will also not be consumed by the enormity of them as well (Kugelmass and Boyarin 27; see Mendelsohn in Hartman et. al. 122).

Through my discussion of the narrative layers in both They Called Me Mayer July and Preoccupied with My Father, I explored how it is not only the

voices of the authors and their deceased family members who came before them, but also the holes in their memories and family histories that are being transmitted between generations. Within the context of my study of Holocaust family narratives, as future readers use the texts of contemporary authors to understand the Holocaust and how it was understood at this point in time, the layering of silences and voices in textual records by members of different generations will provide them with an understanding of the events that occurred during the Holocaust, the effects of those events, and the consequences of how information about these events has been both lost and passed down.

Chapter Three

'Return' Narratives:
The Third Generation and the Grandchildren of the 0.5 Generation

The previous chapter discussed how, after the Holocaust, it was not uncommon for survivors to attempt to return to the places that they had lived before the war or to places where they could attempt to find family members' remains; notably, "various [memorial] books include selections on return visits" as well (Kugelmass and Boyarin 28-29, 12). Yet, as Mayer Kirshenblatt's discussion of to Laybl Zybelberg in They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust and as Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin's exploration of survivors' experiences of return in the Introduction to From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry reveal, through a comparison of various passages from *Yizkor* books in which survivors describe their painful attempts at returning immediately after the war, "returnees" were often met with "violent hostility" and/or "came to realize how total the rupture with the past had been" (27; 28, 29, see 12). Upon this foundation, through an examination of the return journeys of the members of the third generation, this chapter will evaluate the reconstructive process that is undertaken by family members who did not experience Jewish life in Eastern Europe before the Holocaust. In this way, I will be able to examine another layer of textual memorialization and assess the temporal and physical distances between members of the third generation and their "ancestral homeland" (Belhman 61; Foer, "Next" xiv).[79]

As I mentioned in the Introduction, when I first conceived of this project in 2007, I was drawn to a growing body of work by Jewish survivors and their descendents in which they describe their journeys to the places their families lived before and during the Second World War. I observed that, as a whole, these texts explore the complexities, and often impossibilities, of returning to a place as it exists in one's mind (Hirsch and Spitzer, Ghosts 11). I also noted that they highlight the temporal distance between "the past and present," and the geographical distance between the authors' current home and the place in Europe from where their family came (Hirsch and Spitzer, "Would" 274; see Hirsch and Spitzer, Ghosts 269-270; Hirsch, "Generation" 261-262). In his 2005 publication Ethics and Nostalgia in the Contemporary Novel, John J. Su explores how "[t]he longing to return to a lost homeland becomes a central figure of the Western literary tradition long before the term 'nostalgia' was coined to describe it" (1). He describes Odysseus' journey back to Ithaca in Homer's The Odyssey as the "first 'narrative of return[,]'" and asserts that this work "establishes a pattern that continues to compel writers even now in the twenty-first century," as is evidenced by the works that I have chosen to discuss in Chapter Three (1). Notably, while Kugelmass and Boyarin use the word "return," it was not until the 2010 publication of Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, in which they describe their travels to Czernowitz, Ukraine, the home of Hirsch's parents before and during the Second World War, that I found the phenomenon of return journeys by subsequent

generations to be discussed at length (xvi-xix, 8).[80] According to Hirsch and Spitzer:

> Throughout the 1990s, […] many of my Jewish friends and university colleagues had begun to undertake such 'return' journeys to places where their parents and grandparents had lived and from which they had escaped or been deported. Many of these journeys resulted in essays or books, memoirs of their search for ancestral lives that had preceded their own. Since most of these journeys were undertaken belatedly, without parents or grandparents as guides or companions, they were searches driven by archival research and local guidance and by a great deal of desire, curiosity, speculation, and fantasy. (Ghosts 10)

Notably, the difference between the term return journey and Hirsch and Spitzer's reference to "accounts" of these journeys is that return journey denotes the actual act of returning, while an account, or what Su describes as a "narrative of return," refers to the narrativized reconstructions of those journeys, such as the essays, books, and memoirs that Hirsch and Spitzer describe (Ghosts 10; Su 1).

Works that can be categorized as return narratives are incredibly diverse and have been written by members of all of the generations that I have previously discussed. For example, Paint What You Remember (*Namaluj co pamiętasz*), which I examined in Chapter Two, in which director Slawomir Grünberg documents Kirshenblatt's return to Apt, Poland, is a striking example of the representation of a return journey undertaken a member of the 0.5 generation. The return narratives of the 1.5 generation include Saving What Remains: A

Holocaust Survivor's Journey Home to Reclaim Her Ancestry by Livia Bitton-Jackson, and *Miejsce urodzenia* (Birthplace), directed by Pawel Lozinski and featuring Henryk Grynberg. The second generation's return journeys are described in The Pages in Between: A Holocaust Legacy of Two Families, One Home by Erin Einhorn, Hiding Places: A Father and His Sons Retrace Their Family's Escape from the Holocaust by Daniel Asa Rose, and Family Portrait: A Memoir of a Jewish Family During the Holocaust by Ann Helen Wainer. Finally, Lisa Kudrow's attempt to uncover the fate of her great-grandmother Meri Mordejovich in Ilya, Belarus, on the television show Who Do You Think You Are? is a rare example of a return journey by a member of the fourth generation.

Despite the diversity of these texts, they share many similar characteristics. As I noted, on the most basic level, each work describes the return of a survivor or their descendent to the place where their family lived before and during the war. Often, this journey is a fact-finding mission about the family history of the returnee that is undertaken as result of, or in order to supplement, previous research (Hirsch and Spitzer, Ghosts 274). On the whole, I have observed that it is also often undertaken as a part of the returnee's desire to create a "physical" connection with the past and with their Jewish identity (Hirsch and Spitzer, Ghosts 294; see Hirsch and Spitzer, Ghosts xv).[81] Yet, as Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer describe in "'We Would Not Have Come Without You': Generations of Nostalgia" and Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory, returnees inevitably find the places to which they are travelling irrevocably changed, while their descendents often struggle with their

unfamiliarity with the local language, landmarks, and customs (256, 257, 262, 267; 3-7). The feelings of displacement and alienation are felt in different ways by members of each generation and are indicative of the temporal and geographical distances between a place as it exists in one's memory or postmemory and as it exists at the time of return (Mendelsohn in Hartman et. al. 111-112). As such, in many of the return narratives I mentioned, and in both of the books I will discuss in this chapter, authors employ a layered narrative structure so that the story of the previous generations' experiences in the place to which the returnee is travelling is woven into the story of their search, as is evident in the "[t]wo temporal levels [that] structure [… the] narratives in Ghosts of Home" (Hirsch and Spitzer, Ghosts xvi-xix; see Young "Toward" 202).

Finally, as the term return narrative suggests, accounts of return journeys are inherently reconstructive. Written return narratives are created after the return journey with often only photographs or recorded dialogue having been captured in real-time. Yet, even these sources are presented within the context of the written narrative, and thus their role within the story is established after the fact. Similarly, while the footage for films such as Paint What You Remember (*Namaluj co pamiętasz*) and *Miejsce urodzenia* (Birthplace) was taken during the return journey, it was edited *post factum* to create a coherent and chronological narrative. Hirsch and Spitzer address this tension in the following passage from "'We Would Not Have Come Without You': Generations of Nostalgia," in which they ask:

> But what happens during the return journey itself, at the site? What narratives are generated when the present intrudes upon the past? What can these narratives tell us about the persistent and shifting face of trauma? And what of the children of exiles – refugees who 'return' to a 'home' where they have never been before? How do they receive and in turn transmit the conflicting memories generated through their act of witnessing? (257, see also 260, 262)[82]

Therefore, while both written and visual media highlight the extent to which the enterprise of piecing together one's family history is reconstructive, they are illustrative of the extent to which creating a narrativized account of that enterprise is reconstructive as well.

Upon these foundations, in addition to the non-fiction accounts I listed, works of fiction that were inspired by return journeys can also be categorized as return narratives, although they are far fewer in number than non-fiction accounts. An important example is Lisa Pearl Rosenbaum's The Day of Small Beginnings, which tells the story of the separate return journeys of two generations of the Lieber family to Zokof, Poland, where they encounter the last Jewish person left living in the town (88). In the Author's Note that begins the book, Rosenbaum describes the bewilderment and displacement that her "uncle Lloyd Rodwin" felt when he went to "Poland in the late 1970s" and visited Lomze (N. pag). According to Rosenbaum:

> When [… he] arrived at a small city with a cathedral, he realized he didn't know of a single landmark by which he might recognize his father's

> world. At a loss for what to do, he took a quick tour of the cathedral and the city and returned to Warsaw. The story, scarcely an anecdote, suggested to me something so uniquely part of the American experience, the loss of one's family history once the journey to the New World had been made. (N. pag.)

The transmission of this story from Rodwin to Rosenbaum is a fascinating example of how, just as the story of leaving one's home in Europe is often an important part of a Jewish family's Holocaust history, return journeys and the transmission of return narratives are becoming an important part of post-Holocaust experience in the diaspora. Interestingly, the anecdote in the Author's Note is supplemented by a description on Rosenbaum's website of a return journey that she in turn took "[i]n the mid-1990s" in which she "traveled to Poland with her in-laws, who are Holocaust survivors," which inspired and informed much of A Day of Small Beginnings" (Rosenbaum, "About"). The layered nature of Rodwin's and Rosenbaum's journeys, and the different perspectives of the characters of Nathan Linden, a member of the second generation, and his daughter Ellen, demonstrates why return narratives are an important part of the study of the preservation and transmission of intergenerational family history. For not only are return narratives illustrative of the layers of mediation that shape our understanding of a historical event, but they also draw attention to the impossibilities of accurately and comprehensively filling in the blanks in one's family's past. While this rich area of research could support an entire study of its own, in this chapter, in keeping with the generational

structure of my enterprise, I will compare two return narratives written by members of the third generation from each of the two categories I described above, fiction and non-fiction: Daniel Mendelsohn's The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million and Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated.

As I mentioned in the Introduction, The Lost is, in the words of Alan L. Berger, a "documentary" account of Mendelsohn's journey to Bolechow, Ukraine, where his great-uncle Shmiel Jäger, great-aunt Ester, and their four daughters, Lorka, Frydka, Ruchele, and Bronia, lived before and during the war (151, 152; Lost 22-23, 26, N. pag.). A chronicle of Mendelsohn's return journeys to Bolechow, and his travels to numerous other locations where survivors from Bolechow are now living, The Lost demonstrates how, in the post-war diaspora, the process of returning is far more complex than visiting a physical place. Like Hirsch and Spitzer in Ghosts of Home, Mendelsohn is also concerned not only with collecting and assembling details about the Jäger's lives and deaths, but also with recounting their story and the story of his journey in a written form. In contrast, Everything is Illuminated is a fictional account of Jonathan Safran Foer's return journey to Trachimbrod, Ukraine, "the home of his maternal grandfather" Louis Safran before and during the war (Foer, "Jonathan"). After finding "nothing but nothing" about his family history as a result of his travels, Foer created a fictionalized account of his journey and the history of his family over three hundred years (Foer, "Jonathan"). Through the intersection of three narrative layers, his work of "metafiction" highlights the possibilities and limitations of imagined representations of the past (Berger, "Unclaimed" 151).

As the diverse examples of return narratives by and about members of different generations demonstrate, I could have chosen to explore the phenomenon of return in relation to the generational categories I discussed in either of the two preceding chapters. Yet, I chose to undertake this comparison in relation to the third generation since they will likely be the last generation to hear stories of the Holocaust directly from survivors (Franklin 238-239). In some instances, they are even too late. As Alan L. Berger contends, "[u]nlike the daughters and sons of survivors, the grandchildren typically have no direct experience of survivors" (150). This is coupled with the fact that, according to Robert Kroetsch, "[o]ral history is not likely to go back more than two generations – to parents and grandparents. Beyond that little remains – with huge consequences for our sense of history. Within that time-framework exists an enormous prospect of fiction-making" (75). In the context of the books that I am studying, in The Lost Mendelsohn refers to this experience of living on this cusp as:

> the unique problem that faces my generation, the generation of those who had been, say, seven or eight years old during the mid-1960s, the generation of the grandchildren of those who'd been adults when it all happened; a problem that will face no other generation in history.[83] We are just close enough to those who were there that we feel an obligation to the facts as we know them; but we are also just far enough away, at this point, to worry about our own role in the transmission of those facts, now that

> the people to whom those facts happened have mostly slipped away.[84] (433)

To address this tension, I chose to compare The Lost and Everything is Illuminated since both books were created by authors who did not meet the family member whose wartime experiences caused them to embark on their journey of return (Mendelsohn, Lost 7; Solomon; Berger, “Unclaimed” 151; Mullan, “Four”). In the absence of survivors, future generations will have to reply on visual, audio, and written texts in order to reconstruct the past, and thus I have chosen to focus on the role of textuality in each work in order to foreground this process of posthumous reconstruction (Young, Memory’s 1). In this way, I will be able to assess not only how writing is used to reconstruct the author’s family’s history and their own return journey, but also what role works such as these will play in the memorialization of the people and places of which the authors are in search.

Part One

Daniel Mendelsohn's The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million

In a 2009 commencement address for the Department of Classics and the Graduate Group in Ancient History and Mediterranean Archaeology at the University of California, Berkeley, Daniel Mendelsohn discussed the uncomfortable experience of informing his grandparents of his choice to study Classics as a young man:

> 'Greek! Latin!' [… his grandmother] spat. 'What good it will do you, Greek and Latin? They are dead, the Greeks, the Romans — all dead, for a thousand years they are dead! A thousand years! I have *been* to Greece, *been* to Athens! And I can tell you — they are dead! What good did it do them, their literature, their art?! Plato? What good will he do for *you*? […] She took a deep breath and wearily ended with a sentence that—as she could not possibly guess, that May afternoon thirty years ago—would give me the title of a book I would write one day, a book about her vanished world, and how it vanished. 'Plato, the Greeks,' she muttered. 'In a thousand years, it will all be *lost*.' ("Melancholy")

In The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million, which Alan L. Berger describes as "Daniel Mendelsohn's eloquent and elegant kaddish for a family whom he never knew," Mendelsohn tells the story of a single family and its role in a community that flourished in Eastern Europe less than a century ago, a world that is, as he notes, "as lost, in its way, as that of Sappho and Sophocles" ("Unclaimed" 152; "Melancholy"). Adam Kulberg's statement in the text that, "[t]here were the

Egyptians with their pyramids. There were the Incas of Peru. And there was the Jews of Bolechow [sic]," is strikingly indicative of this point (qtd. in Mendelsohn, Lost 429). As the title of the book suggests, at the heart of The Lost is Mendelsohn's search for six of his family members who were killed in the Holocaust: Shmiel Jäger (1895-1943?), Ester (1896-1942), and their "four […] daughters," Lorka (1920-1943), Frydka (1922-1943?), Ruchele (1925-1941), and Bronia (1929?-1942) (22-23, 26, N. pag.; Berger, "Unclaimed" 152). Yet, as a scholar of Classical languages and literature, Mendelsohn is also aware of the ways in which stories are preserved and passed down, and of how information disappears over time (Mendelsohn, "Six" 63; Berger, "Unclaimed" 152). As such, in The Lost, in addition to discovering "*what happened to Shmiel*," Mendelsohn is concerned with the complexities of "*tell*[*ing*] *th*[*e*] *story*" of the Jäger family, his journey, and the process of writing the book (Mendelsohn, "Six" 69). In keeping with my exploration of the relationship between textuality and memorialization in the previous chapters, my analysis of The Lost will focus on two layers of reconstruction in the text: the reconstruction of the Jäger family's history and the reconstruction of Mendelsohn's return journey in a written form. Notably, the presence of these two layers is evident from first four words of the title of the book: "The Lost" and "The Search" (Mendelsohn, Lost).

Mendelsohn begins The Lost with an extensive family tree that traces the genealogy of his mother's family, the Jägers, back to the early 1800s (N. pag.). Not only does this tree enable Mendelsohn to reveal his connection to the members of his family whom he is researching, but, like the dedication at the

beginning of Preoccupied with My Father, it also situates The Lost within the memorial tradition by creating a permanent record of those family members who do not have marked graves; as Mendelsohn states of Shmiel, "[h]e has no grave at all" (Lost 5). Yet, unlike Schneiderman, Mendelsohn also uses this tree to establish his relationship to living members of his extended family such as his siblings Andrew, Matthew, Eric, and Jennifer, all of whom accompany him on parts of his journey, and his mother Marlene, who provides him with vital information about his family history and somber warnings about the dangers of becoming consumed by the past (Lost 111, 452). In this way, Mendelsohn reveals how the effects of the Holocaust have echoed through multiple generations of his extended family from the outset of the text.

In addition to establishing these genealogical connections, Mendelsohn uses his family tree to draw attention to the distance between himself and the lost branch of the Jäger family. In a 2008 interview with Daniel Mendelsohn, Elaine Kalman Naves, noted, "*you're third generation here, I mean you're not even a direct line*," to which Mendelsohn replied "I don't have a direct generational connection to the Holocaust. I have an oblique connection that allowed me to write this book in this way" ("Six" 70). Interestingly, Mendelsohn reiterated this point in a 2011 interview in which he states:

> I'm not the child of survivors. I'm not the grandchild of survivors. The entire thing that made my book possible, I think, is the fact that I have a very oblique relationship to the event itself – in the book I'm writing about what happened to my grandfather's brother, a man I never knew – so it

> was always at an angle to me. And that angle is precisely what the book is about: how do you think about the event, or know about the event, when it is actually becoming more and more remote. (Mendelsohn in Hartman et. al. 108)

Mendelsohn's angular relationship to Shmiel's family is of the utmost importance within the context of my discussion of generational constructs. Although Alan L. Berger refers to Mendelsohn as a member of the "third generation," and compares his work to Foer's Everything is Illuminated within this generational construct in "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and Identity in Third Generation Writing about the Holocaust," unlike Foer, Mendelsohn is not technically a member of the third generation: Shmiel is his great-uncle, not his grandfather (151). Technically then, Mendelsohn's grandfather Abraham Jaeger is a member of the 0.5 generation (Lost 5). This kind of nuance is not usually accounted for in the generational structure that underlies Holocaust scholarship, which is based on a continuous and direct line that runs through a family tree from, for example, the first generation to the second generation (van Alphen 273-274). As I discussed in Chapter Two, in her discussion of postmemory in Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory, Marianne Hirsch argues that the second generation's distance from the Holocaust provides them with a different perspective on the Holocaust than members of the first generation "because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation" (22; see also Mendelsohn, "Six" 62). By extension, as Mendelsohn observes, his indirect connection to Shmiel underscores "the theme of

displacement in th[e] book, about not being close enough," a phenomenon that will become even more pronounced after the first generation has passed away (Mendelsohn, "Six" 70).[85] Problematizing the idea of generations is a valuable way of revealing why I chose to structure each chapter as a comparison of texts written by members of one traditional generational category and one non-traditional generational category whose families originated in the same country, France (Chapter One), Poland (Chapter Two) and Ukraine (Chapter Three), and now live in France (Chapter One), Canada (Chapter Two), and the United States (Chapter Three). For, by demonstrating how different authors use different media and genres to grapple with their family history, it is evident that, even within the same generation, country, or family, no two individuals experienced the Holocaust or have represented its effects in the same way. In the context of Mendelsohn's search for the stories of six of the six million Jews who perished, this point draws attention to how many individual stories that have not been told, and how the stories of these journeys are as much about the lives of the authors as they are about the family members of which the authors are in search.

In The Lost, Mendelsohn describes two return journeys that he took to Bolechow, in 2001 and 2005 (107-152, 448-503). On the first journey he was accompanied by his siblings Andrew, Matthew, and Jennifer, while for the second journey his travelling companion was Froma Zeitlin, a fellow academic (Mendelsohn, Lost 111, 452). As a result of these travels, Mendelsohn was able to meet with local residents and even locate the cellar in which Shmiel and Frydka hid (Lost 280, 473-483). Yet, these trips fell short of providing him a more

comprehensive portrait of the Jäger family since their surviving Jewish friends and neighbours no longer lived in Bolechow. As a result, Mendelsohn was forced to also undertake journeys to other parts of the world such as Australia, Israel, Sweden, and Denmark to interview survivors who knew Shmiel's family personally (Lost 173, 281, 380, 360, 403; Berger, "Unclaimed" 153). Therefore, just as Mendelsohn's relationship to Shmiel challenges the idea of traditional generational constructs, his attempts to learn about the Jägers' fates also challenges the traditional nature of a return journey, for his travels include not only returning to a physical place, but also seeking out the people who called that place home.

In recent decades, the testimonial tradition has become an important part of Holocaust studies and attempts to record the memories of survivors before their passing has resulted in large collections of survivor testimony, which include the archives of the USC Shoah Foundation and in the Fortunoff Video Archive at Yale University (Kraft 312; see Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory by Lawrence Langer). Since Mendelsohn's research is not based on "a library search where the books will still be there in thirty years," but on the process of "communicating with living […] people," his enterprise illustrates the sense of urgency that is associated with survivors' advancing age and declining health (Mendelsohn, "Six" 65; Kalman Naves, "Six" 65; see Lost 505).

Through his discussion of the interview process, Mendelsohn draws attention to how testimony is collected and received. For example, when preparing to interview a survivor, Mendelsohn describes laying out his "tape

recorder, tapes, videocamera, [and] file folders," as well as photographs that are meant to function as memory aids (Lost 293). Further, as the dialogue in the book suggests, like Denise Epstein's Survivre et vivre: entretiens avec Clémence Boulouque, the interviews always contain an implicit relationship between the speaker and the listener (Kershaw 2). Yet, it is important to note that the photographs that Mendelsohn presents, and the questions that he asks about his family, shape the form and content of the interviews; in many cases, the testimony that the survivors provide is more about Mendelsohn's family than about themselves, as Mendelsohn's discussion of Meg Grossbard's parents on pages 181-182 makes clear (Lost). Since future generations will have to rely entirely on recorded testimony to hear eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust, texts such as Mendelsohn's, which attempt to expose the "mediated" nature of the testimonial tradition, will have an important role in Holocaust education (Young, Memory's 1; Kern and Kern-Stähler 173).

Notably, just as returning to Bolechow does not provide Mendelsohn with all of the answers he seeks about Shmiel's family, neither does the experience of speaking with survivors. Therefore, as Ruth Franklin, a member of the third generation observes, while hers is "the last generation privileged to learn about the Holocaust from survivors – either from our own family members or from the strangers who were once fixtures at school assemblies or synagogue functions," she and her contemporaries have "also learned about it from books" (238-239, 239; see also Berger, "Unclaimed" 150). Accordingly, to supplement his research, Mendelsohn uses a wide variety of written and visual sources. These include

Shmiel's letters that were written to his family in America, the letters Mendelsohn received from Holocaust museums and archives as a result of his inquiries about his family history, and "an album of old family pictures that formed the basis of what would become a rather large archive relative to [… his] family history" (Lost 70-71). These documents are representative of the plethora of information that is contained in often informal personal archives such as the "Bolechow World Headquarters" in Shlomo Adler's apartment in Kfar Saba, Israel, of which, without the publication of books such as Mendelsohn's, the reader would likely never become aware (Mendelsohn, Lost 395). Mendelsohn also draws upon publicly accessible documents, which include primary sources such as "The Memoirs of Ber of Bolechow" and Bolechow's *Yizkor* book, the "Memorial Book of the Martyrs of Bolechow," as well as secondary sources that his brother Andrew recommends to him in preparation for their first return journey to Bolechow (Lost 48, 52-53, 111). The juxtaposition of these different kinds of works reveals the different ways in which information about the past is recorded and how Mendelsohn's own work on the Holocaust has now become part of the wider public textual tradition upon which he draws.

