sponsibility he bears for his actions. Whatever the influence of environment, the potential for real love of man, like the potential for evil, lies within man's heart."

*The Art of Dostoevsky* is written in a lucid and untrammeled prose. Mr. Jackson presents Dostoevsky's concepts in Dostoevsky's terms rather than in terms of a critical model of his own—which is a fitting tribute to a writer who was not only a great novelist but also, by virtue of the fictional problems he tackled and solved, a notable critic in his own way.

# ANATOMIES OF HOLOCAUSTICS

THEODORE ZIOLKOWSKI

Sitting in a Fifty-second Street dive on September 1, 1939, W. H. Auden was depressed by the "unmentionable odour of death" that offended the night following the German invasion of Poland. But even as he brooded over the excrescences of that "low dishonest decade," he was confident enough to believe that

Edward Alexander, *The Resonance of Dust: Essays on Holocaust Literature and Jewish Fate.* Ohio State University Press, 1979. xx + 256 pages. $15; Aharon Appelfeld, *Badenheim 1939,* translated by Dalya Bilu. Godine, 1980. 148 pages. $10; *The Auschwitz Album,* with a text by Peter Hellman. Random House, 1981. xxxiv + 168 pages. $23.50; Dorothy Seidman Bilik, *Immigrant-Survivors: Post-Holocaust Consciousness in Recent Jewish American Fiction.* Wesleyan University Press, 1981. 216 pages. $15.95; Hamida Bosmajian, *Metaphors of Evil: Contemporary German Literature and the Shadow of Nazism.* University of Iowa Press, 1979. xvi + 248 pages. $14; Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians.* Harvard University Press, 1981. x + 188 pages. $15; Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, *By Words Alone: The Holocaust in Literature,* with foreword by Alfred Kazin. University of Chicago Press, 1980. xiv + 262 pages. $15; Ellen S. Fine, *Legacy of Night: The Literary Universe of Elie Wiesel.* State University of New York Press, 1982. xvi + 200 pages. $10.95 pb; George M. Kren and Leon Rappoport, *The Holocaust and the Crisis of Human Behavior.* Holmes & Meier, 1980. 176 pages. $24.50; Lawrence L. Langer, *Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit.* State University of New York Press, 1982. xii + 268 pages. $19.95; Jacob Neusner, *Stranger at Home: "The Holocaust," Zionism, and American Judaism.* University of Chicago Press, 1981. x + 214 pages. $15; Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *A Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature.* Indiana University Press, 1980. 210 pages. $17.50; Wendelgard von Staden, *Darkness over the Valley,* translated by Mollie Comerford Peters. Ticknor & Fields, 1980. x + 164 pages. $9.95.





Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god. . . .

Auden was right on one score: some scholars have traced back to the Reformation the moral schizophrenia that enabled men who were perfectly respectable *Familienväter* in the privacy of their homes to supervise atrocities on the job at places like Auschwitz, Treblinka, or Sobibor. Luther, fanatical in his insistence that salvation is a purely personal concern, maintained with equal fervor that in temporal affairs the individual owes total obedience to the duly constituted secular authorities. Thus he legitimated the dichotomy between public and private areas of responsibility that increasingly dominated German thought.

On two other counts Auden, even in this bleak moment, did not foresee the excesses of which history was capable. In 1939 the real "offence" of cultural madness had barely gotten under way. Despite the existence of a few concentration camps the Nazi leaders had not yet committed themselves to a policy of mass killing: the systematic extermination of the Jews was not approved until the middle of 1941. Still today, moreover, there is considerable disagreement about the Holocaust. Historians debate the facts and their interpretation; survivors quarrel about their experiences and responses; scholars are puzzled by the psychopathy of Hitler as well as of his sinister henchmen, the SS élite, without whose connivance the slaughter could never have taken place. Indeed scholarship on the Holocaust, whether accurate or not, is piling up at such a rate that some observers believe the end of the century will witness an accumulation of works exceeding the total number produced on any other subject in human history. Under the circumstances readers will be grateful for two fine books that help us to make sense of the well-nigh unsurveyable mass of material turned out since Auden tried to drown his sorrows over forty years ago.

