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A hidden child: identity and a reconstructed self: a quest for transparency in psychotherapy

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BELLA BORWICK

*A HIDDEN CHILD:
IDENTITY AND A RECONSTRUCTED SELF:
A QUEST FOR TRANSPARENCY IN
PSYCHOTHERAPY*



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**A HIDDEN CHILD:
IDENTITY AND A RECONSTRUCTED SELF:
A QUEST FOR TRANSPARENCY IN PSYCHOTHERAPY**

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit van Tilburg, op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof. dr. F.A. van der Duyn Schouten, in het openbaar te verdedigen ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties aangewezen commissie, in de aula van de Universiteit op vrijdag 4 november 2005 om 10.15 uur

door

BELLA BORWICK

geboren op 16 juni 1938 te Lemberg, Polen

Promotores: Prof. dr. John B. Rijsman

Prof. dr. Sheila McNamee



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PREFACE

There are times in one's life when one writes doctoral dissertations. Although I completed most of the course work for a degree many years ago, I never quite seemed to have the time that I felt was required to research and write a dissertation... And suddenly I did. I also had a subject that concerned me that I thought required attention.

The roots of this dissertation can be found in my preoccupation with the field of psychotherapy and how we, as therapists, manage relationships: the relationships that can often make a difference between a successful outcome for our clients or endless frustration for them and for us. As a teacher and supervisor, I have often been confronted by a general lack of a philosophy of 'treatment' that is in keeping with the times in which we are living; a time of availability of information to anyone with computer access through the internet, juxtaposed with the helplessness people often confront in dealing with Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) and other such decision making bodies that are rarely influenced by clients. We have rules of conduct, very few of which deal with the question of the rights of clients to participate in decision making.

Transparency is a recognition that clients, even very disturbed ones, can absorb more information than we think. And when we suggest hospitalization or a lengthy detoxification, it is necessary that we share information about the problems that changes in behavior, even hoped for ones, can generate in relationships. Then there is insurance. A history of depression may well deprive an individual of life insurance and, unless the problem is fashionably neurotic, may also influence a future career. Before we complain about societal unfairness, we must recognize that we are an important part of that society. So what is stopping us professionals from challenging this system?

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Rector and faculty of Tilburg University for the opportunity to fulfill the requirements – belated though they may be – for the PHD in Psychology. I hope that more universities will have the courage to sponsor and support this type of program. I also wish to thank the Taos Institute and their

faculty for co-sponsoring this opportunity for many of us professionals to complete our academic credentials – and continue our learning. My special gratitude to Dr. John Rijsman and Dr. Sheila McNamee for their continuous support and encouragement. My thanks to the members of the Tilburg faculty who read this rather lengthy document, as well as Professors Jean Paul Roussaux of the Catholic University of Louvain and George Labovitz of Boston University. In addition, I am grateful to Dr. Kitty Laperriere, formerly Director of Training at the Ackerman Institute of Family Therapy, who listened and supported when my need was great. To Dr. Mony Elkaim, Sigie Hirsch, Dr. Laperriere and the late Dr. Gianfranco Cecchin - what a great gift to psychotherapy you four are – who gave generously of their time in the interviews that I conducted.

On a personal note, my endless thanks to my husband, Dr. Irving Borwick, who gave non stop technical support as well as intellectual succor. To my sons, who never appeared surprised that I would undertake such a task when other mothers seemed satisfied with what they had already accomplished and didn't call with constant complaints about computer failure: thank you for believing that my brain cells were still in acceptable form. For my grandchildren, I love you. And a special thank you to my parents, Eva and Leon Zworn, who taught me to care for people – and to forgive even if it wasn't possible to forget. Thank you for saving my life.

In Germany they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up –

Because I wasn't a Communist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up –

Because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up –

Because I wasn't a trade unionist,

Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up –

Because I was a Protestant.

Then they came for me – and by this time there was nobody left to speak up.

Martin Niemoller, Lutheran pastor.

INTRODUCTION

It is my intention in this dissertation to illustrate that in order to achieve what therapists call transparent relationships with clients, it is necessary to begin the process with in-depth self-examination: to fully understand one's own preconceived notions that govern one's practice. This examination may require the process of deconstructing one's professional and personal histories, followed by an understanding which sets the stage for reconstruction. The analysis of the process, in this dissertation, will be from a relational perspective.

What is meant by transparency, and why has this concept become increasingly interesting to psychotherapists? When we speak of transparency in therapeutic relationships, we refer to a relationship that is authentic, open and contained by boundaries that are flexible, and regulated by the unique needs of each situation. It also speaks to the need to share information and, to some degree, to relinquish the expert role. Rather than inform a client of how the therapist perceives the issues that are presented, it further necessitates inviting the client into the decision making process. Transparency requires that therapists be both connected to, and concerned with, the client's story. It does not suggest that it is necessary to routinely share one's innermost thoughts with clients. However, the professional practice of withholding information as well as personal opinions, to remain neutral (Pallazoli, Cecchin, Prata,

& Boscolo, 1978, Nagy, 1981), may well create a prohibitive boundary between therapists and clients. There is no intended proposal here that therapists need to share their own stories with their clients. Self disclosure and transparency, as will be discussed in Chapter 4 are separate issues. It does seem relevant, even necessary, for therapists to be fully aware of their own stories and the impact that the stories inevitably have on how they think and relate - what is shared and what is hidden. It does not necessitate sharing all of these details with clients - on the contrary, it is important to leave time and space for their stories. A therapist's being fully aware of her own experience is necessary only to the degree that it does make it possible to select what is relevant for sharing and which issues are difficult for the therapist to entertain with an open mind.

It is clear that changes are overdue in what has been called 'a paid intimate relationship that thrusts clients and therapists into navigating personal and professional boundaries' (Imber-Black, 2005). We've come to a time in this sociopolitical period of our lives that people, with a growing sense of isolation despite easy access to various kinds of information, want something more from the talking therapies. Families of chronic psychiatric patients have formed their own associations to negotiate with government and the mental health system on behalf of their relatives. Indications that people feel alone in their search for solutions and relief from pain are evident in the growing enterprise of self-help literature and the confessional talk shows in America (Oprah and Dr. Phil). It seems clear that the therapeutic relationships on which most of us have based our practice may no longer be appropriate in this world of informational saturation (Gergen, 1991). Is disclosure of information appropriate or even helpful to everyone that we consult? Even the most open among us behave differently with different clients. That difference may well have more to do with us than with our clients' needs. We each, in our personal histories, make discreet judgments about people. And many of these judgments or observations may be based on influences gleaned from an era that is no longer an appropriate context for today's world. Whatever meaning we give to these differences, they construct the resulting relationship.

Princeton Professor Karen Armstrong, in *The Spiral Staircase* (1994), suggests the necessity 'to make room in our heads' for others. This is, of course, easier said than

done. Somewhere in each of our 'heads' are notions of those people we would like to keep out of our heads, and we do not achieve this selection in isolation from other collaborators and their ideas.

Social constructionism, which opens the door to collaborative re-evaluation, orients us to the awareness that even self-evaluation is an activity undertaken with the participation of others. Without viewing our histories in relation to others, we may find ourselves caught up in a repetitive cycle that offers no new understanding. This collaboration may be achieved through a form of re-storying, a process that includes others. The past did not happen in isolation. All of our activities are conducted in relationships, including psychotherapy.

On Becoming a Transparent Therapist

The concern of this dissertation is more with practicing clinicians than with the training of future ones¹. The belief is that the newer therapists are already being influenced by an informational world that was not available to those of us who have been in practice for a long time. They have also been trained in a context in which Health Management Organizations (HMO's) already had a voice in decision making about treatment. A review of research to the present time, which appears in Chapter Four, suggests that the literature on the subject of transparency in psychotherapy is only now unfolding within the various therapeutic models: systems theory, psychodynamic theory and narrative therapy. Perhaps we, as therapists, have not been attentive to our own history, personal and professional. This dissertation will show what such a self-examination can reveal, in this case with a therapist, myself, who was both analyzed and benefited from therapy, also as part of her training.

The self-examination referred to in this dissertation is the adult commentary on the life and memories of a child who lived through World War II and constructed and reconstructed a self in a changing cast of "Others", who gave direction to a specific profession, and who changed even as the profession itself redirected itself over time.

In this study, I will examine a number of major narratives that inform an understanding of identity and transparency in therapeutic practice. The first story is

about me, the child who lived through and survived a war, and begins when I was two years of age and ends when I was seven. The second story addresses itself to the aftermath: how that child, whose early life is informed by a combination of losses, terror, upheaval, love, culture and family values, develops a 'self' and becomes a teacher and practitioner of family therapy while remaining indoctrinated in the silent decree which she understands is to keep secrets.

How does who we are in the years of development influence who we become as professionals? Our stories endure and change over time in the multiple relationships and conversations that we have, particularly in the system that influences and directs our actions.

My goal is to reflect on professional experience - a practice - as it is narrated in an autobiography. The life being considered here is one that has integrated changes in the field of practice, made choices, and influenced the profession while attempting to remain loyal to the values of the self. Those values of self are recognized as emerging from all those who were significant in childhood, in the middle of the most devastating war of our time. This is also a story that provides an individual with meaning, unity and purpose - in other words, an identity.

Attention will be given to the story about this story, and, as the tale progresses, the story inside the story, which is also about how lives are lived. How we manage who we become cannot be separated from the relationships that we encounter. These relationships and conversations, conducted and overheard, are what open the door to alternative understanding.

The choice to write this in the format of an autobiographical narrative takes this dissertation out of the mainstream of tradition dissertations. In the methodology chapter I will cite writers, particularly John Paul Eakin²(1999), who have put the reliability of autobiographical history into question.² However, memories have an abiding influence on our actions and therapy, finally, is largely about the personal recounting of stories which are in large part autobiographical. Although this has been a difficult process, I have undertaken it in an attempt to forge a pathway towards an integrated approach that will be of use to both therapists and students as they confront

issues of transparency and authenticity in the therapeutic relationship. It is one of the tasks of this dissertation to examine what we mean by transparency and what it might look like in the therapeutic process. What does transparency tell us, as therapists, about what we can and cannot do in various situations? Identity, memory and secrets, all of which will be examined, are part of the puzzle of who we are as people and as professionals, and what we have learned to believe.

This dissertation does not presume to present final answers. It will explore how to begin the self-examination required of transparency and what needs to be learned and unlearned in order to become a therapist who is open to relationships, making disclosures when they are pertinent and appropriate, and understanding the therapeutic relationship as one of collaboration rather than domination, of information sharing and the inclusion of the client, to the greatest degree possible, in the decision making process.

This is a narrative dissertation that examines how life stories inform the professional and how even the most unwelcome events in a person's life may serve as a resource. The narrative is based on the belief that self-reflexive inquiry is an essential entry into any discussion for therapists who view change as a collaborative activity between self and client. It is one task of this dissertation to examine my journey as a therapist through thirty years of practice and the integration of past and present theories that are part of the voyage.

The dissertation will also focus on the relationships experienced over time, and how life stories change and adjust in newly recreated realities. I am interested in the impact of this experience on the kind of professional one decides to be.

What emerges of particular interest is that this dissertation is being written at the convergence of three important events that are pertinent to this story. One is an increase in qualitative research studies, particularly those that not only describe a subjective work without qualifying statistics, but includes narratives of a biographical nature that give voice to reflections that integrate personal experiences with scholarly observations. This development has made it progressively more acceptable for professionals, including psychologists and psychotherapists, to reflect on and share

with beginners in the profession — as well as others — the origin of their choices of theory and subject.

The second event is the growth of the body of literature on World War II, particularly about the Holocaust, a historical event that had as its objective the obliteration of European Jewry. Although there was a flood of research — what may be termed as the ‘Holocaust Industry’ — as early as the 1940s, it is this new literature, written by survivors (among them the youngest to have lived through the war) and the better-known works of professional writers such as Victor Frankel and Primo Levi, that has released the long-suppressed memories that were considered too private and shameful to share. These adult commentaries on childhood experiences may serve as an invitation for the reader to enter into a dialogue of personal stories about wars, including the most recent ones.

The emerging interest in Holocaust stories permits a more scholarly approach to the subject. Rather than examining the experience itself for answers to clearly articulated research questions, what is of interest is how this experience during and after the war, has influenced professional practice.

The third event is an increased awareness for the need of a changed relationship between therapists and clients that is less shrouded in mystery and more transparent. This last has resulted in a growing interest in the person of the therapists, as well as their story.

Narrative as Method

With the emergence of these three events came the decision to write a narrative dissertation, particularly one that involved interviews, a logical choice for an admirer of Jerome Bruner (1986) and Elliot Mishler (1991). The option of autobiography and social construction was a second choice and a difficult decision for a clinician whose professional career was embedded in systems theory and whose personal bias was to reveal only what was deemed essential to the better understanding of a relationship. In retrospect, being the all-knowing expert was never a comfortable role for me. It is no longer clear whether the decision to seek out more openness was due to changed views about therapy or whether working with partners, who advised from behind the

one-way mirror, eventually became a discomfort and a liability, personal or professional. The eventual result was the involvement of colleagues who were prepared to share their views openly with the families who consulted us. (Andersen, 1987)

I had been both intrigued and concerned for a number of years about the exploration of therapists' lives and identity formation as a possible book or dissertation topic. I was curious how one's life stories might offer more complex understandings about the choices clinicians make and how we influence a therapeutic relationship. In order to carry out this form of inquiry, it was necessary to interview experienced therapists who were known for their work with couples. However, after a series of interviews with highly respected colleagues whose work has gained worldwide recognition (Cecchin, Elkaim, Laperriere, Hirsch)³, it became clear that in the process of asking questions of them - of shifting the relationship from colleague to researcher - I was also asking questions of myself, queries that to this point I had not examined. As we began the process of co-constructing this new relationship, and in order to follow the participants in their thinking rather than to pose procedural questions, I needed a better understanding — or perhaps a renewed understanding — of the meaning of my own experience and how it had influenced me. And so the dissertation changed from looking out to looking in.

In sum, this dissertation is the story and exploration of an experienced clinician, as well as someone who was choosing to examine part of a life that had been put aside as belonging to the past. It is also the story of psychotherapy, the renaissance years that were peopled by a cast of characters who remain influential to this day⁴. It is especially about the evolution of family therapy, and the people who influenced and created both the theory and the practice.

At the same time it is a narrative of the self, a narrative that provides an opportunity to bring together various parts of the self into a coherent whole through the relationships that have been constructed.

Having made that decision to use my own experience as part of the material for my thesis, the next step, finding a theoretical approach, was a logical one. What was

needed was a new dialogue and way of viewing the creation of meaning through collaborative activities as required, rather than the individual responses to a pre-determined quest. Social construction offered an alternative way of viewing the world — not through absolutes but through collaboratively constructed realities. Human actions could be understood not as isolated acts but as part of a tapestry that is woven from the culture, traditions and history of those involved and simultaneously holds meaning for the future. This tapestry traces the internal story as it begins to bring together many threads: the stories of how people, even young children, hold on to who they are, and how many aspects of our daily lives, such as ‘aloneness’, are accomplished in relationship with others.

This dissertation therefore is also an inquiry into a professional practice - one that began more than thirty years ago and has also included teaching and supervision of psychotherapy. I will explore the ways in which my beliefs and experience have influenced the process of therapy. I will attempt to maintain an awareness that this analysis may also serve as a form of intervention.

One might ask, ‘Why not accomplish this research through an analysis of a patient/client relationship’? This, after all, is what we therapists and teachers have done best. The reasoning here is that therapists have tended to lead lives in the shadows - in spite of the current interest in the person of the therapist that will be discussed in Chapter Four. We have written about ‘subjects’ as long as the subject in question has been someone else. We have had a tendency to conceal ourselves in the narrative by remaining embedded in the eloquence of our theory. And our elegant theories have not always served us well when they encouraged the creation of dichotomies of expert and learner, teacher and student, doctor and patient.

My chosen path for this dissertation - narrative autobiography embedded in social construction - is a departure. I find it hopeful to realize that so much has changed in the thirty years that I have had the opportunity to make relationships with a remarkable group of people who allowed me into their lives.

The dissertation will be divided into five chapters:

Chapter One: Methodology will discuss and contrast the methodological issues that arise in quantitative, qualitative and narrative research, with some emphasis on the autobiographical. That section will be followed by a review of the literature relevant within the constructionist operation. I have chosen to include and contrast quantitative and qualitative research. It is relevant to speak of the quantitative methods because of its long standing as the instrument of choice for doctoral dissertations, as well as the basis of numerous studies in psychology as well as other fields.

Qualitative research has become associated with education in particular as well as the social sciences — psychology, anthropology, and sociology. As Kincheloe postulates (1991) ‘qualitative inquiry [is potentially] a path to empowerment . . . connecting knower and known: Constructing and emancipating a system of meaning.’ Lather (1986) describes qualitative research as a democratized process of inquiry, characterized by negotiation, reciprocity [and] empowerment. Although he is often associated with research interviewing, I will discuss Jerome Bruner further on in the literature on methodology.

Qualitative Research, in particular Narrative Autobiography, is the most appropriate methodology for this dissertation. Narrative analysis appears to be particularly well suited for investigating first-person accounts of experience and to the multiple stories that will be introduced in this dissertation. Also, narrative dissertations, especially those based on the use of constructionist theory, offer a context to examine experiences that are often private.

Chapter Two: The Personal Narrative will deal with the Holocaust and the child’s experience of the war. The autobiographical narrative will be interspersed with constructionist descriptions of the ways meanings are constructed in interaction with others. It is the child’s story and how she co-manages changing identities while holding on to a system of beliefs that she learned before she was given away to strangers. It also relates the ways those beliefs are constantly reinforced in the new contexts in which she finds herself, through communications with absent parents and through the non-verbal interaction with those who now people her life. These beliefs, based on early descriptions and originally constructed through the relationships with family members, including the stories on which she was raised, remain embedded in

the family's past and now, in the present, represent who they are. The narrative also takes up the meaning that the child gives to her separation from her family, which is further storied by the family as having been decided because the child is special and needs to be protected in order to be safe. The 'special ness' is emphasized by the number of times that others have spared her or chosen to save her. This theme of specialness, combined with responsibility, is eventually re-storied in her adult life.