In addition to the textual tradition, Mendelsohn also documents unwritten sources of information about life in Bolechow that he encounters on his travels. These include the traditional food that Mendelsohn is served by Meg Grossbard in Sydney, Australia, and Malcia Reinharz in Beer Sheva, Israel, as well as cultural norms such as leaving one's shoes outside the door that he observes in Bolechow and that his mother enforced when we was a child (Mendelsohn, Lost 252, 333,

117; see Mendelsohn in Hartman et. al. 112). These culinary traditions and local customs are illustrative of how the process of returning to Bolechow is far more complex than setting foot in a physical "place," although "the place itself, the thing and not the idea of it" also has important resonances for Mendelsohn (Lost 501). Further, they reinforce how, although many former *shtetls* still exist on maps of Eastern Europe, as "(towns with many Jews in them) [they] no longer exist" (Suleiman, "Monuments" 410). As such, all these layers of written and unwritten information demonstrate how the stories of Shmiel's family, and also the experiences of collecting those stories, are both integral parts of Mendelsohn's return journey, and by extension, his narrative of return.

While Mendelsohn uses the many sources of information that I have outlined in his attempt to piece together the fates of the six members of the Jäger family, it is necessary to note that these sources have important limitations. The first of these limitations results from the unreliable nature of the memories of the people that Mendelsohn interviews. With the boom in Holocaust testimony, the study of memory has become an important area of research since, as Robert Kraft explores, testimony raises many key questions about the reliability of an eyewitness' narrativized reconstruction of an event (313). Mendelsohn draws attention to these issues by including the inconsistencies and gaps in many of the survivors' accounts (see Ribbat 200, 206). For example, he draws attention to how Boris Goldsmith does not remember how many children Shmiel and Ester had and to how, when Anna Heller Stern, Lorka's childhood friend, is shown a picture of Lorka, Shlomo Adler, who is translating for her, states, "I don't think this is

Lorka. She said she sees Lorka in her mind, and this is not Lorka" (Mendelsohn, Lost 188-189, 304). The fallibility of memory also undermines Mendelsohn's ability to establish the provenance of stories. Further, when discussing the story of "Frydka and Shmiel and Ciszko" that Mendelsohn spends much of the book trying to unravel, Adam Kulberg is unable to "remember who he'd heard it from" (Lost 410). This point is perhaps most aptly demonstrated in Mendelsohn's own attempts to recollect his childhood; for example, he describes his memories surrounding the death of his maternal grandmother as "at best, fragments" (Lost 4). By drawing attention to the subjectivity of memory, while Mendelsohn calls the reliability of the testimony he has collected into question, since much of the book is a reconstruction of Mendelsohn's memories of his extended travels, the reliability and accuracy of his own account is also brought to the fore.

A second limitation results from the "self-censorship" that is undertaken by Mendelsohn's interviewees (Lang, Philosophical 81). In Philosophical Witnessing: The Holocaust as Presence, Berel Lang refers to this as "silence by self-censorship – through the omission, whether conscious or not, of topics that are unmentionable" (81). Thus, as Annette Kern-Stähler and Axel Stähler assert, "[t]estimony, as is significant with respect to an exploration of voices and silence in contemporary fiction, appears to be situated at the interface of both" (162). Of the people that Mendelsohn sets out to interview, a few are hesitant to share their stories. For example, when Mendelsohn speaks to Shlomo Adler he states, "I have for you a story, a private story, but this cannot be in your book, you have to turn off the tape recorder" (qtd. in Lost 393). Further, before Mendelsohn interviews

Meg Grossbard she sets out a series of rules that include not "discuss[ing] anything about the war," and "not talk[ing] about her own life at all" (Lost 251). Mendelsohn notes that in his conversation with Adler, when he "turned off the tape recorder […] [h]e started talking" and in his conversation with Meg while "apparently having forgotten her own strictures, she talked at length not only about what she remembered about my family but also about the war, about other people she remembered," but he wasn't, for the most part, permitted to "write any of it down" (Lost 393, 252). As he discovers during the course of his journey, Meg's reasons for not wanting her stories to appear in his book are complex; for example, her brother was a member of the Jewish police (Mendelsohn, Lost 385-386). Through his exchange with Meg, Mendelsohn emphasizes how members of the first generation can be reluctant or unable to share their stories (see Ribbat 200; Hirsch, Family 22). Yet, it also highlights how, just as Shlomo and Meg did not share all of their private history, other interviewees to which Mendelsohn spoke might have inexplicitly done the same. Finally, Mendelsohn's examples of self-censorship are also important reminders of the association between knowledge and power. Since, as Mendelsohn points out, those who are dead can no longer tell their own stories, self-censorship raises questions about the extent to which both the interviewees and Mendelsohn have a right to reveal difficult information about people such as Meg's brother, who cannot speak for, or defend, themselves ("Six" 68). In all of these ways, by highlighting the gaps in the information he has collected, Mendelsohn draws attention to not only what was

lost both during the war, but also what was inevitably missing from his own attempts to collect information about the past.

A third, related, limitation results from the sources to which Mendelsohn has access. Since Mendelsohn is largely reliant on oral interviews, the information that he gathers is contingent upon the survivors with whom he is able to speak. For instance, when Mendelsohn talks to Eli Rosenberg in Brooklyn, who is referred to as "the last Jew of Bolechow," Rosenberg notes of his father, "[i]t's too bad you didn't come a couple of years ago [...]. He could have told you a lot" (Susannah Jani qtd. in Lost 66, qtd. in Lost 69). This issue is also brought to the fore as Mendelsohn ages and realizes that the elderly relatives such as Minnie Spieler whom he avoided "at all costs" at family gatherings as a child, could have been integral to his research (Lost 27-28, 101). Thus, Mendelsohn's choice to undertake his research at a certain historical moment influences both the information that he is able to gather and, by extension, the conclusions he is able to reach. By acknowledging that "we can never be other than ourselves, imprisoned by our time and place and circumstances," Mendelsohn demonstrates how a return narrative reveals as much, or perhaps more, about the author and the time in which it was written than about the people or places of which the author is in search (Lost 482).

While I have hitherto questioned the reliability of oral narratives, it is important to note that inconsistencies can be found in written texts as well. As such, a fourth limitation of Mendelsohn's search results from inconsistencies he finds in written works (Lost 224-225). Perhaps the most striking example of this

phenomenon is found in Mendelsohn's discussion of the entries for his family members in Yad Vashem's "[C]entral [D]atabase of Shoah Victims' Names." He states:

> if you were to go online right now to the Yad Vashem Web site and search […] for 'Jäger' from Bolechow, you would learn – or, rather, think that you were learning – that there was a young woman named Lorka Jeiger about whom the following statement was true:
>
> > Lorka Jeiger was born in Bolchow, Poland in 1918 to Shmuel and Ester. She was single. Prior to WWII she lived in Bolechow, Poland. During the war was in Bolechow, Poland. This information is based on Page of Testimony submitted on 22/05/1957 by her cousin, a Shoah survivor.
>
> Whereas, in fact, not a single element of this entry in the Yad Vashem database is accurate[.] (Mendelsohn, Lost 224)

These inaccuracies include the year of Lorka's birth, which is listed on her birth certificate as 1920, and the spelling of her last name (Mendelsohn, Lost 224). Mendelsohn also states:

> that virtually all of the information provided by the same important source […] for 'Shmuel Yeger' (or 'leger') and 'Ester Jeger' (and the three daughters the database attributes to them: 'Lorka Jejger," 'Frida Yeger,' and 'Rachel Jejger') is demonstrably wrong, from the spelling of their names to the name of their parents," an error that ostensibly "eradicates [… his] great-grandmother Taube Mittelmark from history. (Lost 224-225)

These inconsistencies demonstrate the importance of checking information against multiple sources, a process that Mendelsohn undertakes by speaking with multiple survivors and accessing numerous written works. Yet, after survivors die, this opportunity to corroborate written records with eyewitness accounts will be lost, presenting challenges for future generations who will have to rely on "[f]inite" written, visual, and oral records in order to reconstruct the past (Young, Memory's 1; Doležel 169).

The fifth limitation that I have identified results from the impossibilities of reconstructing the "subjective experience[s]" of Holocaust victims (Mendelsohn, Lost 226). For example, Mendelsohn states, "I can look through the available sources and compare them, collate them, and from that arrive at a likely version of what probably happened to Uncle Shmiel, his wife, and their daughter in the days leading up to their deaths; but of course I will never know" (Mendelsohn, Lost 226). Thus, Mendelsohn is skeptical about using one's imagination to fill in the blanks; for example, when he describes the Jewish residents of Bolechow being herded to the train in the second Aktion in Bolechow, of his attempts to "imagine what the mood was" he states, "I couldn't. And can't" (Lost 226). Unlike Foer, who treats the blanks in the historical record as opportunities to use his imagination, for Mendelsohn, these gaps are where the possibilities of reconstruction end (Lost 502).[86] Interestingly, it is this attitude that makes the reader even more aware that, in The Lost, Mendelsohn's is the only interior world to which he or she truly has access, and, as the next point will demonstrate, even that world is presented in a mediated form.

The final limitation that is pertinent to this study results from Mendelsohn's process of turning his return journey into a narrative of return. In The Lost, Mendelsohn is careful to outline the method he uses to collect information during interviews; the reader is aware of how survivors' memories are mediated by the passage of time and by Mendelsohn's act of incorporating the information he gathers into his larger narrative structure. However, since the reader is not present for Mendelsohn's interviews, he or she does not know exactly what transpired or if Mendelsohn described the scene in its entirety. Further, as Mendelsohn writes in the Author's Note, "[s]ome but by no means all of the dialogue recorded in these pages was edited for the sake of coherence and in order to avoid repetitions; occasionally, this editing has necessitated the chronological rearrangement of some remarks" (Lost 507). Since the reader is not made aware of what editing occurred, some of the transparency and reliability of Mendelsohn's account is lost. Further, his information collecting process was shaped by his larger enterprise of discovering the fate of Shmiel's family and grappling with how to tell by their story (see, for example, Mendelsohn, Lost 333-438). Therefore the questions he asks, the sources he uses, the answers he receives, and the ways in which he presents his information are all influenced by his attempts to create this narrative arc (Mendelsohn, Lost 436-437).

In order to understand the implications of Mendelsohn's choices, I will now turn to my discussion of the second layer of The Lost: Mendelsohn's attempts to reconstruct the story of his journey in a written form. For, as the six limitations I have just discussed demonstrate, The Lost is not only about the Jäger

family, but also about Mendelsohn's process of researching and writing the book. Significantly, Mendelsohn includes an anecdote that was told to him by Adam Kulberg's daughter Alena about a young woman in New York "who'd just taken a degree in literature, and who had written a thesis about her grandmother […] who'd suffered terrible things" during "the war" (Lost 413). When Alena read this woman's work, she realized "[i]t was like what she was interested in was not so much the story of her grandmother but how to *tell* the story of her grandmother – how to be the storyteller" (Mendelsohn, Lost 413; Mendelsohn in Hartman et. al. 109). Mendelsohn's inclusion of this anecdote reveals that, although he is in search of the story of members of his extended family, it is evident from his insistence on the importance of the form of The Lost that his other, perhaps overriding, preoccupation, is how to write his narrative of return. Within this context, since, as Mendelsohn contends, "[m]y whole book is an attempt to fill in [… Shmiel's] blanks so I can finally be myself, and not just a remainder of him," it is important that his choices about how to construct The Lost reflect his experiences as a Classical scholar, a member of his mother's family, and a Jew ("Six" 68). By analyzing how each of these three strands of Mendelsohn's identity influences the form and content of the book, in this section I will be able to assess the implications of how Mendelsohn filters the story of Shmiel Jäger's family through an autobiographical lens.[87]

In my discussion of The Lost, as in my discussions of the six texts upon which I focused in previous chapters, I have concentrated more on the literary representation of history than on historical events themselves. Building on the title

of Hayden's White's article "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," I have been interested in assessing how the literary text can function as a historical artifact and as a memorial for members of an author's family. Yet, as Leslie Howsam asserts, "literary history differs from history per se in that it 'is also literary criticism. Its aim is not merely to reconstruct and understand the past, for it has a further end, which is to illuminate literary works'" (73-74; Perkins 177). Therefore, as "both a writer and a critic by profession and […] also [as] a scholar of literature," Mendelsohn is "interested in literary questions that have nothing to do with history or the Holocaust," which influence how he chooses to relate information about the Jägers, his search, and his attempts to render both of these layers in a written form (Mendelsohn, "Six" 63). As James E. Young states in his examinations of memorialization, this process of reflecting upon the act of creation "reinvest[s] the monument with our memory of its coming into being," which forces the reader to question the transformations that occur when an author or historian creates a narrativized version of the past (<u>Texture</u> 14). In "Toward a Received History of the Holocaust," Young proposes the idea of "received history" as a way of taking the process by which historical narratives are created into account. He states:

> In this alternative history, we might restore both the telling and reception of historical lives to the historical record. Such work aims to reinvest the narrated past with the animacy of its telling, the consequences of its reception for the teller and listener. In this way, we might make the listeners' and readers' responses to history a part of that history's record.

> Such a history would include the author's journey to the past, the distance between the lives of tellers and listeners, the points of engagement. […] By restoring to the record the times and places, the social and political circumstances surrounding a give story's telling, we might enlarge the text of history with its own coming into being. (42)

It is this type of "double-stranded narrative," which, as Young contends in relation to his own work, is about "the Holocaust and my generation's relationship to it" and, in a narrower sense, about the "survivor-historian's story and my own relationship to it," that Mendelsohn creates in The Lost (Young, "Toward" 23). For not only does Mendelsohn create a record of historical events, collecting facts and memories about the Jäger family so that they will not be swallowed by the passage of time, but he also creates a record of the effects of those events on the generations that have come after. As a Classical scholar who has been trained to examine the textual fragments that have been passed down from lost civilizations, Mendelsohn is aware of how the stories surrounding the creation of texts often disappear (Mendelsohn, "Melancholy"). Therefore, through his layered narrative structure, Mendelsohn creates a record for future generation of not only what happened to members of his extended family during the Holocaust, but also, in turn, how he attempted to reconstruct those events in his lifetime.

Interestingly, while the layered narrative structure of The Lost stems from Mendelsohn's training as a Classical scholar, it is also linked to Mendelsohn's family history. According to Mendelsohn, "the real reason I preferred the Greeks, above all the others, to the Hebrews was that the Greeks told stories the way my

grandfather told stories" (Lost 32; see also Mendelsohn, "Six" 69-70). Yet, these "stories of strange and epic journeys" did not describe the travels of Odysseus and Aeneas, but his grandfather Abraham Jaeger's own journey to America (Mendelsohn, Lost 160, 33; Mendelsohn, "Six" 68). For, like Mayer Kirshenblatt, as a member of the 0.5 generation, since Abraham left Bolechow before the Nazis came to power, he lived to tell the story life in his hometown before the war. In The Lost, Mendelsohn describes the structures of his grandfather's stories as:

> vast circling loops, so that each incident, each character [… has] its own mini-history, a story within a story, a narrative inside a narrative, so that the story he told was not (he once explained to me) like dominoes, one thing happening just after the other, but instead like a set of Chinese boxes or Russian dolls, so that each event turned out to contain another, which contained another, and so forth. (32)

By using this as the structure of the book, and by explicitly "tell[ing] the reader exactly what the shape of the book is going to be very early on," Mendelsohn demonstrates the intergenerational connection that influences the form of The Lost ("Six" 69; see also Mendelsohn in Hartman et. al. 109). Since his grandfather was not a Holocaust survivor, but the brother of a Holocaust victim, Mendelsohn emphasizes that he is not a "direct" descendent of those who were lost, but, instead, a direct descendent of those who were left behind to tell their story; as he states, "I am not an heir to the Holocaust, but I am an heir to a great storyteller" (Mendelsohn, "Six" 70, 71; see Mendelsohn, Lost 438). Therefore, by moving from the oral to the written tradition, and examining the fates of the Jäger family,

which he notes were missing from his grandfather's stories, Mendelsohn is able to create a narrative structure that reflects his family's past. In this way, Mendelsohn reveals the extent to which the intergenerational generational relationships that I am researching are related not only to the content of a family's history, but also to how the story of that family is told.

Finally, as part of the story within the story he discusses, Mendelsohn situates the history of his family within the Jewish tradition, which provides him with the opportunity to place both the form and content of his book in a much larger religious context, and to explore the role of textuality in Jewish thought. For example, in his discussion of Genesis, in which he evaluates how "the first chapter […] moves gradually from a picture of the skies and the earth down to the first man and woman. The story's focus will continue to narrow: from the universe to the earth to humankind to specific lands and peoples to a single family," Mendelsohn reveals an important aspect of the structure of <u>The Lost</u> (Friedman qtd. in <u>Lost</u> 18). Further, by asking "what does it mean to wipe a population off the face of the world with only a handful of survivors? What is their life like?" in relation to Noah, and exploring the relationships between brothers, be they Shmiel and Mendelsohn's grandfather, and Mendelsohn and his brother Matt, or, on a larger scale, Ukrainians and Jews, in relation to the story of Cain and Abel, Mendelsohn examines his own family's story through the lens of Jewish history (Mendelsohn, "Six" 70; Mendelsohn, <u>Lost</u> 153-267, 77-152, 109, 509; Mendelsohn, "Six" 62; Berger, "Unclaimed 152-153). Yet, by including Biblical narratives, Mendelsohn is also able to examine of the complexities of the

textual transmission of information. As the Talmud and Midrash reveal, exegesis is an integral part of the Jewish tradition. In The Lost, Mendelsohn carries on this tradition by providing analyses of Rashi's readings of Biblical texts (16).[88] His "commentary on the Bible has itself become the object of two hundred further commentaries" and by becoming, in turn, a commentator on Rashi's work, Mendelsohn places himself in this textual lineage (Lost 16). Notably, areas of Rashi's commentaries to which Mendelsohn pays particular attention pertain to language and translation, which, as in the case of the word *kestle* "the Yiddish word for box," enables him to explore how language can distort meaning and evaluate how stories change as they are filtered down through generations (Lost 17, 482).[89] Further, by placing his own story within the context of the Jewish tradition, he demonstrates how the textual tradition is inextricably tied not only to Jewish thought before the Holocaust, but how, in its aftermath, it also remains as an important way of attempting to grapple with this event. Through the inclusion of these three stands of his identity, just as Mendelsohn places himself within the genealogy of his extended family, he is able to situate himself within "intellectual [and religious] genealogies" as well (Lost 16). In this way, Mendelsohn is careful to show that the way in which he approaches the story of Shmiel's family and his return journey is influenced by his own personal history.

Importantly, the sections of The Lost in which Mendelsohn discusses Biblical stories are presented in italics, which set them apart from the rest of the text. This technique of visual differentiation draws attention to Mendelsohn's choice to tell the story in a written form, which is of special importance in the

context of my work in the previous chapter on the relationship between words and images, as Mendelsohn makes clear in his interview with Elaine Kalman Naves ("Six" 61). One of the important ways in which the relationship between these two points of view are presented in The Lost is on the cover of the first edition of the book (Mendelsohn). Here, the title and Daniel Mendelsohn's name are printed on a thin translucent white dust jacket. Underneath, pictures of Mendelsohn's dead relatives, as well as the individuals who aided him in his search, are all presented in the same sepia tone around the edges of the cover. When the dust jacket is removed, where the title once appeared, there is a large empty white space, which is representative of the lost stories for which Mendelsohn is searching. Since the dust jacket only uses words to fill in this blank space, it is also indicative of the reconstructive enterprise that Mendelsohn undertakes through the writing of the book.

Visual points of view are also present in the text in the form of archival photographs of Mendelsohn's family members and contemporary photographs that were taken by Mendelsohn's brother Matt (Kalman Naves, "Six" 58; Mendelsohn, Lost 509). As Hirsch discusses at length in Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, Postmemory, for Susan Sontag archival photographs possess a "posthumous irony" (qtd. in Hirsch 20). When "describing Roman Vishniac's pictures of the vanished world of Eastern European Jewish life," Sontag asserts that this irony exists "because as we look at them we know how soon these people are going to die" (Hirsch, Family 20). "We also know," adds Hirsch, "that they all die (have all died), that their world will be (has been)

destroyed, and that the future's (our) only access to it will be (is) through those pictures and through the unique stories they have left behind" (Hirsch, Family 20). In contrast, Matt, to whom Mendelsohn refers as "a full collaborator on this project from start to finish," takes pictures of the elderly survivors Mendelsohn interviews in locations that represent the countries that they are visiting or some significant aspect of their time together (Lost 509). For example, Klara Freilich is photographed in front of a stone fountain in Stockholm, Sweden, and Jack Greene and Bob Grunschlag are photographed in front of a surfer on Australia's Bondi Beach (Mendeloshn, Lost 376, 259). Like the "photos and videos" that Hirsch and Spitzer take on their own return journey to Czernowitz, Matt's photographs "record and memorialize the fleeting reconnection that transpired between memory and place" (Ghosts 230). Further, the juxtaposition of the archival photographs with more contemporary images, such as the contrast of Shmiel's and Mendelsohn's eyes in the first chapter, creates eerie intergenerational connections (Lost 7; see also Berger, "Unclaimed" 152).[90] Yet, these photographs also create a catalogue of the ongoing process of loss, be it Matt's images of children "play[ing] among the graves of forgotten Jews" in the cemetery in Bolechow where his ancestors are buried or his portraits of Bob Grunschlang and Frances Begley who passed away before the book was published (Lost 133, 445, 441). Therefore, in different ways, all of these examples demonstrate how the words and images in The Lost create a layered record of the world of Bolechow's Jewish community before, during, and after the war.

On a related note, none of the archival or contemporary photographs that are included in The Lost have captions; instead, they are contextualized within Mendelsohn's narrative and function as a constant reminder that, while the story of their subjects is being told in part by the photographer, their relationship to each other and to Mendelsohn's larger enterprise is presented entirely from Mendelsohn's point of view (Kalman Naves, "Six" 68; Mendelsohn, "Six" 68). Further, since the reader is made aware of the process by which Matt takes his photographs, he or she is also left to ponder the identities of the photographers of the archival images whose stories are lost on the other end of the lens.