In her latest work Lucy S. Dawidowicz deals with the paradoxical neglect of the Holocaust by many historians during the first postwar decades. While writing *The War against the Jews, 1933–1945* (1975) and editing *A Holocaust Reader* (1976), Dawidowicz realized that the murder of the European Jews had been recorded with dismaying inadequacy in the standard history books. As she set out to solve this historiographical mystery, she discovered that the Holocaust is not exempt from the general rule that history is shaped by historians, who are moved in turn by such factors as national identity, religion, lan-

guage, and class—in short by a wide variety of personal predilections and subjective elements. Taking into account factors ranging from simple indifference to explicit anti-Semitism, Dawidowicz has sought to explain the neglect or distortions of an event so horrendous in twentieth-century history.

In *The Holocaust and the Historians,* which begins with a rehearsal of the facts and statistics concerning the mass murder of six million Jews, Dawidowicz goes on to survey representative works—textbooks and popular accounts as well as professional monographs—that have fixed our image of the Nazi era. While many factors other than national partisanship played a role, certain fundamental similarities emerge among particular groups of historians. Despite the recent proliferation of "Holocaustology" in American universities, most secondary-school and college textbooks in this country long failed even to mention the Holocaust. With the notable exception of a few scholars like George Mosse and Fritz Stern, even those American historians who have dealt with Nazi Germany have often ignored the fate of the Jews, a deficiency that Dawidowicz attributes as much to a tendency toward narrow specialization as to an American discomfort with ideological issues. In British historiography Dawidowicz accounts for a similar neglect by the disdain for ideas on the part of historians like Alan Bullock or A. J. P. Taylor and by social prejudice in the case of H. R. Trevor-Roper. If Anglo-American historians are ideologically naive, then many German historians—e.g. Friedrich Meinecke and Gerhard Ritter—have been persuaded by the tenets of historicism to discount the events of 1933–1945 as a disruption in the natural continuity of German history, an episode so inconsistent with the national destiny that it may be regarded as irrelevant.

Russian historians, in contrast, have been motivated by an attempt to reconcile the fate of the Jews with the dynamics of Marxist-Leninism while justifying persistent anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and the extensive collaboration of Soviet citizens in the murder of the Jews. For the first twenty years after the war Soviet historians sought simply to erase the Jews from Soviet history, lumping them together—if their actions had to be mentioned—with other undesirables under the general label *cosmopolitans.* When Soviet anti-Semitism intensified after the Six-Day War of 1967, the policy of silence gave way to a new anti-Zionist interpretation maintaining that Zionists, working closely with Hitler, organized the mass destruction of Jews—presumably to discourage Jews content to remain in the Diaspora. While Polish historiography was dominated by the Marxist policy of neglect, the "thaw" of 1956 prompted a number of enterprising Polish historians to come to grips with the fate of the Jews in Poland, one result of which was the establishment of various historical commissions as well as the museums at Auschwitz and Majdanek. In the late sixties, however, under a toughening policy of the party, anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism succeeded in stifling scholarship and in coopting into Polish national history such undisputable facts as the uprisings in the Warsaw ghetto and in the camps.



As a historian Dawidowicz is subject to the same forces as the writers whose work she investigates. Despite the undeniable validity of her basic thesis one senses throughout her work an animus—vaguely anti-German, anti-Polish, anti-Marxist—that heats up her text like a low-grade fever. In her zeal for recognition of the heinousness of the Nazis toward the Jews, she trivializes the Nazi tactics against the Poles and Russians, discredits the initiatives of certain non-Jewish historians, and oversimplifies by omission the various national responses. For instance Jean-Paul Bier's *Auschwitz et les nouvelles littératures allemandes,* published under the reputable auspices of the *Centre national des hautes études juives* in Brussels (1979), offers a much more subtly differentiated analysis of the public awareness of the Holocaust in post-war Germany. Other critics have suggested that American intellectuals were long distracted from the enormities of Nazism by their obsession with Stalinism, not by ideological naiveté. Moreover some critics would even question the Archimedean fulcrum upon which Dawidowicz rests the lever with which she shakes up the historians. To cite only one example, Jacob Neusner—in the two pieces on the Holocaust in *Stranger at Home,* his latest collection of essays and reviews—argues that the extermination of European Jewry became "the Holocaust" only in American Judaism during the seventies as an expression of "Jewish assertion" corresponding, say, to the search for ethnic roots among American blacks. It is unreasonable, Neusner argues, to make "the Holocaust" into the principal subject of public discourse and into the touchstone by which the integrity of modern historiography should be measured.