The story is intertwined with the adult therapist's reflections on how the various incidents in the child's experience have influenced the adult's therapeutic decisions; it also reflects on the ways therapists manage themselves in what are often complex relationships. The child's story is written in the first person to maintain the contemplative nature of the memories.

I will include a section on the history of the Holocaust, not only to inform the reader but also to better understand some of the stories about the story. The literature of the Holocaust is extensive, as is the subject of hidden children. The literature on hidden children, in particular, has proliferated in the last decade, with many of the stories based on interviews with this group of survivors. This, of course, does not include the better-known professional authors, such as Elie Weisel (1992), Primo Levi (2002) and Victor Frankel (1984).

Autobiographical narrative — the way in which narrative gives shape and meaning to human life — has been described in depth by a number of authors, including Josselson and Lieblich (1995), Gilmore (2001), Bruner (2002), Eakin (1995), McAdams (1993) as well as a number of scholarly articles that will be cited eventually.

Chapter Three: The Professional Narrative will examine the major themes — the evolution of the professional and the influences — that have guided my process of development. Some of these influences have emerged from the field of psychology and psychiatry, others in the beliefs and values co-constructed and guided during the child's formative years, the war and the post-war period during which identity was constructed. This section will also serve as the bridge between the early and later

experiences of my life and their relevance to the practice of psychotherapy and the person of the therapist.

Chapter Four: Transparency and The Person Of The Therapist: Identity, Memory And Secrets, will connect the theory with the conceptual material of the narrative — the person of the therapist and the construction of identity. The construction of identity entails how and who an individual was and is and how that individual has evolved, including the influence from multiple contexts that guide the philosophy and the way in which the individual works. If individuals do in fact construct their lives through their own and other stories, which influences have been most dominant in the construction of the identity of this therapist/teacher? Was it the generous mother who lived in the past, or the equally kind and brave father who sought out the very future of which he was afraid? What was the influence of the courageous Ukrainian Nana who risked the life of her family to repay a debt, or the elegant ‘grandmother’ who thought that wartime was not the time to abandon the civilized habits of a culture? Or was it the aunts — the sisters - who put the future of the family into the hands of a little girl and decided to save her life at all costs?

Threads from these considerations will connect other issues: 1) the role of memory and secrets, 2) their place both in identity formation and the therapeutic relationship. The material may appear disconnected at times as I make no effort at a procedural presentation. Rather I will be led by connections as I myself discover their relevance to construction and creation of this narrative.

Chapter Five: Conclusions. This final chapter will summarize the use of narrative autobiography as a method of studying new issues in psychotherapy that involve client/therapist relationships. An important question is the role of reconstruction and it’s importance as an instrument for self examination. A significant issue explored in this dissertation is an assessment whether transparency is an epistemology that will sustain itself in the world of psychotherapy, the degree of its acceptance and its potential place in the changing demands of the profession of psychotherapy in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER 1: METHODOLOGY, LEGITIMIZING NARRATIVE METHOD.

“A good methodologist is an active agent with a purpose of finding out what is really going on in the world.” (Stinchcombe, 2005)

The basic purpose of this chapter is twofold: 1. Compare Quantitative and Qualitative Research, and 2. Examine the Evolution and Use of Narrative Research, with specific focus on the growing tendency to employ Autobiography.

The following is a brief comparison between quantitative and qualitative research. The objective is for this comparison to serve also as an introduction to the main text dealing with Narrative Research with particular relevance to the use of Autobiography in a narrative dissertation.

Quantitative and Qualitative Research represent two distinctively different ways of approaching and executing a research study. The former, embedded in the more traditional methodology, although endowed with confidence for studies focused on determining outcomes, depends on formulating, testing and measuring hypotheses through a rigorous collection and analysis of data. For research to be valued and trusted, one has historically required evidence that it was grounded in a logical empiricism. Simply put, quantitative research is deductive – it determines the relationship between one thing and another – it qualifies relationships between variables. Historically, it has been the reliable method to test instruments that were, nevertheless, dependent on the objectivity of the observer; it was also perceived to be a reliable method to test replicability.

The quantitative researcher seeks to quantify relationships between variables – weight, performance, time, etc. – which are measured on a sample of subjects – tissues, cells, animals or humans. A descriptive study may also be referred to as observational, because it is based on examination without intervention. Although most often associated with studies that require larger samples, they may also be associated with descriptions of one case, as one sometimes sees in the psychiatric literature. No attempt is made to change either behavior or conditions – one measures things as they are.

In the first, there is no intervention; one describes what one “sees” is there. The descriptive studies are interesting because of the large samples or long periods of time that are necessary to produce the sought after results.

Descriptive studies, for instance, of specific populations have produced very interesting and significant information on which one can begin to predicate medical treatment, ecological experiments, and so forth. The results of these studies can be analyzed and use as a base for further research but they cannot be changed. An example would be George Valiant’s forty year study of males (Valiant, 1983). It stands as written and one cannot take out a random section for further analysis.

In experimental research, one may make use of measurements and interventions for the purpose of comparisons. The experimental study may use a smaller sample but, in its more sophisticated form, will also depend on sample groups - often randomly selected – as well as control groups.

Experimental research usually includes an intervention and offers the possibility of studying phenomena both before and after the experimental intervention. Samples may be small or large but usually include a control group as well as a ‘random’ sample. (Even in the study of a single population –such as cancer patients – one can still randomize.) This may also include a pre and post test, as one sees in drug trials.

The experimental research is valued because statistics are perceived as more reliable evidence for their objectivity. One assumes that you don’t fudge numbers. And, like many professionals grounded in an academic approach, it has at times proven useful to look at “numbers” as a point of departure. However, for many of us, when it is has not been possible to pursue a full blown study that would stand up to replication with a representative population that would be useful and also legitimize what was attempted– for reasons of time, money and other resources – the descriptive study has served as a partial solution.

Experimental research, which may introduce an intervention – new medication, revised soil treatment or genetic manipulation – has proved useful in generating information and has also been noted as a shorter-term research tool.

Although quantitative research remains the standard for numerous relevant studies, its primary weakness may lie in the dependence on 'objectivity'. No research is free of cultural context; it may be postulated therefore that there is an element of subjectivity in any experiment that involves observers (von Foerster, 1989). Although quantitative research can be valuable in creating 'snapshots' of certain phenomena and trends, it may at the same time obscure the processes working behind or because of specific phenomena: the additional awareness of what's behind the figures and what they represent at this time and at this place and with a given population.

As a therapist and academic, I have benefited from using quantitative studies, both descriptive and experimental, to support the short term 'action research' that I have devised to test interventions that we were introducing, particularly with issues related to alcoholism (Borwick and Roussaux, 1989).

Qualitative Research is an inductive research method which aims to provide an in-depth understanding of people's experiences, perspectives and histories in the context of their personal stories, situations and settings. One of the characteristics of this choice of research is a concern with exploring information from the perspective of those being studied. Qualitative research methodology relies primarily on unstructured techniques which are, nevertheless, sensitive to the social context of the study. If conducted in a systematic and perceptive fashion, this form of research captures data that is rich as well as complex. It is necessary to be aware of the social worlds that one addresses when selecting a methodology with which to conduct a professional study; one needs to focus on what it is that one wants to study. If the goal is to make sense of the meaning that people give to events, then a qualitative approach may be the method of choice.

One should be mindful that a qualitative analysis should report the theories associated with what is being studied as well as some of the conclusions identified in the review of relevant literature when it is available (Greenhalgh, 1997). It is necessary to reinforce the discipline associated with qualitative methodology. Social scientists appear to be stepping away to a degree from the quantitative method because its reliance on numbers and self description of being value free is being put into question. It's safe to say that no research methodology, as was stated earlier, is value free. As

long as we have people selecting material, making choices and interpreting data, we are dealing with a subjective view of the world; we are always dealing with social processes rather than context free laws. Although the methodology may vary significantly from that employed by quantitative researchers, and may at times prove more difficult to express, that methodology needs to be stated. Qualitative research, which has come a long way in legitimizing studies derived from the social sciences – psychology, anthropology, education- employees a variety of methods, for a broad range of purposes, including exploratory interviews, observation, conversation, storytelling, discourse and narrative analysis (Mishler, 1986, Bruner, 2002, McAdams, 1993, Gilmore, 2001, Ellis and Bochner, 1992, Sandelowski,1991). Based on constructionist theory, it is possible to create a shared context of meaning for those involved in qualitative research studies: this provides the opportunity for a discourse with a larger world view.

NARRATIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND RESEARCH: THE NARRATIVE DISSERTATION

Narrative psychology may be described as referring to a viewpoint within psychology which interests itself in the “storied nature of human conduct” (Sarbin, 1986; Clandini and Connelly, 1992). The ultimate aim of narrative research is the study of human behavior.

Doctoral dissertations have traditionally been based on a quantitative study that is further validated by statistical information. Narrative studies that employ the qualitative format of research have been utilized in recent years in the social sciences, psychology, anthropology and particularly education. This has proven to be a benefit to researchers and students alike in that it has created a haven for discourse and inquiry into areas such as meaning and relationships that require an alternative lens of inquiry. Although this dissertation deals minimally with interviewing, narrative interviews have become more appreciated as a “form of discourse, a joint product of what interviewees and interviewers talk about together and how they talk with each other . . . it reveals our theoretical assumptions and presuppositions about relations between discourse and meaning” (Bruner, 1986).

Mishler (1991) juxtaposes this form of interview interpretation with the traditional interview where questions and answers are treated as information gathering and at another level as a way of stimulating responses. As questions build one on another, a picture would eventually emerge of a problem or opinion, both drawn by the interviewer who both directs the discourse and assigns meaning as part of the exchange. (As a clinician who has spent many years interviewing psychiatric patients, I often had the sense of the interview, already in the initial stages, validating rather than testing a hypothesis about the problem. This became even more rigidified as the need for diagnosis required by HMOs determined the boundary of a diagnosis that would be reimbursed.)

As studies, including interviews, have come to focus on relationships and language as the basis for human conduct, there has been an expressed need to find ways of developing new tools for discourse. Narrative has proven to be a remarkably useful means/instrument of inquiry. As Ruthellen Josselson (1995) writes “Narrative approaches allow us to witness the individual in her or his complexity and recognize that although some phenomena will be common to all, some will remain unique.” And, as Gregory Bateson (1972) once wrote, “Information is in difference.”

Narrative Research may be described as a way of reading, analyzing and making sense of stories, the very stories that reveal both our lives and the relationships that we have constructed in the living of these lives. The ultimate goal of narrative research is to study all of those experiences that we humans name; to capture and investigate these experiences as people live them in time, place and relationships. A focal point of a narrative approach may be people’s expression of their experience of life and their interpretations of these experiences. It is in this act of interpreting that one gives meaning to one’s experience and, at the same time, begins to make sense of that experience – put it into some semblance of order for oneself.

Narrative has also been described as not fixed in meaning but in the process of becoming (McNamme, private communication) – just as we are.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS NARRATIVE

“One writes in order to become other than what one is”. Michel Foucault

“...man is always a teller of tales, he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through them, and he tries to live his own life as if he were telling a story. But he has to choose: Live or tell. Jean-Paul Sartre, *La Nausee*.

A narrative dissertation offers the opportunity to think and write about oneself, and to attempt an understanding and explanation of how certain experiences may lead to important realizations and conclusions about one's life. In the narrative story about oneself, there is the further possibility to record this knowledge as confirming evidence of our newly minted understanding.

Autobiography takes on the task of examining this meaning of our experience. However, each separate narrative account, by its very nature, touches on a larger domain of relationships. Autobiography may be said to embody a conceptually based reality; it has been described as a current way of documenting meaning.

However, the notion of autobiographical writing – telling one's own story as it were – although broadly accepted is not without debate. Foucault suggests that it's a method of becoming “other than what one is”. Philippe Lejuene, on the other hand, in “The Autobiographical Pact”, defines autobiographical writing as “retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality” (In Eakin, p.2.) Eakin himself describes a shift in his thinking from autobiography as the rethinking of self-experience to the postmodern view that self experience – like identity formation – evolves in a relational world. The self is always in the process of becoming and “is defined by - and lives in terms of – its relationship with others (p43).

Eakin (1999) further refers to autobiographical writing as a questionable genre and the “slipperiest of all slopes” (p. 2). He goes on to say that “the gap between who we were once and who we are today...tends to make our sense of self in any present moment seem more unified and organized than it is possible (it) could be.” We

organize our memory into an artificial sequential mode in order for it to be comprehensible.

In our efforts to make our stories coherent, we may be further accused of distortion in the service of cohesion. When I completed Chapters Two and Three – the Personal and Professional Narrative – I re-examined my earlier comments about autobiography. I also took into account some autobiographies that I had enjoyed – Winston Churchill, May Sarton (an American writer) and, more recently, Hilary Clinton. In my own writing, I am very conscious of the difficulty in preserving a coherent and connected ‘dialogue’, for want of a better word. Memories do not present themselves in a literary sequence; they have a way of appearing as out of sequence pictures from the past. Memories of childhood are even more confusing but, in their own way, they have a clarity that is at times difficult to recapture as one gets older and the repertoire of life’s events is enlarged. Perhaps it may also be that the memories that make up the early part of my life, seemed, even at the time, somewhat dramatic and especially, unexpected.

Why then write a Narrative Autobiography? For me, the goal has been to situate my experience as a hidden child of the holocaust in a relational context, and to make sense of what it has meant in my life beyond the explanations I have given and received up to this point. Because any story of survival is a story about relationships, this has further required a reflexive process of sense making and influence that extends beyond the childhood experience. For instance, how are the relationships that I make with clients either limited or enriched by my own understanding of what it is to be in a relationship?

Having been raised on stories about other people’s relationships, I learned at a very young age to construct my familial identity, my connection to the family from which I came but would never know, through the stories that would become both models and instructions about human conduct.

However, in writing a narrative of the self one walks a fine line in one’s description – in choosing the self that may be idealized, wished for, discounted. The choice of self really depends on the context – and the story.

We become the people we say we are, it has been suggested, when we write.

CHAPTER 2: THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE

This Chapter is prefaced by a brief review of the beginning of the Holocaust, which will be annotated with references. The autobiographical part of this dissertation is the only section without any references. It is one person's life. This is the story of one child who survived the war - myself. It also tells of others, especially their experiences after the war and the secrets that they kept. The story is an illustration that how we manage who we become is at least in part found in the relationships of others that predate our own experience and that extend beyond us.

This Was The Holocaust

"Children do not start wars. However [children] experience the negative consequences of conflict: their lives are shattered, disrupted or lost. At a minimum war interrupts a child's healthy growth and development of personality." (Marchel, 1995)

The Holocaust, the event that informed my childhood as well as that of 24,000 other young Jewish survivors (Laqueue, 2001), requires a capital letter.. It is largely all about horrors that people are capable of imposing on each other. It is at the same time about the compassion, humor and caring that coexisted along with the atrocities. What was lost are the relationships, the normality of life in a situation that never should have been: people, confronted by death, still able to care for others, and in doing so, maintaining their humanity.

In the genocide of World War II, Jewish children were not caught up in an adult confrontation. They were supposed to die, a Nazi strategy to rid the world of Jewry. (Landau, 1992). Less than one in ten Jewish children who lived in German-controlled Europe during the war years survived – 1,200,000 were massacred. Those who survived did so with disguised identities, "passing" as Aryans, in constant danger of discovery, often speaking a new language, responding to a new name and concealing physical characteristics that might reveal that they were Jewish. They lived hidden in closets, attics, cellars, sewers and forests, separated from or abandoned by the parents who were picked up on streets or in systematic house searches and taken away to labor and concentration camps. The children survived through their own

resourcefulness — until they were captured and died. There are probably many, uncounted, who have lived out their lives not knowing that they were born Jewish. They represent, in part, the remainders of families who perished. There are others who may have been told, without proof, that their families had died, and some instances of children who may have chosen not to leave their adoptive families and have, in a sense, stayed hidden for the remainder of their lives.

Of the hidden, there were what have been called the “visible” and the “invisible.” (Marks, 1993) In France and Holland, for instance, the visible were kept by families, often on farms, and lived more or less in the open, with some neighbors knowing that they were Jews. The very young could at times be passed off as legitimate offspring; they lived and grew up as members of the family that had hidden them.

The “invisible” were hidden away, in ghettos and concentration camps as well as in any corner that would conceal them. Sometimes they were hidden with a parent or other family member. Even if they were placed with gentiles, no one knew of their existence. They rarely, if ever, left the house. Those who were concealed by religious institutions could fall into either category. They too were always in danger.

Although some of those who hid the children risked their lives and were kind and caring, there were also individuals who were well paid. Sometimes they took their responsibility seriously, at other times the children were in danger from their supposed protectors. The stories of actual abuse tend to be heard more often by therapists. The children did not often complain, during or after.

Many of the invisible hidden, like myself, chose to believe that their parents were alive and would eventually come to get them, even though in many instances, they could not be certain.

The Kindertransport (Harris, Oppenheimer, 2001), which was the British government’s shocked response to the horror of Kristallnacht, saved 10,000 children from Austria, Germany and Czechoslovakia and brought them to Great Britain, with the agreement of the government, beginning in 1939. The British government required the children

to be under 17 and unaccompanied as a condition of acceptance. They traveled on tourist visas, and their care and education were guaranteed by private organizations. They were also to emigrate from Britain as soon as was possible.

Kristallnacht (Rozett, Spector, 2000) was to be the beginning of a nationwide pogrom (a search for and capture) of Jews, one that had been agreed upon by Hitler and encouraged actively by some, if not all, members of the Nazi hierarchy, most particularly Goebbels (Laquer, 2000). There appear to be two reasons why on November 10, 1939, in an orchestrated operation throughout Germany, party members, Gestapo, the Nazi Labor Front and other authorized and unauthorized thugs and ruffians, roamed through the streets, looting and destroying Jewish-owned stores, shattering windows, burning homes and synagogues, ransacking and terrorizing dwellings, destroying sacred objects and records and murdering any Jews who crossed their path. Over 200 Jews were slaughtered, another 20,000 were deported, 300 synagogues were razed and over 7000 businesses were destroyed. This act was explained as a reprisal against a worldwide conspiracy of Jews to strike against the very heart of the German nation. The name Kristallnacht (Night of Shattered Glass) was used by the Germans to refer to all of the broken glass from the synagogue and shop windows.

