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Robert Pinsky, the 39th Poet Laureate of the United States, observed in a speech at Kenyon College that memory is the conduit of past culture, through the current generation, to the future. By culture he meant all of the traditions and knowledge — literary, artistic, scientific, religious, and political — that successive societies receive from their predecessors and reshape for their progeny. For me, that reflects the task of the traditional liberal arts college and, in particular, the process by which such key events as the Holocaust are understood, interpreted, and transmitted. In this instance, giving a voice to what might be lost to death, ignorance, or historical revisionism underlies the academicians special task and the moral urgency to pursue it. As a teacher in an institution molded by the Enlightenment values of universal human rights and dignity and the positive view of human endeavor, as well as from the stance of my own religious heritage that teaches the redemption of history, I am drawn to find and present to students ways of seeing distant glimpses of light when "even the heavens darkened." Yet, I recognize that this project tends to presuppose meaning, order, and an ultimately purposeful view of events and human experiences that may just as forcefully be viewed as the numbing devastation of meaning, moral purpose, and human life. It is just such a recognition of the enigma of existence, however, that has drawn me and others to the difficult and often heart-rending remembrance of the Holocaust with groups of colleagues, students, survivors, and the children of survivors. We function as conduits of special memory — our own and that of others — memory that extinguishes as well as exalts the spirit.

In 1984, a distinguished professor of religion and rabbi, Eugen Kullmann, who had taught a course on the Holocaust for many years at Kenyon College, retired. The college's Provost, also a professor of religion, consulted with the head of that department who immediately concurred that this course should be taught "in a stable and lasting form." A group was called together, including not only religion faculty, but also historians, English professors, psychologists, economists, and others, to design and staff an interdisciplinary Holocaust course, one of a very few interdisciplinary offerings in the college at that time. It was to be added as an elective course, not required for the completion of any major at this school of 1,500 students and 140 full-time instructors. Departmental faculty from political science, music, and philosophy would eventually join the team, either as seminar leaders or guest lecturers. A group of faculty from an array of departments gathered through the summer and into the fall of 1984 to read and discuss a core group of books and to plan the course. In 1996, following the model of the 1984 faculty seminar, a group of instructors petitioned Kenyon's Faculty Affairs Committee for a combined faculty development grant to support a series of seminars/workshops on the Holocaust. This group of faculty met on a biweekly schedule during the fall semester to discuss a number of seminal and newly published books, including Michael R. Marrus's *The Holocaust in History* (Brandeis, 1987) and Daniel Goldhagen's
Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust
(Knopf, 1996), along with other books and newspaper/journal articles of interest. This was a way to refresh the background in the subject matter for regular participants in the seminar and to create a pool of faculty for future staffing of the course, allowing instructors from various disciplines to catch up on current literature and debates. Faculty development seminars offer

opportunities for a larger circle of interested colleagues to discuss the Holocaust in a larger format than that of the team actually teaching the course. These seminars also enrich the academic development of various participants in their own research, possible conference panels, and publications related to Holocaust/genocide themes in their own disciplinary areas, whether they teach the course or not. For example, one participant greatly expanded his own research into the psychology of perpetrators, bystanders, and survivors. Another began new research into the music composed and performed in concentration camps and used as an artistic response to the Holocaust as a form of resistance. Another explored in a conference panel the cross-use of religious symbols by Jews and Christians as a means of reclaiming a sense of the sacred lost in the Nazi genocide.

It was initially decided to use four faculty as seminar leaders, one of whom might be the designated course coordinator. Student enrollment was limited to forty, a number easily attained in almost every year, and usually with a waiting list. The course used the four faculty to head smaller discussion groups that met weekly. This also served to provide as well an intellectual and emotional support for both the faculty and the students, a dimension that designers of the course correctly forecast would be necessary. More recently, limits on faculty release-time and availability have meant a reconfiguration with two seminar leaders, and other faculty volunteering as occasional guest lecturers. Several college-wide public presentations with such well-known Holocaust speakers as Elie Wiesel, David Wyman, Arno Mayer, and James Young, and periodic film series on the topic utilizing Kenyon's growing A/V collection, have elicited interest from colleagues who want to participate in some way in the course in the future.