While Lucy Dawidowicz, despite the bias and oversimplifications of her work, has performed an immense service by organizing a vast mass of historical studies of the Holocaust chronologically by nation, George M. Kren and Leon Rappoport have surveyed much of the same material systematically by topic. Their study proceeds, however, from assumptions quite different from those of Dawidowicz, who rejects any interpretation of Auschwitz as "a paradigm for universal evil": they specifically regard the Holocaust as "the major historical crisis of the twentieth century . . . a crisis of human behavior and values." (Accordingly the bibliographic essay offers in many cases a provocative alternative to Dawidowicz's assessments—e.g. of Hannah Arendt, whose charge of Jewish collaboration she abhors, or of the value of psychobiographies of Hitler, which she disdains.) As a historical crisis it is difficult to grasp because it produced no conspicuous changes in political power, economic theory, national boundaries, or religious forms.

Psychologically, however, the Holocaust has left modern man stripped of moral authority and security because it proved that "the two traditional pillars of Western morality, law and religion, are inadequate to the task of protecting human beings." The atrocities were made possible by advances in the very science, technology, and language upon which civilization had prided itself. "The equation that fits the historical data is this: As the quality of thinking grows more rational, the quantity of destruction increases."

*The Holocaust and the Crisis of Human Behavior* represents the fruitful interdisciplinary collaboration of a historian (Kren) and a psychologist seeking to assess the Holocaust as rationally as possible. The authors reject at the outset two common attitudes: that it was produced by an impersonal human force (e.g. anti-Semitism), an attitude that would relieve the individual of moral responsibility; and that a metaphysical principle (e.g. God's will) is evident in the Holocaust, a fatalistic view that has little existential significance. In an effort to understand mass destruction as a psychosocial event and genocide as a social policy, they examine four topics in detail.

To determine why Germany in particular should have brought forth the Holocaust, Kren and Rappoport single out three factors. In addition to the split of public life from private morality, increasingly pervasive since Luther, they identify Germany's humiliating defeat in World War I, which produced a ruinous state of deprivation as well as a cadre of alienated veterans inspired by a sense of heroic nihilism. In the person of Adolf Hitler, finally, a fanatical leader appeared who was able to exploit the inherent authoritarian tendencies of the nation as well as the socioeconomic resentments. The translation of Hitler's murderous hatred of the Jews into action would have been impossible without the growth of the SS legions with their intense personal loyalty to the Führer. What makes the analysis chilling is the conclusion that "the overwhelming majority of SS men, leaders as well as rank and file, would have easily passed all the psychiatric tests ordinarily given to American army recruits or Kansas City policemen," coupled with the reminder that many other modern states have created their own versions of the SS to carry out programs of mass repression. The vulnerability of the Jews as victims of Nazi repression is explained by an analysis of the prototype of victims in the twentieth century, a group characterized by their common status as nonpersons, unable to avail themselves of the protection of a national state. The familiar tale of escalating persecution from 1933 to the winter of 1941–1942, when the Final Solution was finally adopted, provides the context for a dispassionate discussion of several sensitive issues: the varying possibilities of reaction among the victims; the phases of concentration, deportation, selection, and death as they affected the Jews of the various European countries; and the disparate accounts of life in the camps



by survivors, each of whom insists that his own experience was representative. The authors suggest that several factors are necessary for the shift from victim to resister—notably the threat of immediate violence and a powerful ideological motivation (and specifically *not* the hope of personal survival). Within this framework the authors consider Jewish resistance both in national groups and in the camps as well as various alleged acts of collaboration.

To exaggerate the importance of this sane, sensible, and well-informed anatomy of Holocaustics is difficult. More controversial than any of the specific arguments concerning the susceptibility of Germany, the role of the SS, the character of the victim, and the types of response ranging from resistance to collaboration will be the authors' insistence on regarding the Holocaust not as a unique tragedy of Jewish history—an attitude that disenfranchises non-Jews from either involvement or responsibility—but as a crisis for mankind as a whole.