The reason for raising the level of violence has been attributed to two events. The first is that the destruction was in retaliation for the shooting of Ernst vom Rath, the Third Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris, by Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old studying in France, whose parents were among the several thousand Jews of Polish origin expelled from Germany. Refused re-entry by the Polish government, they set up a makeshift camp on a strip of land between the two countries in a foretaste of what awaited them at Auschwitz, Treblinka and Dachau. The second reason has been attributed to the German hierarchy's decision that war was inevitable if they were to create an empire, and therefore actions that were decried by other countries were of little concern to them. Nevertheless, the response to Kristallnacht was one of outrage, even amongst many Germans, and in the future such excesses were conducted only when they could be unobserved, or more discreetly denied by the populace.

Great Britain, although with its own history of anti-Semitism, acted on its outrage by easing immigration restrictions for certain categories of Jewish refugees. Among the results was the Kindertransport, a consequence of the insistence of several charitable organizations, including the Quakers. And so 10,000 children, crying for their parents, lonely and scared, often dispatched on short notice, were saved. Most never saw their parents or older siblings again.

Before I began this re-examination, I had never consciously struggled with the enormity of the Holocaust — the deliberate and systematic murder of six million Jews in Nazi-dominated Europe. Although it is not my intention to examine the reasons for this planned purge, nor is it the goal of this narrative to analyze the history of European anti-Semitism, as it was then or as it is now, like many others I remain curious as to when and why the Nazis determined the policy of the total annihilation of European Jewry to create a Europe that was *Judenfrei*. Unfortunately, we've had ample experience with the 'how' that they set out to accomplish this goal.

The "why" is speculative. The numerous stories of Hitler's being a Jew in his youth, the effect on him of sharing a classroom with Ludwig Wittgenstein, the Austrian philosopher born of Jewish parents (Cornish, 1998), have been told to explain the causes of Hitler's vengeful hatred of Jewry. The need of the German people to find some honor after the First World War and the punitive decisions of the Geneva Convention may also tell part of the story. Another somewhat facile explanation is that in the need to bring the people together around a common goal, even a contrived one, it is necessary to create the "Other." Jews became that "Other", their difference becoming an object of exploitation for the Nazis whose long-term goal from the beginning was to take over all of Europe and beyond.

Hitler came into power in Germany in 1933; the Second World War began in 1939. At what point did this leader of his country turn from zealot to madman? It is formally accepted that it was between the years 1941 and 1945 that the Nazi regime engaged in the purposeful extermination of Jewry. Among them, with the exception of my parents, was everyone who would have eventually influenced my life choices — suggested what schools to go to, what colors to wear, what books to read, who to fall in love with and what to tell my grandchildren—in short, what experiences, my own

or that of my parents, would prepare me for the decisions that I would be taking for the rest of my life.

What meaning can one possibly attach to an experience that tore at the very heart of who and what one was as a human being? There is no way to construct a life without attaching meaning to what one has experienced.. And somehow, we children of war, who were without language when all of this began, had the task of participating in a dialogue that made no sense. Discourse, however, even among the very young, is a result of relationships. Language does not reflect the world, nor does it guide these relationships; we create our views of the world and the relationships that we form, in our interactions with each other (McNamee, 2005 Personal Communication).

We children understood from our elders that we should not talk about the experience, pretending that the war wasn't important enough to mark us. In sum, we decided to participate in what has been called a "charitable amnesia."⁵

The Zworn – Helfer-Merle Family

Ours is a family who, like many others, was decimated by the horror of what is now referred to as 'The Holocaust' or the Shoah.

In the Beginning

My parents and I lived in a small town called Horodenka, a bit of geography that had alternately been assigned to, although not necessarily claimed by, both Poland and the Ukraine. The geography of Horodenka has been a family joke. My father attempted to shed the image of coming from the Ukraine for the more sophisticated one of being from Poland. Therefore, Horodenka was in Poland. My mother, on the other hand, had a negative view of Poland, especially its cuisine, and would mimic the way in which Polish Jews spoke and conducted themselves. Jews who had left Europe before the war referred to the region as "Galicia," and all Galicianer as horse thieves. (I was raised to speak German, and later, when a Canadian consular officer deemed Horodenka to be in Germany, I quietly acquiesced.)

My father had a clothing factory and had gained a certain stature in both the Gentile and Jewish community because of his skill as well as his success. A sometime actor,

who grew up in a shtetl possibly fifty kilometres away from Horodenka, he was responsible for his widowed mother, two younger brothers and two sisters for whom he provided dowries — the responsibility of the eldest son. My mother, the orphaned daughter of a physician and his well-to-do wife, was also of the same town. They built a house, had one little girl — the only child on my mother's side of the family — and planned their lives.

My Earliest Memories

It is impossible for me to think of my childhood without always beginning with the large yellow kitchen, the drawers where my mother keeps eggs, and the small table and chair where I sit waiting for the scrambled eggs and onions that my mother is preparing for my dinner. I think it was dinner, a dinner that I was to eat by myself which in itself was unusual. She has her back to me, and it is the last time that I will sit at my little table and watch my mother move with familiarity and efficiency in her own kitchen. The year must be almost 1939, and our war has begun. We can hear curious noises from outside. My father enters periodically, to inform my mother that the Russians, who had taken over the town, are being pushed out by the approaching Germans. In retrospect, he seems more excited than troubled. When the door opens to admit my father, and I turn as far as I can to the right, I can catch glimpses of the church steeple that dominates our town, lit up periodically as if someone has released a few carefully positioned firecrackers. I find out later, during my usual sport of a two-year-old's version of eavesdropping, that the intermittent noise and lights are the result of bombs and gunfire. I have no idea what this noise signifies, except that it is necessary for me to be very quiet.

It is the last time until we come to Canada in 1949 that our little family will be together in our own home. By the next day, my mother and I will be hiding in the attic in someone's house while my father will join the other men in the Platz (town square) where the newly arrived Germans have brought the remaining men of the town. Only three of all of these males will be selected to survive, my father among them. The rest will be taken away in trucks that are waiting to take them away. Some of those will be shot. My father tells the story of looking around him and wondering if there is any opportunity to somehow disappear, to run away. A German guard with whom he seems somehow to be acquainted says "No, Zworn, don't try anything. You will be all

right ('Nein Zworn. Keine Naerischkeit'. 'No Zworn. Don't do anything foolish.')

They need my father's factory to produce uniforms for the newly occupying forces. My father comes to find us in the attic where my mother will have to leave her little sister, Chana, behind because the German who is accompanying my father has said that the agreement that he has with my father stipulates that one woman and one child will be freed. My mother's little sister is crying, as she clings to my mother's arm. I don't know where the rest of the family is and why she is here alone, with us. The German taps his stick impatiently. The other people in the attic attempt to disappear into their own silence. Has saving us endangered the lives of all of these other people?

I remember — or is this yet another story that I heard — that as the approaching boots, (always associated with the SS or other German military) could be heard marching up the stairs to the attic, my mother was preparing for a spray of gunshots as soon as the door was opened . She hugged me to her and interspersed her body between me and the door so that the bullets would reach her first or that the bullets would capture us both. Instead, the door was thrust open and there stood my father with a uniformed German behind him. My father is pointing us out, and taking me in his arms and at the same time putting his other arm around my mother. My mother is crying that she can't leave her little sister, the German tells her to choose between the two children; my father looks away as he tries to extricate my mother from her sister's arms. Everyone else observes in silence. This choice has shadowed me for the rest of my life.

Although we are temporarily spared, we do not remain in Horodenka for my father to produce the necessary uniforms. My parents decide to attempt to escape to Lemberg (known by Poles as Lvov and now renamed Lviv by the Ukrainians). During our brief absence, our house, like Zorba's, has been totally emptied, not a particle remains. My mother looks at the empty wall where her mother's portrait had hung, the sole visual reminder of a mother who had died when she herself was eight years old. Clothing, furniture, toys, food, family pictures and mementos are gone. There is no sign that it had ever been occupied, that a small family had lived there, laughed and cried, saved and dreamed of a future. My parents, an attractive couple in their late twenties, leave behind everything that they had built in the few years of their marriage: a house, a

factory, a place in the community, including all of their hopes, as they begin a journey that holds no promise of a future.

My mother's oldest sister, Celia, has lived in Lemberg since her marriage. She and her husband, Max, were childless and devoted to each other. Max had been drafted into the Russian army, and Celia, and the two sisters who lived with them while they attended university, had been moved into the newly created ghetto where all of the city's Jews had been herded. My parents do not know, as they start their most indirect of journeys, that the ghetto serves as an intermediate stage in the genocidal process. It achieves a number of Reich's goals: people inside the ghetto die of disease and starvation; it facilitates the collection of men who are needed to work in the labour camps. And it served as a convenient conduit to the death camps; and it serves as a conduit to the death camps, the ultimate fate of those who survive the Lemberg Ghetto. They are eventually taken to the nearby Janowska concentration and labour camp.

This particular move was not voluntary and each entrant was assigned a space to occupy. Gaining entry is not simple. "Leaving" the ghetto is the term for maintaining population control. Unless you were a resident of the city, and an adult who has been assigned to a factory as "free" labour, you were not allowed to leave voluntarily. Jews were no longer free to travel.

I have no procedural memory of how we made the trip from Horodenka to Lemberg, only a series of incidents without chronology. My mother and I took alone because it was deemed safer than the three of us travelling together. Because my mother was the only one of us who looked Semitic, either my father decided that either he or I were to travel with her, until much later when she was to run away from the concentration camp and make a solo trip into hiding.

Somewhere during this journey, before we left Horodenka, my mother and I hid in a cellar, filled with people who were larger than I was, and all of us standing very still. I can still feel the unevenness of the mud floor as I attempt to balance myself between all of these dark large bodies. I recall the total darkness, and the silence that ties us to each other in a dark, dense cloak. My mother is gripping my hand, as she pulls me

nearer to her body. Somewhere an infant's weak cry penetrates the stillness. An angry wave of silent reprimand is more felt than heard. As I attempt to bend down, the only other child, attempting to be invisible, a man stands on my little finger. His heavy boot rests on my hand until we are ready to leave the cellar. I learn later that the infant was permanently silenced, but somehow I already know this. When we leave the cellar, my little finger is flat. My mother pats my head.

Looking back, I recognise the danger that we children represented to the adults. The smallest sound, the innocuous question potentially endangered the lives of many people. The more profound issue was that many of these adults were parents whose children were already lost to them. Some had been picked up in previous pogroms, others were "given" to Christian families, churches or whoever appeared ready to take them. What is important to mention is the migration of the Jewish population from the shtetls to neighbouring small towns and eventually for those who remained, to the larger cities, even as we migrated from Horodenka to Lvov. Those adults who survived, often those who remained of truncated families, were no doubt confronted by an unimaginable mixture of guilt, loss and grief, combined with the fear for their own survival. We few children were a constant reminder of all of that.

Another Horodenka incident and part of the journey to Lemberg, impossible for me to place into any chronological order, involved a train ride. My mother looks very pretty in a dark blue silk summer dress with scattered red and white flowers as she holds my hand tightly in hers. I remember the clarity of the sunshine, the sudden reversion to the normality of walking with my mother. At the same time I sense the tension through my mother's grip as we near the train station and she searches for a coach. Suddenly, a soldier resplendent in his SS uniform, reaches down, lifts me through into the train through the window and gestures for my mother to follow. As she was later to recall, she trembled as she allowed herself to be led into a coach reserved for senior German military, accept the offered seat while the men fussed over her "Aryan" child. Apparently, I promptly fell asleep while my mother agonised over what I might divulge in my sleep, most specifically the odd Jewish word that I had learned in spite of the fact that I only spoke German. Later, my mother would describe her further horror as she watched other Jewish travellers, many of whom she knew, taken off the train. She would also later say that although the experience of being hunted was still

relatively new, these people, with their bowed bodies and arms protectively around their children, people that she knew as independent and proud already had a look of defeat. The military/Gestapo train we were on was, of course, never searched. It helped, no doubt, that I was a little blue-eyed girl with curly blond hair who was beginning to understand that she was not what others thought she was, although at times was not at all certain what she needed to be or to do next in order to stay safe.

Was this an adventure, an outing for a young child? Although I have been described as being cheerful and curious, I know that I never asked where we were going and when we were going to get there. I also remember being told repeatedly not to converse, to respond politely but not to say too much. No further explanations were given or seemed necessary. And as adult, what does one do with this experience? It is difficult to draw parallels between the past and the present, but they have a way of intruding, stealthily, unexpectedly.

The Ghetto

The ghetto was where I lived with my parents and my mothers' sisters, a charmed society of women whom I would miss for the rest of my life. In my memory, they represent laughter, warmth, safety and unconditional love. They loved and cared for each other and they extended that generous embrace to me. For the rest of my life, mostly spent in a family of men, I would seek the essence of that understanding and regard their absence from my life as my major loss. The perpetual loneliness I have lived with is my personal tragedy, my war scar.

My memory of the ghetto is always of interiors. I remember the ghetto as a succession of corridors, rooms and ceilings. The ceilings all seemed very far away and, although many people lived among these walls, for some reason I don't remember a great deal of movement or verbal exchange. It seems now that life was conducted in whispers, and although there was no doubt considerable interaction, I was kept very separate from all activity that did not directly involve me or my adults. It strikes me now that this was no accident; that in fact my presence was a partial secret to the degree that it was possible. It was probably hard to predict what information people might offer up in dire situations.

The activity that I was aware of — from which they couldn't spare me — was the removal of people. I use the word removal because it was clear to me that their departure was not of their own choosing. Sick people were moved to the “hospital” (a euphemism) from which even I knew they would not return. Others were led away, protesting, weeping quietly or in total silence. It was often the other family members who remonstrated, pleaded and held on to either the guard or the individual that was being taken. These were the scenes that disturbed me, for which I never asked an explanation. There was no discussion: no reasons given, none asked.

We lived in shared rooms, often more than one family in a certain space, our existences constructed around a series of beds. Ours was a corner room, part of a corridor, that we had to ourselves, with a coal stove in one corner and two windows along one of the walls. I remember a wooden crate covered with one of Aunt Celia's embroidered tablecloths and a jar of yellow flowers, dandelions it seems to me (flower choices were limited), in the centre. Outside the door opening was darkness, people moving and speaking, emitting noises and smells, but outside of the occasional foray to the doorway, this seems to have had little to do with me. In our space there was laughter and peace. It is so easy for me to remember the normalcy of this life. I was never exposed to the desperate scavenging for food, the trading that they did of negotiables in order to survive. The jokes about food choices had no relevance, because I, the once-famous discriminating eater, had learned not to make demands and to enter into the jest about our subsistence. They brought me, as a participant, into the joke of their present existence. What reminiscences they shared of their previous existence tended to be more jocular than regretful. This continued to be true for the rest of my life. The only reference to loss was for people, never about possessions. Things were replaceable. People were not.

I was rarely left alone in the ghetto. A sister, usually Goldie, the youngest, would risk her life to stay behind, especially if there were rumours of an actia (a roundup). There was an acknowledged conspiracy among the sisters to save my mother so that she could raise me. No one seemed to doubt that I would survive. They were all of them, including my father, singularly dedicated to that cause.

Of course, inevitably, I was to be alone one of the times when the camp authorities, mostly Jewsi, participated in an effort to rid the ghetto of children. I had been trained to climb into the stove if any strangers came onto our floor. The actual entry to the living quarters was through a door into the room adjacent to ours. I never left the room when I was alone, so that it was an exception that I was speaking to some of the other children in the outer room when the group of men came barging through the door and told all of us to get our coats and follow them. Docilely, the other children complied, while I explained reasonably that I wasn't allowed to leave without my mother's permission. No one seemed impressed with my explanation and one of the men advanced aggressively towards me; just then the door opened abruptly and a uniformed German entered. I remember the feeling of thinking of this very tall and blond man as a sympathetic giant and very different from these other people. He looked around the room, lifted me into his arms and asked me why I looked unhappy. Once more I explained that my mother was at work and that I couldn't possibly leave without her permission. He put me down and instructed the guards to leave me behind. As the men began to gather the other children towards the door, I remonstrated with them that they couldn't take my friends because I was too little to stay by myself. My German hero agreed and so we were spared, this time. This incident isolated me even further from the other children. I suspect that since I had no clear understanding of the danger, I trusted the kindness the Germans had always shown me. Possibly, therefore, I became a danger, someone to whom the older children felt they owed their lives but could not trust. I certainly didn't understand any of this, nor do I remember being troubled by the gradually increasing gap between us. Things were the way they were.

There were probably "rules" that governed our co-existence with our neighbours, conventions that were no doubt created as part of finding ourselves cheek by jowl with people we had not selected as mates. The problem of dealing with the people on the other side of the wall surfaced again through the daughter of Marco, Max's less successful brother and therefore Celia's brother-in-law. Marco, I overheard, had always been dependent on Max and apparently expected Celia to take over the role of caretaker, which she seemingly rejected. My memory of the situation with Marco and his family is not coincidental because it was a recurring subject among Celia and my other adults. He especially resented our presence — my parents, Bella and Goldie,

and me — and would often come barging into our room, breathing out alcohol fumes and asking for money. I remember that he both fascinated me (I had yet to see an adult tilting side to side and thought his unsteady gate was a game) and he scared me because he shouted. After the incident of the attempt to remove us children, which involved his daughter who was several years older than I was, both he and his daughter seemed to blame me in some way for the whole affair. I learned early that even positive deeds, as the saying suggests, never go unpunished.

The Marco story continued because his wife fell ill and my father was asked to procure medication for her, which evidently failed to cure her. One day, some men arrived with a stretcher and took her away “to the hospital,” But as I was to learn later, there was no hospital, only a hastened death. I stood in the doorway and saw her trying to get out of bed to prove that she wasn’t ill, only she kept falling down and the guards began to drag her while she cried and screamed for her husband, for someone to rescue her. I remember her blue feet, her white legs and the very thinness of her. The daughter was also crying while she tried to hold her mother back. And then an adult took me away. Marco quickly replaced his wife with another lady. The daughter, for whom I remember feeling very sad, fascinated me because she was part child, part woman and had a great deal of dark hair that I admired. As one of the few blond-haired females in the family, I had always coveted dark hair. My Aryan appearance may have saved my life but caused me no end of identity problems. However, the daughter would never speak to me, and although I would sometimes see her looking into our room, she would never come near.