By creating a received history, Mendelsohn is able to record not only the story of his family members, but also the stories of the constellation of survivors and family members with whom he comes in contact in the book. As such, the book functions as a memorial on two levels. On the one hand, as Mendelsohn states, under the Nazis, individuals "were erased consciously, purposefully from memory and history. The people who killed them wanted to erase them. That was the agenda. Not just to kill them. But that nothing would be left. No memories. No stories" ("Six" 67). By presenting concrete evidence of their existence, as the title of the book suggests, unlike the untitled books in Rachel Whiteread's "Nameless Library," Mendelsohn chose to memorialize the Jäger family not in terms of absence, but of loss (see LaCapra, Writing 69). As Mendelsohn states, "I'm […] advertising that this is a tragic book. It's not called *The Found*" ("Six" 66). This idea is most strongly reinforced at the end of the book where Mendelsohn states, "as we know, everything, in the end, gets lost," an idea that he reiterates

elsewhere in the book, in his interview with Naves, and in his 2009 commencement address at the University of California, Berkeley (Lost 502, 486; “Six” 67; “Melancholy”). On the other hand, at the end of the book, Mendelsohn also creates a memorial page for the people whom he interviewed who died before the publication of the book such as Frances Begley (1910-2004), Boris Goldsmith (1913-2005), and Salamon Grossbard (1908-2004) and he refers at length to the death of his editor Sarah Pettit in 2003 at the end of the Acknowledgements (505, 512). In this way, just as Mendelsohn memorializes the loss of the six family members of whom he went in search, through the creation of a received history, he also memorializes the losses that occurred along the way.

As I have attempted to demonstrate in this first section of this chapter, through the creation of his return narrative, Mendelsohn attempts to flesh out the “bare bones” of history on paper by bringing the lost world of Shmiel’s family’s experiences in Bolechow, and his own experience on his return journey, to life in the mind of the reader (Lost 356). For, as Mendelsohn writes in one of the most poignant and lyric passages in The Lost:

> everything in time gets lost: the lives of people now remote, the tantalizingly yet ultimately vanished and largely unknowable lives of all of the Greeks and Romans and Ottomans and Malays and Goths and Bengals and Sudanese who ever lived, the people of Ur and Kush, the lives of the Hittites and Philistines that will never be known, the lives of people more recent than that, the African slaves and the slave traders, […] the smiles and frustrations and laughter and terror of the six million Jews in the

> Holocaust are now lost, or will soon be lost, because no number of books, however great, could ever document them all, even if they were to be written, which won't and can't be [...]. But for a little while some of that can be rescued, if only, faced with the vastness of all that there is and all that there ever was, somebody makes the decision to look back, to have one last look, to search for a while in the debris of the past and to see not only what was lost but what there is still be to found. (486-487; see Mendelsohn "Melancholy"; see Mendelsohn, "Six" 67)

Therefore, despite the inexorable passage of time, Mendelsohn demonstrates the ways in which texts such as his will function as signposts for future readers when they set out in search of their own family history (Berger, "Unclaimed" 153).[91] For, by detailing not only what happened to six of his family members during the Holocaust and how he and other members of his family have been affected by the Holocaust's aftermath, Mendelsohn creates a document in which not only the past, but also the process of reconstructing the past, is recorded and laid bare. In the following section of this chapter, my examination of Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated will explore the complexities of this issue in greater depth by evaluating the relationship between physical and imaginative return journeys and the ways in which works of fiction can function as memorial texts.

Part Two

Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated[lxix]

As an undergraduate at Princeton University, Jonathan Safran Foer set out on a return journey to Trochimbrod, Ukraine, "the shtetl of [… his] family's origin" ("Jonathan"; Foer qtd. in Mullan "Three"; see Collador-Rodriguez 56).[lxx] As the entry in The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust reveals, Trochimbrod, which was once a thriving Jewish community, was devastated by the Holocaust ("Zofjowka" 1516). In a 2008 article in The Jewish Daily Forward entitled "Novel Illuminated Memories of Lost *Shtetl*," Marissa Brostoff describes how Safran's "wife and daughter [… were] killed" when the *shtetl* was ravaged by the Nazis in 1942 (Brostoff). "Safran's daughter by his second wife was Ester Foer, Jonathan Safran Foer's mother," and when Foer returned to Trochimbrod over four decades after Safran died in 1954, he brought with him "a photograph of the woman, who [… he had been] told, had saved [… his] grandfather from the Nazis" in the hopes that he would be able to uncover information about his grandfather's story (Solomon; Foer, "Jonathan"; see Foer, Everything 24). Yet, as he noted in an interview:

> I found nothing but nothing, and in that nothing – a landscape of completely realized absence – nothing was to be found. Because I didn't

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[lxix] A version of this chapter was presented at the The Politics of Memory Graduate Conference. Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Toronto. Jefferies 31 Mar.-2 Apr. 2006.

[lxx] There are many spellings for Trochimbrod. When referring to the actual *shtetl* to which Foer returned, I have chosen to use the spelling from The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust: Trochimbrod (1516). When referring to the *shtetl* in Everything is Illuminated, I have chosen to use the spelling that Foer includes in the text: Trachimbrod (51). As the title suggests, Avrom Bendavid-Val uses another spelling in The Heavens are Empty: Discovering the Lost Town of Trochenbrod and I have chosen to use that spelling when I am referring to that book.

> tell my grandmother about the trip – she would never have let me go – I didn't know what questions to ask, or whom to ask, or the necessary names of people, places, and things. The nothing came as much from me as from what I encountered. (Foer, "Jonathan"; see Collado-Rodriguez 56)

Interestingly, Foer did not "intend to write Everything is Illuminated"; like Mendelsohn, he had hoped to "chronicle his journey in strictly nonfiction terms" (Foer, "Jonathan"). But, as a result of what he didn't find on his return journey, he turned to fiction as a way of grappling with the complexities of attempting to reconstruct his family's story and the story of his own journey as well (Collado-Rodriguez 56).

Writing and the possibilities of representation are at the heart of Foer's *oeuvre*. From his use of punctuation in place of words that cannot be expressed between a father and a son in the short story "A Primer for the Punctuation of Heart Disease," to the way in which, in the short story "Rhoda," the text leaves off just as a young man is about to interview an elderly woman about her life, to his extensive use of images in his second novel Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, in which a young boy's searches for information about his father who died on 9/11, to, as I will discuss at length in the concluding chapter, his manipulation of Bruno Schultz's Street of Crocodiles in his most recent work Tree of Codes, Foer is constantly exploring the "limits of language" and the possibilities of the printed page (Morley 295, 309).[92] This idea is expressed most poignantly, perhaps, in Foer's "Empty Page Project" ("Emptiness" 150). The first page in this collection of blank pages was the "top page" of "a stack of [Isaac Bashevis]

Singer's unused typewriter paper," which was, as Foer notes, "the next page on which Singer would have written" (Foer, "Emptiness" 148). Fascinated by this "blank sheet of paper [that] was at once both empty and infinite," Foer asked other writers such as Susan Sontag, Arthur Miller, Zadie Smith, Joyce Carol Oates, and Don DeLillo to send him the page on which they would have written next ("Emptiness" 148, 150). Foer was even given the top page from a stack of papers in a drawer in Sigmund Freud's desk at "the Freud Museum in London" ("Emptiness" 150-151). Of the initial page that spawned his collection, Foer noted that on it he saw:

> the phantom words that Singer hadn't written and would never write, the arrangements of ink that would have turned the most common of all objects – the empty page – into the most valuable: a great work of art. [… It] contained everything Singer could have written and everyone he could have become. ("Emptiness" 148).

It is this tension between what was never recorded and writing as a creative and generative act that is at the heart of my examination of Foer's first novel.

In Everything is Illuminated, Foer explores his return journey and the process of rendering that journey in a narrative form in three distinct narrative layers (Mullan "One"; Varvogli 90; Eaglestone 128, 128-131).[lxxi] The first layer I

[lxxi] Notably, different scholars have identified different numbers of layers into which Everything is Illuminated is divided. For example, in "Nomadic With the Truth: Holocaust Representations in Michael Chabon, James McBride, and Jonathan Safran Foer," Christoph Ribbat refers to two "narrative strand[s]" in the novel which coincide with what I term layers one and two (212). Similarly, in the abstract for "Ethics in the Second Degree: Trauma and Dual Narratives in Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated," Francisco-Collado Rodriguez asserts that the novel is "[d]ivided into two narratives with two contrasting voices" to create a "dual structure" (54, 57). Finally, in his review of Everything is Illuminated, "Boy of Wonders," Daniel Mendelsohn notes that the novel "has two wildly different narrators, and two elaborately

will discuss is written from the perspective of the translator Alex Perchov; it is a "realistic" account of the character Jonathan Safran Foer's search for Trachimbrod and his grandfather's past (Foer, "Jonathan"; Mullan, "One"; Varvogli 90; Behlman 59; Eaglestone 130; Ribbat 212). The second layer is made up of "parts of [… a] novel that Jonathan is writing" that spans from "1791 with the story of the founding of the shtetl […] to 1942, when the shtetl is bombed by the Nazis" (Mullan, "One"; Varvolgi 89, 90; Behlman 59; Eaglestone 128; Ribbat 212). As Aliki Varvogli writes:

> Some of the stories of the generations from the late 18th century to the middle of the 20th are based on Jonathan's knowledge of his grandparents' past. However, the narrative he produces is his own imaginative and often fantastical creation: a fiction of an imagined past, a made-up family history through which Jonathan attempts to find his own place in the world. (89)

The third layer consists of Alex's correspondence with Jonathan about their respective works (Mullan, "One"; Varvogli 90; Behlman 59; Eaglestone 131;

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intertwined stories." In contrast, in his discussion of Everything is Illuminated for the Guardian Book Club, John Mullan refers to the novels "three strands" that coincide with the layers that I have identified ("One"). Further, in "'Underwhlemed to the Maximum': American Travellers in Dave Eggers's You Shall Know Our Velocity and Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated," Aliki Varvogli refers to "three narrative devices [that are] interwoven throughout the novel," in The Holocaust and the Postmodern, Robert Eaglestone refers to "three interrelated stands with two different authors, all of which focus on the moment of 'illumination,'" which he discusses "chronologically," and in "The Escapist: Fantasy, Folklore, and the Pleasures of the Comic Book in Recent Jewish American Holocaust Fiction," Lee Behlman refers to the structure of the "text-within-the-text" (90; 128, 128-131; 59). Like Mullan, Varvogli, and Eaglestone I have chosen to discuss these three separate layers because it is my contention that, as I argued in "'Paper People' in a 'Paper Universe': Memory and Imagination in Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated," while the first two layers are the fictional worlds that are created by Alex and Jonathan, the third layer provides a metafictional comment on the previous two layers and thus must be considered separately within the text. Yet, like Mullan, I have chosen to discuss in the order in which they appear in the text ("One").

Ribbat 212). Since both Alex and Jonathan are writers, all of these layers ultimately hinge on the creation, preservation, transmission, and reception of texts (Feuer 24-25, 27; Collado-Rodriguez 56). As such, in this section of Chapter Three, by analyzing each of these layers in turn, I will evaluate the roles of reconstruction and memorialization in Foer's imaginative rendering of both his return journey and his family's past.

Layer one of Everything is Illuminated consists of eight sections that centre on the return journey to Trachimbrod (Mullan, "One"; Varvogli 90; Eaglestone 130; Ribbat 212). Here, the character of Jonathan Safran Foer is led in search of his family's history by Alex, a translator for "Heritage Touring," which is described by Alex as a travel agency "for Jewish people […] who have cravings to leave that ennobled country America and visit towns in Poland and Ukraine […] to unearth places where their families once existed" (Foer, Everything 3; Eaglstone 130; Varvogli 91; Feuer 28; Ribbat 213). Notably, Jonathan and Alex are accompanied by Alex's grandfather, who is also named Alex, and by his grandfather's "SEEING-EYE BITCH [sic]" Sammy Davis Junior Junior (Foer, Everything 29; Ribbat 213; Berger, "Unclaimed" 155; Feuer 26). Although Alex refers to the character of Jonathan Safran Foer as the "hero" of his story, and his account of their journey begins with Jonathan's arrival in Ukraine and ends with his departure, as Christoph Ribbat states in "Nomadic With the Truth: Holocaust Representations in Michael Chabon, James McBride, and Jonathan Safran Foer," Jonathan "is not given a voice by his author; instead, the journey the two young men embark on is told from Alex's point of view"; significantly, this is indicative

of the fact that while "he alone is there in every" layer, Jonathan "never directly addresses the reader" (Foer, Everything 1; Feuer 26; Varvogli 89; Ribbat 212; Mullan, "One"; see Ribbat 212). For as Alan. L Berger observes, "[t]he two exchange a series of letters, but readers only get to see those of Alex" ("Unclaimed" 155; see Ribbat 214-215). Further, Varvogli contends that:

> Though Alex is the main narrator, he announces from the start Jonathan is the 'hero' of his narrative, and it is significant that the American traveller [sic] is depicted indirectly, through Alex's impressions of him, and through his own fictional story of Trachimbrod. With his decision to create an American hero who is only glimpsed through other narratives, Foer has found a formal analogy for the issues of identity that his book explores. (90)

In this way, Foer draws the reader's attention to the distance between what occurred on his return journey and his fictionalized rendering of those events in a narrative form.

In this first layer, the group ventures across the Ukrainian countryside on what Alex refers to as a "[v]ery [r]igid [j]ourney" (Foer, Everything 1; Varvogli 90). Eventually they come across an old woman, whom they refer to as Augustine, and her small home (Foer, Everything 118, 181; see Feuer 30; see Collado-Rodriguez 62). When Alex asks Augustine about Trachimbrod, she states "[y]ou are here. I am it" (Foer, Everything 118; Eaglestone 130; Kern and Kern-Stähler 170). In the home's two rooms, are objects that once belonged to the Jewish residents of Trachimbrod. In one room are numerous boxes with names

such as “WEDDINGS AND OTHER CELEBRATIONS,” “DARKNESS,” “DUST,” “DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN,” and “PRIVATES/JOURNALS/ SKETCHBOOKS/UNDERWEAR” and of the other room, Alex observes that “[a]ll of the clothing and shoes and pictures made me reason that there must have been at least one hundred people living” there (Foer, Everything 147; see Kern-Stähler and Stähler 170; Franklin 239; see Eaglestone 130; see Feuer 33). The number and diversity of these objects is the reader’s first indication of the immense scope of what was lost in the destruction of the *shtetl* (Doležel 177-178). Ultimately, Augustine takes the group to the site where Trachimbrod existed and Alex’s description of what they find there is reflective of Foer’s description of what he encountered on his actual trip:

> nothing. When I utter ‘nothing’ I do not mean there was nothing except for two houses, and some wood on the ground, and pieces of glass, and children’s toys, and photographs. When I utter that there was nothing, what I intend is that there was not any of these things, or any other things. (Foer, Everything 184; see Kern-Stähler and Stähler 170).

Yet, it is here that the group finds not only a memorial to the residents of Trachimbrod, but also that Augustine shares with them her memories of the *shtetl’s* destruction (Foer, Everything 189, 184-193). Importantly, as Augustine’s narrative progresses, Jonathan decides that he does not want to hear her gruesome account and Alex stops translating, which “emphasizes the narrative and mediated character of Holocaust testimony” (Foer, Everything 186; Kern-Stähler and Stähler 174, 173, see 172; see Behlman 60). Later, in the third layer, when Alex

includes Augustine's testimony in a chapter he sends Jonathan, he warns him "if you still do not want to know the rest, do not read this" (Foer, Everything 186; Kern and Kern-Stähler 174, 173). This point is of particular significance since, by only having been exposed to the facts that are outlined on the memorial, Foer is able to imagine the destruction of the *shtetl* in layer two. This tension between facts and fiction is also reinforced by the way in which Jonathan writes in a notebook throughout their journey; as Alex observes, "[t]he less we saw, the more he wrote" (Foer, Everything 115; see Feuer 32; see Collado-Rodriguez 61). By having Alex possess information about the destruction of Foer's family's ancestral home and having Jonathan allow Alex to see only fragments of the fictional narrative he is creating about Alex's family in his diary, Foer highlights the gaps in both his return journey and his narrative of return, and reveals the extent to which authors such as Alex and Jonathan, and, by extension, he himself, control the information that the reader is given and the way in which a story is told.

Perhaps the most important example of this phenomenon in Everything is Illuminated relates to Alex's grandfather's wartime experiences. Although the group sets out to uncover information about Jonathan's family, as Christoph Ribbat, Francisco Collado-Rodriguez, Menachem Feuer, and Aliki Varvogli observe, it is in fact "[t]he tour guides [who] encounter their own heritage"; for, as Jonathan attempts to discover more and more information about his family, Alex also realizes that there are gaps in his own family's past (Ribbat 213; Collado-Rodriguez 56, 62-63; Feuer 25, 28, 62-63; Behlman 60; Varvogli 94; Berger 155).

Foer highlights these gaps through the private conversations that take place between Augustine and Alex's grandfather as well as the personal archive through which Alex's grandfather sorts. As Alex notes, "[t]he first night I witnessed him crying he was investigating an aged leather bag, brimmed with many photographs and pieces of paper, like one of Augustine's boxes. The photographs were yellow, and so were the papers. I am certain that he was having memories for when he was only a boy, and not an old man" (Foer, Everything 102). Notably, Alex, Jonathan, and the reader are not privy to the contents of these conversations or Alex's grandfather's bag and it is not until the group sorts through a box labeled "IN CASE," which Augustine gives Jonathan upon their departure, that they come across a picture of Alex's grandfather and he reveals his involvement in the war (Foer, Everything 192, 225; Feuer 34). When the Nazis occupied Trachimbrod, Alex's grandfather, who was from the neighboring village of Kolki, was forced to make what Lawrence Langer refers to as a "choiceless choice," betraying his Jewish friend Herschel to the Nazis to save his own life (Foer, Everything 228, 247, 243-252; Kern and Kern-Stähler 175; Suleiman, "Thinking" 283; Collado-Rodriguez 62-64; Langer, Admitting 46; Feuer 35; Berger, "Unclaimed 156; Behlman 60). In his fevered description of the event, in which "syntax and punctuation" are abandoned, Alex's grandfather refers to himself as Eli and points to his grandchild and to Jonathan, as he did to Herschel, stating, "he is a Jew" (Varvolgi 93; Mullan "Four"; Foer, Everything 251; Feuer 43; Ribbat 213). While the movie adaptation of Everything is Illuminated conclusively represents Alex's family's as Jewish after this point, an idea that Feuer supports in his article

"Almost Friends: Post-Holocaust Comedy, Tragedy, and Friendship in Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated," when asked about this subject Foer has stated that in the novel "he preferred to leave ambiguities unresolved" (Kern-Stähler and Stähler 168; Feuer 43-47; see also Collado-Rodriguez 63; Foer qtd. in Mullan "One"; see also Berger, "Unclaimed" 156).[93] Notably, in "The Translation of Testimony and the Transmission of Trauma: Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated and Liev Schreiber's Film Adapatation" Annette Kern-Stähler and Axel Stähler refer to this as " the most decisive and – as we would argue – sadly reductive change" that took place in the adaptation process (176).[94] By presenting the entwined experiences of "Alex, a grandchild of perpetrators, and Jonathan, a grandchild of survivors," Foer reflects upon the "intergenerational transmission of trauma" by assessing the ongoing effects of the Holocaust on both those who returned from afar and those who remained in Ukraine as Alex's translation of his grandfather's suicide note on the final two pages of the book demonstrates (Varvogli 89-90; Feuer 25; Varvogli 89-90; see Berger, "Unclaimed" 158; see Eaglestone 131; see Feuer 25). Yet, by also introducing ambiguities, Foer forces Alex to question his assumptions about Americans and Jews and his own heritage (Varvogli 83-84).[95] In these ways, he breaks down binary oppositions between perpetrators and victims and gestures towards the many layers of stories in Ukraine that are waiting to be uncovered.

Importantly, Foer introduces another layer of "ambiguity" into the text through his use of "language" (Kern and Kern-Stähler 167). Alex, who is both Jonathan's translator and his "cultural mediator," uses what Foer has described as

a "unique brand of mangled or thesaurus English" (Varvogli 90; Mullan, "Two"; see Behlman 61).[96] In the passage where Jonathan and Alex first meet, Foer writes:

> He must have witnessed the sign I was holding, because he punched me on the shoulder and said, 'Alex?' I told him yes. 'You're my translator, right?' I asked him to be slow, because I could not understand him. In truth I was manufacturing a brick wall of shits. I attempted to be sedate. 'Lesson one. Hello. How are you doing this day?' 'What?' 'Lesson two. OK, isn't the weather full of delight?' 'You're my translator,' he said, manufacturing movement, 'yes?' 'Yes,' I said, presenting him my hand. 'I am Alex Perchov. I am your humble translator. […] I implore you to forgive me speaking of English. I am not so premium with it.' (Everything 32)

This passage demonstrates how, through Alex's awkward sentence structure, inappropriate word choice, limited vocabulary, and difficulty understanding Jonathan, Foer is able to present Alex quite "humorously as a man trapped in language, unable to overcome its rigors" (Collado-Rodriguez 60). Yet, Alex's difficulties with English also have more solemn purposes in the novel as well. On the one hand, Alex's accent when speaking English "emphasize[s] the foreignness" of Ukraine for Jonathan and, as Aliki Varvogli contends in "'Underwhelmed to the Maximum': American Travelers in Dave Eggers's You Shall Know Our Velocity and Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated," it also makes the reader aware of the distance between Jonathan's family's roots

and his status as a foreigner half a century later (Suleiman, "Monuments" 399; 91).[97] On the other, by drawing attention to the way in which language limits and evades Alex, not only is the reader constantly reminded that he or she is witnessing an act of "textual *poiesis*," but the accuracy of Alex's account is called into question as well (Doležel 23; see Kern-Stähler 166-167; Collado-Rodriguez 60). In this way, by highlighting the "unreliability of language" and its inherent "ambiguity," Foer exposes the layers of mediation that have taken place between Foer's return journey and his fictionalized narrative of return (Kern-Stähler and Stähler 165, 167).

While Alex draws the reader's attention to the "ambiguities of language," Augustine draws his or her attention towards the ambiguities of memory (Kern-Stähler and Stähler 167). As the only remaining Jewish survivor of Trachimbrod, Augustine is responsible for preserving the stories of her community and its members who did not survive; as she states of her home, "everything that still exists from Trachimbrod is in this house" (Foer, Everything 154).[98] Therefore, like the elderly interviewees in The Lost, her presence reveals the extent to which the third generation exists on the cusp between living memory and history: since Augustine remains for Jonathan to find, he has the opportunity to hear about the destruction of the *shtetl* from a survivor, yet, as her decaying memory reveals, he has in many ways already come too late (see Feuer 33). For example, although Augustine is able to tell the group the story of the destruction of the Trachimbrod the reliability of her account is undermined when, as a very old woman she states, "I must go care for my baby[.] […] It is missing me" (Foer, Everything 193; see

Feuer 33). This issue is compounded by the fact that, although the group refers to her as Augustine, Alex realizes that they actually do "not know her name"; to Alex she is "the woman we continued to think of as Augustine, even though we knew she was not Augustine" (Foer, Everything 192, 181; Feuer 30; Kern and Kern-Stähler 167, 170; Collado-Rodriquez 61-62). By revealing through her testimony that she is not replacement for the actual Augustine, Foer emphasizes that, unlike the photographs and stories that Mendelsohn gathers in The Lost, Augustine's stories and artifacts are all products of his imagination. Therefore, while Mendelsohn grapples at length with what will be lost when a generation of survivors is no longer alive to tell their stories, Foer reveals the scope of what is already gone.