Lawrence L. Langer is also concerned, as the subtitle of his *Versions of Survival* explicitly states, with the larger implications of "the Holocaust and the Human Spirit." The first of his four interrelated essays is a meditation, "Language as Refuge"—by which he means "a too easy faith in the hypnotic power of language to restore integrity to a disintegrating world." Langer's principal targets are Victor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*, Bruno Bettelheim's *The Informed Heart*, and Terrence Des Pres's *The Survivor*, in all of which he detects an attempt to deny the harsh reality of extermination at Auschwitz in favor of a reassuring "logotherapy" or morality or grace that bestows meaning on the experience. The minor premise of Langer's syllogism is undeniable: from the victims who consoled themselves by performing music, writing sonnets, and painting pictures to the survivors who have exorcised their nightmares in subsequent accounts, it is clear that men and women sought refuge from the horrors of the *univers concentrationnaire* in language, art, philosophy. But if one questions the major premise—that the search for meaning is incompatible with the acceptance of reality—then Langer's conclusion is unpersuasive. More to the point: Langer falls into the very trap that he condemns, for he repeatedly lapses into metaphor as he writes. We hear of "tillers in the field of atrocity" as well as a "gardener in the greenhouse of words who knows that her precious language has been decimated by a terrible disease." Elsewhere the horticultural imagery is displaced by the theatrical when Langer refers to "actors on the stage of atrocity" and "secular atrocity . . . enacted on the stage of Jewish faith." To the extent that it seeks organic unity in horticultural metaphors and dramatic unity in theatrical ones, Langer's argument is vitiated by his language.

The first meditation, the most provocative of the four, provides the background for the subsequent essays. (The second one takes too many pages to belabor the obvious point that victims at Auschwitz had little

choice about the nature of their deaths.) In a convincing interpretation Langer discusses the "divided voices" that characterize the prose of Elie Wiesel: survivor and victim, testimony and silence, affirmation and despair. For Langer, who approves of ambiguities, these tensions are by definition superior to the straightforward utterances of Frankl, Bettelheim, and Des Pres. Similarly (after some interesting pages on the poetry of Gertrud Kolmar) Langer celebrates Nelly Sachs because her language embodies the paradoxes of survival rather than a simple message of determination and reassurance. (Note again that Langer resorts to a reassuring image, albeit a confused one, to summarize his conclusion: "The Holocaust has bequeathed to Nelly Sachs a crippled universe, which limps toward health on the hesitant crutches of her sturdy verse.") But this chapter, as persuasive as the readings may be, is puzzling in the larger context of the book. The polemics of the first essay are directed against accounts by writers who actually survived the camps through the strength of their single-minded conviction; Kolmar, in contrast, had written all her poetry before she was arrested in 1943 and sent to Auschwitz, while Nelly Sachs escaped to Sweden in 1940 and never knew the camps. What is the relevance of their poetic visions to the tactics of survival practiced by prisoners in the camps? One might even argue that poetic ambiguity is the luxury of hindsight and reflection. The poetry actually written in the camps tended to be simple and direct rather than complex and elusive—much more like the logotherapy of Frankl or the moral rigor of Bettelheim than like the ambiguities that Langer identifies in the works of Wiesel and Sachs.

To a great extent, of course, critics—like Lucy Dawidowicz's historians—see what they are looking for. When Edward Alexander looks at Nelly Sachs, and at the works of the Israeli poet Abba Kovner, what he sees is not so much the backward-gazing poetry of contradictions that appeals to Langer but instead a "link between the Holocaust and the rebirth of Israel in the imaginative and spiritual life of the Jewish People." Similarly Alexander argues in *The Resonance of Dust* that Israeli Holocaust fiction—by Haim Hazaz, Yehuda Amichai, Hanoch Bartov, Haim Gouri, Dahn Ben Amotz, and Yoram Kanich—provides evidence for the failure of European Judaism. In a post-Enlightenment age in which a secularized anti-Semitism is no longer confined by the powers of law and religion only Zionism provides hope. Alexander explores this theme in more specific detail in such secular works as I. B. Singer's *The Family Moskat,* Chaim Grade's novella *My Quarrel with Hersh Rassevner,* and especially in Saul Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet,* which he analyzes as the collapse of an elderly survivor's Enlightenment ideals. Finally he surveys a body of prose and poetry reflecting the ways in which the Holocaust affected the religious beliefs of devout Jews.