Extermination

In spite of the vigilance my adults, I saw and heard more than they thought, although I didn’t necessarily understand all of it or imagine what it meant. One day I heard a woman shouting and crying outside, and when I looked out, leaning forward and standing on my toes, I could see a uniformed person holding a child, swinging it in the air. And then he let go. I witnessed other scenes that puzzled me, but when I heard a big bang and saw someone fall, I began to realize that they had been shot and that meant that they would not get up again.

What few elderly people I saw seemed to disappear. Looking out on to the street one day when I was alone, I could see guards leading a small group. They walked slowly, some with difficulty, and I recognized several that lived somewhere near our room. The guards would shout, prod and someone would fall. They walked until they were beyond my view. It was one of the few times that I remember crying at something that I observed. I always liked old people, although I knew very few. There was a tall, graceful lady with beautiful swept-back white hair. She always wore a dark dress of some soft fabric, which swayed gently as she moved. One of the few people outside of my own adults who would greet me when she saw me peeking through the doorway, she wordlessly brushed her hand across my head in passing. When she would speak, it was to refer to me “as the child with observant blue eyes.” I loved the way she smelled and would watch for her whenever I could. Then she was no longer there. What seemed like much later I could hear my adults speaking softly to each other, referring to her and mentioning my name. They apparently decided not to say anything to me, and I of course never asked.

To the best of my knowledge, I left our building and the ghetto grounds twice, both times under a coat, bound to my mother’s body, with sisters as Praetorian guides on each side. The first time was the sortie to the broom factory to which my mother, a skilled seamstress, had been assigned. This was to define the next years of my life. The second was to leave the ghetto for the last time.

Before that was to happen, I became ill with pneumonia. From somewhere my father brought forth a doctor, who, in those pre-penicillin days, gave me a transfusion of blood — my mother’s blood. Although my father and I both had Rh O-negative blood, my mother was some combination of positive. The result was a massive infection that encrusted my entire head. And so I was to leave the ghetto forever with short, straight, dark blond hair. In my farewell picture, I look extremely tall for my age and am wearing a dress made from the striped brown and off-white uniform that was eventually worn by concentration camp inmates.⁶ On my head, at a precarious angle, sits a very large bow — no doubt an effort to soften the dispirited look of the hair and the despondent look of the child.

I Leave My Family, And Part of Myself, Forever

It happened during my single visit to the broom factory that a Christian co-worker of my mother's took it upon herself to try to save my life. A single parent of a little girl of my age called Basia, she had a childless, married brother, a lawyer, who for a price might be persuaded to relocate to Lvov, with his wife and newly acquired child — me. In short order, a trust fund administered by Christian friends of Aunt Celia was established, Basia's papers were replicated with my picture and I had a new identity as a Catholic child. Since finances rather than trust or affinity were the basis of this transaction, part of the arrangement was that the anonymous trustees would supervise my well-being from a distance, and should any harm befall me, the remaining moneys would be used to pursue and punish anyone who harmed me. This last part was decided when my father and some of the trustees finally met the man with whom I was to live. However, by then it was much too late. The Lvov ghetto was to be liquidated and razed within almost a year of my departure. My mother and her sisters were to be taken to the Janowska labor and concentration camp, while my father was left to wander, a shepherd without his flock.

The part of my life when I was hidden, two and a half or three years, can be divided into two phases — with and without the grandmother. This is the only name I knew her by — grandmother — and that is what she was to the real Basia, whom she appeared to see only rarely. And of course she was the mother of the lady who rescued me from the broom factory, as well as of the son who brought her into his home as part of an arrangement that included me. She was the shortest person I had ever known, not much taller than I was, and also at first view, the fiercest. She was the best grandmother I could have had and, indirectly, my presence no doubt contributed to her final confrontation with her son, and her death. As I have said, grandmother was a small woman, erect and formal. Her grey hair was pinned up and swept off her forehead. In my memory, she is always dressed impeccably and in the process of directing me towards a useful activity. While she lived with her son and daughter-in-law, she would take me to church and attempt to raise me as a good Catholic child. Dressed in black patent Mary Jane shoes, white socks and a straw hat with a ribbon, I would only be allowed to leave the apartment to go to church. For this reason, if no other, I rather liked church. We would walk in the square for a few minutes after each service, but would leave before the other parishioners. By then I understood that I wasn't to respond when someone spoke to us. How clearly I can still

see the water sparkling of the fountain in the middle of the square and feel the drops on my skin.

There was a certain decorum that pervaded the house as long as she was there. She and I would eat our meals together at a long table, set with full array of cutlery and glasses. I have no idea who prepared these meals. It must have been her contribution, because after she was taken there was no longer prepared food. I was permitted to eat what was available and occasionally there was some hot soup.

There was no space in this house that was dedicated to me. I slept on a mattress, near a balcony, a mattress that I brought in every evening and was to take out before everyone was awake. When it rained or snowed, the mattress would be wet or stiff with cold. It seems clear to me that the mattress was not something that was ever referred to. I would often nestle next to it, on the floor, in order not to be conspicuous. A necessary appendage, we all pretended that it wasn't there.

One day, the SS came and took away the grandmother. Her son had reported her to the authorities for making critical comments about someone or something. I was either kept or stayed out of the way. She never said good -bye. By then I was used to having people disappear, but she had talked to me and taught me and even occasionally praised me, and her abrupt departure, which I seem to have understood to be involuntary, cut me off entirely from predictable human contact. Suddenly, I no longer felt safe. Somehow, I had a sense of being entirely isolated in an unsafe place. All I had were the drawings that I would send to my family, which described in prearranged detail, the present status of my life. I never questioned or doubted that they were the recipients of these communications. There were certain advantages in being a child.

Shortly after, the ghetto was liquidated and my father came one time when no one was home. I realize now that he had run away to avoid the concentration camp and may have thought that this could be a final good -bye. I don't remember his leaving and all that would have meant to me. I had learned not to ask. We spoke again of the messages that I would send: drawings that conveyed my state: if I was unhappy they showed rain; if I was very unhappy, there was a drawing of a girl in the doorway. If

things were all right, the sun shone. After grandmother's departure, the sun never shone. I spent days by myself. My "foster parents" seemed to have no particular schedule, as neither of them appeared to work. They no longer spent all of their time in their room but would walk around the house naked and couple spontaneously wherever they happened to be. My presence never seemed to bother them, nor did they involve me in their activity. I was not an active participant in their sexual games. I was invited to play with his penis while he reclined on the sofa or bed or even on the rug. I would giggle because I found this a strange adventure, never having seen a male organ until I lived with this rather strange couple. The exposure never aroused in me any sexual desire. I think that I rather liked touching the warm skin of another human being. It did make me very curious about what this was all about and when I finally joined my parents, I not only insisted on staying in the middle but would lift the meager covering of our straw "bed" from time to time to assess if there was any activity that I should be aware of. My mother would look at me suspiciously but either she didn't know how to broach the subject of what I might have experienced or decided that it was best to leave things as they were. I think that had I stayed longer I might have become involved in the couple's multitude of sexual games. Happily, I left before that could or did happen.

Nicola Comes To Take Me Away

The household continued to take new turns. The man started wearing an SS uniform. Instead of being invisible, I now had the task of shining his boots so he could strut around the room in them. The woman, his wife, was rarely home. When she was, they would still walk about the apartment undressed and interrupt other activities to have intercourse, but the playfulness seemed to have gone. They no longer spoke to each other. They had rarely ever spoken to me.

I had no understanding of sex. In spite of having lived communally with adults, including my parents, for a lengthy period of time, only some of what went on outside our room reached me, and that which did, I didn't really understand. I could see in the ghetto that Marco shared his space and no doubt his bed with the new lady a short while after his wife had been removed. I no doubt heard about that. The daughter seemed to have moved deeper into the outer room, but none of this concerned me. However, about this new activity around me I was very curious.

In the apartment, there was one more visit from my benefactor, the sister, and her daughter, the original Basia. I was fed, that I do remember vividly, and had my clothes washed. I was even permitted to bring my mattress in that day. but I put it outside as soon as our visitors left.

One incident remains clear in my memory. The adults had gone out and we children were left in the house to play. Basia never ceased to wonder that she and I shared a name and a birthday, and although a bit older than I was, she counted on me to provide the games we were to play. Suddenly, there was that familiar sound of boots on the stairs and pounding on the door, with the command that we “open up.” Swiftly but quietly, I recall it all so clearly, I instructed Basia that this was a new game. I was to hide between the improvised wardrobe behind the bedroom door and she was to pretend to be alone. I can still hear her timidly opening the door, and the cacophony of loud voices as several people entered and began a cursory search of the house. Basia compliantly cried that she was alone. The search seems to have been perfunctory, although I had nightmares for many years of an arm and a weapon probing the clothes that hid me. They must have been German soldiers because they didn’t pilfer but manifested their authority in the fear that they generated.

Shortly after, Nicola came one afternoon when I was alone and took me away. The image I hold of him is the one when he entered the apartment, and at my insistence helped me change into my long-unused church finery. He scooped me into his arms, and took me away from what was swiftly deteriorating into my private nightmare.

I have no memory of when Nicola first came into our lives. A very tall well built young man, with reddish hair and kind green/blue eyes, he must have been in his very early twenties at the time. Of course, I have grown up with stories about how a short peasant woman in a long black skirt and a scarf tied around her head arrived one day at my mother’s door, with a tall youngish boy in tow. She explained how she had walked the 20 or more kilometers to persuade my father to accept her son as an apprentice in the factory because he wanted to run away and join the Cossacks. My father must have explained that Nicola, then in his late teens, was somewhat past the age of apprenticeship, and that there was the additional difficulty that my father had

no boarding facilities. The woman, who I was to learn to call Nana, then proceeded into our home to appeal to my mother. They were poor farmers, peasants, with a daughter still to be married, and a dowry to be found. Nicola was their only son but had never shown any interest in farming. They had no money but he was a good boy, and he would help out and obey my mother. Left on the farm, he would drift off and eventually join up with the Cossacks who were recruiting youngsters to join them. Even if my father were to take him on, they had no money to pay for housing and food at one of the rooming houses in town. The woman stood her ground, imploringly. She needed help in order to save her beloved son. My mother found a small room for him somewhere in our house and so Nicola stayed. It was clear that he would never become a tailor, but he would live with us, eat with us and became part of our family, until sometime in the mid 1940s when he would finally run away and join a local group of partisans. But before that my father went into hiding on the farm after the liquidation of the ghetto, my mother had run away from concentration camp and joined my father and, finally, Nicola brought me to them.

After rejoining my parents, it seems that I pushed the time with the “foster” family out of my mind. It wasn’t until many years after the war that I discovered that I had been a “hidden child” and even then it had no meaning to me. I was to discover in recent years, that the term hidden children has broad meanings. Many of the children were in hiding with parents, others were orphaned and some had been given away or placed with families, churches and charitable institutions. I had chosen not to share my experience other than in analysis, and the decision to do so now causes me great discomfort. Abuse and perversion, words that could be applied to describe my life with the family that took me in, have no relevance in the context of those times. My desire not to be besmirched by the often meaningless buzzwords that pepper our socio-psychologically oriented language, has always made it even more difficult for me to share information that served more to inform than form.

In any case, it has always seemed to me that other people’s stories were more evocative, more worthy of being heard. Other people’s suffering has touched me more. When my children were told the story of Anne Frank and visited the place where she hid, they came to my father with sad tales of her suffering. My father, who judged the attic in Amsterdam that concealed the Frank family as a great

improvement on the hole underground that housed us, informed them that I, their mother, had suffered more. Confronted by this information, I pointed out that I was alive and therefore Anne Frank's suffering cannot be compared with my experience. Where my father saw triumph that did not negate the horror of what I went through, I seemed to judge as an unworthy comparison to the heroism of those who perished. For some reason to have lived was the less courageous act.

It has been curious for me to hear the stories of clients who had been hidden as children, in Holland, Belgium and France. Most of their protectors were farmers or religious institutions. There were some in Polish urban areas, often with false papers, and accompanied by a parent. The husbands and fathers were more frequently taken off streets or in organized actias. One story that touched me deeply was of a woman, a year or two younger than I. Her mother was caught in a roundup and, when commanded to put her hands behind her head along with the others, revealed the infant that she held close to her body. Before the baby could be seized out of her arms, another woman who was watching from the sidelines ran forward and tore the baby away, claiming it was hers. She argued with the suspicious guards and eventually ran away. The woman, who was to raise my client, did not know the mother or anything about the child. No one came to claim her and it was not until she was over forty and a mamushka (Russian diminutive for mother) was dying that she discovered from a sibling how she came to be saved. She had no way of finding her family of origin, although she was curious to know who they were, who she was.

Reflections

As a therapist, I made every attempt not to allow any part of my story to intrude on those of my clients. Part of this is professional respect for the storyteller. Often they assume that I have no idea of what the war was like. And I really don't know what it was for them. This is a difficult boundary to hold — especially since they assume that I'm American and not Jewish. At times I may tell them that I'm Jewish or even that I passed the war years in Europe, but those decisions must be thought through as to what meaning that they may have in the client's story. It is the same way for a therapist who has been diagnosed with cancer and is seeing a client with a similar diagnosis; there has to be a reason for disclosure, it has to serve a purpose that will

ultimately help the process and the relationship, and specifically those seeking help. Nevertheless, I must admit to moments of discomfort, as if I was being dishonest.

The way in which I seemed to see my life away from my family — because that is how I still feel it — did not define me. I never doubted that my father's secret visits would continue, that the drawings that described my emotional state that were smuggled to my family would reach them. I knew that they would come and take me to safety. And eventually they did. The question of safety, of security, I have come realize, is an important sub-theme to my story. It is the meaning that I found in a multitude of separate acts that provided me with the self-assurance that was necessary in order for a small child to accept the unacceptable and to go on to make a life.

There is a song that describes a Jewish mother who leaves her child during the war in order to save his life.ⁱⁱ As a little girl in the Displaced Persons camp in Germany, I was often lifted onto a table to sing this song for visitors. I no longer remember all of the words. To translate the Yiddish loosely, it tells the story of a woman who leaves her child. The child looks out of the window, with his beautiful eyes, one pair of dark eyes among all the blues. His mother looks at his little nose and his sweet lips made for kisses, his beautiful dark locks. The song tells of how his mother brought him there late one night, wrapped against the cold and hugged and kissed him and spoke to him in a quiet voice. "My child, she told him, "I brought you here this night to save your life. Play nicely and quietly with the other children, be quiet and obedient. Not a Yiddish word, a Yiddish song. After this night you are no longer a Jew".

Being the possessor of neither the dark eyes or dark curls of the child in the song, I performed on cue, as if it were someone else's story I was singing about. In truth, in spite of my blue eyes and bright blond curls, inside myself I was always that dark-eyed child left among strangers. It might have been easier if I had looked less like the non-Jews but then perhaps that would have resulted in less expressed interest in saving my life.

I said early on that it was not my intention to tell a procedural tale. It isn't that kind of story. Once I rejoined my parents, my primary interaction was with my mother who, for that brief time, became my teacher and the primary influence in my life. She was still available to me.

My Mother's Journey

My mother was a wonderful storyteller. If a child had to spend ten months underground, with no light or other sensory or intellectual feedback, one could do no better than to have my mother as a companion. To this day, I may see an old movie or read a book that seems familiar, only to realize that my mother had described it in such detail that I had actually visualized the experience. She had a punitive sense of humor that compensated in wit what it lacked in gentleness. She told me stories of growing up in a shtetl, of her family, and most of all about the loss of the mother she idealized when she was eight years old and her mother was forty-eight. About her father she was more ambivalent. She had craved his attention. She was the pretty daughter, where Celia was the responsible eldest child, and often felt that he had spent more time looking after his patients than he gave to the family. When Jews were not allowed to practice medicine, my grandmother opened a barbershop and hired a barber in order to convince the authorities that my grandfather was not a real doctor. Nevertheless, the farmers left chickens, eggs and vegetables outside their doorway and still came in the middle of the night with their ailments. He was frequently jailed but often the jailers were also his patients and would release him.

Many years later I was to enjoy the privilege of being Beryl Dov Helfer's granddaughter. While living in Toronto, after the birth of my eldest son, I developed a skin rash on my hands that resisted treatment. My mother came to help with her adored grandson and heard that there was a physician from her hometown who might be able to cure me. No appointment was necessary. The doctor, a small man in his late sixties or early seventies, slightly bent with wispy white hair, greeted my mother, kissed her hands and expressed his joy and gratitude that she had thought to consult him. He also spoke to me of the grandfather I never knew, a man who had helped him to establish a practice in a difficult environment and who had taught him "to treat illness and to listen to the soul."

My grandfather also liked to drink, a subject not encouraged by my mother. An example of this protective shield that his wife and daughters had drawn around this habit was to reappear many years later, during my son's bris or circumcision. The baby apparently tenaciously held on to the wine-soaked cloth that was to ease his pain

and licked his lips when it was removed. Those present who had known my grandparents laughed, shook their heads and commented that his great-grandfather would have been proud. My mother was not amused. My grandmother's solution that he only drank at home was to create a 'salon.' In the context of intellectual discourse, drinking became a social activity rather than a physical craving.

My grandmother, after whom I was named, has been described to me as an imposing woman of many talents, who was remembered for her kindness and respected for being a lady. She had suffered several miscarriages and had delivered two stillborn babies before and after giving birth to Celia and my mother. It was apparently her dowry that had paid for the large white house on the hill and the bake oven where the less fortunate townspeople could bake their bread and keep their food warm for the Sabbath. My mother was the daughter who inherited the large portrait of my grandmother, which was to hang over my crib. I slightly remember the dark hair, held back with a comb, a lace-trimmed dress and an imposing demeanor. I also recall being afraid that the painting in its heavy gilded frame would fall on me. My mother may have been unsure of her father but she adored this mother whom she lost to heart disease at a very young age, and cried for her, even when, as an adult, she herself was stricken with multiple sclerosis that was to destroy her. She clung to Celia, who for her was the living connection to the mother that her sister had known for three years longer than she had. My grandfather was to remarry seven months after his wife's death, to a woman much younger than himself, and father five children before his own death. He named his first daughter from this marriage, Bella, after my grandmother.

