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Dear David,

The tape is a sensational present. It ~~was~~ wonderfully clear, and I love listening to you. I don't know why; I just do. I haven't been able to listen to the whole tape yet. I am much beset by rapidly approaching essay deadlines; but I hope to have some leisure soon.

I must apologize for delaying the composition of my abstract for such a long time. I was much in doubt what I would like to speak on. It had to be something that was provocative and at the same time manageable in twenty minutes. And something that will not take months to prepare. The idea for "Lousy Childhoods" as I call the session privately -- you can call it whatever you like and whatever seems appropriate to you -- originated with my listening to Bercovitch telling me about his early years in Montreal, a story which cannot be told by anyone but himself.

After much deliberation what to talk about (Isaac Babel? Simon Buloff? E. L. Doctorow? and the terrible childhoods they describe) I decided to do something more literary and thus to continue the wild discussion I started last year, when I argued that the writing of fiction about the Shoah is inappropriate and doesn't work. This year I will say something to the effect that if you need to write fiction about the Shoah it's better to use the genre of the picaresque novel than that of the Bildungsroman. As you will see from my longish proposal I will talk about ~~for~~ texts that show children in Nazi-occupied Poland. Please trust me that the paper will make sense in the end, even if the proposal sounds a bit chaotic. But that particular insight is rather new for me and I have to let it cook for a while.

I wrote an express letter to George Saiger, M.D., that he should send the abstract to you. He is a psychiatrist and an amateur biographer of Ludwig Lewisohn. He is very reluctant to apply his psychiatric knowledge to Lewi-

sohn; but I have strongly encouraged him to do so. I told him that you need his abstract before the end of the month.

I think Marcus Moseley is a great idea. I am also very happy that you volunteered as chair. I am supposed to propose a reading by women poets; if you hadn't agreed to propose the session I would have had to say 'no' to the poets (something I would not have regretted all that much). Thank you so much for doing the paper work.

Do you have one of the flyers to fill out? If you don't, make yourself a copy on real paper from the miserable (fax machine) xerox that I enclosed. Punkt 3 seems the only one relevant: The speakers would be (in alphabetical order) Klingenstein, Moseley, Saiger (speaking order should be chronological, I suggest). My title you find on the "abstract." Form Saiger you will hear; and Moseley you know. I enclose my registration check for you to send along.

Now I have to type my rambling abstract. Hope you won't be too horrified; but I feel I have to explain what I am up to..

Stay in touch. (Many thanks for the new Yugenturf page. It is a much better copy. Did your talk have a title?)

Warmest feelings,
JL/E