In his essays, which are refreshing for a tough-mindedness that eschews all mysticism and sentimentality and rhapsodic flights, Alexander attributes the astonishing absence of the Holocaust in American-Jewish fiction for so many years to the persistence of "the universalist-humanist delusion" that blinded Jews to the particularity of their Jewish identity. Apart from the notable exception of Bellow's *The Dangling Man,* it was not until the sixties—with Edward Wallant's *The Pawnbroker,* Norma Rosen's *Touching Evil,* Susan Schaeffer's *Anya,* Arthur Cohen's *In the Days of Simon Stern,* and the later works of Cynthia Ozick and Saul Bellow—that the Holocaust became a genuine theme. Alexander's suggestive essay looks almost like a table of contents for Dorothy Seidman Bilik's fine book, *Immigrant-Survivors,* on post-Holocaust consciousness in recent Jewish-American fiction. Leaving aside the more familiar "Jewish Novel," which deals satirically with second- and third-generation American Jews, Bilik concerns herself strictly with the figure of the Jewish immigrant in fiction. In contrast to the early immigrant novels, which depict the successful Americanization of the heroes through linguistic, cultural, and economic assimilation, the immigrant-survivors tend to remain isolated from the society surrounding them, set off by what Bilik nicely terms "the stigmata that constitute a semiology of the Holocaust." Uninterested in establishing a permanent home in America, which is often perceived as being no less violent than the Europe they left behind, these immigrant-survivors cultivate the memory of the Holocaust as an act of reverence and personal survival. Bilik substantiates these generalizations through detailed and often brilliant analyses of specific works: several stories by Bernard Malamud and I. B. Singer, as well as the previously cited novels by Wallant, Schaeffer, Bellow, and Arthur Cohen. It is regrettable that Bilik provides so little sense of the writers or the context of their works: her discussion remains almost totally literary. But the book is filled with critical aperçus—e.g. on the frequency of poor vision or blindness among these survivors as "symbolic rejections of the unbelievable sights they have seen, as well as signs of their suffering and of their superior insight." Above all it is a major achievement to have identified a valid genre within the larger corpus of Jewish-American fiction.

While the first studies of Holocaust literature tended to be dominated by ideological or psychological concerns, some of the best recent work has been produced by critics with a background in literary studies like Bilik or Ellen S. Fine, a scholar of French literature, who has given us in *Legacy of Night* what is for the time being the most systematic, thorough, and knowledgeable introduction to the oeuvre of Elie Wiesel. Fine uses the motif of *the witness* as her organizing principle as she takes up the novels in chronological order, analyzing each with intelligence and sensitivity. But at no point is the reader allowed to forget

that her main purpose is a study of Wiesel's creative testimony as *literature*. A similar literary focus informs Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi's excellent comparative study of Holocaust literature, *By Words Alone*, which goes gratifyingly beyond the predictable canon of works. Using criteria that combine a sophisticated literary consciousness with a vivid moral sense, Ezrahi visualizes the genres of Holocaust literature in a series of concentric rings radiating outward from the testimonial works and memoirs that constitute an immediate reflection of life in the ghettos and camps. The intermediate stage between testimony and imaginative literature includes not only such widely publicized documentary dramas as Peter Weiss's *The Investigation* and Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy*, but also less familiar fiction like Pierre Julitte's *Block 26*, Kuznetsov's *Babi Yar*, J.-F. Steiner's *Treblinka*, and Richard Elman's *The Twenty-eighth Day of Elul*. In all such works the author "relies upon his adherence to documentary evidence . . . to establish credibility for his particular view of history." By means of skillful juxtapositions and comparisons Ezrahi exposes discrepancies in the transmission of information as well as the inner vision characteristic of each artist—precisely the factors that raise documentary art from documentation toward art. Ezrahi coins the term *concentrationary realism* to designate the fiction of Tadeusz Borowski and Edgar Hilsenrath, which places the individual at its center (in contrast to the *types* preferred by documentary literature) in an effort to delineate the effects of "extreme situations" on individual integrity. The works that Ezrahi calls "Literature of Survival" focus (*pace* Langer!) on the strategies that victims within the camps—e.g. in Ilona Karmel's *An Estate of Memory*—as well as survivors after liberation devise in order to come to terms with survival.