Their stepmother seems to have been overwhelmed to find herself a widow with five children before she had been able to adjust to the life into which she had been thrust as a young wife. My mother and Celia took on the responsibility for this new family. Although their mother's family who had left for the United States many years earlier sent tickets and visas, my mother said that they could not leave the children whom they adored and towards whom they felt a responsibility. They were for them their sisters and brothers as well as their children. This love they had for each other went some way towards saving my life, although it has made me feel bereft because I always knew that when they all died no one would ever love me as much as they loved each other, and loved me. After my grandfather's death, money was scarce and

my mother would tell me that she and Celia, who had been taught embroidery and how to make lace, an appropriate activity for young ladies but which they disliked learning, earned their necessities through this skill. As Celia and then my mother, married, they each took one of the older girls with them and then paid for her education. They continued looking after the rest of the family even after the war started.

My mother met my father when she was twelve and he was thirteen, although “met” may suggest more formality than was required or necessary in Obertin, the village where they both grew up. My father’s father, my paternal grandfather, died from typhoid when my father was ten. It seems to have been my father’s fate to look after those near him at the expense of his own dreams. His teachers considered him a scholar and apparently attempted to enroll him in at least one Yeshiva to continue his studies, a plan his widowed mother refused to consider. His personal ambition was to join the professional Yiddish theatre, and once more he was accepted [by the theatre?] only to be told that it was his responsibility to look after the rest of the family. My father was the eldest son, by two years, of five siblings: two older sisters and two younger brothers. As my mother told it, the rest looked after themselves while he looked after everyone else. It is easy to imagine my father in that role. He was apprenticed to a tailor and stayed in Obertin, conducted amateur theatre and courted my mother, whom he tended to regard jealously as his property. My mother appeared to relish the stories she told me about their courtship and his accusations that she was not faithful, at fourteen. When I remember my beautiful flirtatious mother and my controlling father, I can imagine the courtship to have been lively, even if the marriage was never an easy one. It saddens me to think that their lives between the late twenties and early thirties, when they could have begun to profit from the years that they had invested in preparing for their life together, when my mother’s beauty was to flower and my father’s talents evolve. They were to spend all of those years, to waste all of that time, in the middle of a nightmare.

My mother told me about the town where she had grown up, the friends she had and the tricks she would play to irritate her suitor, my father. I think of her as a somewhat conventional young woman who had already known tragedy but still had an enormous appetite for life and for fun. She always read and in later life devoured her two daily

newspapers, one in Yiddish and one in English. She had a rather glib way of looking back at the early parts of her life: every happening warranted caustic laughter. She would tell me of the time my father was “drafted” and selected to join the cavalry because he liked riding. Apparently Jews didn’t ride but spent most of their time cleaning up horses as well as their by-products. In the cavalry, my father’s given name, Judah, immediately provoked accusations of his personal responsibility in killing Christ. Finally, when his life was in danger, my mother used part of her dowry to buy his freedom, although my father’s pride in his uniform and his wish to ride continued to amuse her. My father was to be known by his middle name, Leon, for the rest of his life.

My mother’s stories are mesmerizing, informed by a nineteenth-century view of life and conforming to a sense of community participation. One is drawn into the story as more of a participant than merely an observer. She told me some of what happened after the ghetto was liquidated and she and Celia were separated from Bella and Goldie. As she spoke, I shared in the panic and the fear. Goldie had a marvelous green tweed suit, the last finery of the wardrobe of a proud university student. The straight skirt comes to her knees and has a small slit in the back. I wanted one just like it when I grew up and she promises to see to it when the time comes. She would toss the fitted jacket over her shoulders and free her shoulder-length gold curls from the narrow shawl collar as she would leave the room. In my memory she bends down to talk to me or adjusts my clothing, always wearing that skirt with a fitted white cotton blouse or going off in her suit.

My mother and Celia search for their sisters as best they can because to draw attention to themselves or to those that they are seeking can prove dangerous. They continue looking, in the hope that perhaps they had run away and were safe somewhere. On the second day that my mother and Celia are in the concentration camp, they see the girlfriend of one of the units that undressed the bodies of those that had been killed, wearing Goldie’s green suit. They never learn what happened to Bella.

The Janowska Labor Camp

My mother speaks little of the camp itself and her life there, or how they spent their days. Mostly, she talks of the first twenty-four hours that they spent outside, in a field

inside the walls, waiting to die. The Germans found ways to pass the time. They had a bearded elderly rabbi have intercourse with a young girl, and forced everyone to watch. They had women fornicate with dogs, and imposed other forms of bestiality that only very sick people could dream up, people with temporary power over the lives of others but nothing to live for to suggest they were human. My mother told of a lovely young woman who had caught the eye of one of the soldiers. She had been sitting near my mother and, having noticed his interest, walked over and offered herself to him in exchange for her life. Apparently, he spoke a few words to her, walked away and then came back and shot her. I no longer remember when I heard some of these tales but I suspect that we were still underground and that my mother had come to the conclusion that I already understood more than I should.

My mother described lying in the field with a picture of me inside her blouse, covered with her tears. This was also where she kept the poison that she had with her almost from the time when we first came to Lvov. Celia at first begged her not to use the poison but eventually asked only that she not do it near her. My mother was to keep this packet for the rest of her life. After we had sold my parents' home and were attempting to sort out their belongings. I looked for this historic package and was relieved not to find it.

We also spoke of how my mother managed her escape from the concentration camp. Along with the electrified fences, dogs and soldiers who surrounded the camp, there were numerous other constraints to discourage those inside to go outside. The clothing was decontaminated, and if the odor and creases were not enough of a deterrent to detection, a yellow star was sewn to the back. Shaving a patch through the hair was another way of identifying runaway Jews. In order to prepare for her "run," as my mother called it, she needed to have alternative clothing and avoid the "concentration camp frizur (hairdo)." My mother did not see herself as an especially brave woman and credited Celia's determination for all of the preparations and for getting her out. She never forgave herself for leaving without her sister, who promised to follow shortly. During their march to work, Celia pushed her out of the line and into a nearby group of people who apparently used to stand on the sidewalk as the women were marched through, shouting contemptuous remarks and making coarse gestures. I used to ask my mother how she could have blended with this group of

people, without being noticed, and she would answer that she “just did.” Once outside the protective group that included her sister, her mind shut down, as she reported, and the need for action took over. The thought came to her with razor-sharp clarity: “If I stand here, I will die.” And so she walked away.

That Which Is Past Is Also Present: We Live With Our Memories

This next story I associate with my mother’s flight through the Ukraine, this last trip she was to make alone. I turn on the television in Brussels. Not being a habitual watcher, I intrude into ongoing programs, as much to avoid the repetitious news on our one English channel as in the hope of finding something of interest to watch. I turn to one where the language is French, and on the screen is statuary of funereal inspiration, apparently dating back to the Hapsburgs, as I discover. The city is Lvov, and these are in fact graveyards. I am reminded of a conversation with a Ukrainian-born taxi driver, during a lengthy Boston traffic jam. He had recently emigrated from Lvov. When I ask about his city and, exceptionally, share with him that I too was born there, he tells me that the concentration camp was in the process of being leveled to make way for new construction, and that bones are scattered across the newly dug ground. However, this televised burial ground predates the Second World War. In any case, my people do not merit graves. They are to be crushed to the ground without benefit of mass identification. Lvov will recreate itself in seamless continuity; from the Hapsburg past to the twenty-first century, without acknowledging the slaughter that occurred in between, no doubt now ascribed to history as part of a German invasion that had little to do with the populace.

Further into the transmission is a train ride, passing through the countryside, the train occupied by women scarved in babushkas who eerily resemble my old Ukrainian Nana. Is this where the train bearing my mother passed through as she traveled, heart in mouth, to rejoin my father? The women do not converse but occupy themselves eating food out of plastic bags. I am struck by the incongruity of plastic replacing the paper that has somehow lodged itself in my mind. They bite into vegetables and chunks of what appears to be bread. I have a vision of my mother, sitting on a bench on this train, hungry, looking down to avoid any possible eye contact. My very pretty mother is chilled in her light dress, having shed her coat lest it carry the unforgiving odor of disinfectant.

The program moves on to the village of a Molfar, who is described as a Shaman-style healer who cured diseases of unknown origin. The narrator cites his specialty to be the cure for schizophrenia and other types of psychopathology — “black karma,” he calls it. People come from far off towns in the hope of being healed. Apparently, he half chants, half sings as he addresses himself to his hopeful charges. I suddenly remember having heard that the Nana, Nicola’s mother who had hidden us, had been very superstitious and that she somehow associated caring for us with the continued well-being of her son. I distinctly remember her crossing herself every time that she approached us. However, being caught up in my own devotion to Jesus, I know doubt saw this as being more connected to my piety than a wish to keep bad spirits at bay.

Once more my nostrils, out of a memory, are invaded by the decaying dampness of a forest and I see my mother, bent over, gently removing mushrooms from the earth. Nearby, I attempt to pick the purple violets out from their protective leaves, with my small plump hands, losing more than I manage to hold on to.

We are in a place called Ukraine: It is so familiar, it holds my memories of trains and forests, gardens and women who age before their time and wear flowered scarves on their heads. Yet I do not belong here, any more than my mother did on that train so many years ago. I am aware of this from everything that I have heard and read, but more sharply from the cold place inside my soul. They wish to pretend that I died and had no share in the countryside, outside the train, that they claim as their own. But return I must some day – if only to day good-bye to those that were mine and live inside of me.

The Courage of Others: Hiding — The Last Phase

This phase of our life in hiding was to last a year for my father, eleven months for my mother and ten months for me. I do not remember the reunion with my parents. My mother, never one to withhold the painfully obvious, pointed out that I was no longer the same child that she had cried over and given away. The once familiar threesome of father, mother and me was no longer sufficient. We knew by then that Celia was probably the only one still alive, but every effort that Nicola had made to meet her near the gates of the concentration camp had come to nothing. My mother gradually

stopped waiting in anticipation, and I learned quickly not to ask questions. Somehow, along with Celia and Goldie and Bella, the hopefulness and the sun had gone out of our lives. In retrospect, we three were less the survivors and more something that somehow got left behind. There was little rejoicing in this reunion. My mother would go through the motions: she would wash my now long hair and braid it, teach me how to write when we had a bit of light and tell me stories about the books she had read and movies she had seen, but the playfulness that lit her from inside was never to return.

It always seemed to me that my mother considered living out her life without her sisters and brothers as a questionable survival. In the context of other people's losses, she didn't even feel free to complain. As surviving families, we were considered quite fortunate to have come through the war as a unit. For me, especially, having two parents suggested a form of normality, a gift that not all other children had. My parents would have no other children. Although my mother became pregnant somewhere between Poland and Germany, she had an abortion. I would guess that it was at my father's insistence. I think he genuinely believed that they did this for me. I am to live the rest of my life without something I so very much long for — siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins, people who belonged to and with me, who would glory in my successes, love and be proud of my children and weep with me when confronted by mutual losses.

Lodz

I now realise that Lodz represented a shift in my relationship to my parents. The introduction of other people and the need for my parents to begin taking more direct charge of their lives marginalized my involvement. They still shared information with me, asked my opinion and involved me in their discussions about how much money we had and how we would spend it, but there were two major factors over which I had no influence. The first was my mother's abortion. Suddenly, my mother had to stay in bed and the sheets and her nightgown were stained with blood. I accepted the explanation that she had a rather large 'bubu' (sore) and even insisted that I also needed a bandage for the imaginary injury to my finger. It wasn't until I was an adult that my mother told me the truth.

The other emerged when we had “guests”, that seemed to include everyone from Lvov, Horodenka, and Obertin who happened to be passing through town. For my parents there was the restrained joy of seeing or hearing about old friends: finding out who was alive, who wasn't, where they were and how they had survived. My parents became reacquainted with the world that they had left behind, a world of the past of which I had no direct knowledge. For me, like for most children, the world was in the present and in the future. I don't remember feeling left out but I very much recall feelings of intrusion. The ultimate indignity was that in our new housing, because of a lack of beds, I had been assigned a crib that was two feet shorter than I was. Since I usually attempted to sleep with my parents, this affront was minimised. However, when the visitors were in residence, my parents brooked no argument about my obligation to sleep in the crib. I have no idea where everyone else slept and, in later years wondered whether I was being protected in some way. The visitors were only passing through, but their presence not only invaded my space but also situated me in the role of ‘child’, a role I had abandoned a long time ago and no longer knew how to take up.

I was to learn not much later that many of these people were trading in the black market. It had something to do with crossing the boarder illegally into Russia to either sell or buy yeast, and return to Poland with other unavailable goods, including, I believe, nylon stockings. They were earning a great deal of money, and since my father wanted to return to Russia to seek out the Nana and her family as well as look for his youngest brother, he was soon to become involved in their activities in a small way

At first we were very poor. My mother shopped every day and had to calculate very carefully how much she spent for each meal. There was the time I went with her to the market and fell in love with a doll that had blond braided hair and blue eyes. I had learned not to ask for anything, but it didn't require words for my mother to recognise the longing of a child who hadn't owned a toy since she was two years old. I remember her looking at me ruefully and telling me that we would be eating mamaliga (cooked corn meal) for the next two weeks. Although I never had a

daughter with whom to share the doll, she has crossed the Atlantic at least twice and, of course, I have her still. And then we got rich.

Rich Was Better

My father decided to venture to what was to become the Iron Curtain to search for his brother, earn some money on the black market and visit the Nana and her family. This first trip was a modest financial success but terrifying for my mother and me. We would go for walks but she seemed to have difficulty focusing on the most minor activity, including fussing for me to wash and get dressed. Although the next phase of our lives was to be my second opportunity for almost total independence, I sort of missed being looked after.

My father appeared exhilarated on his return. Although he had not located his brother, he had seen the Nana and was able to leave them some of his newly earned riches. Apparently, they were nervous about his visit but were pleased to have the extra money. My father half laughingly told us that Nana's husband was content that the additional money allowed him to plan for a more important monument for his grave.

It seems clear in retrospect that for my father to have improved our economic situation, in spite of what dealing in the black market implied both in terms of danger and morals for someone like him, had provided my father with a way of taking his life back into his own hands. It seemed certain that he intended to continue this pursuit, and several times my mother was also to cross over while he stayed with me. Suddenly, I had a governess who, along with the other two children, would take me to the park, play games and take up my sadly neglected education. Since my parents were busy plotting their illegal trade, I ate by myself, in a nearby restaurant, where I was served as if I were an adult princess. In the time of rations and limited availability of food, I would sit at a table with starched white cloth and napkin, and listen to the suggestions made by a black-clad waiter. I remember loving the silver domes that covered the dishes and tried to select meals that would require this necessary accoutrement. I had learned how to dine formally from the grandmother when I was in hiding, and managed with pride, if not necessarily skill, the multiple knives, forks and glasses with which I was confronted at each meal. I saw less of my parents but I was accustomed to being on my own, and the governess gave me more than my share

of time, possibly because I fell in so easily with behaving like a 'little lady'. I remember loving all of the formality, the beautifully served meals, the proper new clothes and having books, although I have no idea in which language I was reading then. At some point in my life I must have read a bit of Russian, perhaps some Polish which I had just begun to speak and definitely Yiddish, which I could read but not speak and only understood because I spoke German. In fact German was still my language of choice, but I was to discover that, like many wartime children, I was linguistically flexible. It saddens me that, although I still speak rather poor German, I have forgotten the multitude of languages to which I had been introduced. My parents spoke German to me and German, Polish or Yiddish to each other, depending on whether they wanted me to understand — or not. When I started school in Montreal I was humiliated that I spoke only the bit of English I had been taught before we left Germany. With great determination, I decided to speak only English until I was fluent. And pushed all of the other languages, along with many of the memories about which I am now writing, out of my conscious mind, as well as out of my life.

One other event always stands out in my mind. It was New Year's Eve and my parents went out for the evening without me. When they returned, I remember so clearly, they were flushed and their skin and clothing felt cool as they embraced and kissed me. Without my asking, they told me that they had taken a fiacre (horse and buggy) ride through town to see in the New Year. I have always hugged that memory to myself. There was something wonderful about my parents in a horse-driven carriage, just the two of them alone.

Although I always thought that we had lived in Lodz for at least a year, I realize now that we left after no more than six months, if that.

The Displaced Persons Camp

When did the conspiracy of silence begin? I never spoke of my childhood, even in the DP camps in Germany that served as a temporary bridge for what was left of the Jewish population, to receive aid and to provide a process of acclimation to a future. In the camps I was an oddity: the youngest, a German-speaking, Catholic-Aryan child who spoke no Yiddish, the lingua franca of the camps. My parents shielded me from the emotional outpourings of the older children, behaviour that I didn't understand in

any case. The classrooms were designed for adolescents and young adults and although attendance was not compulsory at seven or eight years, I was often the only absentee. Private tuition further separated me from the rest of the population, with the exception of two or three children who, although older, became companions of sorts. My parents were concerned to preserve what was left of my naiveté.

We left Einring after a short stay because my father was to direct a theatre group and was also given the responsibility of welcoming and co-ordinating some of the entertainment that arrived from America.

Again, two events stand out in my memory. The first, which took place in Einring, I treasure because for the very first time, possibly since the ghetto, I felt safe.

A large group of people arrived in the camp in the middle of the night. They had evidently been travelling for a long time and no provisions had been made to either house or feed them. My mother opened the children's kitchen and began the process of cooking for and feeding the exhausted arrivals. Because they didn't want to leave me by myself, my father had carried me, sleeping, into the kitchen and made a bed for me on a sack of flour, near the oven. I remember lying there, inhaling the smells of food being freshly prepared, bread baking, coffee brewing, the soft hum of voices and my mother efficiently bustling around the kitchen, her movements as always economical, giving the odd instruction and bending down to check on me. I pretended to sleep and I never wanted to leave that kitchen or have anything change again.