The team staffing the course customarily meets for planning the semester before the course is offered, and two or three times a week during the life of the course, to discuss matters of common concern, Holocaust-related news in the media, upcoming student presentations, and guest lectures. The syllabus used for the course is constructed anew each year by the designated seminar leaders, using as a guideline the selected texts, topics, films, and guest lectures from previous years, but making significant changes along the way. Student and faculty interests shift. For example, studies of the role of women, the ethics of Nazi medicine, Jewish and Christian theological responses to the Shoah, and the rise of Neo-Nazi and skinhead movements were added when interests indicated a need to shift topics. But the overall course description has remained largely the same:

This course is an interdisciplinary inquiry into the destruction of European Jewry during the Second World War. How was it that in our century, in the midst of civilized Europe, a policy of genocide was formulated and systematically implemented? We will examine the Holocaust within the contexts of modern European history, Nazi ideology and practice, the Jewish experience in Europe, the nature and history of anti-Semitism, and the psychology of human behavior. Our work will draw on film, literature, art, memoirs, theology, empirical research, and historical investigations. An ongoing concern of the course will be the significance of the

Holocaust in contemporary political discourse and in our own thinking as individuals.

The name of the course itself came under close scrutiny. We asked whether the more proper designation, the Shoah, should be used instead. It was decided, however, that the more familiar, if still problematic, label "The Holocaust" (with the definite article) would be more understandable and accessible to students. And, even while stressing the uniqueness of this particular genocide, the course has always acknowledged the suffering and persecution of other groups: Romani, gypsies, gays, socialists, etc. For instance, we have used the work of the Holocaust survivor Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals* (Henr y Holt, 1986), and the pseudonymous Heinz Heger,
The Men with the Pink Triangle: The True Life-and-Death Story of Homosexuals in the Nazi Death Camps
(Alyson Books, rev. ed., 1994)
, to explore how Nazi ideology targeted groups they regarded as "deviant" in a systematic program of persecution.

The course is taught each Spring semester, with lectures and seminar meetings, each eighty-minutes long and held on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the fourteen-week semester. Films and special lectures are scheduled for other evenings as well. Seminars begin with a brief writing exercise on a subject related to the assigned readings of that week. The topic is either announced at the start of the seminar or previously by an e-mail instructing the student to bring their typed response to class. Some kind of ongoing journal, in which the student summarizes key points of the readings and raises critical questions, is also usually required. Students are expected to attend all lectures and to participate actively in the seminar discussions; the level of participation is directly reflected in the grade assigned for the course. There are mid-semester and final examinations. Students are provided with detailed study guides in anticipation of these in-class examinations, which test their ability to give definitions of key terms, summarize the content and argument of assigned readings, and creatively integrate and critically evaluate material from various authors and genres.

The last requirement in the course is a research project. Sometimes this is a traditional research paper but often it is a thirty-minute presentation on a research topic of shared interest, working with a team of three or four other students. The team must present their research to the whole seminar group in a way that fosters further discussion and must prepare a short bibliography for members of their seminar on the topic presented. A series of deadlines for topic selection, a progress report and working bibliography, and a subsequent five-page summary of the team's work are usually parts of this assignment. Students, schooled in the philosophy of rugged individualism, often balk at the team format, fearing their grade might suffer with the weakest link on the team. We believe that this team approach is an important part of the pedagogical process, but have made modifications to have each student submit a short summary of

personal work along with the group report, or sometimes have asked them to complete evaluations of each other's contributions to the team presentation. The better teams have often divided the labors by subsections of the topic or according to the perceived strengths of the team members (e.g., one might be better at oral presentation, another at Web searches, or another at constructing graphs or visual displays). These team presentations also allow students to delve more deeply into the assigned topics of the course or to explore additional ones. Topics have included: SS/Nazi ideology; Nazi doctors and medical experiments; resistance and rescue; corporate business and the death camp labor; methods of coping in the camps; the White Rose Movement; the Vatican and the Jews; American public opinion and the Jews; war crime trials, (e.g., Nuremberg, Adolf Eichmann, Klaus Barbie); the individual experience in journals of the period, both from Jews (e.g., Etty Hillesum) and non-Jews (e.g., Reck-Malleczewen); survivors and their children (e.g., the family dynamics); the rise of Neo-Nazis in Europe and America; the persecution of gypsies, gays, Jehovah's Witnesses, socialists/Communists, Christian clergy and so forth. Students are encouraged to find their own topics, however a range of possible topics is posted and students may sign up, or indicate alternate interests. The pairing of student and topic is done in consultation with the seminar leaders.