Turning from works with a cultural perspective that is primarily western and secular, Ezrahi surveys the literary and philosophical traditions that shape Hebrew literature of the Holocaust. After tracing the "legacy of Lamentations" in Yiddish and Hebrew writing that is largely unfamiliar outside Israel, she shows that the same religious forces are at work in her appraisals of more familiar figures writing in western languages—Wiesel, Singer, Schwarz-Bart, Sachs, Celan. In contrast to the writers who try to comprehend the Holocaust with reference to its documentary reality or within the context of Jewish faith, another group—Jerzy Kosinski, Jakov Lind, Adolf Rudnicki, Jorge Semprun, and Pierre Gascar—share no preexistent world-view into which they can integrate the Holocaust. In their works, accordingly, "the Holocaust becomes the primary and the only given . . . an invincible enemy which has conquered the imagination as well as the battlegrounds of civilized mankind."

Ezrahi finally scrutinizes responses to the Holocaust in American literature, which require an imaginative effort quite different from that



of the European Jews who experienced it at first hand. Initially mentioned peripherally in the early war novels and then gradually in works addressing the problem of American anti-Semitism, the Holocaust was not a central theme but a point of reference by which to measure the status of Jews in the United States. The Eichmann trial and Hannah Arendt's widely publicized essay focused public attention for the first time on the Holocaust and generated two main themes. One, the banality of evil, can be traced all the way down to recent television series dealing with the Nazi era. The other, which sees the Holocaust not primarily as a historical event but as "a complex of psychological possibilities," was appropriated by such poets as Sylvia Plath, whose experiments with Holocaust imagery attest the widespread diffusion of the Holocaust in western culture and, at the same time, represent "a devaluation of the particularity as well as the monstrosity of the historical experience."

Ezrahi's book is important not only for its impressive scope, but also for the defamiliarization of canonical texts afforded by her perspective from Israel. Most impressive, perhaps, is the self-control that has enabled her to come to grips with urgent and passionate issues *sine ira et studio*. Alvin H. Rosenfeld covers much of the same material in *A Double Dying*, his "phenomenology of Holocaust literature," which is both less extensive and less dispassionate than Ezrahi's book. Rejecting older and traditional modes of criticism as inappropriate, Rosenfeld argues that Holocaust literature, as "an attempt to express a new order of consciousness, a recognizable shift in being," requires us to contemplate "fundamental changes in our modes of perception and expression." The first category comprises works from the camps—those provisional notes and diaries that constitute the most authoritative reflections of the Holocaust—and the memoirs of survivors. Rosenfeld shows (as did Langer in *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*) how the first survivors came to terms with their experiences by adapting existing modes to their purposes: the inversion of the *Erziehungsroman* in Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz* and the trial of faith in Elie Wiesel's *Night*. The writers who first sought to write fiction about the Holocaust, when fact itself surpassed any fiction, faced a new kind of problem. In his most productive chapter Rosenfeld surveys the varieties of fictional forms ranging from fictional documentation of the sort utilized by John Hersey in *The Wall* or Leon Uris in *Mila 18* by way of fictional analogies like Bernard Malamud's *The Fixer* and André Schwarz-Bart's *The Last of the Just* to the grim ironies of Borowski and Kosinski. To illustrate the mode of poetry Rosenfeld narrows his focus to the two inevitable examples, Paul Celan and Nelly Sachs. To designate a poetry that is not *inspirational* but that records the silence of a crumbling world Rosenfeld coins the term *poetics of expiration*. Demonstrating persuasively that the images in the poetry of Celan and

Sachs reflect many issues of post-Holocaust theology, he suggests analogies between Celan's poetry and Jewish-Christian mysticism, especially the Kabbala, and cites parallels between Nelly Sachs's praise of silence as a form of prayer and the theological utterances of Richard Rubenstein and Emil Fackenheim. The dilemma of language produced by the Holocaust is overcome, Rosenfeld concludes, by the Yiddish poet Jacob Glatstein. Taking it upon himself to preserve the culture of European Jewish life from the "linguicide" that inevitably accompanied the Nazi genocide, Glatstein finds a new meaning for the Yiddish poet in his mission to preserve a language and, thereby, a culture and a people.