The second event was a Passover Seder, attended by about thirty people.⁹ The prayers, the discussion was not about the past but about us, the journey that we had already taken as well as the one that still lay ahead for us all. The State of Israel was still to be established, but these were Jews who had survived the death camps and were determined to get to Eretz (Hebrew for Israel). They were being detained in Cyprus and living without food on the ships that had carried them. Some of them had left from our camp, including some children. For us, even us children, the Passover readings were the continuation of a story that was also our story. No Seder was ever to have this impact again, or be remembered with this sense of relevance, until the one in Brussels just before my father's death.

My Father's Last Passover: Another Memory for a Lifetime: An Intervention in the Story.

This digression to fifty years later was the next Seder that was to have meaning in my life. We were five, my eldest son and his wife, my husband and I and, of course, my father. We knew that he was dying and that this would be our last Passover with him. My husband began conducting the Seder and then turned to my father and asked whether he would like to lead instead. My father took the Haggada (Passover prayer book) and started reading, but soon it became very clear that he was speaking from memory. He continued, in this way, in Hebrew, through most of the ceremony, all of it from a memory of long ago, while we four sat hushed, and listened.

Gabersee

The next phase of my life took place in Gabersee, the place in Germany that provided me with temporary permanence. The place known as Gabersee had been a psychiatric facility, an old-fashioned asylum which probably included retarded as well as psychiatric patients. The buildings were mostly three- and four-storey red brick structures, surrounded by straggly green grass, resembling in some ways a neglected campus. We lived in the administration building because of my father's role as theatre director and were able to have a room for ourselves. That building itself was two stories with offices on the first floor, assigned to the directors whose families lived on the second floor. Our room was about ten feet wide and quite long. Our beds were lined up against opposite walls near the window, with a table and chairs in the middle. The far end of the room held a larger table or cabinet on which stood the two-burner electric stove on which my mother prepared full meals. Across from that was an improvised bed which served as a sofa and made up our living room. Although the bathrooms were shared, I remember them as spotlessly clean. There was a community kitchen which provided meals for the residents, but we never ate there.

The camp provided, along with shelter, a retraining programme for the adults and a school for the children as well as for young adults whose studies had been interrupted by the war. There were numerous classes, but the primary occupation for many of the inhabitants was in planning how to leave. Usually, this meant either the United States, Israel or Canada. There may have been other destinations, but I didn't hear about

them. The way out to North America required visas with relatives as guarantors or for certain categories of workers. In the latter case, I believe the need to be partially driven by JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services) and possibly UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) workers who recognised the necessity of resettling these thousands of people. I have no idea whether Canada was in desperate need of tailors, but that was one method through which many people gained entry, including my family.

Israel, as a destination, was both a reason to leave as well as a passionate desire for many, my mother among them. I don't know whether she had heard of friends or acquaintances who had managed to settle there or whether, for her, Israel represented a form of return to the shtetl, a communal way of life that was more rural and where relationships were less formal. A *chaverai* (Hebrew for 'group of friends'). My mother needed people. For my father, a communal life in Israel had absolutely no appeal. Already in the camp, he would point out, the whole system was based on *protectia* (influence); who you knew and your place in the hierarchy determined where and how you lived, how soon your papers were considered and even access to clothing and other necessities from UNRRA and other sources. He also refused the visas that were to arrive from my mother's family because, although he wanted to live in a large city, he thought New York unmanageable, and, he was afraid of being captured by my mother's family. This argument between my parents was to rage for months.

There was very limited entry to Israel before 1948, and those who tried to go there risked their lives, as ships were diverted to Cyprus or other destinations where they lingered without food or necessary sanitation. It seems to me that Israel was both encouraged and discouraged as a destination. I, as both a loner and as an experienced eavesdropper on adult conversations, heard remarks about how we Jews would only be safe in a country of our own. Among the younger people, there was agreement that if fighting for one's survival was inevitable, as many of them seemed to believe it was, doing so for one's own country was the only solution. This spirit was further bolstered by the Zionist organisations that were gradually beginning to reappear and make overtures, especially to the young adults. Of course, this was all to change with the UN charter that granted independence to the little state of Israel in the summer of 1948.

Who can ever forget that day in a displaced persons' camp somewhere in the middle of Germany. No one seemed to be indoors and rumours abounded like waves floating over and around the crowds. 'Have they, will they, what if'? I followed my father or mother around, not entirely sure of the true significance of such a decision, especially if it were to be negative. And how everyone danced and cheered and hugged. What a wonderful place it was to be on May 14, 1948 in a displaced person's camp somewhere in the middle of Germany when your people were granted their own country! I may not have understood it then, but who had more to gain than we did?

Access to Israel was not immediate because the mandate did not permit for an immediate influx of people. Also for many the traditional Passover greeting of 'next year in Jerusalem' was not their true wished-for destination. And visas to the Americas were still difficult to obtain. Therefore the daily preoccupation for the adults of thinking about, if not always working towards, their future destinations, continued.

A Different Kind of Childhood

Even though I was only eight, I had two occupations at the time. One was the self-selected one of hanging around the theatre where my father rehearsed his players. I would sit in a corner hanging on to each word and every instruction. From time to time I would forget myself and prompt one of the actors, only to be reminded by my father that I was allowed to watch as long as I didn't open my mouth. When my father put on 'The Dybbuk' (Ansky, 1920), I actually had the part of the heroine as a child. However, after one appearance I came down with mumps and thus ended my theatrical career. The plays were on for a week and were attended by people from other camps also. My father, I was to discover later, took considerable poetic license, especially when he rewrote the stage play. My husband, who was teaching English literature at McGill University when he first saw my father's scripts, informed me that, among other changes, my father had given 'The Weavers' (Hauptmann, 1892) a happy ending, including a parade. It seems that happy endings, preferably heroic ones, were what my father surmised his audience wanted and needed.

My other occupation was to trade with the German farmers in the neighbourhood — clothing and cigarettes for vegetables, fruit and an occasional chicken. This job fell to me for three reasons: I spoke German, my mother refused to do it and my father didn't have the time. Most important, I was an unintimidated negotiator. I had an added advantage of being angry. My anger had two sources. I was often mistaken for a German child and sometimes would be stopped in the camp by strangers who thought I had mistakenly wandered in to a place where I did not belong. The second source was my difficulty over language. The common language of the other children in camp was Yiddish, although a number spoke Polish or Hungarian. My primary language was still German, which helped me to understand their Yiddish, but when I attempted to speak it with my German pronunciation, I was often laughed at. My knowledge of Polish had progressed but I had a limited vocabulary. I was also at that time among the youngest children in the camp. I didn't seem to fit anywhere and the only people who thought I was more like them were the Germans, who were not especially well liked as a group by the camp inhabitants.

The German farmers were probably at first amused by the pint-sized negotiator but eventually took me seriously, and I came home with whatever vegetables were available, fruit and the occasional meat and eggs that my mother would prepare with her usual skill. The part I liked least were the times I had to dig the root vegetables out of the field and carry them home. If my father was free, he would sometimes meet me and carry back my load. There were also times when I would dig in the field, accompanied by my mother, without permission. Sometimes we would pick berries, but my mother would rarely leave the camp unless it was to go to the movies with friends or my father and me into nearby Wasserburg.

As for school, I was an irregular student; the habit of absenting myself from classes would stay with me throughout my years of study. In fact, the curriculum in the camp's school was designed for pupils who were often twice my age. Along with reading, writing and arithmetic, all of which I enjoyed, we were taught trigonometry, algebra, biology and Hebrew. The atmosphere in the one-room class was alive with flirting and sexual tension that were appropriate for the older teenagers and young adults but had little relevance to my day dreams of either being an actress or surprising my parents by trading a skirt sent by relatives from America for a lovely

plump chicken. The other school that I attended only on Fridays, although attendance was required daily, was cheder (religious school). Each Friday afternoon, however, the children were awarded with tickets to buy ice cream, and I liked ice cream. Therefore on Fridays I studied diligently, and the rabbi, smart man that he was, must have decided that studying one day was better than nothing.

I also studied violin, and I mention my lessons for two reasons. The first is because my German violin teacher, whom I no doubt exasperated, told my parents that I was a nice child, even if I didn't practice, but that I was too young to hold so much hate. Although I was polite to him, it was very clear to him that I hated everything and everyone German. This remark puzzled me at the time because I was so often taken for a German myself that what he described now sounds as if it were a form of self hate. Being mistaken for a German child in the DP camp was unpleasant if not dangerous, and this happened to me often enough to possibly make me wish to differentiate myself from my teacher in any way I could. I don't remember feeling hate then, nor do I feel it now. I was never taught to hate, and I only experience it when my husband or children are endangered repeatedly by someone or something specific. And even then it is not really hate. I consider hate too profound an emotion to waste on people who are not important.

Although my father travelled with the theatre group, he was more often at home, rehearsing new plays, participating in the administration of the camp and greeting visitors from the various organisations and the American army. Groups of children would be brought out to greet and entertain the guests, and I would inevitably be invited to sing my signature song of the little boy who was given away by his mother. In fact I was often presented as evidence of how well we war kids were looking. In one respect, I was an unfortunate choice, if one of the goals of showing us off was to procure more clothing, food and books for the children. I was mostly well dressed, a Zworn obsession, helped along by the fact that both of my parents could sew. I was better fed than most and had first access to any books and magazines that appeared at the camp because I lived upstairs from the library and appeared at their doorstep daily to find out if anything of interest had arrived. Life magazine was a discovery I cherished because, as someone once said, it was a magazine for people who couldn't read, and I fell in love with the pictures. I also came to love Chicklets gum which the

librarian jokingly shared because she insisted that I was the most avid reader in the camp.

There were other children in the camp who probably spent more time with each other and even attended school regularly. My closest relationships were with the three who lived on my floor: Lonka, four or five years older, a tall girl and also an only child with very tall and serious parents. Nathan, who lived with his widowed and enterprising mother and was to suffer from severe emotional problems, and Yosie, who was probably only two or three years older. Nathan and Yosie were both eventually to arrive in Montreal at least a year or more after we did. But none of us were ever friends. Perhaps we had learned from our parents that friendship could mean loss.

The pattern of being a loner was unplanned. Having spent so much time alone, I seemed to have learned, from an early age, to live in part in a separate world. The contradiction is that I very much like being with people, I love my friends and make new acquaintances easily but my entire life has made that more of a luxury than routine. Having moved often as an adult has made it difficult to maintain more than the closest friendships, and those are spread from Montreal to Boston to Brussels and South Africa. In looking back, I realize that my parents maintained contact with very few people after they would move away. All of those families and friends that they had been close to in Kiev or Lodz, the two camps where we had lived and even some acquaintances from before the war, went out of our lives and I no longer even remember their names. I recognise three families from Gabersee in my wedding pictures, two of whom belong to Nathan and Yosie. I was to repeat that pattern in my own life. It was not unusual for us to leave a city where we had lived and maintain no contact with the people we came to like. Goodbyes are to be avoided because it is probably forever.

The past has stayed with me in other, more poignant ways. As a child you rarely analyse how you are perceived by adults. Because I strongly resemble my father, total strangers in later years would stop me and tell me something about myself as a child. Some were the visitors from Lodz, others from Horodenka. The message was most clearly delivered by the woman of a couple who lived in Montreal but had known us

in Gabersee. Both had lost a husband and wife as well as children in the war, had met after liberation from somewhere or other and had lived together in Gabersee I met Lisa, for that was her name, walking near my parents' house some years after I myself no longer lived in Montreal. She took my arm, and crying, informed me that she was pleased that I had turned out well, That I was never to forget that I also represented all of those who had not survived as well as those, like her, whom I would outlive. "As long as you live and remember us", she told me, "We also will live through you. It will all have been for something". This was not an isolated incident. Sometimes Horodenka survivors wanted to see me because they said that I was all that was left of the next generation that would have been. On the occasions that my husband was with me when I would be confronted with such a message, his astonished reaction made me aware of the fact that not everyone lived with such a responsibility. Until then, I had consciously not regarded such encounters as unusual.

These years in Germany were happy ones for me, also because my father seemed content and my mother at peace. However, my mother was beginning to show concern about the lifestyle that I had created for myself – wandering around the camp, speaking to the adults and listening to their stories - and thought it was time for us to leave for a more permanent home. And rather than make use of the visas available to us for the United States, my father, ever the independent, decided to apply for entry to Canada as a tailor.

Another Journey: The Journey Of Hope

My father's request to be admitted into the quota for tailorsⁱⁱⁱ was greeted as a joke by his associates. However, they respected his wishes, even if they never came to believe in his qualification, and we were issued a number several months away. In the meantime my father decided that I should see Europe before I left for what he was certain would be the last time.

First we travelled through Germany. Bavaria was a beautiful part of the country when seen from a proper train. We explored Munich and other cities that had not been devastated by Allied bombs. However, what stands out in my memory is Vienna and the Opera House. The Vienna Opera House, I have since discovered, was located next to the hotel that was occupied by the German command. The Opera House had

therefore suffered several direct hits during the bombing. When my father and I, dressed in our best, went to the Opera in the fall of 1948, the building was probably in the process of being rehabilitated. All I remember are the red plush seats, the formality of the event, the music and finally the singing. Many years later I was to return to the opera with my husband and stay in the very hotel that had been Nazi headquarters during the occupation. The stairway was still decorated with paintings of soldiers. I assumed that these soldiers were Austrian and that their military triumphs predated the war. But who's to know.

Over the years my father was to take me to many concerts, the theatre, auctions, art galleries and other operas — these were not activities that my mother enjoyed — but nothing could ever stir my imaginations as did attending my first opera in the partially destroyed Vienna Opera house.

We visited Salzburg and travelled through the mountains of Bertchesgaden (Bavaria), how we travelled I no longer remember. As my children would do eventually, I would also complain of seeing too many churches and being satiated by monuments. Although my memory of the specifics of the trip are patchy at best, going hand-in-hand with my father through all of the places that he had no longer expected to see again, remains with me always as a warm remembrance.

The preparation for our departure involved endless paper work. The reason that I remember this is because my father kept modifying the information, asking my mother and me not to forget the new data, only to change it anew. If he heard a rumour that older children were more easily passed through the stringent immigration requirements, I would suddenly gain a year. When having been in hiding during the war was suspect, our entire history was up for review. Former illness was always suspect; therefore we were to present ourselves as newly hatched eggs, never having experienced as much as a common cold. My mother would laugh at all of this preventive activity, but my father would quickly lose his temper with both of us. There followed a flurry of trips and consultations as my father attempted to predict the unpredictable. Somewhere, he was sure, someone had the answers and it was essential that he find this someone who would advise him. I hadn't seen this uncertain, anxious side of my father before, but I was to experience it frequently in subsequent years.

The dependency on someone's having the answers, combined with flashes of rage, were to become very familiar, the first being especially irritating. Suddenly, there was a 'them' who knew more than my father and I didn't like that at all.

In the meantime, the life force of the camp was gradually beginning to unravel, as the inhabitants were confronted by the inevitable — the camps were temporary measures. The time to move on was at hand.

Once again, I have no memory of leaving the camp, of saying goodbye. Our destination was the port of Hamburg from where we would board a ship that would take us to Halifax, Nova Scotia, the entry point into Canada.

Hamburg

We left the camp in December, 1948, and were not to leave Germany until sometime in January of 1949. This was probably due to a combination of the time it took to process everyone and possibly also because of the lack of availability of a ship. For the first time I was confronted by masses of people who came from other camps, and other individuals who wished to go to Canada.

Two events stay with me as having had, directly or indirectly, long-term consequences, although both are related in some way to changes in my father's behaviour. Almost from the time that he was accepted as a candidate for immigration, it seemed as if he began to doubt his ability to make decisions, to adequately take control of his life and therefore ours. It began with the first-come-first-serve assignment of space in Hamburg, where we were to remain for several weeks. In the same way that Ellis Island had served as a port of arrival for determining who could stay in the United States, in Germany these processing decisions were made at the point of departure. Unlike Ellis Island, no adequate preparations appear to have been made for the masses that descended on this place. Our first introduction was to be led to a very large room with lines upon lines of beds that were accessed through one doorway. As the crowds milled with their belongings in hand, one of my parents must have asked me to run ahead and procure the necessary beds, which I succeeded in doing. As I reached a bed against the wall, which I had been taught from long experience was the preferred location, a man in line threw a trunk in the direction

where I was standing, hit me on the head and knocked me unconscious. When I came to, I was vaguely aware of a commotion as people remonstrated with the man who had struck me, while he shouted back in a clearly unrepentant voice. Rather than fear, I remember clearly a sense of enormous outrage. I hadn't pushed ahead of him, I simply moved more quickly because I wasn't encumbered by parcels. This was important to me because my mother, concerned about a distinct lack of manners among many survivors, had given me strict instructions on how to hold my place with determination but without aggression. I decided then and there that, whenever possible, I would do what I deemed necessary not to be pushed aside. This, combined with a sense of responsibility that was beyond my years, began a process of concern that was too big for a little girl and plagues me to this day.

The other event, if I can call it that, was my father's continuing anxiety about whether we would be deemed worthy of immigration. Every rumour about who was accepted and why someone was rejected resulted in a new flurry of instructions to me and my mother: whether we had suffered hardship in the war, whether I would be considered old enough, whether we had ever had whichever infection was the *maladie de jour*. We were given so many new instructions that my mother stopped listening. But I felt as if all of his anxiety was transferred to me. Somehow, if we didn't pass it would all be my fault. The more my mother was able to remove herself from whatever was going on, the more I seemed to take up the role of the second adult. This persistent sense of being in charge of protecting everyone was to manifest itself for many years in my dreams. My recurring dream had me searching for ways to keep my husband and children safe from the Nazis who were chasing us. I would seek out routes through people's gardens, empty attics and other hideaways, in order to evade the enemy. One dream had me revisit the same apartment building night after night in order to find the best path. Sometimes I would wake up crying out, but usually I would find myself in bed whimpering. These were also the types of dreams that you couldn't leave even if you knew that you were dreaming: it would all begin again as soon as you fell asleep. I stopped having these dreams gradually, and altogether after my father died.

It wasn't until my children were adults and pointed out to me just how often I would overreact in some situation that didn't warrant excessive concern that I at least became aware of this anxiety. My youngest son would at times remind me that

whatever that I was rushing towards or away from was not the last boat out of Hitler's Europe. But in truth it often felt as if it were. And somehow I was responsible for everyone's safety.