The course is structured, week-by-week, with an array of assigned texts and topics. Beginning with the introductory lecture period, all the instructors lay out what they see as the basic issues that will be explored, the problematics in the subject matter and interdisciplinary approach, and the personal perspectives and experiences that they have recognized in their own grappling with these historic events and ideas. This may include reflections by an instructor who is a child of survivors, an instructor in Judaic studies who sees the Holocaust as an important part but not the whole story of modern Jewish identity, or a Christian historian exploring the Christian traditions conscious and unconscious legitimating function in the Nazi genocide.

The texts used in the opening weeks, Lucy S. Dawidowicz's *The War Against the Jews: 1933–1945* (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1975) and *A Holocaust Reader* (Behrman House, 1976), which view the events of World War Two through the lens of German anti-Semitism, and such works as William Sheridan Allen's *The Nazi Seizure of Power* (Franklin Watts, rev. ed., 1984) or Ian Kershaw's *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (Edward Arnold, 2nd ed., 1989), an equally focused counter-perspective to Dawidowicz, concentrating instead on other, random factors as the catalyst for the "Final Solution" or Sarah Gordon's *Hitler, Germans and the "Jewish Question"* (Princeton University Press, 1992), give the student broad overviews of modern European history and the antecedents of anti-Semitism, German Nationalism, the history of European

Jewry, and Nazi ideology in practice, as well as alerting the student to varying contexts of interpretation and emphasis in the data presented. Students are expected to absorb an enormous number of facts, but also to become sensitive to how one should weigh historical arguments and uncover the assumptions and biases of individual historical writers and sources.

After the initial phase of the course, the general discussion focuses on the apparatus of destruction: the Einsatzgruppen, the Ghettoes, and the implementation of the "Final Solution" in the death camps after the Wannsee Conference set the bureaucratic machinery in motion. Faculty and students then examine a detailed picture of life and death in the camps. Materials read and viewed that stand out in this portion of the course are: the BBC video of *The Warsaw Ghetto* ; the docudrama *The Wannsee Conference* at which the blueprint for extermination was devised in less than ninety minutes; and portions of survivor recollections and the reflections of perpetrators in the epic video *Shoah* . The texts read include Gitta Sereny's chilling interviews with Franz Stangl, the enigmatic commandant of the Treblinka death camp, in *Into that Darkness: An Examination of Conscience* (Vintage, 1983); Hannah Arendt's classic study of what she termed "the banality of evil" in *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Peter Smith Publishers, rev. ed., 1994); Primo Levi's harrowing story of coping and resistance in *Survival in Auschwitz* (Touchstone, 1996); and the first section of Viktor E. Frankl's first-person memoir *Man's Search for Meaning* (Buccaneer Books, 1993), often criticized for its attempt to discern psychological meaning and purpose from the killing grounds.

Following that material, the course deals with questions of resistance in its varied forms, rescuers, and bystanders. Students view works such as *The Courage to Care*, which introduces them to an array of "righteous Gentiles" who risked themselves and their families to assist and shelter Jews, often total strangers. When asked, while visiting Kenyon, whether he wondered why so few helped the Jews during this time, Elie Wiesel responded, "The more wondrous question is why some helped at all." It has been important in the development of the course materials students learn that there was resistance, and that Jews did not, as often depicted, go "silently like lambs to the slaughter." The heroic uprising pictured in contemporary newsreels in the video documentary *The Warsaw Ghetto* ; the video *The Partisans of Vilna* ; segments of Claude Lanzmann's