From these positive developments Rosenfeld turns to various literary "Deceptions and Corruptions" generated by the Holocaust. Taking Hochhuth's *The Deputy* as his text, he analyzes the corruption of language brought about by the Nazis and frequently noted by critics (e.g. George Steiner). To illustrate the inevitable exploitation of Holocaust material Rosenfeld cites the vaudeville ghetto of Leslie Epstein's *King of the Jews*, the maudlin appropriation of Holocaust imagery by Sylvia Plath, and the grotesqueries of Lina Wertmüller's film *Seven Beauties*, which Bruno Bettelheim assailed in a celebrated *New Yorker* review. The critique of Peter Weiss's *The Investigation* exposes a weakness of Rosenfeld's "phenomenological" approach vis-à-vis Ezrahi's generic perspective. He fails to recognize that the displacement of individualization by ideological types in Weiss's play is in fact inherent in all documentary art, as Ezrahi persuasively demonstrates.

Rosenfeld's attack on William Styron's *Sophie's Choice* is based on two premises: an unwillingness to see the universal implications of the Holocaust and indignation at Styron's assumption that a Polish Catholic woman could be viewed as a representative victim of the camps. If no one but Rosenfeld were involved, we might pass over this controversial issue in silence. But the reviews of Styron's novel fell almost predictably into two camps depending largely on the critic's ideological perspective. Like Dawidowicz, who censures Polish and Soviet historians for citing the non-Jewish victims of the death camps, Rosenfeld (along with other reviewers of *Sophie's Choice*) displays a protectionist attitude about the Holocaust. But can you have it both ways? Is it acceptable to criticize the world for its failure to pay heed to the Holocaust and then, if non-Jewish writers attempt to do so on terms that enable them to grasp the phenomenon in the context of their own experience and history, to insist on the territorial imperative? It is perhaps worth thinking about, in light of Neusner's insistence that "the Holocaust" takes on its special meaning only in the context of U.S. "Jewish assertion," that Styron's novel encountered a much more generous reception abroad—in France for instance—among readers who experienced Nazi repression at first hand and know that you did not



have to be Jewish to go to Auschwitz. Surely to see the merits of Styron's attempt to show how a young American in the fifties sought to comprehend the Holocaust and integrate it into his own cultural experience is not to denigrate the destruction of the Jews. Indeed, if one agrees with Kren and Rappoport that the Holocaust was a crisis of human values, then we should hope that there will be further attempts by writers to come to grips with the phenomenon from every possible point of view—not just that of the victims, Jewish or otherwise, but also of the perpetrators and, equally important, of the bystanders and observers in this country and abroad.

Critics of strict observance, like Rosenfeld, who deny the competence of Peter Weiss and William Styron will no doubt reject Hamida Bosmajian's attempt to trace the shadow of Nazism in contemporary German literature. The introductory survey of autobiographical accounts of "the self in the nightmare of history" deals with the reality of the Holocaust as it was viewed by such non-German writers as Wiesel and Borowski. Well over half of *Metaphors of Evil*, however, is devoted to three novels—Siegfried Lenz's *The German Lesson*, Günter Grass's *Dog Years*, and Uwe Johnson's *Jahrestage (Anniversaries)*—that have almost nothing directly to do with the Holocaust but are concerned, instead, with the question of witness, guilt, and responsibility on the part of Germans too young to have participated in the horrors of Nazism. The discussion of documentary drama comes much closer to the material of the Holocaust as depicted in the Christian tragedy of Hochhuth's *The Deputy* and the trial records of Peter Weiss's *The Investigation*. With the analysis of German poetry as represented by Celan and Nelly Sachs, we are back on familiar Holocaust territory again.