Being in Hamburg was otherwise rather amusing. There were other children my age and there were also infants who had been born after the war. I remember being drawn to the babies, because they, like the elderly, were altogether new to me. There was a distinct lack of privacy, but this was one population that was inured to carrying out private acts in public places.

The S.S. General Sturgiss: A Child At Last

When we were finally to leave Germany, it was on a troop ship, the S.S. General Sturgiss, which was in no way modified for civilian passengers, for families with children. Thus the men and women were segregated for the two-week journey, although those of us who were able would eventually meet in a common dining area for meals. After the second day at sea, not many presented themselves for the questionable cuisine, although the churning waters contributed more to their absence than the quality of the food. For me, this particular journey was an adventure. I made a friend, a girl of my own age who would also live in Montreal, although at this point neither my parents nor I knew where we were going to reside. Ontario and Quebec, which is to say, Toronto and Montreal, were the places of choice, because they were urban centers and my father did not care for small towns. No one seemed interested in the provinces further to the southwest, which were the ones that in fact were looking to increase their population. My father was hesitant about the province of Quebec because it would mean that I would also need to learn French.

It seems difficult to imagine what hopes and threats this new destination held for my parents. For my father, who hadn't worked as an employee since his apprenticeship, the change would be the greatest. Yet, to the best of my knowledge, he never discussed it and certainly never complained. On the ship, he seemed to have recovered some of his entrepreneurial skill and even managed to procure an orange for me from one of the sailors. Oranges were to my father the equivalent of Jewish chicken soup, the potential cure for whatever ailed a person. The odour of that orange being peeled has never been equalled; I capture it now and then and hug it to myself.

My adventure on the ship was an unsupervised one for the first five days or so. Although my father was well, my mother was not proving to be much of a sailor. By the end of the first week neither was I. But while I still resisted the swells of a very rough sea, I ran around with my new friends, exploring every corner of the vessel, telling my poor seasick mother and anyone who cared to listen what was being served in the kitchen and being a general nuisance. At last, I was behaving like a kid and loving it. Although our quarters were not large or luxurious, even a dilapidated boat was better than the large dormitory we had only recently vacated. My father was still preoccupied with the future, but for a brief period, the worries were on other people's shoulders than mine. Most of the passengers were too ill to bother thinking about what lay ahead. In fact they appeared quite prepared to give up any thoughts of life after this sea voyage if they were delivered from their misery. Eventually we had a glimpse of England, which must have been reassuring to those who doubted that land still existed, and much later we were to sight what I think must have been Prince Edward Island. The new world was just ahead, and gradually people who had disappeared below deck from the beginning of the trip began to reappear. It was much less fun having them around, attempting once more to take charge, but it was nice to see my mother feeling well enough to brush her hair, put on a fresh dress and let me take her by the hand and show her around. Briefly, I was the ultimate authority on what there was to know about the S.S. General Sturgiss, a ship that we heard was retired shortly after our voyage. It should be said here that at no time did my mother point out to my father that had we used the visas that were sent by her family, we would have benefited from a much more elegant passage. Instead we arrived in Canada as true refugees, a description I was to learn to dislike.

It surprises me some times what I don't remember. In 1949 we found ourselves in Montreal, largely because friends of the family, who had left Europe after the First World War, had arrived at our port of entry to persuade my parents that they needed to make their lives where they had landslides (those people who came from the same town or region). My parents' friends, the Schaffers, almost got to Halifax from Montreal ahead of us, with a welcome that was to remain as warm throughout the years. Abie Schaffer was a tall, elegant man who I was to learn resembled the actor Clark Gable, a fact of which he was quite aware. His wife, also called Bella, had been

my Aunt Celia's best friend, and her sister and my mother had been equally close. The only survivor from either family was the young man who had caught me when I fell off the train all those years ago. They were determined that we come to Montreal, and Abie, who was a designer of men's clothing, had already asked the people he worked for to hire my father. There seemed little my parents could add. My mother was delighted to find herself with friends. Since my father didn't have a counter-proposal, we were destined for Montreal.

My parents asked little of me it seems; my loyalty to them was fierce. They were not pretentious people, but they were proud. These established Canadian émigrés, these landslites, who with some exceptions had left their small towns at a very young age without education or means, had prospered. What these friends failed or refused to grasp was that in the intervening years my parents had continued their education, and, having never been poor, were less so by the time that the war started. Yet we were like trophies, salvaged from the devastation, expected to abide by an understanding of Europe that these people had left behind before they were fully grown. The outpouring of generosity must be acknowledged, the kindness, the wish to make it better. However, it succeeded in further masking the necessary expression of who and what we had become. Everyone seemed to agree that the war was best forgotten. There was a good life available for those with talents who were willing to work. And my parents were.

Thus we colluded and put the unimaginable behind us. Although my parents had been wonderful role models when it came to generosity, affection and permissiveness, my success was important to them. However, my father, especially, would panic whenever I attempted anything that he deemed dangerous, which was almost everything. Skating, skiing, riding a bike, each in turn was discouraged as being likely to inflict instant bodily harm. It was in the things that concerned me that I would become agitated, the images that touched on a past that I had shut away as if it had all happened to someone else.

Refugees In The Land Of Promise

It always seemed unimaginable to me that any Jewish survivors would choose to remain in Europe, as many did. I learned eventually that in doing so they avoided in

most cases the status of being refugees, an identity that I would not recommend. The issue was not whether you wanted any of the benefits accruing to refugees. If you came to Canada after the war, you were considered a refugee. You were often expected to be satisfied with housing that my parents considered to be the next best thing to a slum, usually in areas that immigrants had tended to settle, and still do. Therefore, in many cities, and this is true of Montreal, there were streets that over the years have provided housing for every major migration of people who had no means. As these groups, who are usually hard working and ambitious, accumulate some wealth, they move on and are replaced by the next newcomers. My father, without knowing the city, instinctively knew where he didn't want to live. In some ways my parents were further impeded by friends who had arrived in Montreal in their youth with very limited means, and expected us to go through the same trials that they did. Another issue about being refugees is that you often found yourself in a paradoxical position. If you chose to take advantage of what was on offer from the charitable organisations that were willing to be of help to those who needed them, you were often considered as taking advantage — after all, who was there to help the pre-war immigrants? If on the other hand, like our family, you wanted nothing from anyone and preferred to make your own way, you were not behaving within the expectations of being a greener (the word green was used pejoratively to describe newcomers); you were putting on airs. This was also true if you were ambitious, dressed well (à la Leon Zworn), did not eat canned foods but insisted on fresh produce prepared with style (à la Eva Zworn), worked hard and expected your children, or child, to perform accordingly. Years later, I would hear someone speak of a boy he had attended the school with, who had excelled academically, saying 'how were we to know he was smart, he was just this kid who came from Europe and could hardly speak English'. It made sense for someone like myself, who worked hard at losing the telltale accent, to 'forget'. The problem with that type of forgetting is that you lose big pieces of yourself in the process, because it's a game one continues to play until one is no longer aware how it began.

My first memory of Montreal was the total whiteness. We had snow in Germany but nothing like this glacial city, with its outside staircases which were in fact as hazardous as they looked. My parents and I were immediately taken shopping for boots and hats, because the Montreal cold is to be taken seriously. Walking, or

sliding, because one had to learn how to manoeuvre on the icy sidewalks, along the street was an adventure. At the same time, it was extraordinary to see stores brimming over with fruit and vegetables and clothes and sweets and a number of objects I didn't know existed.

I remember a girl in my class once writing that newcomers to Canada expected the sidewalks to be made of gold. As absurd as that may have been, we certainly didn't expect sidewalks that were made of ice. But the plenitude was overwhelming and I didn't know where to look first. I stared open mouthed at this wondrous cornucopia. The older Bella gently prodded me along before I broke my neck looking back. The Schaffers had a son, and a daughter my age, and all of them took us into their family as if we had always belonged there.

Looking back, I realize how little discussion there was of the war and our experience of it. Clearly, this may have been a gesture of kindness, an effort to protect us from our own memories. In retrospect, how could they not have talked about it — they who had lost everyone near and dear to them who had stayed behind. The silence, which was to protect both them and us, was finally a favour to neither. Two years ago, I had dinner with the Schaffer son and discovered that he had researched Obertin on the internet in an effort to learn more about his parents' history, which was withheld from him in the same way that I have kept my story from my children in a spurious effort to spare them —or more likely myself.

My parents rarely saw any of the people we had known either in the camps or in Hamburg. We visited one of the families, only to discover several months later that the father of the family, a man in his late thirties, had committed suicide. My questions about his death and what would happen to his young children went unanswered.

Shortly after our arrival to Montreal, an uncle of my father's arrived to see what was left of the family, us. My father had barely known of his existence but welcomed him as one of the few relatives he had left. The uncle insisted that we take a professional photo with him, and once more we began to feel like exhibits in a panorama that we were beginning to understand and like less and less.

Family

In December of 1949 my mother's family were to invite us to visit them in New York and that experience would be a major influence in my life. The driving force for the visit was my mother's cousin's husband, Willie, and how fortunate we were to have known him. The two weeks were to be filled with visits to all of my mother's relatives, including my grandmother's sister, a beautiful elegant old woman whose children and grandchildren treated her like the queen she could have been. She grasped my mother's hand the entire evening as if through her she could touch all those others whom she would never hold again. Here at last were the tears and the questions about my aunts and uncles that I had been anticipating all this time. Finally, these people wanted to hear not only about how we managed to be alive but how the others had died. It was the closest that we came to a shiva that none of us had ever sat for those we loved. It was wonderful to see my mother surrounded by her family, and much as I felt overwhelmed by the tall buildings that were New York City, I regretted that my mother could not be with these people. The visit was extraordinary in two other ways. The first were the living quarters of my mother's male cousins, not unlike what I had previously seen in the movies. A bar in the living room that also made milk shakes, a view of Manhattan that overlooked the city and everyone dressed as if they were imminently expected at a great dinner or a marvellous celebration. And yet, these were casual people, hospitable and, again, really happy to see us —especially my mother whom they hadn't seen since she was a young girl - and regretful that Celia couldn't be there as well. I hadn't realised how desperate I had been to hear the names that had meant so much to me. Fortunately, everyone assumed that the tears in my eyes were those of the joy, of at last meeting the family that had been trying to get us out of Europe all of those years.

The second important event was meeting my cousins, real relatives that other people had and I never expected to own as well. There were two groups; two boys of my age and three or four that were anywhere between nineteen and in their twenties. The boys of my age were talented singers who had already earned their university tuition performing at bar mitzvahs and weddings. The older cousins totally overwhelmed me. Of the two eldest girls —they were already young women —one was married and the other engaged. The married one was studying medicine and the other was at law

school but was also a talented musician. My favourite cousin was Eli, who was still at university and who, rather than spend New Year's Eve with his friends, elected to take along a very starry eyed young cousin to Times Square to see in the New Year and provide her with an adventure that she was never to forget.

After this trip, for the first time since the end of the war, I felt connected, although briefly, to someone other than my parents. I would never learn how to be a child but I could be clever, like these cousins. I could study and someday do something important like this new family I had discovered. There was a tradition that I could follow, and somehow I felt less alone.

Starting Over

And so my parents started over, and so did I. Starting school two years behind my age group, because of language, I quickly recuperated the necessary grades. Being very tall for my age was another incentive in rushing head. English came quickly and, for me, it had to be without a trace of an accent —not always simple, and the 'th' sound was a killer. However, the need to sound like everyone else was a necessary ingredient. It was only many years later that I would come to appreciate the courtliness of my father's mittel Europa accent. What was difficult was being treated as curiosities.

JIAS had procured living quarters for us as paid guests in someone's home. Housing was impossible even if one had the means. Key money was the bribe that would eventually procure private accommodations but we were still a long way from there. The rooms that were to be our first home were adequate. For the first time since I was two years old, I was to have a room of my own. Unfortunately it was very dark and unheated and after a few imaginary visits from the baba yagas (witches), I was too frightened to fall asleep. This particular house was situated in a cul de sac, with many children. Encumbered by a reluctance to speak and never having learned to play children's games, like skipping rope or something to do with marbles, I became a very interested spectator but rarely a participant.

It fell to my mother to ingratiate herself with the owner of the house, a rather large blowsy woman who spoke loudly and no doubt meant well. Since we were to share,

along with the single bathroom, the kitchen and eating areas, a certain amount of sociability was essential. The three of us were appalled that our 'hosts', the woman, her foster daughter and seemingly invisible husband, ate without a tablecloth or made any effort to have mealtimes as social occasions. They, in turn, no doubt found these greeners (pejorative name for newcomers) pretentious with our efforts to maintain a certain decorum, to hold on to what little we could that represented who we were.

School was to be another adventure. I was not the first refugee child to attend this neighbourhood school, and they made every effort to accommodate me. Unfortunately for me, my predecessors all spoke Yiddish, the language in which some of the children and teachers tried to be of help. I'm not certain whether it was frustration or ambition that drove me but I refused to speak to anyone for two weeks. I carried a small German-English dictionary that my father had probably provided as everyone in the household tired rather quickly of my non-verbal communication. After the allotted period, I actually communicated in a reasonable version of the English language and very soon after lost all traces of a foreign accent. I also abandoned on the process any other language that I had spoken before, particularly a smattering of Polish and Russian. German remains a rather spotty version of what it once was. However, the need to 'fit in', not to be ashamed and not to be lumped indiscriminately with every other refugee, was a primary need. I so desperately wanted to be like everyone else around me, to leave the past behind and enter this new society as a full-fledged, contributing member. A friend from the past (and present) tells me that as a child, newly arrived in Canada, she already knew who she was and, presumably, what she wanted. I had no clear idea at all of what was inside me, what potential I had. I knew what I didn't want —to be thought of as unintelligent, a stranger, different and uninteresting. I think that I wanted approval above all else, but I only wanted it from some people.

We were to live in a series of rooms for two years before we were able to find a place of our own. I'm not certain why my parents moved. For me each change also required a change in schools so that it was not entirely a satisfactory arrangement. However I never raised the subject with my parents, and, at this point, they seemed to assume that I would adjust. Our second lodging was in what used to be called a double parlour: these were two large rooms at the front of the house separated by a large

glass door. My room served also as a sitting room but it was bright and the proximity to my parents was reassuring because I was having nightmares. My father would come into my room when I cried out but usually I would try to stay awake until I was sure that the dream wouldn't come back. Our landlords were an elderly couple of whom I was slightly afraid. I rarely saw him but the woman tended to wear long layered skirts, a scarf even in the house, and had incredibly long hair sprouting out of her chin. She actually had a somewhat witch like appearance with a longish nose that she constantly wiped with the back of her hand. We ate in our own quarters so that, once more, it was my mother who had most of the direct dealings with the other family. I was almost twelve years old and began to invite friends over about which the old woman would complain to my mother. I was pleased when we moved because I tended to stay outside whenever my parents were away so as not to be alone in the house.

Our third move was in some ways the most satisfactory. The family had a son who was two years older than I and attended the same school. He was a curious boy who would spend the rest of his life in psychiatric care but it was rather pleasant having someone close to my age to talk to and with whom to play cards. My father was the persona non grata in this instance because he would come home from work without greeting anyone, which these people, probably within reason, found ungracious. He would then proceed to read the paper or sit impatiently without saying a word. For some reason, we had our meals together with them, which only aggravated the situation further. The couple were short and rather portly, but were quite different from our previous landlords in that they were better educated, more cultured and, best of all, spoke English beautifully, which was very helpful to me because, other than my teachers, I had limited contact with people whose speech I found worth emulating.

At long last my parents found a very small one-bedroom apartment, with a living-dining room and walk in kitchen. My father was pleased with the street, my mother liked the fact that it had been newly redone and freshly painted, and I could walk to school. We were to live there for less than two years when my father found a two-bedroom apartment with a proper kitchen in Outremont, a good neighbourhood in which to raise his only daughter. Was it more difficult for him to find housing because of his new status in Canada? Who knows? It was not always a question of money,

although my mother expressed concern that if we moved away too quickly, her friends would perceive it as opportunistic. My father, bless him, could not have cared less. At this point, he had two jobs and was soon to receive the recognition as a master tailor that he so richly deserved.

Although our first home on Laurier was minuscule, it was all ours and the street is still lovely to this day. In fact the building itself, located in an area that has been rehabilitated by the French-speaking residents, looks better than ever. I had skipped the fifth grade and was looking forward to the next school year.

Elementary school was where I learned to shine. By this time I had friends but I was essentially the same loner I had learned to be. It wasn't until high school that I began to spend serious time with other people and by the time I started university I was always with, or part of, a crowd. Friends are very important to me and, although I was a late starter, I cherish the few people I care a great deal about and I'm truly fortunate that the caring appears to be reciprocated. I had an advantage when I started school in Montreal in that my parents had taught me mathematics, I could write prose in languages other than English and I was a voracious reader. I enjoyed being singled out when visitors came to the school from the school board and I loved getting report cards full of Es (excellent), except for being talkative in class and barely scraping a Good, accompanied by teacher's comments about my need to modify my discourse during lessons. Unfortunately, I was soon to become bored, start high school without completing elementary school, and never having formed any learning habits, basically to lose my way for almost four years.

In the meantime, there was the Jewish Public Library which was to rescue me for a number of years. The library was at that time across Mount Royal, the mountain around which the city was originally constructed, or so I have always believed. Every day, after school, I would find my way to this quiet haven and take out books such as *War and Peace* or *The Brothers Karamazov* which I read in Yiddish. I loved the smell of the books and the peacefulness of the library, with no one to suggest that I go out to play instead. My mother's friends thought I was quite strange, especially in the summer when I would arrive in the country with thirty library books —special

dispensation for devoted small readers —which my father would trade for me as soon as I was able to complete one.

I hated the “country”, I hated baseball and most of all I hated being picked last because I was such a bad player. Card games I could win at and tended to enjoy more. Getting me to go out of the house ‘to get a little colour’ seemed to be a community pastime and one which I resisted. Everyone had an older sister or brother who were around because it was summer, and who would accompany them to the nearest village, which was our only escape. Although they would almost always take me along, how I wished that I too had an older sibling to boss me around and take care of me. I began to resent my parents for dragging me to this horrible place, for not providing me with an older somebody, for my long braids, for my freckles and most of all for my boredom. I wished that I had been born in Montreal, that we had a car of our own and that my mother would find herself more sophisticated friends who did something other than play cards. In this last, my father and I concurred. And then I would feel guilty because I really loved my parents and recognised that they worked hard to provide me with a better life.