Shoah
, which detail the armed revolt and mass escape at Sobibor death camp; the story of the self-sacrificing Hannah Senesh in
Hannah's War
and her
Life and Diaries
(Schocken, 1973); and Yuri Suhl's edited volume,
They Fought Back: The Story of Jewish Resistance in Nazi Germany
(Schocken, 1987) are all important sources showing particular occasions of armed resistance. But students also come to see that the performance of religious rituals, artistic expression, unbroken familial connections, sabotage and delays in forced-labor factories, escape into the countryside, immigration when possible, and other acts — many small and invisible acts — constituted resistance to the death machine.

The most important book, I felt, for the next portion of the course on what the world knew and did, or, more properly, did not do, is David Wyman's singular scholarly and archival achievement, *The Abandonment of the Jews, 1941–1945* (Pantheon, 1984). This revealing work by the off-spring of a line of Methodist ministers exposes the apathy and pathetically weak-willed resolve of the American government, its Western allies, and Jewish and Christian religious and political groups. It is accompanied by a viewing of the video
Safe Haven
, the story of the Oswego, New York, internment camp that welcomed fewer than 900 Jewish refugees. Students are made aware of the United States' failure to mount and sustain genuine and open rescue efforts and immigration policies for persecuted Jews, even after the Nazi extermination program was known to be functioning nonstop.

Another portion of the course has at times dealt with the Holocaust in art, literature, and music. We have used the video *Paradise Camp* and other materials, especially the art and poetry of children at Terezin, the so-called "model camp" constructed by Hitler to deflect international criticism and Red Cross inspections of prisoners' living conditions. Many people are already acquainted with examples of this art, but we explore even more the documenting art created by adults in various camps, the music performed and composed in the camps, and even the Jewish and Christian ritual objects secretly created and used in the camps under the harshest conditions. Along with the visual and aural material, we have used a number of other works of the imagination: Art Spiegelman's *The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale*
(Volumes 1 and 2, Pantheon, 1996); Elie Wiesel's
Night
(Bantam, 1982); Cynthia Ozick's
The Shawl
(Knopf, 1989); Bernard Malamud's
The Fixer

(Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1966); Clara Asscher-Pinkhof's
Star Children
(Wayne State University Press, 1987); Tadeusz Borowski's
This Way For the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen
(Viking, 1967); Rolf Hochhuth's
The Deputy
(Translated by Richard and Clara Winston, Grove Press, 1964); Jerzy Kosinski's
The Painted Bird
(2nd ed., Houghton Mifflin, 1976); and André Schwarz-Bart's
Last of the Just
(Fine Communications, 1996); alongside the poetry of Paul Celan and Nelly Sachs. Wiesel was once quoted — again, at Kenyon — as saying that he would not use fiction, even his own novels, in a course on the Holocaust, preferring instead only historical studies, primary documents, diaries, letters, contemporary newspapers and journals, photographs, and newsreels. However, we found that students had invariably had their introduction to this subject matter through
Night
, or though such works as
The Diary of Anne Frank
, either the widely-circulated book or the various stage and film versions, through Stephen Spielberg's
Schindler's List
, or other films such as
Seven Beauties
,
Bent
,
Jacob the Liar
,
The Pawnbroker
,
The Holocaust
TV series,
Au Revoir Les Infants
,
The Assisi Underground
,
The Shop on Main Street
,
Judgment at Nuremberg
, or more recently,
Life is Beautiful
. We have used some of these films in the course. It is through such works of the imagination that the students' continuing interest in the subject and their sense of moral conviction are formed.