The second layer of Everything is Illuminated, which consists of eighteen sections that are often divided into groups of three, Jonathan traces the history of Trachimbrod from Trachim's arrival in 1791 to its destruction in 1942 (Foer, Everything 8, 267; Mullan, "One"; Eaglestone 128- 129; Varvogli 89, 90; Ribbat 212). The first sentence of the first of these sections reads, "[i]t was March 18, 1791, when Trachim B's double-axle wagon did or did not pin him against the bottom of the Brod River" (Foer, Everything 8; Mullan "Four"). When asked by a reader about the "research" that he undertook for the book, Foer has stated that this sentence, "which was originally to have opened the book," is the only "sentence in the whole book that is the product of the kind of [histotrical] research that I think you are asking about" (Foer qtd. in Mullan "Four"). Yet, the ambiguity of the words "did not" undermine of the specificity of the date and

name and draw attention to the unstable factual foundation on which Foer's enterprise is built (Foer, Interview). Further, by tracing his "lineage" to Trachim's daughter, who is pulled from the Brod River after which she is named, Foer entwines his family history with the imagined history that he creates for the *shtetl* and open both stories up for interpretation (Everything 13; Feuer 38; see Eaglestone 129).

As the opening sentence of the second layer suggests, Foer's Trachimbrod does not adhere to the parameters of the world that Alex describes. Instead, scholars such as Collado-Rodriguez and Feuer have drawn attention to the similarities between Trachimbrod and "Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Macondo in 100 Years of Solitude, […] a space within which many people live in dreams, experience bouts of insomnia, and involve themselves in odd and transgressive sorts of sexuality and acts of violence" (55, 58, 59-60; 37; Collado-Rodriguez 55, 58, 59-60; Mullan "Four"). Other similarities between the texts include their intergenerational structures, which focus on the many iterations of a single family, and the role of writing in each text, from Melquiades' manuscripts, to Foer's second layer, which was created over five decades after the actual destruction of Trochimbrod (Garcia Marquez 420-422). Further, both works contain "magical realism," which, as Lee Behlman asserts in "The Escapist: Fantasy, Folklore, and the Pleasure of the Comic Book in Recent Jewish American Holocaust Fiction," functions as a "self-conscious device for imagining the past, but also one which announces that gap between itself and the past *as it was experienced*" in Everything is Illuminated (Behlman 60; Eaglestone 129; see Collado-Rodriguez

58; see Behlman 56; see Varvogli 94). Through the creation of this kind of intertextuality, Foer distances the novel from historiographical accounts of Trochimbrod and challenges the reader to engage with the many levels of writing and reading in this layer of the text and forces the reader to question "the relationship of writing to memory" in the novel as a whole (Berger, "Unclaimed" 157; Feuer 24, 25).

In a 2002 review, Mendelsohn wrote that Everything is Illuminated is "filled with people reading and writing: letters, notes, plays, books" ("Boy"; see Collado-Rodriguez 56).[99] In the second layer, these acts of writing take on the form of the many records in which the residents of Trachimbrod attempt to preserve aspects of their daily lives. While Foer uses these works to create a textual record of imaginary members of Foer's family going back for generations, their often transitory and fragmentary nature, their lack of adherence to the ontological parameters of the actual world, and in many cases, their destruction demonstrate the extent to which the history of Trachimbrod and a record of the experiences of the *shtetl's* fictional and actual residents have been irrevocably lost.

The textual records in Trachimbrod come in a variety of forms that reflect the composition of the *shtetl* and the preoccupations of its inhabitants. Trachimbrod is divided into two sections, the Jewish Quarter and the Human Three-Quarters, as well as two religious groups, the Uprighters and the Slouchers. Notably, Foer traces his lineage to the Slouchers through Brod's adopted father Yankel D, who renames himself Safran (Everything 47; Feuer 39; Collado-

Rodriguez 59).[100] To further reflect these two points of view, the collective and individual history of the occupants of the *shtetl* is recorded in two books: The Book of Antecedents and The Book of Recurrent Dreams (Feuer 39). The Book of Antecedents as a response to the question, "IF WE ARE TO STRIVE FOR A BETTER FUTURE, MUSTN'T WE BE FAMILIAR AND RECONCILED WITH OUR PAST?" (Foer, Everything 210; Feuer 39). Accordingly, this book is a record of occurrences in Trachimbrod's physical world, while The Book of Recurrent Dreams records occurrences in the residents' imaginations (Feuer 39). A description of the content of the former encyclopedia reads:

> The Book of Antecedents began as a record of major events: battles and treaties, famines, seismic occurrences, the beginnings and endings of political regimes. But it wasn't long before lesser events were included and described at great length […] and the rather small book had to be replaced with a three-volume set. […] The Book of Antecedents, once updated yearly, was now continually updated, and when there was nothing to report, the full-time committee would report its reporting, just to keep the book moving, expanding, becoming more like life*: We are writing … We are writing … We are writing …* (Foer, Everything 196)

Notably, this book functions as a reference point for future generations; as Foer writes, "[e]ven the most delinquent students read The Book of Antecedents without skipping a word, for they knew that they too would one day inhabit its pages" (Foer, Everything 196). Yet, as this quotation demonstrates, despite the authors' attempts at comprehensiveness, like any literary text, The Book of

Antecedents is "finite," an idea Foer highlights by repeating the phrase "*We are writing* ..." in succession over two hundred times (Doležel 169; Everything 212-213; Eaglestone 129; Berger, "Unclaimed" 157). As Lubomír Doležel contends, "finite texts, the only texts that humans are capable of producing, are bound to create incomplete worlds" (169). In contrast, The Book of Recurrent Dreams includes entries such as "4:513 – The dream of angels dreaming of men" and "4:522 – The dream of meeting your younger self," which do not comply with the physical laws of nature that operate in the actual world in layers one and three (Foer, Everything 137, 140; Doležel 178). Like the memories that Mendelsohn collects in the interviews that he described in The Lost, Foer uses The Book of Recurrent Dreams to draw attention to the inner worlds of the residents of Trachimbrod that have not been preserved in the "'official' historical record" (McHale 87). This idea is also explored in the last section of the second layer when The Book of Recurrent Dreams is thrown into the fire and only the final entry, "The Dream of the End of the World," remains visible as it burns (Foer, Everything 272-273; Feuer 43). The tensions between these books are indicative of the larger tensions in Everything is Illuminated between what Foer has labeled the perspectives of "the eye" and "the mind's eye" (Foer, "Jonathan"). By establishing himself as a descendent of the Slouchers, the group that is responsible for updating The Book of Recurrent Dreams, just as Mendelsohn creates an intergenerational connection by using his grandfather's storytelling technique, Foer connects himself to his imagined family history by choosing to represent Trachimbrod through a fictional lens (Feuer 39).

In addition to these formal and collective records, many more personal and transitory texts are created in Trachimbrod that also reveal the complex relationship between writing and the personal histories of the characters in the book. For example, when Brod is a child, Yankel D lets her sleep on a "bed of crumpled newspaper in a deep baking pan [… that he] gently tucked […] in the oven"; Foer writes that "[w]hen he pulled her out to feed or just hold her, her body was tattooed with the newsprint. […] Sometimes he would rock her to sleep in his arms, and read her left to right, and know everything he needed to know about the world. If it wasn't written on her, it wasn't important to him" (Everything 43, 44). Further, after his "never-wife" leaves him, Yankel D "reread[s] the letters that she had never written him" each night until "the details" become "nearly impossible to distinguish […] from the facts" (Foer, Everything 48, 49). Finally, as he ages, like the residents of Macondo, Yankel writes notes to remind himself of his identity:

> Fearing his frequent deficiencies of memory, he began writing fragments of his life story on his bedroom ceiling with one of Brod's lipsticks that he found wrapped in a sock in her desk drawer. This way, his life would be the first thing he would see when he awoke each morning, and the last thing before going to sleep each night. You used to be married, but she left you, above his bureau. You hate green vegetables, at the far end of the ceiling. You are a Sloucher, where the ceiling met the door. You don't believe in an afterlife, written in a circle around the hanging lamp. (Foer, Everything 83; see Feuer 40; see Collado-Rodriguez 59-60)

As these examples demonstrate, the private records of Trachimbrod's residents are used to define their reality and personal history in the same way the public encyclopedias define the collective reality and history of the *shtetl*.[101] Yet, like Foer, the residents of Trachimbrod also use them to rewrite and reimagine the often painful aspects of their personal story and, in so doing, create a record of events that differs from their actual lives.

In addition to defying the boundary between the real and the imagined, the records that are created in Trachimbrod also defy the "teleology of historical writing" (Flüdernik 82). For example, Alex notices that in the diary that Jonathan is writing, some of the events that are recorded "happened early in history and some had not yet even happened yet," and this blurring of time periods has important consequences for characters in the text (Foer, Everything 160; see Collado-Rodriguez 56-57, 61, 63). When Brod reads the entry in The Book of Antecedents entitled "THE FIRST RAPE OF BROD D," she accesses the story of her life as it will be recorded at a later date (Foer, Everything 89). Yet, when the future readers discontinue reading, Brod is denied access to the remainder of the entry: "[t]he boy falls asleep, and the girl puts her head on his chest. Brod wants to read more – to scream READ TO ME! I NEED TO KNOW! – but they can't hear her from where she is, and from where she is, she can't turn the page. From where she is, the page – her paper-thin future – is infinitely heavy" (Foer, Everything 89; Collado-Rodriguez 59; Eaglestone 129). This idea is reinforced in the scene in which Brod sees a "scrap of paper on the desk, with handwriting that looks like hers: *This is me with Augustine, February 21, 1943*," which refers to

the writing on the back of the picture that Foer brought with him on his actual return journey, and by the scene in which the group finds a book with a similar title to The Book of Antecedents, The Book of Past Occurrences, in Augustine's box marked "IN CASE" (Foer, Everything 88, 224, 222; Feuer 34). As Collado-Rodriguez states in "Ethics in the Second Degree: Trauma and Dual Narratives in Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated," "[t]rauma theorists have pointed out that departing from a linear narration of events and confusing time spans are two of the characteristic marks of trauma narratives" (63).[102] Unlike The Lost, in which Mendelsohn creates a seductively complete story, in Everything is Illuminated Foer continually distances the reader by juxtaposing voices, styles, and time periods and drawing attention to gaps in the narrative.[103] As a result, like the author on his return journey, the reader must constantly engage in a reconstructive process when moving through the text. In this way, by collapsing different time periods and drawing the reader's attention to the seemingly permeable boundary between different layers of the text, Foer illustrates that, since it exists only within the confines of the book, Trachimbrod can only be "reconstructed" in one's mind (Eaglestone 130).

Upon these foundations, just as Foer explores the limitations of language and memory in layer one, he also examines these themes at length in layer two. Although the residents of Trachimbrod are obsessed with using writing to create a record of their collective and individual experiences, Foer reveals that their words often fall short of expressing their true intentions or emotions. For example, when Safran, Foer's grandfather, is set to marry another woman just before the *shtetl*'s

destruction, in their last conversation, his lover, who is referred to only as the Gypsy girl, is unable to express her true feelings: "[s]he didn't say, *You are going to marry*. And she didn't say, *I am going to kill myself*. Only: *How do you arrange your books*" (Foer, Everything 234, 238). Sensing the inadequacies of language, the residents also make up new words that better encapsulate what they are trying to say. For example entries in The Book of Antecedents are under made-up words such as "Ifice," "Ifact" and "Ifactifice," so that the writers can subtly distinguish their intended meanings from other related entries such as "Artifice" and "Artifact" (Foer, Everything 202, 203, 202). Notably, these limitations are echoed in Foer's writing style in layer two as well. For example, when the Nazis approach Trachimbord, Foer's statement "NAZIS ENTER UKRAINE, MOVE EAST WITH SPEED" is shown in increasing sized letters to denote the limitations of language and typography for capturing the urgency and temporal associations that are implied by these words (Everything 267). Perhaps the most striking example of this phenomenon occurs in Foer's representation of the *shtetl's* destruction, which includes only fragmentary sentences amidst "two pages of ellipses" (Everything 270-271; Eaglestone 129; Varvogli 93).[104] In this way, just as Jonathan resists hearing what occurred during this event in layer one, he is also able to resist describing it in layer two. If, as Wolfgang Iser has asserted, "[w]ithout the elements of indeterminacy, the gaps in the text, we would not be able to use our imagination," then, by failing to provide a definitive account of the *shtetl's* destruction, Foer suggests the limitations of his own attempts at imaginative reconstruction by presenting an event that words cannot express (qtd.

in Doležel 171; Iser, Implied 283). In this way, he forces the reader to question the extent to which they are comfortable using their own imagination to fill in these gaps as well (Doležel 171; Iser Implied 283).[105]

Additionally, just as the reliability and accuracy of Augustine's memory is called into question in layer one, Foer highlights the way in which written records cannot comprehensively preserve memories and experiences in layer two. For example, the guest book in which the names of Trachimbrod's residents are recorded at Safran's wedding is incomplete; Foer writes, "the various Trachimbroders who weren't, in Tova's estimation, worthy of an invitation were not at the reception, and hence not in the guest book, and hence not included in the last practical census of the *shtetl* before its destruction, and hence forgotten forever" (Everything 163). These phenomena reveal that, just as Mendelsohn's story of Bolechow is filtered through his attempts to tell the story of Shmiel Jäger's family, Foer's history of Trachimbrod is also presented through the lens of his own imagined genealogy. By focusing on only one thread of many that made up the fabric of a specific *shtetl*, each author reminds the reader of the many other stories that have not been told.

In light of the limitations of the textual record, Foer imagines a way in which members of future generations will be able to confirm the existence of the residents of Trachimbrod without relying on language or the printed page. In an interview, Foer was asked to what the word illumination in the title referred. He stated that, broadly, illumination is "an arc from ignorance to knowledge, from inexperience to wisdom," which is reinforced by the fact that the chapter in which

the stories in layers one and two converge is called "Illumination" ("Jonathan"; Everything 243-52; Collado-Rodriguez 62; see Ribbat 214; Eaglestone 130; Mullan, "One"). Yet, in the novel, one of the things to which illumination also refers is the light that emanates from couples making love (Berger, "Unclaimed" 157; Varvogli 94).[106] Foer writes:

> From space, astronauts can see people making love as a tiny speck of light. Not light, exactly, but a glow that could be mistaken for life – a coital radiance that takes generations to pour life honey through the darkness to the astronaut's eyes. In about one and half centuries – after the lovers who made the glow will have long since been laid prematurely on their backs – metropolises will be seen from space. They will grow all year. Smaller cities will also be seen, but with great difficulty. *Shtetls* will be virtually impossible to spot. Individual couples, invisible. (Everything 95)

Just as André Schwarz-Bart's Le dernier des justes, a novel published in 1959 that traces the intergenerational history of a Jewish family from the 12th century to the gas chambers in the Second World War, begins with the line "[n]os yeux reçoivent la lumière d'étoiles mortes" ("Our eyes register the light of dead stars"), after the Holocaust, when nothing remains of Trachimbrod or its residents, this light will cause astronauts to remark that "[t]*here's definitely something out there*" (Schwarz-Bart, Dernier 11; Schwarz-Bart, Last 3; Foer, Everything 99). Foer writes, with great poignancy for his post-Holocaust readership, "'[*w*]*e're here*,' the glow of 1804 will say in one an a half centuries. '*We're here, and we're alive*'" (Everything 96). Further, since this light is created through an intimate and

procreative act, and since it cannot exist outside of the ontological parameters of the book, it draws attention to both the scope and irretrievability of what was lost in Trachimbrod.

Before moving to my discussion of layer three, it is important to reflect on the treatment of layers one and two in the film adaptation of Everything is Illuminated in order to assess the significance of their relationship in greater depth. Directed by Liev Schrieber and starring Elijah Wood as Jonathan Safran Foer and Eugene Hutz as Alex Perchov, this film includes many of the aspects of the novel that I have previously discussed, including the group's journey to Trachimbrod, which is narrated by Alex and shown to be part of a book he is writing, and Alex's "thesaurusized English" (Belhman 61; see Mullan, "Week two; Varvogli 92-93; Ribbat 212; Kern-Stähler and Stähler 166-167). Yet, the second layer is almost entirely absent; aside from the "flashback" of the execution scene and Alex's grandfather's emergence from a pit of corpses, the history of the *shtetl* is not represented (Kern and Kern-Stähler 177, 178; Schreiber, Everything). By focusing solely on the return journey, not on the imaginative reconstruction of the place to which the group returns, and by ending with Alex's grandfather's burial in the field where Trachimbrod existed, the film has a conclusive and redemptive quality that is absent from the novel. While this could make the story more accessible to a general audience, it strips the narrative of the aesthetic and "ethical" complexities that arise from the juxtaposition of layers one and two (see Berger, "Unclaimed" 156; Collado-Rodriguez 55; Kern and Kern-Stähler 180). For, in relation to the structure of the book, Foer stated:

> The novel's two voices – one 'realistic,' the other 'folkloric' – and their movement toward each other, has to do with the problem of imagination. […] With two very different voices, I attempted to show the rift that I experienced when trying to imagine the book. (It is the most explicit of many rifts in the book.) And with their development toward each other, I attempted to heal the rift, or wound. ("Jonathan")

In the novel, by attempting to use his imagination to trace the history of his family and of Trachimbrod over multiple generations, Foer does not conclusively fill in the blanks he encountered in the historical record and on his return journey; instead, as I have revealed through my discussions of language, memory, and textuality, he illustrates the impossibility of comprehensively reconstructing the past in a narrativized form.

The possibilities and limitations of writing are most explicitly examined in the third layer of <u>Everything is Illuminated</u>, which consists of Alex's correspondence with Jonathan (Mullan, "One"; Varvogli 90; Eaglestone 131; Ribbat 212). Interspersed between sections of the previous two layers, this layer, which is presented in eight sections, connects the realistic and folkloric voices to which Foer referred (Foer, "Jonathan"). As Alex asks, "[w]ith our writing, we are reminding each other of things. We are making one story, yes?" (Foer, <u>Everything</u> 144; Collado-Rodriguez 60). Yet, by also revealing the challenges of attempting to reconcile these points of view, instead of closing the rift between them, Foer self-reflexively comments on the limitations of using words to attempt to heal this wound; this idea is illustrated, perhaps most strongly, by the fact that only Alex's

side of the correspondence is included in the text, which forces the reader to be aware of, and attempt to fill in, the blanks (Berger 155; Ribbat 214-215; Varvogli 90; Collado-Rodriguez 56).

The acts of writing and reading create a dialogue between the writer and the reader. In the third layer, Foer explicitly examines this relationship by allowing Alex and Jonathan to exchange and comment upon their writing from layers one and two (Varvogli 90; Collado-Rodriguez 56). Just as Ansgar Nünning asserts "that there is not one truth about the past, only a series of versions which are dependent on and constructed by the observer rather than retrieved from the past," Foer's exchanges between Alex and Jonathan demonstrate the extent to which an author's choices shape a reader's understanding of an event (369). For example, Alex writes:

> *Oh yes. There is one additional item. I did not amputate Sammy Davis, Junior, Junior from the story, even though you counseled that I should amputate her. You uttered that the story would be more 'refined' with her absence, and I know that refined is like cultivated, polished, and well bred, but I will inform you that Sammy Davis Junior, Junior is a very distinguished character, one with variegated appetites and seats of passion. Let us view her evolution and then resolve.* (55)

Through their correspondence, Alex also reveals himself to be an unreliable narrator, causing the reader to question the reliability in his seemingly realistic account of events; these inconsistencies include the number of women he has been with and his name, which Feuer asserts is a "fictional identity […] designed

for a fictional and comic character, […] not a traumatized character [who is actually] named Sasha" (Foer, Everything 1, 144, 5, 34; 41, 35; Collado-Rodriguez 60; Feuer 27, 41, 35; see Behlman 59-60).[107] As Alex notes, "*I think this is why I relish writing for you so much. It makes it possible for me to be not like I am*" and "*with writing we have second chances*" (Foer, Everything 144; see Kern-Stähler and Stähler 171). Feuer has even suggested that the suicide note at the end of the book is also Alex's fabrication and is based on a fictional entry that he read in Jonathan's diary in layer one in which Alex stands up to his domineering father (44-48). Thus, as the narrative moves closer toward the point at which the story of Alex's grandfather's wartime experiences and the destruction of the *shtetl* intersect, the implications of Alex's preoccupation with using fiction to represent the world in a better light takes on much more complex connotations. As Alex asks Jonathan in layer three:

> *We are being very nomadic with the truth, yes? The both of us? Do you think that is acceptable when we are writing about things that occurred? If you answer is no, then why do you write about Trachimbrod and your grandfather in the manner that you do, and why do you command me to be untruthful? If your answer is yes, then this creates another question, which is if we are to be such nomads with the truth, why do we not make the story more premium than life? It seems to me that we are making the story even inferior.* (Foer, Everything 179; see Stähler and Stähler 171; see Franklin 240; see Feuer 42; see Ribbat 214-215)

As this passage demonstrates, Alex recognizes that in fiction, "there are [not] any limits on how excellent we could make life seem," and he implores Jonathan to use his imagination to alter history for the benefit of those in the present instead of to reveal painful aspects of the past (Foer, Everything 180; Behlman 61). Yet for Jonathan, as for Foer, writing is a way of revealing and complicating the complex layers that make up our understanding of the past, not of burying them deeper.

Everything is Illuminated is an example of "[h]istoriographic metafiction," a term that was used by Linda Hutcheon in A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction to describe "novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" (119; qtd. in Nünning 360; see Collado-Rodriguez 61; see Eaglestone 128). As I have explored, in this genre "there is not so much a loss of belief in a significant external reality as there is a loss of faith in our ability to (unproblematically) *know* that reality, and therefore to be able to represent it in language" (Hutcheon 119). By creating a dialogue between Alex and Jonathan about their writing, Foer challenges the reader to question his own creative enterprise and the limitations of representation of using fiction to fill in gaps in the "dark areas" in the "official historical record" (McHale 87). Yet, as Daniel Mendelsohn contends in his review of Everything is Illuminated:

> Foer's interest in […] intertwining the fictional and the 'real,' is more than just a gimmick. It's a remarkably effective way of dwelling on an issue of considerable urgency in Holocaust literature: the seemingly hopeless split

> between history and narrative, between what happened and what can be told. ("Boy")

In both The Lost and Everything is Illuminated "[t]he problems of storytelling are just as important as the account itself," which is a significant comment on the third generation's perspective on representing the Holocaust (Zararzadeh qtd. in Ommundsen ix). By "transforming the process of writing into the subject of writing," both Mendelsohn and Foer highlight "the impossibility of [achieving] any unmediated, wholly accurate access to the past" (Behlman 60). In so doing, they expose the extent to which textuality shapes our traditional understanding of historical knowledge and demonstrate how, "as living memory passes into history," self-reflexive literary works will function as important educational tools (Hutton 72; Young, "Toward" 23).