Bosmajian's book is unified by her focus on the reciprocal metaphors of aggressive-defensive rigidity and chaotic emptiness that she traces through the various works of her analysis. Noting that "the rigid corpse, void of life, is the final image of rigidity and chaos," she concludes her study with the plea that the Holocaust must be universalized through literature and kept in the forefront of our consciousness "so that we may prevent future chaos and rigidity." As fully as I agree with the thematic sentiment, the message all too often loses its impact, for like much recent criticism the book refers to a universe of words that eschews nearly all contact with reality. The title, which comes from Vico's statement that "every metaphor is a little myth," is symptomatic of the literariness of the book, which evokes in the name of Holocaust an astonishing list of critics ranging from Bachelard and Bergson by way of Eliot and Eliade to its motivating spirit, Northrop Frye. Bosmajian regards "the ironic mode as an expression of and defense against the nightmare of history." I am prepared to recognize (with Langer and Rosenfeld) an ironic inversion of the traditional *Bildungsroman*,

say, in the early works of Wiesel and Levi. But I have trouble with viewing the deportation of the Jews as "a perverted and ironic quest journey into an externalized dark night" or with seeing Hitler as a trickster-figure who, "displaced into historical time, . . . loses much of his power and has to assume the posture of subordination." Does a statement of that sort have any meaning outside the fiction (Grass's *Dog Years*) to which it refers? Did the inmates of Auschwitz in 1943 regard Hitler as a trickster or think that he had lost most of his power? Bosmajian is an articulate and intelligent critic, but too often she is talking about literature in a manner that has preserved little contact with the grim reality evident in *The Auschwitz Album*, a collection of photographs depicting the "resettlement" of Hungarian Jews in 1944. Apparently made by an official camp photographer for undetermined purposes, the album was discovered during the liberation by a survivor from the very transport whose arrival at Auschwitz is so poignantly recorded in this remarkable publication.

Meanwhile the corpus continues to grow. In *Darkness over the Valley*, a frank account of growing up in Nazi Germany that constitutes a useful documentary counterpart to the novels of Lenz, Grass, and Johnson, Wendelgard von Staden writes candidly of her family's complex and differentiated response to Hitler and to the construction of a concentration camp for Jews and Polish prisoners of war in a secluded valley near her parents' farm outside Stuttgart. Aharon Appelfeld's predictable allegory, *Badenheim 1939*—where even the dogs are shut up in the ghetto—reads like a fictional exemplification of the analysis by Kren and Rappoport of the victim's reluctance to accept the reality of the situation. But who can blame the carefree vacationers in Appelfeld's Austrian resort town in the summer of 1939? After all even an observer as astute and skeptical as Auden was stunned by the events of that incredible September. We need many more books by writers of every persuasion and much more accurate scholarship before we can "unearth the whole offence" of that profound human crisis that has come to be known as the Holocaust.



# ANCIENT CRITICISM

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Over-all surveys of ancient literary criticism seem to be a regular feature of twentieth-century scholarship, appearing at the rate (roughly) of one per generation, though with a quickening of pace as we move from the opening sections of Saintsbury's *History* (1902) through Atkins's two volumes (1934) to Grube's *The Greek and Roman Critics* (1965) and, finally, the work under review. Russell's is by far the shortest, and its organization is radically different. The traditional summary and running commentary of major texts in chronological order has been rejected in favor of an introductory historical narrative compressed into three brief chapters, followed by seven equally brief essays devoted to the ancient conception of poetic inspiration, the didactic view of poetry, mimesis, rhetoric and its influence, the theory of stylistic characters and levels, genre theory, and ideas of literary history and development.

The result is inevitably a book which secures system and concision at the price of a certain loss of ease and clarity. For the student who wants an introduction to the whole field, the first fifty pages are simply too little to give more than a puzzling and at times misleading account of eight hundred years of thought, and compression leads to similar problems in the essays that follow. Interpretations, whether the author's own or those of other scholars, often have to be presented as simple assertions, even when the reader needs more evidence—more, for example, than the authority of Rudolf Pfeiffer to establish the intriguing idea (p. 22) that the whole literary tradition known as Alexandrianism arose through a conscious effort to cultivate precisely those poetic qualities which, a century earlier, Aristophanes had ridiculed in Euripides, and more than a paragraph to justify the contention (p. 108) that Aristotle's notion of poetry as a portrayer and imitator of types rather than individuals, the likely rather than the actual, makes mimesis into a kind of poetic idealization. The author shows a marked and justifiable preference for Longinus as the most sensitive critic of antiquity; but his isolated citations of passages in which Longinus has seen further or deeper than anyone else are a less effective means of making his point than a single connected exposition of Longinus's general critical position would have been. Frequent cross-references

D. A. Russell, *Criticism in Antiquity*. University of California Press, 1981. viii + 220 pages. $24.50.