Along the way, while immersing themselves in a diversity of genres, the students are asked to become familiar with an extensive new vocabulary of words and phrases, to be able to recognize, to relate to other concepts, and to define briefly. This function of vocabulary building, which might be easily overlooked, is in itself an important act of remembrance and historical reconstruction. Just a few of the persons, places, concepts, and events they are asked to memorize are Bergen-Belsen, Bermuda Conference, Bund, Einsatzgruppen, Adolf Eichmann, Reinhard Heydrich, I. G. Farben, Judenrat, Kapo, Kristallnacht, Le Chambon, Josef Mengele, "Nacht und Nebel," Nuremberg Laws, Reichsbahn, Sobibor, Sonderkommando, Treblinka, The White Rose, Stephen Wise, and Zyklon-B. Language creates a universe of reference, and part of the ability of the student to command the material is to demonstrate an ease in the use and understanding of key terms, and how their interpretation depends upon wider linguistic and cultural contexts. Thus, a word signifying a common pesticide could be transformed into an expeditious instrument of human death in the gas chambers, and Zyklon-B would ever after resonate with its terrible new meaning.

As historical memory fades, the use of glossaries, maps, biographical lists, chronologies, and reproductions of ephemera (posters, tracts, government documents, etc.), as well as bibliographies and filmographies, will be necessary and important supplemental material to provide students. These tools, along with the study of the pertinent languages, will provide students with the means and references with which to decipher primary texts, investigate public archives and private depositories of materials — some, such as those in the former Soviet Union, just now unsealed — and put the mosaic pieces of history together. Our students, we all must understand, are not the final recipients of this gathered information, only its temporary guardians and conduits for the future. Along the way, they must be equipped to preserve this inheritance and add their own voices as a legacy.

Obviously, as a teacher alongside my colleagues, I see the study of the Holocaust as part of the larger study of history and culture, including the darkness as well as the light. It is part of the humanistic project of exploring human life in its endless convolutions. But I have seen the study of the Holocaust on this campus bear a number of immediate fruits and off-shoots. Among faculty who have led the course or given guest lectures, this study has directed them to new, interdisciplinary interests for research and publishing, affected the choice of materials and topics introduced into other courses, and created structured links of professional contact between faculty in different departments and schools' over questions of course content and general pedagogy. Amongst students it has created interests more diverse and energizing than in their prior exposure to the subject. For one student it led to discussions of family history and its roots in Eastern Europe; to another student it meant an exploration of her family's life in Germany; to another student it meant that his grandfather, who helped liberate a concentration camp, used the opportunity of his grandson's inquiry to show photos of that event he had never shown to anyone before. To some alumni/ae who have taken the course it has led to visits to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, along with various relevant sites and museums in the U.S. and Europe. Those who are

teaching in both public and private secondary schools have introduced units on the Holocaust in history, social studies, religion, and English literature classes. One alumna, now a secondary school teacher, discovered a local gallery had a permanent exhibition of the paintings of Samuel Bak: highly symbolic allusions to the Holocaust. His works are also displayed at the art museum at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. She now arranges annual visits by her students to view this art, to tour the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and to use the important film collections of the Fortunoff Video Archives for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University and the National Center for Jewish Films at Brandeis University. On campus we have had at various times a semester-long series of Holocaust-related films/videos, panels on the question of genocide, historic and current; a 24-hour reading of the works of Elie Wiesel; annual talks by Holocaust survivors and witnesses; photographic and artistic displays; and the involvement of faculty and students from the course in the Yom Ha-Shoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) commemoration each year under the auspices of the Kenyon Hillel.

As a member of the department of religious studies at Kenyon, a department which views the ongoing phenomena of religious life and thought as rooted in historical experience and contextualized in culture, the study of the Holocaust in particular continues to illuminate my own research and understanding of modern Christian history, itself radically changed since "the Tremendum." The active remembering of the past, what students of religion define as anamnesis, is in itself a profoundly religious act and has significance for this academic exercise in remembrance.

I will end my own reflections by mentioning one volume frequently used in the course, the volume edited by John K. Roth and Michael Berenbaum, *Holocaust: Religious and Philosophical Implications* (Paragon House, 1989). This book raises questions of faith and human meaning, in the voices of different writers, poignantly and provocatively. It urges and demonstrates ways in which both Jewish and Christian theological thought must begin to reflect honestly and openly on this aspect of a beleaguered but shared past. In a significant way, one caution voiced forcefully in this volume functions as a chastening warning to all those who teach, interpret, or speak about the Holocaust. In the words of Irving Greenberg, "No statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of the burning children." That is why we teach.