In addition to examining issues pertaining to writing and reading in the three layers in Everything is Illuminated, it is also necessary to examine the relationship between writing and reading outside of the text. Although Foer has been quite forthcoming in interviews about the issues that he explores in Everything is Illuminated, he has been guarded about the actual return journey on which the book is based. For example, to my knowledge, the photograph of Augustine that was the underpinning for his journey has never been explicitly released as such.[108] Yet, in a 2010 interview, Foer uncharacteristically clarified the relationship between fact and fiction in many aspects of the book:

> Trachimbrod, it's a real place – or was one. And there really was a photograph of Augustine. […] A young man named Alex did take me

> around, although we had absolutely no relationship whatsoever during the trip and did not correspond after. He was neither intentionally, nor unintentionally, funny. There was no Augustine. There were no boxes. There was no Sammy Davis Junior, Junior. (qtd. in Mullan, "Three"; see Kern-Stähler and Stähler 178)[109]

By maintaining a "distance" between his private return journey and his public narrative of return, Foer draws attention to the elements of ambiguity that are present in the text and maintains the distance between his fictional rendering of both his grandfather and Trachimbrod and how they existed in the actual world (Eaglestone 128; Behlman 60-61).

Unlike many other *shtetls*, since Trochimbrod was inhabited almost entirely by Jews, it ceased to exist after the war; contemporary aerial photographs of the area show only the main street lined by trees in a large field where Trochimbrod once stood (Bendavid-Val N. pag.; Brostoffl; Bendavid-Val 17, 142-143, 13, inset 1). In light of this devastation, not all of the reactions to Foer's fictional representation of Trochimbrod have been positive. Mendelsohn's over-arching attitude in The Lost about representing actual people is that:

> There is so much that will always be impossible to know, but we do know that they were, once, themselves, specific, the subjects of their own lives and deaths, and not simply puppets to be manipulated for the purposes of a good story, for the memoirs and magical-realist novels and movies. There will be time enough for that, once I and everyone who ever knew everyone who ever knew them dies. (502)

This sentiment is strongly reinforced in the newspaper article "Everything is Not Illuminated," which was published in the Prague Post in 2004. Here, Ivan Katchanovski asserts that the novel "distorts history by omitting" what he perceives to be "crucial facts" ("NOT Everything"). Yet, the recently published The Heavens are Empty: Discovering the Lost Town of Trochenbrod by Avrom Bendavid-Val, which Foer refers to as "the definitive history" of Trochimbrod, has a very different take on the value of Foer's work ("Next" xiv).

Bendavid-Val's father YomTov (Yonteleh) Beider, to whom The Heavens are Empty is dedicated, was born in Trochenbrod, emigrated to "*Palestine in 1932*" and to the United States in 1939 (N. pag.). In 1997, Bendavid-Val and his brother Martin, both children of a member of the 0.5 generation, undertook a return journey to the place where their father was born (xx, xxvi-xxviii). Notably, Bendavid-Val writes that they were guided by:

> a young man in Lviv who was beginning to build a business of genealogical research for Jewish families and was willing to serve as a guide, translator, and driver for people like me. […] The young man's name was Alexander Dunai. About ten years later Alex was described with great affection by another customer-become-friend, Daniel Mendelsohn, in his book, The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million. Alex helped Daniel visit a small town in Ukraine where members of his family had lived and were murdered, and to research what happened there, during some of the time when he was also helping me. (xix)[110]

During this return journey, and over many trips that took place over the next twelve years, what "began […] as a sort of family project" turned into a much larger project about the history of Trochenbrod (Bendavid-Val xxvi, xxv-xxvi, xxvii). Bendavid-Val was fascinated by the *shtetl's* "historical significance" as "a full-fledged 'official' town situated in the Gentile world but built, populated, and self-governed entirely by Jews" (xxvi). To preserve its story, in The Heavens are Empty, Bendavid-Val includes descriptions of Trochenbrod's origins, maps, photographs supplied by members of families whose relatives lived there, including a photograph whose caption reads, "Label Safran from Trochenbrod-Lozisht […] and the Ukrainian family that hid him while the Nazis were rounding up Jews for slaughter" that was submitted by Foer's mother as well as testimony, photographs of artifacts that have been dug up on the town site and of a memorial in Trochenbrod and photographs of how the land where Trochenbrod once existed looks now (xxvi, x-xi, 1-24, 22, 157-189, 18, 23, 1, 24).

In his Introduction to The Heavens are Empty, Foer contrasts his representation of Trachimbrod's history with Bendavid-Val's work. Here, he describes Everything is Illuminated as:

> a highly fictionalized response to a trip I made, as a twenty-year-old student, in an effort to find the woman who saved my grandfather, Louis Safran, from the Nazis. The book was an experiential, rather than historical, record of Trochenbrod. Or perhaps it's more accurate to say it was a deeply personal expression of one man's experience in his destroyed ancestral homeland. ("Next" xiv).

Foer's description evokes Hirsch's definition of postmemory in which she states that postmemory's "connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation," as I discussed earlier in the chapter and at length in Chapter Two (Family 22). As a member of the third generation, who possesses what Ribbat refers to as "post-postmemory," Foer's distance from the Holocaust is even greater than the members of the second generation to whom Hirsch's definition refers (213). Yet, despite this distance, Bendavid-Val notes how "[t]he book and the movie with the same title kept Trochenbrod's name current for several years" (153). In The Heavens are Empty, he states:

> Even though the book and the movie use the variant 'Trachimbrod,' people descended from Trochenbrod knew what it was. Many of them had known of Trochenbrod only as family legend, sometimes handed down with diminishing clarity over several generations. They were amazed to learn that other people knew of Trochenbrod, they were excited by its new fame, and they wanted to know more about the town and connect with other Trochenbrod descendents. (153)

This connection, the progress of which Bendavid-Val outlines at length, was made tangible in a mass return journey that occurred in August 2009, in which "three Trochenbrod natives – two who survived in the forest and one who slipped away during the Russian occupation – and seventy-five descendents of Trochenbroders, the youngest of them teenagers," travelled to the site of the *shtetl* "from Brazil, Canada, Israel, Ukraine, and the United States" (153, 153-154, 154). Just as I

discussed how an exhibition of Kirshenblatt's paintings in Apt sparked the town's residents to create a Holocaust memorial for Apt's once thriving Jewish community in Chapter Two, Foer's fictional rendering of Trochenbrod challenged survivors and their descendents in the diaspora to reflect on their relationship to the *shtetl's* past. In the context of Foer's own family history, the dedication for Everything is Illuminated reads, "[s]imply and impossibly: FOR MY FAMILY," and Foer's mother Esther has stated that "[w]hen Jonathan wrote the book, it was kind of a gift to me […] it gave me some of Trochenbrod, some of the *shtetl*, some of my family" (Foer N. pag.; qtd. in Brostoff). As this quotation demonstrates, his book presented a world populated by characters that readers in the diaspora who were descendents of those who had lived in Trachonbrod could access in their own home and use to reflect upon their own history. Through the creation of Everything is Illuminated, Foer allowed readers to undertake not a physical return journey, but a return journey in their minds.

It is possible to gain further insight into how Foer's fictional rendering of Trochimbrod's history can function as a form of memorialization by comparing Everything is Illuminated to another work that explores the often tenuous relationship between imagining and remembering: Rafael Goldchain's I Am My Family: Photographic Memories and Fictions.[lxxii] Goldchain, who was born in Santiago, Chile, and came to Canada over three decades ago, "want[ed] to provide his son with a personal connection to" his family and "Jewish culture"; yet, his family history made this process a very daunting task (Langford 10). Since his

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[lxxii] A version of this section of this chapter was presented at the Comparative Literature Graduate Student Lecture Series, University of Alberta. Jefferies 28 Oct. 2010.

family was widely dispersed, and, since many of his ancestors died in the Holocaust, as Martha Langford states in "Imagined Memories: On Rafael Goldchain's Family Album," "what had been passed down in his family were photographic scraps mixed with scraps and legends" (Goldchain 16-17; Langford 10). Accordingly, Goldchain set out to recreate his family history by fashioning "a family album of traditional portrait photographs with an unconventional twist: the only subject is Goldchain himself" (N. pag.). While these photographs of Goldchain dressed in period costumes have been shown in a gallery setting, when collected in a book form they create what Goldchain has described as a "a simulacrum of a family album filled with images of ancestors, all of whom bear my likeness" (18). By creating a lineage in which his physical features are consistent with those of many of his forebears, Goldchain reconstructs the history of multiple generations of his family, while, like Mendelsohn and Foer, simultaneously drawing attention to what was lost.

Like the other two authors I examined in this chapter, when undertaking research for the collection, Goldchain encountered a number of obstacles. In the Artist's Statement at the beginning of the book, he describes the difficulties he encountered when "obtaining documents from Poland," as well as the challenges that arose as a result of the "the wide geographic distribution of family members and the lack of contact between them, […] the advanced age of the last remaining relatives of [… his] grandparents' generation, […] and the various spellings of [… his] family name," the implications of which I discussed at length in my analysis of The Lost (Goldchain 18-19). Therefore, in order "to rebuild the family

album from the ground up" and "fill in the blanks in his photographic family tree," Goldchain decided to layer photographs of multiple generations of members of his family who are both "real" and "imagined" (Langford 10, 12). Examples of the actual relatives in I Am My Family include Goldchain's maternal grandfather Don Moises Rubenstein Krongold, whose image he reconstructed "purely [… from] memory," while his imagined relatives include Naftuli Goldszajn, whose portrait is based on an image that Goldchain saw in And I Still See Their Faces: Images of Polish Jews (Goldchain18, 48-49; Langford 13; Goldchain 78-79). In order to achieve an air of authenticity, all of the portraits, both real and imagined, are accompanied by the name of the person and the locations and dates of their births and deaths. Yet, they are also accompanied by the word "self-portrait" (eg. "Self-Portrait as Don Marcos José Goldchain Liberman"), in order to simultaneously remind the reader of the book's artifice (Langford 12; Goldchain 24, 29).[111] Notably, this artifice is most poignantly brought to the fore in the book's "Appendix: Sketchbooks, Production Stills, and Family Trees," in which "Archival photographs" follow text and images that document the "several layers of transformation, including makeup, hair, costumes, studio lighting, performance, and digital manipulations" that enabled Goldchain to transform into the figure in each photograph (Goldchain 129-151, 153-168, 20; Langford 12). Yet, just as the juxtaposition of different layers in Everything is Illuminated announces the text's fictiveness, and Foer's attempts to fill in gaps in the historical record with his imagination draws attention to what has been irrevocably lost, the form and content of I Am My Family also demonstrates how,

as Goldchain notes, "[t]he attempt to make [… my ancestors] present in a corporeal way – through a genetic resemblance and through the phenomenality of the photograph – paradoxically also signals their absence, their pastness, and their irretrievability" (24). By creating this alternative record in which the dead are mapped onto the living, and the "unborn," those who never had a chance to exist, are "counted […] among the lost," I Am My Family demonstrates how "imagining" can function as "a way of remembering" (Langford 13). Therefore, in both Everything is Illuminated and I Am My Family, imagination functions as an important part of the memorialization process. In this way, like Mendelsohn, by attempting to create a return narrative that memorializes the Holocaust not in terms of absence but of loss, Foer and Goldchain have created powerful reminders of what is gone.

In works of fiction and non-fiction, the world within the text is constructed in the mind of the author and brought to life once again in the mind of the reader. In Everything is Illuminated, by drawing attention to the role of the textual record in the preservation and transmission of knowledge, and the relationship between language, memory, and imagination, Foer highlights the extent to which, while books can contain the "fictions necessary for life," they "*are for those without real lives* [...] [*a*]*nd they are no real replacement*" for those lives in the end (83, 195). With his rendering of his return journey and his family's history so reflective of the perspective of his own mind's eye, like Mendelsohn's and Goldchain's works, Foer's writing embodies his assumption that I previously memtioned that "[a]ll writing […] is autobiographical" since there "is nowhere for

it to come but from the author" (Foer qtd. in Mackenzie). Therefore, through the creation of his return narrative, Foer shows that a work of fiction can be an important record for future generations of one person's attempts to come to terms with both the past and the present at a specific point in time.

Part Three

Conclusion

As my examinations of Daniel Mendelsohn's The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million and Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated reveal, while Mendelsohn and Foer undertook return journeys to Ukraine in search of their families' histories, their narrativized representations of their journeys and their families' stories vary in significant ways. In the previous two sections, by placing these texts in a comparative context, I explored the implications of how Mendelsohn and Foer chose to reconstruct, represent, and memorialize their families' pasts. Yet, as Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer state in Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory:

> For returnees, making contact with spaces and objects of their own past provides a means of working through the multiple and discordant layers of lives interrupted by war, genocidal threat, displacement, and emigration. But what kind of past is created by journeys and narratives of return for those in subsequent generations? Will sparks (re)ignite for them? (296)

In this final section, I will attempt to answer these questions by exploring the importance of return journeys and return narratives for future generations of family members and Holocaust scholars.

In The Lost, Mendelsohn is aware how the opportunity to speak with elderly survivors will soon be added to the litany of losses that occurred during the Holocaust and that are taking place within its wake (Mendelsohn, "Six" 65). After the death of survivors, members of subsequent generations will have to rely

upon a variety of primary and secondary sources in order to learn about the human consequences of war. Yet, as both Mendelsohn and Foer reveal, while written and visual texts can be used to preserve and transmit information, their inherently mediated nature, and the confines of language, the printed page, and the photographic frame make them imperfect windows into the past. In his extensive work on memorialization, James E. Young has explored the complexities of visiting a memorial site that is situated in a specific place (Texture x). Building on this foundation, in light of these limitations, it is necessary to acknowledge that as survivors die and the textual tradition is given increasing prominence, return journeys will be an important way for future generations to create a tangible, albeit also mediated, connection with the past. This is especially significant since, as Omer Bartov explores throughout Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine, evidence of Jewish life in Eastern Europe is continuing to disappear (8-10).[112] The image on page 2 of Erased of fading "prewar stone signs in Polish and Yiddish" is indicative of this point (Bartov). In The Lost and Everything is Illuminated, by not only attempting to reconstruct what life was like for their families in the communities where they lived before and during the war, and by documenting evidence of Jewish life in these communities at the time of their return, authors of return narratives are able to situate these current changes in an intergenerational context.

As I explored at length in the previous two sections, the third generation will likely be the last that will have the privilege and responsibility of hearing the stories of Holocaust survivors firsthand (Franklin 238-239). Yet, as Mendelsohn's

horizontal and perpendicular relationship to Shmiel Jäger on his family tree demonstrates, generational categories are not as straightforward as traditional definitions imply. As such, when viewed in the context of their return narratives, it is evident that the third is not the only generation to which Mendelsohn and Foer belong since Mendelsohn, who was born in 1960, is a member of the Baby Boomer generation ("1946 to 1964"), while Foer, who was born in 1977, is a member of Generation X ("1965 to 1981") (Lost N. pag.; Underwood 95, 96; Everything N. pag.; Underwood 159).[113] If, as Susan Rubin Suleiman notes, "what all of the attempts to define a historical generation have in common in the concept of a shared or collective experience, which in turn influences (or even, as [Karl] Mannheim suggests, 'forms') collective behavior and attitudes," then, while these authors are bound together by their relationship to a historical event, they occupy very different frames of reference within their own lives ("Thinking" 280). This is evident in Foer's statement in references to comparisons between himself and authors such as Jeffrey Eugenides and Jonathan Franzen:

> I'm from a generation that was raised with the Internet, which is quite different. It makes a huge difference. And I was raised with a different kind of television and music. Music for example that depends very much on borrowing from different traditions, sampling pieces of other music and overlaying different rhythms and melodies and I think that is reflected in my writing. It was not intentional and it was not an attempt to reflect something about the culture in which I grew up, but it's what I know. And

> I think it comes across in the typography and in the style in the combination of voices. ("Author")

As this quotation demonstrates, while the generational difference between Mendelsohn and Foer influences the form of their return narratives, yet another generational category also influences the content of their works: Mendelsohn is referred to as "*second*-generation American" by Meg Grossbard, while Foer is referred to as a "second generation immigrant" by Aliki Varvogli, which causes one to question how these generational categories are defined as well since it was Mendelsohn's grandmother and Foer's mother who came to the United States (Lost 256; 89; Lost 14; Brostoff). Yet, however these generational boundaries are defined, in his analysis of Everything is Illuminated, Varvogli asserts that "the novel suggests" that for "the young Jonathan, [a] second generation immigrant, the trauma of the Holocaust resides in Europe, and he feels he must go there to find it"; therefore "[t]o be Jewish American […] is to be somehow incomplete, since part of the meaning of that identity is linked with a past that happened elsewhere," an idea that is part of his larger examination of the implications for his return journey of the place from which he has come (89).[114] With one foot firmly rooted in present-day America and one foot in the history of what is now Ukraine, Mendelsohn's and Foer's return journeys and narratives of return are important reminders that Holocaust studies cannot afford to only look back, for, as returnees, Mendelsohn and Foer are influenced as much by the stories of their families and the communities in which they once lived as by their own life experiences and the communities of which they are a part (see Varvogli 94). A

fascinating area of future research would be an in-depth examination of how the intersection of the different generational categories to which authors belong influences the form, content, and reception of their literary works.

As my comparative discussion of The Lost and Everything is Illuminated reveals, I agree with Mendelsohn that nothing is permanent, not memories, stories, communities, or even, as I will explore in the Conclusion, the printed page (Mendelsohn, Lost 486-487; Mendelsohn "Melancholy"; Mendelsohn, "Six" 67). Return narratives allow returnees to document the effects of these changes on individuals, families, and communities as a result of their intergenerational and intercontinental scope. Through the layers of stories that are contained within return narratives, and the additional layers that are revealed through their pairings, they are an invaluable record of intimate family history, but also of how the Holocaust and its legacy was understood and represented at this point in time. In the Concluding Chapter, I will explore this issue further by assessing how new technology is changing the nature of textual memorialization, the written record, and the narrativization of both the present and the past, as well as how the intergenerational family narratives that I have studied can be used to educate present and future generations about the Holocaust.

Conclusion

Off the Printed Page

In the preceding chapters, I explored the role of literary texts in the memorialization of Holocaust family history. Building on James E. Young's contention that, after the Second World War, *Yizkor* (memorial) books turned "the site of reading into a memorial space," I explored the ways in which books have functioned as memorials for subsequent generations as well ("Memory" 78; Young, Texture 7). Upon these foundations, by considering each of the eight books in my study as "a cultural transaction, a literary text, and a material artefact," I examined how family history has been preserved and transmitted by different generations, while also drawing attention to the amount of information about individuals that has been irrevocably lost (Howsam 4). The first section of this concluding chapter will examine the ways in which new technologies are changing how family history is being recorded and accessed and how this will, in turn, affect the ways in which future generations will memorialize their family history and understand the Holocaust and its aftermath. For, as Marianne Hirsch and Nancy K. Miller observe in the Introduction to Rites of Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory, "[i]n the first decade of the century, the turn to roots has been supported and stimulated by the vast resources of the Internet and the new or recycled technologies of research" that cannot be ignored in the context of my study (xi). Support for this idea can also be found in Marianne Hirsch's and Leo Spitzer's publication of "The Web and the Reunion: http://czernowitz.ehpes.com/" in Rites of Return (59-71). In turn, section two will

examine how both scholars and students can use literary representations of the Holocaust to engage with the past. In these ways, I hope to demonstrate not only how the textual memorialization is continually evolving, but also how, in light of the work that I have undertaken in the previous chapters, there are many other areas of research that must continue to be explored.

Part One

A Digital World

Chaim Grade identified the vast collection of writing that was left behind by those who perished in the Holocaust as a "paper universe" (Weisel, Foreward 5). Over seventy years after the start of the Second World War, the work that I have undertaken in this study draws attention not only to the continuing role of the textual tradition in the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, but also to the changing nature of the printed page. With the expanding influence of the Internet, digitization, e-book readers, and digital publishing, our relationship with Grade's paper universe and with the post-Holocaust textual record is becoming increasingly tempered by the digital universe of which we are a part. In Imagining the Holocaust, Daniel Schwartz contends, "to know ourselves we have to write ourselves, make a record" (39). Yet, as I have demonstrated, it is not only what is contained within that record, but also its form, that is of importance within the context of my study (Young, Writing 37, 10, 38). In the context of his discussion of "literary testimony" in Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust James E. Young contends:

> If the diarists' and memorists' literary testimony is evidence of anything else, it is of the writing act itself. That is, even if narrative cannot document events, or constitute perfect *fact*uality, it can document the *act*uality of writer and text. The writer and his link to events may thus be reified not in the writer's words but in the writing activity that brought words to the page. (Writing 37; Jaillant 363)

As such, building on my discussion of Everything is Illuminated in Chapter Three, I will begin this section of the Conclusion with an analysis of Jonathan Safran Foer's novel Tree of Codes in order to lay the groundwork for my discussion of how the relationship between paper and digital media is influencing the ways in which, for subsequent generations, the *acts* of writing, archivization, and textual memorialization are taking place.

In 2010, Foer published Tree of Codes. A conceptually fascinating work, Tree of Codes is a die-cut alteration of Bruno Schulz's Street of Crocodiles (1934) (Foer, Tree 138; Foer, "Jonathan"). Foer removed words from the English translation of Schuz's Polish text by literally "cutting into and out of the pages" of the book (Visual Editions qtd. in Foer, "Jonathan"). In the "Author's Afterword" for Tree of Codes Foer describes the conceptual underpinning for the work thus:

> When the Germans seized Drohobycz in 1941, Schulz, a Jew, distributed his artwork and papers – which are said to have included the manuscript of a novel, Messiah – to gentile friends for safekeeping. These comprised the great bulk of his artistic output, and not a single item of them has been seen since. All that we have of his fiction are two slim story collections, The Street of Crocodiles and Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass. […] Their long shadow – the work lost to history – is, in many ways, the story of the century. (137)

In comparison to Everything is Illuminated, in which Foer tests the boundaries of representation by using words to fill in the gaps in his family history, in Tree of Codes he tests the boundaries of silence and loss by scraping away at the textual

record itself (Foer, “Jonathan”). Instead of adding words to the empty page, as a work of literature is traditionally created, Foer acted like a visual artist, chiseling words from Schultz’s novel like a sculptor “carving a stone” (Foer, “Jonathan”). For example, on page one, all of the words have been removed so that the reader enters into the work through a series of holes. On subsequent pages, since the holes that have been cut out provide windows through which other words are visible, the reader must lift each page in order to discern what comes next. Further, when progressing through the text, the reader has to physically separate pages that became entwined in the die-cutting process. This incredibly tactile reading experience in which the physicality of the book as a material object comes to the fore is reinforced by the fact that, when the book is finished and all of the pages have been separated, the covers feel concave. Foer refers to this sensation, which draws more attention to what is missing from Schulz’s text than to what remains, as “a slight feeling of hollowness or lightness that is inevitable when so much material is removed from the center of a book” (Foer, “Jonathan”). Interestingly, it is for this reason that the first edition could not be published in hard cover, as it would have collapsed in upon itself (Foer, “Jonathan”).

In many ways, Schulz’s Street of Crocodiles is a historical artifact. As a remnant of a much larger *oeuvre*, its existence points to the historical circumstances that led to its creation and to the loss of much of Schulz’s other writing. By creating “a die-cut book by erasure, a book whose meaning was exhumed from another book,” Foer explores what is both lost and gained in the process of creating a “response” to Schultz’s original text and an entirely new

work (Foer, Tree 138; Foer, "Jonathan"). As such, in Tree of Codes, Foer uses both the form and content of the book to draw attention to the layers of mediation that are present in narrativized representations of the past.

Through the creation of a text such as Tree of Codes, which relies heavily on its materiality, Foer makes an interesting comment on the role of books in a digital age. According to Foer, "[o]n the brink of the end of paper, I was attracted to the idea of a book that can't forget it has a body" (Foer, "Jonathan"). Unlike most traditional novels, Tree of Codes could not be read on an e-book reader; the process of creating a digital image of the text would strip it of its corporeality (Foer, "Jonathan"). By making the page not only a conduit for a literary work but part of the work as well, Foer draws attention to the way in which texts are created and accessed in our digital world.

Yet, in spite of the way in which paper is privileged in Tree of Codes, digital media is an integral part of the marketing of the book. In a 2010 interview with Steven Heller in The New York Times, Foer stated:

> the publisher [Visual Editions] is driven by the making of books, and not the selling of them. There were no review copies made, there is no marketing or publicity team in the United States, there will be no ads. The infrastructure that brings a book to the public is absent. How could a reviewer be expected to notice something that is almost entirely invisible? ("Jonathan")

In response to this question, there is a short film on YouTube called "Tree of Codes by Jonathan Safran Foer" in which close up images of die-cut pages are

featured alongside Foer's discussion of the text. The film was posted by Visual Editions, as were two other related films, "Tree of Codes by Jonathan Safran Foer: Making Of," which shows how a page goes through the die-cutting process, and "Tree of Codes by Jonathan Safran Foer: Public Reactions," which catalogues readers' initial reactions to the text. By marketing Tree of Codes using the media that the book inherently resists, Foer and his publisher reveal the tensions facing writers and readers at this point in time.

In the context of my study, an important implication of these tensions is readers' access to information. Despite my focus on the physical text as a memorial space, radio interviews, academic and newspaper articles, and obituaries that were available in online databases and on personal homepages were an integral part of my research. An important example of this phenomenon is online access to *Yizkor* books. The New York Public Library is in the process digitizing their collection of *Yizkor* books enabling family members like Foer, Mendelsohn, and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, and scholars such as myself, to gain access to this first stage of textual memorialization from anywhere in the world ("About Holocaust"; see Hirsch and Spitzer, "Web" 61).

In addition to the digitized copies, translations of *Yizkor* books are also being made available online. As I discussed in Chapter Two, in The Life and Death of a Polish *Shtetl*, Gene Bluestein reveals that he undertook a translation of the *Yizkor* book for Strzegowo, Poland, so that "younger members of [… his wife's] family," who were unable to read the text in Yiddish, would "know something about this period in their family's history" (ix, x; see Kuglemass and

Boyarin 36). Yet, these kinds of print translations are exceedingly rare.[115] Notably, in The Lost Mendelsohn explores how "many of the Yizkor books, including the Sefer HaZikaron LeKodoshi Bolechow, are in Yiddish or Hebrew or both, and jewishgen.org has sponsored a project to translate them into English and post them on the site" (Lost 64).[116] On the one hand, this kind of access to information allows for a much more democratic approach to research since family members can read digitized *Yizkor* books without the often prohibitive costs associated with travelling to the places where they are housed or the time constraints of learning the languages in which they are written. It also enables rare manuscripts to be preserved without regular wear and tear and ensures that back up copies exist in case the originals are destroyed. On the other hand, though, measures such as digitization and translation are excellent examples of how the distance and "the dialogue between the past and present" stretches far beyond the temporal sphere (Hirsch and Spitzer, Ghosts xviii).

Mendelsohn also refers to his use of the "Jewish geneology Web sites' FamilyFinder page" on "jewishgen.org" in The Lost (61, 64; see Gruber 151). Another important example of an online database is "The Central Database of Shoah Victims Names" at Yad Vashem that I mentioned in Chapter Three. The creators of the databases on the JewishGen and Yad Vashem websites have brought together a wide variety of sources in order to expedite the research process. Yet, the information contained in databases, and the parameters by which they can be searched, can shape a researcher's outcomes. Therefore, it would be dangerous for family members or scholars to rely entirely upon online sources

when examining a person or a place since no database is comprehensive and there are often inaccuracies contained therein. An excellent example of this phenomenon are the inaccuracies in the entries for Mendelsohn's family members in "[T]he [C]entral [D]atabase of Shoah Victims Names," which I discussed at length in Chapter Three (Lost 224-225). As Mendelsohn points out in his discussion of the discrepancies between the information that is contained in the entries in the database and what he discovered through the course of his journey, if he had not undertaken many additional layers of research he would not have been able to identify what parts of the entry were incorrect (Lost 225). Finally, online research takes away the personal elements from the research experience. As Mendelsohn demonstrates through the personal attachment he forms with Mrs. Begley, accessing information online denies family members and researchers the human connections that can be created by coming into contact with a person or undertaking a journey to read a text in its physical environment (Lost 441-444).

In Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory, Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer elaborate upon this point in their discussion of the website for Czernowitz. As I discussed in Chapter Three, in Ghosts of Home, Hirsch and Spitzer detail their many "return" journeys to the city where Hirsch's parents lived before and during the Second World War (xvii, xvi). It is in this context that, while Hirsch and Spitzer describe the website that was created by and for descendents of Jewish families from Czernowitz as a "dynamic, 'living,' and steadily growing virtual archive," and an "invaluable resource" that contains "previously unknown or hard-to-access private holdings and family collections,"

they are quick to point out the limitations of making sources available in a digital form (Ghosts 261, see all Ghosts 260). The authors state:

> Despite their vast informative power, […] and the fact that many posted materials can be downloaded, printed, and viewed 'offline,' they do remain in the realm of the virtual. They lack the smells, scale, and tactile physicality of the 'actual,' certainly, but also of the analog 'originals' from which they were generated. They are generally also without the context in which their originals were first collected and displayed in family albums and communal archives. […] Furthermore, as Svetlana Boym notes, 'computer memory has no patina of history, and everything has the same digital texture.' Digitized images and documents, posted on the web, combining private and familial with public holdings, *seem* to offer more immediate access and breadth of detail than materials in traditional archives. But in the process of their web-based dissemination and circulation, these resources – often compressed, cropped, and attenuated – remain frustrating simulacra. (Hirsch and Spitzer, Ghosts 264-65)[117]

Notably, this passage demonstrates how, just as Walter Benjamin explored the way in which the "aura" of an original "work of art" is lost when it was replicated "in the age of mechanical reproduction," in the age of digital reproduction the same holds true as well (221). Therefore, while Hirsch and Spitzer emphasize the possibilities presented by digital media, like Foer, they also emphasize the limitations of using documents that have lost their materiality and physical

context, issues that are of the utmost importance when analyzing the future of the book as a memorial space.

As my discussion of many of the texts in the previous chapters, the prevalence of testimony in contemporary Holocaust studies, and the online databases that privilege information about individual Holocaust victims reveal, bearing witness to the names and stories of those who perished is an important way of memorializing the Holocaust. Yet, the increasingly permeable membrane between the public and private spheres in contemporary Western society is affecting how present and future generations will relate to the stories of victims, survivors, and their descendents. The prevalence of online social media including MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, Pinterest, and blogs, many of which make information that would have previously been contained in a private diary or in personal correspondence part of the public record, point to a contemporary fascination with autobiography in a variety of forms. Notably, this phenomenon cannot be ignored in the context of my research into the intergenerational transmission of knowledge since future generations, who will presumably have even greater computer literacy since they will have grown up within the context of these social networks, will be accustomed to sharing information about themselves online.

In light of these issues, in addition to the online databases and web pages I discussed, it is also necessary to also examine personal websites, not only as important resources for researchers, but also as another way of turning "the site of reading into a memorial space" ("Memory" 78; Young, <u>Texture</u> 7). Instead of

functioning as a virtual archive that is centered on an event or community, these homepages, which contain information about families and individuals, present fascinating opportunities for memorialization to occur in the virtual sphere. While most of the authors I discussed in the preceding chapters have a web presence of some kind, Daniel Mendelsohn's and Mayer Kirshenblatt's and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's websites are of particular interest in the context of my research (Daniel; They).

Mendelsohn's website centers on his career as a writer (Daniel). Importantly for this study, when a visitor clicks on the link for "Books" and then on the link for "The Lost" they are given access to excerpts of reviews for the text by authors such as Elie Weisel, Francine Prose and Charles Simic, but not to any additional writing about the work by Mendelsohn. This is an important example of how, online, an author is able to link their work not only to their biographical information but also to selected critical material about a text, thereby controlling, to some extent, how a reader interprets their work. Websites such as Mendelsohn's are also incredibly fluid: as new books are published and new appearances are scheduled, new information is added to the site. Yet, information is also taken away. When I first conceived of this study in 2007, there was a section on Mendelsohn's website titled "The Bolechow Project," which was a virtual exploration of Bolechow that supplemented his work in The Lost (Daniel). When I returned to the website three years later, this section was gone and there was no way of returning to an earlier version of the site. When a book is published, numerous copies are created, and, ideally, when one is misplaced,

damaged, or destroyed other copies or earlier editions can be accessed instead. But when a webpage is altered the change is irrevocable and there is no record of the website as it previously existed. Interestingly, in the 7th edition of their style guide, the Modern Languages Association recognized the impermanent nature of virtual spaces by moving away from citing specific "URLs" (182-184). The deletion of information about Bolechow from Mendelsohn's website is a fascinating addition to the numerous losses he catalogues in his text and an important reminder the ways in which our progressively paperless world is influencing how information is recorded, archived, and accessed.

The second website, which is titled "They Called Me Mayer July: Mayer Kirshenblatt remembers the world of his childhood in Poland before the Holocaust," is more extensive in scope. Centering on the creation and dissemination of They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust, this website includes pages such as "Exhibitions," which detail the times and places that Kirshenblatt's original paintings are on display, as well as a "For teachers: Resources," which includes an extensive bibliography on a variety of subjects including "Jewish life in interwar Poland," "Memory artists," and "Intergenerational projects" that could facilitate comparative examinations of Kirshenblatt's and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's work.[118] Further, a page called "Interview a loved one of your own" includes guidelines for readers to conduct interviews of their own provided by "StoryCorps" and "The Samberg Family History Program, "which are groups that encourage readers to learn their own family stories and provide resources for gathering and recording

information. In this way, the website presents Kirshenblatt's and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's relationship as a model for readers who are preserving and transmitting their family histories in a textual form.

Despite this plethora of information, in the context of my study, perhaps the most important part of "They Called Me Mayer July: Mayer Kirshenblatt Remembers the World of His Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust" is a relatively recent addition to the website: Kirshenblatt's obituary by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett which appeared in the Lives Lived section of the Globe and Mail on January 29, 2010 ("Mayer"; "Lives").[119] As this obituary demonstrates, while They Called Me Mayer July is a memorial to Apt, the website has become a memorial for Kirshenblatt and important evidence of James E. Young's assertion that "[a] memorial may be a day, a conference, or a space, but it need not be a monument" (Texture 4). The digital universe has led to a new kind of memorial space that is not physical, like a monument, or temporal, like a calendar day; instead, it can be accessed, like a book, by the reader at the time and place of their choosing. Yet, unlike a book, it is not tangible or fixed on the printed page as my example from Mendelsohn's website reveals, and, problematically, not permanent as well.

In the context of my study of intergenerational family history, an important example of the possibilities of online memorialization is a website that was created for Hana Brady. Established decades after her death, this virtual space functions as a celebration of Hana's life, but also as a record of her posthumous legacy. Born in Nove Mesto, Czechoslovakia in 1931, Hana Brady died in

Auschwitz in October 1944 at the age of 13 ("Timeline"). In 2000, Fumiko Ishioka, a coordinator at the Tokyo Holocaust Center, requested to borrow artifacts from Auschwitz for an exhibition in Japan ("Timeline"). In addition to "a child's sock [… and] shoe, a child's sweater, and a can of Zyklon B poisonous gas," one of the artifacts she was sent was a suitcase that bore Hana's name and the word *Waisenkind* [orphan] ("Timeline"; Levine 2-3). Ishioka's students' fascination with the identity of the owner of the suitcase led her on a search that stretched from Auschwitz to Tokyo to Theresienstadt ("Timeline"). Finally, she was able to locate Hana's older brother George Brady in Toronto, where he had moved after the war ("Timeline"). With an introduction by George Brady, the website, which is titled "Hana's Story," provides a great deal of information about Hana and her family and provides links to the layers of texts that weave the story of Hana's life with the story of Ishioka's search to uncover the fate of the suitcase's owner in a section calling "Sharing Hana's Story." Under this heading are pages such as "Audio," which includes a link to Karen Levine's 2001 radio documentary "Hana's Suitcase" that was created for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "Print," which includes information on her 2002 book Hana's Suitcase, and "Film," which includes information on Harvey Weinstein's 2009 feature-length film Inside Hana's Suitcase. Finally, under the heading "Inspiration" are pages such as "Study Guides," which contain educational resources for teachers, as well as "Art/Letters/Creations," which includes artistic responses by students to Hana's story. These responses are particularly poignant since "photographs of Hana's drawings," which were created in Theresienstadt,

were used to educate children about her story at the Tokyo Holocaust Center in an exhibition titled “The Holocaust Seen Through Children’s Eyes” (2000) and were included in Hana’s Suitcase as well (“Timeline”; Levine 34, 40, 47, 60, 67). Like the books I discussed, these layers of generations and media create a record of not only victims’ and survivors’ experiences of the Holocaust, but also of subsequent generations’ responses to learning about the Holocaust at this time.

The website about Hana Brady differs significantly from the other texts that have been created about her life since, unlike radio broadcasts, television shows, plays, or books, websites do not have to go through an external publishing process. As I discussed in relation to Daniel Mendelsohn’s website, while information on websites is not necessarily as permanent or verifiable as information that is contained in a book, it can be accessed by readers in a variety of locations free of charge and stored in a variety of ways, from printing out a document to saving information to a data key or hard drive. However, although works that are published and saved online are not vulnerable to the same natural phenomena things as paper they are in fact less permanent and more fluid than a printed text since an author can change, add, or delete information at any given time without the paper trail that is created when a new edition of a text is published. Despite these possibilities and limitations, though, on the whole, this does mean that, just as the creation of online resources has led to a democratization of research, personal websites have opened the door for the democratization of memorialization. Now families can create public memorials about individuals or the places they came from without a publisher’s support.

While this could lead to a decrease in the reliability or professional standards of textual memorials and make it more difficult to verify information that is not otherwise publicly accessible, it also creates more opportunities for individuals to memorialize their family history. Perhaps what all of these examples demonstrate, then, is that what the Internet has done most effectively is ensure that the book is no longer where the act of reading begins and ends.

We are at an interesting point in history, where the possibilities of the written word are changing how information is retrieved and stored. How members of the fourth generation, and the generations that follow, choose to use digital technology to memorialize their family history in a textual form will further reinforce the interplay that I have discussed throughout this study between the time period that is depicted in a text, the time in which it was written, and the time in which it is read. For, no matter how deep we are immersed in the events the past, as the form in which a text is produced and accessed demonstrates, we can only ever view them through the lens of the present (Young, Writing 10).

As my examination of the way in which technology is changing how we prepare to pass information on to future generations reveals, the Internet is providing many new opportunities for the collection and dissemination of information. Yet, as documents are digitized, and the primacy of the book is lost, our collective archive is becoming increasingly fluid and erasable. Within the context of my research into intergenerational Holocaust family narratives I have attempted to show that, in our digital universe, the specter of forgetting looms just as large as it has in the past (Hirsch and Spitzer, Ghosts 265; Whitehead 153).

Therefore, in the following section, by focusing on the role of Holocaust literature in the educational process, I will evaluate how, as Holocaust survivors die and "living memory passes into history," textual renderings of family history will shape the ways in which future generations will learn about the Holocaust and its aftermath (Hutton 72; Young, "Toward" 23).

Part Two

The Scholar and the Text, The Text and the Classroom

As the etymologies of the words reveal, memory and memorialization are inextricably linked – both words are derived from the Latin word *memor*, meaning "mindful" and "remembering" ("Memoir" 586). Within the current academic climate in which the study of memory is not only fashionable but has also been referred to as a "preoccupation," it is necessary to assess the ways in which my research presents practical and generative possibilities for understanding how scholars and students can continue to engage with textual memorializations of Jewish life before, during, and after the war (Whitehead 2).[120] As James E. Young asserts in The Texture of Memory, "[i]t is not enough to ask whether or not our memorials remember the Holocaust, or even how they remember it. We should also ask to what ends we have remembered" (15; see Young, "Memory" 100). Accordingly, whereas the first section of this chapter examined how in the early twenty-first century our relationship to memory and memorialization is changing as a result of new technologies, this second section will evaluate the extent to which the academic approaches to memory affect how scholars engage their own Holocaust family history and assess how the texts I have studied can be used to educate future generations about the human costs of genocide.

The Scholar and the Text

When studying representations of their family history in an academic context, it is important to acknowledge how academic discourse on memory is shaping the textual memorialization of the Holocaust. Of the eight authors I chose to explore in the previous chapters, three hold academic positions: Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daniel Mendelsohn, and Jonathan Safran Foer (Barbara; Daniel, "About"; "Jonathan"). As I discussed at length in Chapter Two, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's academic work was incredibly formative on her interactions with her father and on the form and content of They Called Me Mayer July and the influence of Mendelsohn's training in Classics is also evident in The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million (Berger, "Unclaimed" 152). Another excellent example of this phenomenon can be seen in the work of Rafael Goldchain, a Professor at Sheridan College in Toronto, whose work I discussed at length in Chapter Three. For example, in the "Artist's Statement" at the beginning of I Am My Family: Photographic Memories and Fictions, Goldchain analyzes his photographic creations in terms of the writings of Roland Barthes, Robert Sobieszek, and Jacques Derrida in a manner that is reminiscent of Marianne Hirsch's analysis of family photographs in Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory; in fact, Goldchain even cites Hirsch herself (Goldchain 19, 22, 23; Hirsch 1-6; Goldchain 21, 23). While this kind of self-reflexive writing can draw attention to many of the themes I discussed in the previous chapters, it can also alienate readers who are not well versed in the intricacies of the academic discussion surrounding Holocaust representation and

shape how family history is preserved. Therefore, within the complex debate about the limitations of fact and fiction and memory and imagination that I addressed in this study, it is possible that creative writing about the Holocaust will become so theoretical and abstract that it will be inaccessible to non-academic audiences or that the constraints of the academic discussion surrounding Holocaust representation will hinder creative output (Suleiman, "Thinking" 291).[lxxiii]

In Holocaust Representation: Art Within the Limits of History and Ethics, Berel Lang identifies three categories of writing about the Holocaust. The "first of these groups includes a large body of Holocaust writings that profess historicity, the exemplary genre here being the diary, but encompassing also other, more mediated forms like the memoir, the autobiography, the 'oral history,' the nonfictional fiction (in novels or short stories), all of which rely on the reader's belief in their verisimilitude" and "the second category – Holocaust writings that appear with only a subtext or context of historical reference – applies to a smaller but still substantial number of works whose indirection can be understood in terms of Aharon Appelfeld's aphorism that 'one does not look directly into the sun' (i.e., at the Holocaust)" (Lang, Holocaust 21, 23). Finally, "[t]he third category of Holocaust genres […is] historical writing itself" (Lang, Holocaust 24). To my mind, the most illustrative and generative example of the role of academic discourse in the transmission of Holocaust family history, which illustrates the connection between categories one and three of Lang's schema, is

[lxxiii] My thanks to Dr. Gary Kelly for his discussion of this idea at the Comparative Literature Graduate Students Lecture Series at the University of Alberta in October 2010.

the relationship between Goldie Morgentaler, a professor of English at the University of Lethbridge, and her mother, the Yiddish writer Chava Rosenfarb, who passed away in 2011.[lxxiv] Unlike the previous authors I mentioned, Morgentaler has not commented creatively on her mother's life and writing; instead, her engagement has occurred solely in the academic sphere. Rosenfarb's and Morgentaler's relationship is the only one of its kind of which I am aware, and it raises important questions about role of academic engagement and authorial responsibility in the context of my research into intergenerational textual representations of family history and the Holocaust.

Born in Lódz, Poland, in 1923, Chava Rosenfarb began writing as a child (Morgentaler, "Biography"). When she was transported to Auschwitz in 1944, the Nazis confiscated Rosenfarb's writing, much of which was written in the Lódz Ghetto (Morgentaler, "Biography"). Throughout her career, Rosenfarb created an extensive body of writing that reflected her life in pre-war and wartime Poland. Her books include <u>The Tree of Life: A Trilogy of Life in the Lodz Ghetto</u>, which is, according to Goldie Morgentaler, "one of the few novels – as opposed to memoirs or autobiographies – to be written by an actual survivor of the Holocaust," and <u>Survivors: Seven Short Stories</u>, which deals predominantly with fictional survivors adapting to post-war life in Montreal ("Biography").

[lxxiv] A version of this section of this chapter was presented at the Canadian Writing Research Collaboratory Canadian Women Writers International Conference: Connecting Texts and Generations. Canadian Litertaure Centre, University of Toronto. Jefferies Sept. 30-3 Oct. 2010. A version of this section of this chapter was presented at the Imagining and Representing Identities in Canada: Words and Images of the Cultural Mosaic, Multiculticanada Graduate Students Colloquium. Canadian Literature Centre, University of Alberta. Jefferies 19 Mar. 2010.

In 2006, Rosenfarb became the first Yiddish writer to be granted an honourary doctorate in Canada (Morgentaler, "Biography"). In the convocation address at the University of Lethbridge, she described what it is like to write in her native tongue:

> I wrote my novels in Yiddish out of a sense of loyalty to the vanished world of my youth, out of a sense of obligation to a world that no longer existed. Little did I realize that in a few short years, Yiddish itself would no longer exist – at least not as I knew it, not as a living and breathing language of day-to-day life. To lose one's language is an unspeakably painful thing, especially for a writer. Writing is always a lonely profession, but the Yiddish writer's loneliness has an additional dimension. Her readership has perished. Her language has gone up with the smoke of the crematoria. She creates in a vacuum, almost without a readership, out of fidelity to a vanished language; as if to prove that Nazism did not succeed in extinguishing that language's last breath, and that it is still alive. And so here I am – a Yiddish writer on the prairies. A Yiddish writer who must depend on translation in order to be read. (Rosenfarb, "Honorary")

Interestingly, just as it was Rosenfarb's father who, at the age of eight, urged her to "write things down so she would not forget them," decades later it is Morgentaler's daughter who has most ardently taken up the task of translating her mother's work (Survivors, N. pag.). In addition to translations of Tree of Life trilogy and Survivors, Morgentaler has written biographies of Rosenfarb, such as

those that appear in Writers in Yiddish and on Rosenfarb's website, as well as academic articles, such as "Land of the Postscript: Canada and the Post-Holocaust Fiction of Chava Rosenfarb," which is a critical analysis of Survivors that appeared in Judaism in 2000 ("Chava" 250-256; "Biography").

In 2010, I presented a paper on entitled "Engaging with Yiddish Literature in Canada: Chava Rosenfarb and Goldie Morgentaler, a Family Portrait" at the Canadian Writing Research Collaboratory's Canadian Women Writers Conference: Connecting Texts and Generations at the University of Alberta (Jefferies). In the question period, Ruth Panofsky posed a fascinating question about the responsibilities of academics such as Morgentaler who build their academic careers on their family history. Her question drew attention to how, while Morgentaler is instrumental in ensuring that Rosenfarb's work reaches a new generation of readers, it is important to note that, as her biographer, and the most prolific translator of, and academic commentator on, her writing, Morgentaler has a large influence over how her mother's work is read.[lxxv][121] In History and Memory After Auschwitz, Dominick LaCapra "distinguish[es] between two kinds of memory. Primary memory is that of a person who has lived through events and remembers them in a certain manner," while "[s]econdary memory is the result of critical work on primary memory, whether by the person who initially had the relevant experience or, more typically, by an analyst, observer, or secondary witness such as the historian" (20-21). As more and more scholars such as Paula Fass, Marianne Hirsch, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett,

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[lxxv] My thanks to Dr. Ruth Panofsky for her discussion of this idea at the Canadian Writing Research Collaboratory's Canadian Women Writers Conference: Connecting Texts and Generations at the University of Alberta in September 2010.

Chaya H. Roth, and Rafael Goldchain publish books that entwine their academic training with their family history, the disciplinary and methodological categories that shape secondary memory are becoming blurred. Therefore, through the course of this study, it has become clear to me that, in light of "the current memory boom," the relationship between academic discourse and family history is an area that deserves further attention since it highlights the extent to which, if, as Jonathan Foer contends, "[a]ll writing […] is autobiographical," scholars' textual engagements with, and perpectives on, the Holocaust are the result of their individual experiences, interests, and research paths (Whitehead 3; qtd. in Mackenzie). Importantly, it also raises related questions about the extent to which academic writing can function as a form of textual memorialization. While these would have been too large of topics to examine sufficiently within the scope of this study, it is an area that I hope to explore in my future research.

The Text and the Classroom

In light of my discussion of "received history" and the relationship between academic history and family history, before concluding, it is necessary to examine my own relationship to the ideas in this study (Young, "Toward" 23). I initially became interested in examining Holocaust family history as a result of my experiences learning about the Second World War in high school. Our introduction to the Holocaust in high school was through a very factual lens and I was disturbed that, although we discussed the events of the Holocaust in the

context of the Second World War, we did not explore how they affected the lives of individuals, their families, and their communities in depth. This distance between historical facts and personal experiences of history was particularly noticeable because, even though there were numerous members of the third generation in my class, we did not discuss any of their families' stories, nor did we listen to testimony by the survivors that participate in Holocaust education programs in Edmonton. As a result, in the months and years that followed, I took it upon myself to try to find ways of connecting to individual stories of survivors and their families. The first way that I did this was through literature: I voraciously read many works by members of the first generation such as Elie Wiesel's Night and Viktor Frankls' Man's Search for Meaning in an attempt to understand the different ways in which survivors described the Holocaust and the effects of trauma in their own words. Next, I participated in the Adopt a Survivor Program facilitated by the Temple Judeah of Manhasset and the Edmonton Jewish Federation so that I could hear the story of a Holocaust survivor firsthand. I also became part of the Holocaust and Memory Workshop (now known as the Critical Memory Studies Workshop) at the University of Alberta so that I could be exposed to Holocaust scholarship in a variety of disciplines. Finally, I visited Holocaust museums and archives in Washington D.C. and New York so that I could experience how memorialization was taking place. Over time, these four layers of engagement led me to contemplate how literature could be used to address the roles of primary and secondary memory in Holocaust education.

Despite my intentions, as I progressed in my studies of Holocaust literature, I often faced the same issues with which I was confronted in high school. Academic writing has a necessarily objective tone. According to Karein Goertz, "the Holocaust still resides in a liminal zone between history and memory – that is, between the past as object of dispassionate study and the past as an affective part of personal and collective consciousness," an idea that is exemplified in the following quotation by Angela Kershaw: "[w]riting about [Irène] Némirovsky is not just an academic exercise, because her personal tragedy was real. Némirovsky's own approach to writing fiction is also the most appropriate way to read it: critical detachment must be maintained so as to facilitate a proper appreciation of the affective force of the story" (33; 6). While Kershaw's approach is important for "maintain[ing] [the] scholarly objectivity" that is required for engaging in critical thought, throughout this project I often found the disconnect between the emotionally charged books that I was researching and the objective manner in which I had to analyze them to be jarring (Kershaw 2). Accordingly, I questioned not only authors' responsibilities when dealing with the representation of their family history, but also academics' responsibilities when analyzing the traumatic experiences of actual people. As James E. Young writes in "Toward a Received History of the Holocaust":

> While academic critics have been quick to speculate on the motives of filmmakers, novelists, and popular historians, we have remained curiously blind to our own instrumentalization of memory, to the ways an entire academic industry has grown up around events of the Holocaust. It is time

> to step back and take an accounting: where does all this history and its telling lead, to what kinds of knowledge, to what ends? (43)

For me, answers to these questions can be found by approaching literary works not only as historical artifacts but also as a means to facilitate "empathetic" engagement in the classroom (LaCapra, Writing 47).

Empathetic engagement is not something that is addressed extensively in work on intergenerational memory. Most sources I encountered are concerned with the aesthetic and ethical limits of representation and the responsibilities of the author, while far fewer are concerned explicitly with how a work affects the reader. The work of Dominick LaCapra is a notable exception. In Writing History, Writing Trauma, LaCapra asserts that "the response of even secondary witnesses (including historians) to traumatic events must include empathic unsettlement that should register in one's very mode of address in ways of revealing both similarities and differences across genres (such as history and literature)" (47). In my opinion, the blurring of boundaries between an author's academic perspective and their personal history that I discussed in the previous segment of this section is an excellent example of a way in which this kind of unsettlement can occur as it opens the door for many other ways in which family members, scholars, and students can engage with the past. As Susan Crane asks in (Not) Writing History, "[h]ow does history become 'personal' – only when it is survived, or only when private lives become public knowledge? What constitutes an 'experience' of history – 'being there,' being told about it (telling it), being taught it (teaching it), reading about it, writing it? Or does history become 'personal' when an individual

cares about it?” (20; Young, “Toward” 40). By caring about a story, by allowing oneself to be moved by the subject matter, and by acknowledging that the characters are, in most of the cases I have discussed, real people, readers of the texts that I have chosen are able to engage empathetically with the experiences of a victim, survivor, or their descendents, and, in so doing, respond not only to the aesthetic questions posed by literature, but also to the way in which, in the classroom, it can be used to communicate the individual and human costs of war. According to Ruth Franklin, “[a]rt makes connections; it encourages empathy; it awakens the imagination” (Franklin 242). Or, put another way:

> *That will let you imagine, even if they can’t let you see.*[122] This is the true value of literature and of humanism more generally – a value, it should be pointed out, that stands in direct contrast to the Nazis’ program of dehumanization. […] The act of imagination, on the other hand, is an act of empathy. (Franklin 15)

Notably, this sentiment is echoed by Yann Martel in “Writing Death,” in which he states “an essential quality of the Jews in the Holocaust [… was] their *unknownness* – not to themselves, of course, but to the Nazis and, alas, to us” (260). Yet, by reading about the stories of those who perished, those who survived, and their descendents, what Martel refers to as the “anonymous memorial of a number: 6 million” becomes much more concrete (260). Notably, this idea is part of the memorial enterprise to which Annette Wieviorka refers and which I explored in the context of <u>Suite française</u> in Chapter One (140-143; Kershaw 191).

As I have demonstrated, in eight books that I examined in this study, eight authors grappled with their families' complex histories and with their experiences of textually reconstructing the past. Yet, through the kind of pedagogical engagement that I have just discussed, these books can also be used to enter into a dialogue about the effects of the Holocaust on relationships of various kinds, be they between family members, communities, perpetrators and victims, nations, and members of subsequent generations. The intergenerational relationship between parents and children that I explored in my study is a human construct that stretches across time periods, cultures, and geographic locations since all authors and readers have occupied the position of children and many are, or will become, parents or grandparents as well. To frame an event that is often described as "incomprehensible" in terms of these familial relationships is to attempt to make seemingly abstract suffering concrete (Lang, Holocaust 17). By teaching intergenerational Holocaust family narratives, history can be understood not only from the perspective of those who perished, but also from the perspective of those who continue to live with the consequences of historical events at different points in time. Although articles such as Susan Gubar's "Poetry and Holocaust Remembrance," Amy Hungerford's "Teaching Fiction, Teaching the Holocaust," Gary Weissman's "Questioning Key Texts: A Pedagogical Approach to Teaching Elie Wiesel's Night" and David Scrase's "Building a Holocaust Studies Program for Both Town and Gown" in Teaching the Representation of the Holocaust edited by Marianne Hirsch and Irene Kacandes touch on some of the pedagogical applications that I have addressed, an empirical study of a reader's engagement

with literary representations of intergenerational Holocaust family history would be a fascinating area of future research that would have important applications for how the works that I have studied are taught.

In an era in which the institutional validity of Comparative Literature has often been questioned, another way in which the study of intergenerational family narratives could continue to be expanded is through comparative examinations of works in different languages and media that were created by perpetrators or victimized groups.[123] The film *2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß* (2005), in which Malte Ludin, the son of Hanns Ludin who a Nazi that was executed in 1947, examines the impact of his father's legacy on his family, and Shared Sorrows: A Gypsy Family Remembers the Holocaust (2002) by Toby Sonneman, in which the author, who is of Jewish descent, attempts to uncover the fate of a Gypsy family during the war, are examples of texts that could be used to facilitate this kind of comparative thought. Stephen C. Smith, the "Executive Director of the Shoah Foundation," emphasized this idea in a 2012 radio interview in which he explored the consequences of the Foundation "expanding its original mission to include testimonies for mass atrocities other than the Holocaust" (Jim Brown qtd. in Smith).[124] According to Smith, "[t]he driver of it largely was an educational one. If we are going to teach about this issue and the values that sit around that its really important to hear the voices of people who experienced genocide in […] its very many forms." For it is Smith's contention that to "take this down to what I call the molecular level, to the level of the individual person" as I have done in this study, and "to listen more deeply to other people […] that's

where the secret of prevention lies."[125] Intergenerational relationships can also serve as a parameter for embarking upon comparative genocide studies.[126] For while I have been unable to find the same plethora of autobiographical material that I have collected about the Holocaust for other genocides of the twentieth century (a phenomenon that in itself deserves further examination), exploring the effect of a genocide on multiple generations of a family is a way of entering into a discussion of the ways in which art, be it literary or visual, can be used to communicate the complexity of human suffering in a variety of contexts, an idea that Susan Rubin Suleiman supports in "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust" (291-292). As she states:

> maybe because now that we have so many straightforward accounts, which of course must be preserved and archived, we'll have to think about what will actually endure and continue to be meaningful to people who are not specialists. Call it my bias again, but I believe that works of literary merit (however one interprets that term) have a greater chance to endure than others. ("Thinking" 291).

Notably, Franklin echoes these sentiments in the following statement from A Thousand Darknesses: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction:

> We need literature about the Holocaust not only because testimony is inevitably incomplete, but because of what literature uniquely offers: an imaginative access to past events, together with new and different ways of understanding them that are unavailable to strictly factual forms of writing. (13; see also 15)

In these ways, by incorporating Holocaust family history into the educational process, the stories of those who perished to continue to "live[…] as narratives that become part of [… the] lives" of those who came after (Schwarz, Imagining 23). For through empathetic engagement and comparative examinations, students will have the opportunity to understand the personal implications of historical events, and those who perished will be remembered not as statistics, but as human beings.

Part Three

Silence and Voices

The title I chose for this study is Silence and Voices: Family History and Memorialization in Intergenerational Holocaust Literature since I was as fascinated by the voices that have been passed down to us as I was by the voices have been silenced and lost. Accordingly, in the preceding chapters, through an examination of the themes of memorialization, generational categorization, narrative, and family history, I explored the complexities of representing Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust in different textual forms. Within this framework, my study of intergenerational layers of writing, painting, film, digital media, and academic discourse allowed me to evaluate the contributions of different voices to the ongoing dialogue about the Holocaust and assess how books can function as historical artifacts and sites of memorialization that ensure that the stories of both the author and their subjects will continue to survive after they are gone. Through the course of my research, I aimed to demonstrate that, as Pericles stated, "[w]hat the dead leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others" (Hynes qtd. in Schneiderman, Interview). For in the midst of all of the suffering I encountered in the stories of victims, survivors, and their descendents, I was affirmed that, as time passes, people die, and communities change, in the words of Herman Kruk, the voices that are preserved in books exist as "trace[s]" for generations that are yet to come (N. pag.; see also Kroetsch 71). In this way, the intergenerational Holocaust family narratives that I examined in this study function as fragile

threads that connect the past and the present, the real and the imagined, and the living and the dead.

Endnotes

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[1] "The excerpts quoted in this scholarly paper are included in compliance with the Canadian Copyright Act. Substantial excerpts are reproduced under the s. 29 provision for Fair Dealing for the purposes of research, criticism and review" (Paul).

[2] The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers Sixth Edition by Joseph Gilaldi was used throughout this study.

[3] "[P]aper universe" is a term that Elie Wiesel paraphrases from Chaim Grade (Foreward N. pag.).

[4] Another iteration of this idea can be seen in Amy Hungerford's question, "[w]hat happens to history when it is made into art?" (180).

[5] Foer discusses the relationship between "silence" and "[v]oices" in the creation of Everything of Illuminated in "Week three: Jonathan Safran Foer on the origins of Everything is Illuminated" (Mullan).

[6] For a discussion of the complexities of literary representations of the Holocaust see, for example, Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma by Dominick LaCapra and Holocaust Representation: Art within the Limits of History and Ethics by Berel Lang.

[7] In "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust," Susan Rubin Suleiman draws attention to the different experiences of those who experienced the Holocaust in "Eastern vs. Western Europe," which is an idea that underscores the comparative construct that I have created (289). Further, Marianne Hirsch's and Leo Spitzer's statement in "'We Would Not Have Come Without You': Generations of Nostalgia" about the "children of exiled 'Czernowitzers'" that "[a]lthough none of them had even been there or seen it […] it was the source of their 'native' German linguistic and cultural background, with which – although they now live in the United States, Canada, Australia, Israel, France, Germany, Austria – they still identify" supports my examination of the legacy of the Holocaust across both generational and geographical boundaries (261, 261-262).

[8] As Christoph Ribbat asserts in "Nomadic with the Truth: Holocaust Representations in Michael Chambon, James McBride, and Jonathan Safran Foer," "[t]o do justice to the enormous problem that 'telling the story' causes for Holocaust survivors, literary critics have recently argued for new ways of reading survivor narratives. They call for readings that are just as attentive to the silences and the gaps as to the stories actually told. The problems of storytelling are just as important as the account itself" (200). For a discussion of how the idea of "[b]lank spaces" pertains directly to the Holocaust and its aftermath see Ruth Ellen Gruber's analysis of this idea as well as Omar Bartov's Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine (15-16, 235; 8-10). For a comparative discussion of "specific stages in history that have been lost, undocumented or misinterpreted due to the absence of historical evidence, the split sense of a historical past, and the constraints of writing history" that place these ideas the

context of "slavery, diaspora, and colonialism," see Zhu Ying's Fiction and the Incompleteness of History: Toni Morrison, V.S. Naipaul, and Ben Okri (12).
[9] For an example of this idea in relation to Everything is Illuminated, see The Holocaust and the Postmodern by Robert Eaglestone (130).
[10] These ideas also call attention to the relationship between "memory and representation," which is a theme that I will return to throughout this project (Ribbat 204).
[11] For a discussion of "Suite française in our time" see the work of Angela Kershaw (1-2, 7, 185-194).
[12] Importantly, Suleiman draws attention to her "bias" when making this statement, and it is important to note that this kind of "literary" bias that also underscores my study ("Thinking" 291).
[13] As Alan L. Berger states, "Everything is Illuminated derives its *raison d'être* from the presence of an absence. The author underscores this point by having one of his fictional characters observe, 'The origin of a story is always an absence' (p. 230)" ("Unclaimed" 156).
[14] See, for example, Marianne Hirsch's examination of the Maus series in Family Frames: Photography Narrative and Postmemory and "The Generation of Postmemory" and James E. Young's chapter entitled "Art Spiegelman's Maus and the After-Images of History" in At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture (21-40; 112-113, 117-123; 12-41). For a specific examination of "familial transmission" see "The Generation of Postmemory" as well (Hirsch 115).
[15] For further information on this idea see the Introduction to From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry by Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin (35).

[16] See also The Rape of Europa, directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, and Nicole Newnham.
[17] For an example of the story of a Canadian family seeking to reclaim their artwork see Kathy Kacer's Restitution: A Family's Fight for Their Heritage Lost in the Holocaust. For broader examinations of this issue see Lost Lives, Lost Art: Jewish Collectors, Nazi Art Theft, and the Quest for Justice by Melissa Müller and Monika Tatzkow and Robbery and Restitution: The Conflict Over Jewish Property in Europe, edited by Martin Dean, Constantin Goschler, and Philipp Ther.
[18] Importantly, Daniel Mendelsohn refers not only to the idea of *Yizkor* ("Yiskor, *yizkor*: a memorial service") in The Lost, but he also makes specific reference to the *Yizkor* book for Bolechow (9, 21, 59, 65).
[19] For more detailed information on the history of *Yizkor* books see "About Yizkor (Memorial) Books" on the New York Public Library's website.
[20] See the website for the Dorot Jewish Division of the New York Public Library for a further discussion of many of these points ("Yizkor Books Online").
[21] While Stark's term "postmemorial" is derived from Hirsch's term "postmemory," I chose to refer to the books I have examined as memorials since I

am examining how these have been created by and received in many different generational categories (201, 202; see Hirsch, Family 22).

[22] For a more indepth discussion of the influence of Adorno's statement see Ruth Franklin's A Thousand Darknesses: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction, The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination by Lawrence Langer, and Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory by Marianne Hirsch (2; 1; 23). For an examination of how "Adorno modified his position" also see Franklin's work (222).

[23] For example, Francisco Collado-Rodriguez refers to "Jonathan's quest for his family's roots" in "Ethics in the Second Degree: Trauma and Dual Narratives in Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated" (56).

[24] See Jack Kugelmass' and Jonathan Boyarin's discussion on pages 36-37 of From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry.

[25] See Marianne Hirsch's discussion of both Helen Epstein and Ernst van Alphen in "The Generation of Postmemory" (109).

[26] Ruth Franklin makes mention of Nothing Makes You Free in A Thousand Darknesses: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction, while Susan Rubin Suleiman discusses The Holocaust in Three Generations: Families of Victims and Perpetrators of the Nazi Regime in "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors of the Holocaust" (216, 226; 287). Ruth Franklin's A Thousand Darknesses is divided into four sections that are organized along generational lines: "Part One: The Witnesses" and "Part Two: Those Who Came After," and two short chapters at the end of the book "Identity Theft: The Second Generation" and "Conclusion: The Third Generation" (21, 41, 215, 235). Notably, Franklin begins the Conclusion with a quotation from Everything is Illuminated (235; Foer 198-199).

[27] Other areas where I found resonances with my research after I had undertaken my project were Before Auschwitz: Irène Némirovsky and the Cultural Landscape of Inter-war France by Angela Kershaw, as I will discuss at length in Chapter One, "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and Identity in Third Generation Writing About the Holocaust" by Alan L. Berger in which he discusses The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million and Everything is Illuminated as examples of third generation writing (though he does not focus on the idea of return in each text as I do), and the title of Voices and Silence in the Contemporary Novel in English, edited by Vanessa Guignery in which authors address, in part, how "[i]n twentieth century literature and in the aftermath of colonisation, the two world wars and the holocaust, narratives of trauma confront the aporia of speaking the unspeakable, voicing the unvoicable [sic]" (Berger 151, 152-153, 155-158; Guignery 3; Kern and Kern-Stähler 166). At each point that I came across a work like this, I chose to incorporate it into my study as I was always too far along to change course.

[28] In the course of my research, the only written work by the member of the fourth generation is included in Nothing Makes You Free: Writing by Descendants of Jewish Holocaust Survivors edited by Melvin Jules Bukiet. Interestingly, while Bukiet refers to the inclusion of a work by the "*fourth* generation" in the anthology's Introduction, he does not identify which work it is (26). For a critique

of Bukiet's work see Ruth Franklin's A Thousand Darknesses: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction (216-217, 226-228, 230-231).

[29] For an elaboration of this point, see Jack Kugelmass' and John Boyarin's discussion in the Introduction to From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry (19, 34).

[30] Traditionally, the importance of the study of narrative in Holocaust Studies historically has been enforced by "the narrative quality of testimony" and this can now to mapped on to the study of literary works (Kern-Stähler and Stähler 179). For a more indepth examination of this idea see Robert N. Kraft's idea of "[n]arrative memory" in "Archival Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Oral Testimony" (316).

[31] For an in-depth examination of the role of imagination in Holocaust literature see Daniel R. Schwarz's Imagining the Holocaust.

[32] Kugelmass and Boyarin do warn, though, how "some historians wary of memorial books" since "they are concerned about the sacrifice of accurate facts in favor of mood and sentiment" (24). Further, they warn that "one should not confuse the memorial books with the towns they commemorate. The reality depicted in the memorial books is distorted because it is seen – and can only be seen – through the prism of the Holocaust," an idea that I address at length in Chapter One through my discussion of Angela Kershaw's perspective on Suite française (Kugelmass and Boyarin 41; Kershaw 185, 194).

[33] For Hirsch's discussion of her justification for studying family history and familial relationships see "Why the Family?" in "The Generation of Postmemory" (112-115).

[34] For a discussion of the consequences of "the incompleteness of history" on those in the diaspora in another context, see Zhu Ying's discussion of the work of V.S. Naipaul in Fiction and the Incompletness of History: Toni Morrison, V.S. Naipaul, and Ben Okri (12, 17, 20-22, 75-106).

[35] For a more comprehensive list of sources for the study of family history see Sources and Methods for Family and Community Historians: A Handbook, edited by Michael Drake and Ruth Finnegan, with Jacqueline Eustace.

[36] For an interesting comment by James E. Young on his evaluation of the need for this perspective in scholarship see Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation (172-173).

[37] An example of a book by Némirovsky that was published after the war is Les Biens de ce monde (1947) (Kershaw 11).

[38] It is through the character of Jean-Marie that Némirovsky draws attention to the idea of writing in Suite française (207, 289).

[39] In the Avant-propos to Survivre et vivre: entretiens avec Clémence Boulouque, Boulouque makes this connection with Hélène Berr in relation to Denise Epstein (15).

[40] Interestingly, Benjamin Harshav also refers to, and includes, parts of a "fictional account of the Holocaust," on which Herman Kruk was working before his death (qtd. in Kruk 674). A comparison of works of fiction that were written

during the Second World War by Jewish victims would make a fascinating area of future research.

[41] Kershaw's work on "paratextual material" builds on that of Claire Squires, who in turn builds on the work of Gérard Genette (188).

[42] See Elaine Kalman Nave's and Daniel Mendelsohn's discussion of this idea in relation to Suite française and The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million in "Six from Six Million: Daniel Mendelsohn Interviewed" (59, 61-62).

[43] See also Kershaw's discussion of "a hint in Némirovsky's notes that the Jewish situation would have been treated in later parts of the text" (181).

[44] The order in which the texts will be discussed has been determined chronologically by the date that they were published.

[45] Importantly, Epstein reiterates this story in Survivre et vivre as well (82-83).

[46] Interestingly, this age difference crosses the age ranges of what Suleiman refers to as "'children' old enough to remember but too young to understand" and "'children' old enough to understand but too young to be responsible" ("Thinking" 283).

[47] See also Susan Rubin Suleiman's "The 1.5 Generation: George Perec's W or the Memory of Childhood" in Teaching the Representation of the Holocaust, edited by Marianne Hirsch and Irène Kacandes (372-385).

[48] In Un paysage de cendres, while Bénédicte assumes the role of older sister to Léa, she is not her biological sister; therefore, in terms of her family of origin, Léa is very much alone (132).

[49] For further information on testimony see Lawrence Langer's Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory.

[50] For another perspective on this debate, see Elaine Kalman Nave's exchange with Daniel Mendelsohn in "Six from Six Million: Daniel Mendelsohn Interviewed" (62).

[51] Juliana Ochs Dweck gestures towards this idea in the title of her 2009 review of They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust and the accompanying exhibition, "Painting a Jewish Memory Book."

[52] For in-depth examination of his aesthetic choices in Maus see Art Spiegelman's MetaMaus: A Look Inside a Modern Classic.

[53] See Jack Kugelmass' and Jonathan Boyarin's Introduction to From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry for more information on this phenomenon (12).

[54] The title of the "synopsis for the English-speaking reader" of the *Yizkor* book for Apt reads "Apt: A Town Which Does Not Exist Anymore," which is reflective of Susan Rubin Suleiman's contention that *shtetls* "(*as they were*, towns with many Jews in them) no longer exist" (Publication 6; Yasheev N. pag.; "Past"410).

[55] In They Called Me Mayer July, Kirshenblatt also represents the Christian population of Apt, as the paintings "Christian Boy Scouts Marching" and "Funeral of the Father of My Christian Friend" demonstrate (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 273, 80).

[56] For example, in "Nakhete: Washing the Floor in a Wedding Gown on Friday Afternoon," Kirshenblatt represents Nakhete Watman; "[s]he and her parents disappeared in the war" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 160).
[57] Unlike Kirshenblatt's paintings in They Called Me Mayer July, which have titles, the paintings in Preoccupied with My Father are not given names; therefore, I have chosen to differentiate them according to their page numbers (see Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 391-397). Interestingly, many of the "works were photographed by Rafael Goldchain" in They Called Me Mayer July (391).
[58] Interestingly, on the website for They Called Me Mayer July, there is a photograph of an unfinished painting in Kirshenblatt's studio that was taken during *shiva*. This canvas, on which only pencil lines are sketched, enforces the span of time that was required for Kirshenblatt to complete a painting and how the memories that he did not have time to preserve on paper have been lost after his death (Mayer z"l).
[59] While the second layer of They Called Me Mayer July was written by both Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, for the sake of clarity, since it is presented from Kirshenblatt's point of view, when quoting from the book I mention only Kirshenblatt, yet I refer to both Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in in-text citations (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 368).
[60] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett also used other techniques to glean information from her father (see for example page 385) (Daughter's). Interestingly, then, while Kirshenblatt was responsible for the memories that he recorded, to some extent, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett controlled many of the topics that were covered.
[61] For example, in Bending Toward the Sun: A Mother Daughter Memoir by Leslie Gilbert-Lurie and Rita Lurie, "Part I" is written "In Mom's Voice," "Part II" is in "My Own Voice," and "Part III" is "A Joint Venutre" (9, 155, 281).
[62] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's mother "Doris (Dvoyre) Shushanoff" came to Canada in 1929 from Brest-Litovsk (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Daughter's 359).
[63] An important way in which Kirshenblatt-Gimblett enforces the academic nature of her Daughter's Afterword is through her inclusion of "Notes," as they signal a stark stylistic departure from the rest of the text (382-385).
[64] Interestingly, an art contest for "Opatów youth" also accompanied the exhibit, which is an example of how Kirshenblatt's enterprise is generative and of how the visual arts can be used as an educational tool ("Mayer's").
[65] This passage also concludes Jack Kugelmass' and Jonathan Boyarin's Introduction in From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry (43).
[66] In *Yizkor* books, authors refer to members of an entire community in "the unadorned lists of […] names" (Kugelmass and Boyarin 25). Yet, in Preoccupied with My Father, Schneiderman lists only the names of his family members who perished on both his father and mother's sides, demonstrating that the people whose names are contained therein are not connected by a place, as they are in They Called Me Mayer July, but by familial ties (1).

[67] Notably, in her Daughter's Afterword, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett states that "[d]uring "the late 1960s, my mother was more responsive to my questions than my father, who was busy running a business, six days a week, ten hours a day" (Daughter's 361). Yet, in They Called Me Mayer July, her mother's stories are not included. Therefore, like Schneiderman, who also focuses solely on his father, in They Called Me Mayer July Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's family history, which is made up of both her mother's and her father's stories, is incomplete.
[68] These poems are an example of Marianne Hirsch's contention that over "fifty years after Adorno's contradictory injunctions about poetry after Auschwitz, poetry is now only one of many supplemental genres and institutions of transmission" ("Generation" 105).
[69] Interestingly, blank pages occur throughout Holocaust literature. Another notable example of texts in which authors choose not to describe painful events in words are in the third book of Chava Rosenfarb's Tree of Life: A Trilogy of Life in the Lodz Ghetto, which is titled The Cattle Cars are Waiting: 1942-1944. Here, page 362 contains only the words "Chapter Twenty-nine … Thirty … Thirty Two … ad infinitum … AUSCHWITZ. WORDS STOP, UNDRESSED, NAKED, THEIR MEANING, THEIR SENSES SHAVEN OFF. LETTERS EXPIRE IN THE SMOKE OF THE CREMATORIUM'S CHIMNEY …" and the six pages that follow are blank (362-368). Also, in "The 1.5 Generation: George Perec's W or The Memory of Childhood" Susan Rubin Suleiman explores how in Perec's work "the blank page separating parts 1 and 2, [… contains] only a wordless line in the middle of the page, consisting of three ellipses points and a parenthesis in bold face: (…)" (Perec 61; Suleiman 381). A comparison of the role of blank pages and ellipses in Holocaust literature would be an interesting area of future research.
[70] For a further reflection on this idea of the Holocaust being absent from the text in relation to The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million see Elaine Kalman Naves statement on page 62 of "Six from Six Million: Daniel Mendelsohn Interviewed."
[71] Both Preoccupied with My Father and Schneiderman's obituary in The Globe and Mail draw attention to a phenomenon that is common for members of the second generation: being part of their parents' second families (19; "Yoel"). Within a comparative context, this phenomenon is also explored in Art Spiegelman's Maus II: A Survivor's Tale. And Here My Troubles Began in which he refers to his parent's first child Richieu, to whom the book is in part dedicated, as his "ghost-brother, since he got killed before I was born," and in Philippe Grimbert's Un secret: roman in which the author to explores his childhood relationship with the an imaginary brother, and the process of discovering at the age of fifteen that he actually had had a half-brother, Simon, who was killed in the Second World War (5, 15; Hirsch, Family 21, 36-38; 11, 75, 76, 78-79). In the case of Schneiderman's family, both of his parents lost their spouses and children during or after the war, and, by extension, Schneiderman lost two half siblings that he never met (Preoccupied 1; "Yoel"). This experience being the only one left to inherit the layers of loss that precede one's birth is an excellent example of the

"belatedness" or "post-ness" that is that is felt by members of the second generation (Hirsch, "Generation" 105).

[72] In The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning, Young describes how "A POST-HOLOCAUST GENERATION […] of artists, writers, architects, and even composers does not attempt to represent events it never new immediately but instead portrays its own, necessarily hypermediated experiences of memory" (1).

[73] In "The Generation of Postmemory," Marianne Hirsch states that "[t]he 'post' in 'postmemory' signals more than a temporal delay and more than a location in an aftermath. Postmodern, for example, inscribes both a critical distance and a profound irrelation with the modern; postcolonial does not mean the end of the colonial but its troubling continuity, though, in contrast, postfeminist *has* been used to mark a sequel to feminism. We certainly are, still, in the era of 'posts,' which continue to proliferate: 'post-secular,' 'post-human,' 'postcolony,' 'post-white.' Postmemory shares the layering of these other 'posts' and their belatedness, aligning itself with the practice of citation and mediation that characterize them" (106).

[74] For another example of breaking down generational categorization Susan Rubin Suleiman's discussion in "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors of the Holocaust" of the possibilities of a "1.3 or a 1.7 generation" (281). Ruth Franklin addresses this idea in relation to the first generation in the context of Helen Epstein's work as well (218). See also Melvin Jules Bukiet's ideas on the delineations of generations (26-27).

[75] As Hirsch contends, "[p]ostmemory characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can neither be understood or recreated" (Family 22).

[76] As Michael Bernard-Donals states, "I want to make the case that memory and forgetfulness are facets of the same phenomenon of understanding: the occurrence of events begins interminably to recede into an inaccessible past at the very moment of occurrence, while the event's passage into language – into any knowledge that we might formulate of the occurrence – makes the occurrence (narrative, testimony, history) *other* than the event" (3).

[77] For a discussion of the relationship between memory and "commemoration" see Mendelsohn in "Memoirs of Return" (Hartman et. al. 115-116, 122-123).

[78] This was highlighted for me most strongly during the course of my research by the passing of Mayer Kirshenblatt in 2009 and Chava Rosenfarb in 2011 (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Mayer"; Morgentaler "Biography"). As such, by the time I finished this project, there was not a member of the first or 0.5 generations that I was studying who was still alive.

[79] Annette Kern-Stähler and Axel Stähler refer to this as "following the 'heritage trail'" (178). Note, though, that this is not a phenomenon that is exclusive to the post-Holocaust experience. As Norman Ravvin notes in the Introduction to Henry Kreisel's The Rich Man, which is a fictional account of Jacob Grossman's return to visit his family in Vienna before the Second World War, "the bulk of The Rich

Man is a portrayal of Grossman's trip back to the old country. Such trips were not as rare at the time as we might think. Steam ship companies devoted to this form of reverse migration – call it memory tourism – advertised regularly in the Yiddish press" (8). For more information on this subject see Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin's Introduction (14-15). After the Holocaust, as I am explore in Chapter Three, these kinds of journeys became much more fraught.

[80] I later discovered that Hirsch also examines that topic at length in earlier in Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory and later in works such as including "'We Would Not Have Come Without You': Generations of Nostalgia" and "The Web and the Reunion: http://czernowitz.ehpes.com/" that are co-written with Leo Spitzer (267-269; 257, 260, 262; 64-69). The essays in Rites of Return: Bodies, Sites and Archives of Attachment, edited by Marianne Hirsch and Nancy K. Miller, also elaborate upon the idea of returning in greater depth. Interestingly, in part, "the essays in Rites of Return bring to diaspora studies an articulation of the complex interaction between the affects of belonging and the politics of entitlement in a diasporic world, rethinking and retheorizing the complex interactions between loss and reclamation, mourning and repair, departure and return" (5). For a more indepth examination of the idea of return journeys see the chapter entitled "The Tourist Track" in Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe by Ruth Ellen Gruber in which she explores ideas such as what constitutes "roots tourists" (131-154, 150).

[81] See Jonathan Safran Foer's comments on this subject in "Jonathan Safran Foer on Everything is Illuminated. An Interview with Jonathan Safran Foer."

[82] Mendelsohn also explores the idea of home in "Memoirs of Return" (Hartman et. al. 11-112).

[83] A statement such as this problematizes the category of generations by demonstrating the large time periods that and range of experiences they are meant to cover. Foer, who is also a member of the third generation, was not alive in the 1960's, having been born in 1977 (Everything N. pag.).

[84] Framing this idea in another way Ruth Ellen Gruber states, "[t]houghtful reevaluations of history, culture, and identity are at play, as are sincere attempts to make up for the past. But Holocaust commemoration per se is only part of the equation. In many ways (at least in its initial stages) the phenomenon has reflected a 'third generation' syndrome: the desire to discover and seize hold of knowledge withheld, denied, or ignored by older generations, be they parents, grandparents, or ruling elites" (9).

[85] Alan L. Berger argues that the postmemory can be applied to the third generation as well ("Unclaimed" 150).

[86] As I will discuss later in Chapter Three, Foer examines the limits of representation in Everything is Illuminated and the extent to which imagination allows one to better understand the past and the extent to which it ultimately falls short. For example, Annette Kern-Stäler and Axel Stäler address how the Holocaust "'is not,' as the survivor in Foer's novel has it, 'a thing you can imagine. It only is. After that, there can be no imagining' (188)" (163, 160; see Mullan "Two").

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[87] For an analysis of the different aspects of Irène Némirovsky's identity see Chapters Two and Three of Angela's Kershaw's Before Auschwitz: Irène Némirovsky and the Cultural Landscape of Inter-war France, which are entitled "A Russian Soul" and "A Jewish Soul" (68-98, 99-134).
[88] According to Mendelsohn, "[i]t is generally acknowledged that the greatest of all biblical commentators was the eleventh-century French scholar Rabbi Shlomo ben Itzhak, who is better known as Rashi" (Lost 16).
[89] For example, when he was a child Mendelsohn's grandfather stated of some of Shmiel's family, "I know they were hiding in a *kessle*," and Mendelsohn's interpretation of this final word as "castle" coloured his assumptions about their hiding place (Lost 19). It was not until his second return journey that he discovered that the word *kestle* actually referred to the cellar in which Shmiel and Frydka hid (Mendelsohn, Lost 481, 482).
[90] Another striking example in which eyes are used to create a physical connection between generations is in I Have My Mother's Eyes: A Holocaust Memoir Across Generations by Barbara Ruth Bluman. With sections by three female members of the family, I Have My Mother's Eyes features family photographs that highlight the striking resemblance between each generation after two of the family members have passed away (120-122, 123).
[91] As Alan L. Berger contends, "The Lost is a Baedeker for those wishing to better understand one of the forms in which Holocaust trauma can be expressed in the third generation" ("Unclaimed" 153).
[92] To see how this idea can be related to Everything is Illuminated see Lee Behlman's "The Escapist: Fantasy, Folklore, and the Pleasures of the Comic Book in Recent Jewish American Holocaust Fiction" (56).
[93] Collado-Rodriguez supports this ambiguous reading in "Ethics in the Second Degree: Trauma and Dual Narratives in Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated" (63).
[94] For a more detailed examination of the adaptation of Everything is Illuminated from the book into a film see Kern-Stähler's and Stähler's article as a whole ("Translation").
[95] When Alex first meets Jonathan, he reveals his lack of knowledge and stereotypical assumptions about Americans and Jews (Foer, Everything 31-32; Varvogli 83).
[96] For an indepth examination of translation in Everything is Illuminated see "The Translation of Testimony and the Transmission of Trauma: Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated and Liev Schreiber's Film Adapatation" by Annette Kern-Stähler and Axel Stähler.
[97] See Christoph Ribbat's discussion of how works of Michael "Chabon and [James] McBride […] interweave the history of war and atrocity with family stories and tales. This makes it possible to construct an unbroken future-oriented narrative. By connecting the catastrophic events of World War II and the Holocaust to America via family ties, their novels make the events seem less apocalyptic. The atrocities do not stand alone, nor do they erase all possibilities of storytelling" (211).

[98] The figure of the single remaining Jewish person in the ancestral hometown to which American returnees return is also at the centre of Lisa Pearl Rosenbaum's The Day of Small Beginnings. As the "last Jew of Zokof" states when he is met by Nathan Linden, a member of the second generation: "I am Rafael Bergson, the head of the *Chevra Kaddisha* of Zokof. The Burial Society you say in English. There is no other position for me. We don't have a shul. I am the leader of a community of one. […] Before the war there were five thousand souls. Five thousand of us and five thousand Poles. Now it's their town, like we were never here" (88). Notably, in my discussion of The Lost, I also mentioned Mendelsohn's visit to Eli Rosenberg, "the last Jew of Bolechow," in Brooklyn (66-69). A comparative examination of this figure of the last remaining Jewish person in the literature of the second and third generations is an area I plan to explore in future research.
[99] Foer has stated that, upon its publication he wanted "three people [… to] review" Everything is Illuminated: James Wood, Daniel Mendelsohn, and Francine Prose ("Author"). Despite his insistence on the limitations of imagination in The Lost, Mendelsohn's review of Foer's novel in New York Magazine in 2002 is very positive (226, 502; "Boy").
[100] By tracing his heritage to Yankel D, who "changed his name to Yankel" after "the name of the bureaucrat who ran away with his wife," Foer shows the instability of language and the complexities of genealogical connections (Foer, Everything 47; Feuer 39).
[101] For an exploration the nature and role of "fictional encyclopedias" see Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds (Doležel 177-181). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett also examines the idea of encylopedia in the Daughter's Afterword in They Called Me Mayer July (372).
[102] Francisco Collado-Rodriguez makes specific mention of Anne Whitehead and Cathy Caruth (63).
[103] This is reflective of Lubomír Doležel's summation of Thomas Pavel's assertion "that cultures and periods with 'stable world view[s]' tend to minimize incompleteness, whereas periods of 'transition and conflict' maximize it" (Doležel 170; Pavel 109).
[104] This is another example of what I discussed in endnote 68.
[105] For another perspective by Wolfgang Iser on this idea, Lubomir Doležel recommends The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response (194).
[106] For a list of "[e]xamples of illumination" in the novel see "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and Identity in Third Generation Writing About the Holocaust" by Alan L. Berger and "Ethics in the Second Degree: Trauma and Dual Narratives in Jonatha Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated" (157; 62)
[107] As Feuer notes, "Sasha is the diminutive of Alexander in Ukrainian" (35).
[108] Notably, an image containing "Label Safran […] and the Ukrainian family that hid him while the Nazis were rounding up Jews for slaughter" is included in Avrom Bendavid-Val's The Heaven's are Empty: Discovering the Lost Town of Trochenbrod and in Marissa Brostoff's "Novel Illuminates Memories of Lost Shtetl" (N. pag.).

[109] For another perspective on this idea see "The Translation of Testimony and the Transmission of Trauma: Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated and Liev Schreiber's Film Adaptation" (Kern-Stähler and Stähler 178).
[110] Jonathan Safran Foer has confirmed that the guide who went with him to Trachimbrod was "a young man named Alex," though I have not been able to find any confirmation that it was the same man that is described by Amrov Bendavid-Val (Foer qtd. in Mullan, "Three"; xix). Interestingly, in a 2002 article in The New York Times titled "Who Killed Uncle Shmiel?" from which The Lost stemmed, Mendelsohn also writes: "On the plane to Poland, my siblings and I passed around an excerpt from Jonathan Safran Foer's then-forthcoming novel, 'Everything Is Illuminated,' about an American Jew who goes to Ukraine to find out what happened to his relatives; the fictional guide is named Alex. 'Great!' our real-life Alex laughed, when we told him. 'This will be good for business!' That was in Cracow; during the trip back to L'viv, he had said, a bit guardedly: 'I don't tell all friends what it is I do. I don't think they'd understand.'"
[111] Importantly, this idea connects to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's discussion of "portaiture" in the Daughter's Afterword to They Called Me Mayer July (380-381).
[112] In the Introduction to Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine, Omer Bartov describes how his research for the book stemmed from plans to undertake a return journey with his mother to her "hometown," which did not take place before she died (xiii). Of his research into the Jewish history of Eastern Europe, he states also in the Introduction that he had initially intended to "write a history, or, in fact, a sort of collective biography, of the town of Buchach, which would trace its existence from the very early beginnings in the fourteenth century to its demise as a multiethnic community during and in the wake of World War II" xv). A chapter on Bolechow titled "Bolechiv/Bolechow/Bolekhov/ Bolikhov" that is included in his book that provides an interesting counterpoint to Mendelsohn's description of the town (72-75).
[113] Notably, in Everything is Illuminated, both Alex and Jonathan are born in 1977 as well (Foer 1; Berger, "Unclaimed" 155).
[114] For another point of view, see Lee Behlman's discussion of this idea and his application of the ideas of James E. Young (56, 70). See also Laura Levitt's American Jewish Loss After the Holocaust (3).
[115] From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry also contains many of translations of sections of Yizkor books by Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin (51-272).
[116] According to Marianna Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, in the context of their research, translations of "[d]ocuments in German, Yiddish, Russian, or Romanian" reveal how "English" is "the Web's lingua fanca" ("Web" 61). For an examination of the fact that "the English language is now firmly established as the new lingua franca" see "'Underwhelmed to the Maximum': American Travellers in Dave Eggers's You Shall Know Our Velocity and Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated" by Alexi Varvogli (91).

[117] For a more indepth examination of the importance of the possibilities of the virtual world, see "The Web and the Reunion: http://czernowitz.ehpes.com/" by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer.
[118] Notably, this bibliography includes works such as Art Spiegelman's Maus series and Marianne Hirsch's Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, Postmemory, and lists artists such as Rafael Goldchain that I use in my study ("Teachers").
[119] It was the Lives Lived section of the Globe and Mail in which the obituary for Yoel Schneiderman that I discussed in Chapter Two also appeared ("Yoel").
[120] Whitehead makes these claims in the context of her evaluation of Andreas Huyssen's ideas about the role of memory in "contemporary Western culture" (1).
[121] In the context of my study, this question could also be applied to Marianne Hirsch's work as well.
[122] Franklin's discussion of the original context of this quotation by Jorge Semprun can also be found in A Thousand Darknesses: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction (13-15).
[123] The threat to close the Comparative Literature Program at the University of Toronto in 2010 is an excellent example of this phenomenon (Church).
[124] For another perspective on this idea see "The Witness in the Archive: Holocaust Studies/Memory Studies" by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer (165).
[125] This idea is also supported by Suleiman in "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust" in which she states that it is through "the individual rather than the collective" and through "*personal, subjective expression* that the experiences of children in the Holocaust can most memorably be communicated" (291).
[126] For Mendelsohn's observations on the complexities of comparative genocide studies see "Memoirs of Return" (Hartman et. al. 118-119). See also Stephen D. Smith's interview with Jim Brown.

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