Montreal: I Have A Hometown

For the rest of my life, whenever I’m asked where I’m from, I declare with pride that I’m from Montreal. It is unusual for any further enquiry as to whether I was born there — usually it is assumed — but it is only in recent years that I don’t finesse the non-answer. Truth is, the post-war person that I was to become was and remains a Montrealer. The city was my haven; it offered safety that I didn’t realise that I was lacking. Montreal may have even at that time been perceived as the French-speaking capital of the new world and the Paris of North America, but for my mother it was a place that sold real bread, which is to say European. However, the old world similarities were meaningless to me. This was a new world which I could explore and I never remember the need to compare it to what came before; that was temporary, and receded further into the past with each new discovery. The city had wonderful outdoor staircases that, for a location that was covered in ice and snow for the better part of the year, were the most impractical bit of architecture imaginable. Yet even those contributed to the sense of agora, a visible community carrying on the task of living. The smells were new: smoked meat and French fries permeated the air as one

passed Ben's or some other emporium of delectable offerings. Kik Cola was our Coke and every Sunday my parents and I would celebrate this new Sabbath by lunching on all of the above. For a kid who had been carrying large pitchers of German beer home in the DP camp and was allowed to taste it as a reward, this new sweet stuff was much more to my liking. However, my tendency to compare the local beer to what I had been drinking in Germany was swiftly discouraged by my mother as yet one more activity that I was to retire forthwith.

Montreal gave a false impression of congruence. The city was divided into what has been called the "two solitudes", the English and the French. However, this was only the beginning. The school system was further separated along religious lines, Catholic and Protestant, the latter comprising everyone else including us Jews. The English community at the time was a broad entity, the more established having Scottish roots and having little to do with the majority of the Jewish community. Nevertheless, because of linguistic preference, it also served loosely as a catchall of sorts for immigrants and other less than prosperous inhabitants. The English lived on the western part of the island that was Montreal, many of the wealthier in Westmount. Like the French, they were to be found all over the city, but the east of Montreal was thought of as being more French, which in fact it was to become. The post-war immigrants, among others, could be found largely in the middle and toward the east. This area had a life, energy and rituals all of its own, and many were connected to Jewish holidays. One of the experiences that I have missed the most in my life away from the city was the smell of Friday before sundown and the major Jewish holidays as people rushed to buy the necessary challahs (braided egg bread) and other foods before closing time.

The elementary schools that I was to attend almost exclusively served Jewish students. My sense of it is that the larger number of children of Jewish immigrant families attended the private parochial schools, which, no doubt, excused tuition at least in part for the newcomers. My father insisted on the public school system. The only explanation he gave was the usual — I would have a reduced curriculum to deal with and therefore less pressure. My mother didn't challenge this decision. In later years, when my own children were to begin their education in these very same religious schools from which I had been excluded, her only additional clarification

was that perhaps I needed more time to accustom myself to the idea of being Jewish. In retrospect, I believe this to have been a poor choice in that it isolated me even further from the past and other children with similar wartime experience. My mother was also at the time very much influenced by her landslites all of whom sent their children to local schools.

In spite of some rather arbitrary decisions in the early years, I look back to growing up in Montreal as my good fortune. I was never caught in a middle class cookie cutter environment. My parents were still constructing their lives and had few preconceived notions as to how I should organise mine. The schools I went to had enough students like myself; young people with wishes to accomplish something worthwhile. I felt free.

Another important element that was to differentiate the Canadian experience was that there was no 'melting pot' mentality guiding our transition into any given direction. We were not Polish Jews or German Jews or Russian Jews. We were Jews who had made the choice to speak English and thus aligned ourselves with one part of the population. Other than that we were free to construct, or reconstruct, our lives. There were constraints that I didn't understand as a child. Happily, no one attempted to point them out to me.

Montreal provided the roots that I longed for and which, paradoxically, I was never to offer my own children. These roots connected me to my adopted community and helped me to understand, if not necessarily who I was, at least how I wanted to be. But more than that, they afforded me a history that was not about death and survival. Although the Montreal English-speaking community has decreased because of the politics of the province, I can still return and recognise in a restaurant or on the street, in spite of the greying hair and other ageing encumbrances, a face from grade three or someone I knew in high school.

Is Guilt A Judeo/Christian Disease?

It now seems to me that my parents adapted to the new culture on a 'need to know' basis. They accumulated certain information and assumed the rest, until the assumption that they held proved to be incorrect. I have no idea why they were never

informed about health insurance, because life insurance salesmen appeared at our door before we even had one to close. However, inevitably one of us was going to require hospitalisation and it turned out to be me.

The pain I had in my side was treated at home by my mother by having me dance around the room to forget that it hurt. This treatment was doomed to failure and my appendix was eventually removed just before it burst. Since my parents had no medical coverage, this intervention was to use up a part of the money that they had set aside for a sunny day. Within the year I was to become ill again and this time my mother sought a medical diagnosis before prescribing distraction. My very young body had been deprived of a number of necessities when we were in hiding and it needed help in relearning how to function. However, whoever was treating my body could not take into account that my sense of accountability about what I had wrought on my hard working parents would hurt more than the many sutures that would eventually be removed. This early experience may have gone far in creating a lifelong concern for the need of national healthcare. What it was not able to erase was my sense of responsibility; not only had I single handily wiped out my parents savings but I had shamed them in the pride that they had of always being there when I was hurt.

Although a sense of guilt has always been one of my specialities, it reached its apex when I was hospitalised twice in the same year for emergency surgery. My parents, without hospital insurance, insisted that I have a private doctor, which ate up a large part of their savings. By the second surgery, the doctor apparently took a nominal fee but although I was in a semi-private ward, my parents couldn't visit me because they hadn't paid the full fee for my room. This was at my insistence because at age twelve I was very aware that my illness was proving to be financially ruinous for them. Nevertheless, they wanted to see me and bring me treats. I can still see my mother looking through the glass in the door and not being allowed to enter. The parents of the other children attempted to make it up to me by sitting with me and bringing me comic books, but I would smile as long as I thought that my mother might be at the other side of the door, and cry as soon as I was told that she had left.

I worried about my parents, and most of all, in the early years, I was concerned for my father. He never complained but he seemed to have so little life outside of work. I

desperately wanted to make it up to him somehow, for all of those losses he had suffered, those ambitions he appeared to have put aside in order to provide for my mother and me. He seemed remote to me, as if he had entered into a world of thought that he had no one to share with. Sadly, he never appeared to take me seriously. I was a girl and as such should have no interest in the state of the world or any other heady matters that were the province of men. My father could have inspired and ignited the feminist movement all by himself. He took me to the movies, the theatre and occasional concerts, but he never talked to me. He was vehemently opposed to my going to university. I realised now as I did then that he feared that further studies would make me potentially more independent and eventually take me away from him. Which it did. Years later, when he was very ill and living with us in Brussels, medication would often bring about mood changes. He might be alternatively violent, disoriented, depressed or all three. I was constantly working with his physicians and talking with colleagues and friends about how to adjust the drugs he took in order to make him more comfortable. Yet each time he was offered a new prescription he would explain very reasonably to the doctor, who was there as a personal favour to me, that he couldn't possibly take a new pill without first discussing it with his son-in-law. My husband took this, along with some of my father's other foibles, with good humour and affection, although I suspect that at times it embarrassed him on my behalf.

My mother structured a life for herself that she was not to change for more than twenty years. Each Saturday she played cards with the landlady. The locale would alternate each week and followed a similar pattern. Cards followed by a very late meal of potatoes, herring and other such indigestible fare. My father and I wondered about how my discriminating mother could possibly serve up such a meal, and at that hour, but my mother was not one to challenge the group. If that's what they ate, that's what she served. My father would accompany her but usually leave after the game was well underway. He would ask her from time to time to go to the movies instead but she would never give up her Saturday night ritual. The problem for me was when they played at our house on Laurier. Since I slept on the hide-away bed in the living room, I would stay in my parent's room until everyone left. However, since the back of their door also served as a clothes cupboard, the door would remain partially open and I would be assailed by the noise and odours well into the night. It seems unfair

now how I resented my mother's pleasure but it troubled me that she made no effort to meet other people and take an interest in something other than the inevitable cards. She was eventually to do just that but by then the Multiple Sclerosis that was to slowly kill her had already begun its insidious invasion of her body. My mother supported my decision to continue my education but there was no one available to talk with about what I might study. In my parents' circle of friends at that time, it was only the boys who went to college. The message that was clearly conveyed was that university was less about learning and more about future work. I visited hospitals to understand what physio- and occupational therapists did as well other professions allied to medicine. With very few Jewish students admitted to medical school under a rigid quota, the notion of medical school was not even a passing thought. Also, my undergraduate grades would not have made that possible. I started university at age 17, four and a half years after coming to Canada, and found my first two years at university a confusing combination of instruction from my parents that I needed to have a specific goal and a natural curiosity of wanting to learn. And so I interviewed personnel directors who were surprised to see a high school student who was planning to attend university discuss a future career. Since I had clearer ideas about what it was that I didn't want to do in the future, I found myself grasping at straws.

For someone who was young in years, it seems to me now that I was alternatively excessively worried and ambivalent about my future. Which was curious, because I never believed that there was a future. Although I would lie in bed at age eleven worrying about what was then Red China invading Canada and the United States: even as children, we Canadians have always understood that we might stand and fall with our powerful neighbour of whose policies we didn't necessarily approve. I wasn't altogether convinced that there would be a tomorrow. Perhaps the most serious issue that the war had left me with was the refusal to plan, to save, and to even think about consequences. In retrospect, I desperately wanted to imagine a future, and in fact I behaved as if tomorrow was a natural sequence but deep inside me I never believed it. When I had children I was often preoccupied with thoughts about how I would save them if the horrors of the last war should befall us. How I would keep them alive. How I would keep them well. I always felt that they had been entrusted to me as a promise of the future, three extraordinary little boys whom I had to protect at all costs. I desperately wanted them to live in a better world than I had first known but

also worried that I wasn't preparing them for all eventualities. At the same time I had to believe that what had happened to me was not the norm and I didn't want to infect them with my concerns and my memories. With the perspective of the present, I realize that over the years I could have explained more. Because in withholding my story, it was inevitable that I would also withhold parts of myself. Looking back, I had a difficult time growing up because, in some ways, I had to invent myself as someone who had not been touched by the horrors to which I had born witness, and which, even as I write, I am trying to avoid describing.

My Mother's Illness

My mother died in her early sixties after fifteen years of illness and eventual paralysis. She was the first person in her family to be buried in a grave. While everyone spoke of her premature death, I marvelled at the fact that I could visit her, bring flowers and mourn her in the way most people are accustomed to grieve for their dead. But we never had.

It always amazed me that, although she accepted her illness as being almost inevitable, a form of penalty for having outlived the others, she wanted to stay alive, in circumstances where many of us would have preferred death. I think that had a great deal to do with her grandchildren, the prize that Hitler couldn't seize. My mother was a grandmother at forty-eight and proud of it. Where she always had energy and spunk, the act of relinquishing herself to the illness appeared to be out of character unless one can accept the notion that each of us has a boundary, a limit beyond which we cannot urge ourselves. My mother may have felt that she had done enough. Sadly, I never made any attempt to ask her about this and other things, although she may have been ready to speak of it. My only excuse is that I was a neophyte therapist, very careful not to intrude. The other, perhaps more accurate, reason is that my mother was unpredictable and at times very punishing in her reactions. And there were times that she resented me, and especially my father on whom she was totally dependent. Some occasions when, even with limited speech, she would tell me that she needed a mother rather than a daughter, someone to nurture her, as I was clearly not able to do. And at other times she was genuinely glad to see me, although she never lost her light touch. When I appeared in her room with a cast on my nose, she informed me that it was an improvement on my usual appearance. I

was in no danger of ever being vain. My mother would also assure me that I should learn to depend on my brain because I was not as well served by my looks. It wasn't until years later that I discovered that I had been pretty. She was gentler with my children than she had been with me and gloried in everything they did. Giving her grandchildren was probably my singular gift to her. And they were fortunate to have her, even for the few years that she was well. My middle son tells of how when he was little and my mother was no longer able to walk, he asked her for hot chocolate with whipping cream. Since she refused to have a wheel chair in the house and could no longer use a walker or cane, getting from the bedroom to the kitchen presented a challenge. So she crawled on all fours — apparently it was a game for both of them — and made the hot chocolate and the whipping cream.

There were times when I feared that my father would not survive my mother's illness. She would call him constantly, without regard as to whether he was eating, working or even on occasion trying to rest. Although she had a nurse during weekdays, she thought nothing of asking him to close his business and come home. All our attempts to explain to them both that this was untenable fell on inattentive ears. In the early years, my father refused to make any changes in the house to accommodate growing handicap. He would crossly tell us that she would soon recover. In a sense they both colluded in their interdependence, and shut me, and everyone else, out. I've often felt great remorse that I had not done more for my mother, that I hadn't lavished the care on her that I did on my father during his illness. I realize at the same time that my father was in charge during her sickness, and that he did not accept interventions in any form. However, being the proficient nurturer of guilt that I am, there are numerous incidents that I can recall, during a sleepless night, when I could have been there more for her.

I always thought of my mother as typifying a certain survivor who had not really survived, although they tried to go through the motions of being and feeling. The only exceptions were her grandchildren. I always understood that my father and I were poor substitutes for what she had lost. She tried but it was as if all of the really important things had already happened. When she learned of Cousin Willie's death, a man she genuinely cared for, she casually invited friends to play cards, because they had planned to play cards that Friday evening. When her great friend, Abie Schaffer

died, she was moved but there were few tears, and there were rarely any for other people who had been her friends or acquaintances. When I asked her about it, she would look at me intensely but never reply. It was only years later, when she herself was very ill, that she began to show emotions — of sadness as well as love. Some of the latter were even directed at me.

I think that my mother's grief overwhelmed her ability to mourn. There was simply too much. She rarely spoke of her sisters, unless she was telling a story. And the stories themselves in their humour permitted her not to give recognition to her vulnerability, before and in the present.

We spoke very little of her illness or her fears as I have already mentioned. We never spoke of her premature death, which was inevitable. It was as if lying in bed, attached to a catheter, unable to scratch her nose or touch her face, as if everything that was happening to her, was somehow normal. I never questioned for all of the reasons that I have cited but most important, because we had lost the ability to articulate that which hurt. Or perhaps we had never had it.

My mother died too young and took with her a part of my history that I still hadn't understood. I doubt that I ever told her how much I loved her, how grateful I was to her for all that she had done and been for me. I miss her very much.

Everyone's Zadie

My father was only forty-nine years old when my eldest son was born and would have preferred to be called Leon or something less ageing than Zadie. It was ironic that he became 'Zadie' even to some of my sons' close friends who did not at first realize that this was the Jewish word for grandfather. When my mother was too ill to travel with friends, we began to spend summer holidays together. My father would rent a house in Cape Cod and we would pile into two cars and drive from Montreal. In the days before car air conditioners and with two and then three little boys, what could have been a trying journey was often relieved by my mother's pleasure of being out of the house and the contentment of having the family together, in one place. Picnic lunch was a way of life for my parents — this was definitely not an army that ever travelled anywhere on an empty stomach. The arrangement suited all of us: My

children had their grandparents, my parents had their grandchildren and my husband and I had a modicum of freedom.

For both my father and my mother their grandchildren were their reward for survival; proof that Hitler didn't succeed. Even after we moved to Europe, my parents, amazingly my mother travelled to Brussels for two of our sons' Bar Mitzvahs. Totally paralysed, she would be there for the service but not for dinner. How little I appreciated their effort, especially hers, to be there for my children. Although I wanted, needed, to have them there, I don't think that I ever told them, especially her, that any of us ever said, how much it meant that she came. I was very efficient in providing nursing care and other necessities but parsimonious with my presence. I had so looked forward to her coming, to showing her our beautiful garden — my mother had been an energetic gardener — and our wonderful house. I had so little understanding, until I myself became ill, how hard it is to focus outwardly when you're in pain, how long term chronic illness serves to disconnect you from the world of the healthy. We encouraged her to come out in her wheelchair, to sit among the flowers, but it was all too much and much too late. My mother died a week after returning from Brussels, a month after the Bar Mitzvah of my second son. Sadly she missed the Bar Mitzvah of our youngest but it wasn't for want of trying.

My father became re-acquainted with the Europe that he never expected to see again. I had wondered what coming back to Europe would be like for him but my father was rarely predictable in his reactions. He appeared to show little interest in the changes that had taken place in countries that he knew, particularly Germany and Austria. When we visited Gaberseel on the way back from a skiing trip, he seemed to show little emotion and even less curiosity. When the Iron Curtain was no more and I would make mention of going back to Poland or the Ukraine, he'd nod and say that perhaps we might do that some other time. He never explained and I, once again, never asked. Although he may have given an explanation to one of the boys, he probably felt that it was too much to trouble me with such sombre reflections. In his gentlemanly way, my father remained a confirmed member of the testosterone club. During my mother's shiva (the seven days of observance for someone who died), he remarked that it was an unusual pleasure to spend so much time with me, that I wasn't doing or running for once, but in fact we spoke very little. I think he liked to have me there when visitors

came to pay their respects, especially those that I hadn't met before, but he was not prepared to discuss my mother. Several years later, I was to write to him, asking him please to stop his negative comments about her, which I found very disturbing; I said that I appreciated his anger but that I needed to mourn her in my own way. I never mailed the letter, but left it on my desk. Privacy was a language my father didn't speak and so he read it. The observations were toned down after that.

What truly infuriated me about my father was his tendency to rewrite history. Although I was very young during and immediately after the war, I happen to possess a very retentive memory. Because so much of what happened to me was somewhat unusual, and because my responses were not informed by customary learning, I have retained entire sequences as if I had been an observer rather than a participant. My father would at times redesign my experiences to fit an image that he found more reassuring, not unlike the scripts he rewrote to assure a happy ending. Since I had firmly closed the door on my own recollections years before and had only reviewed them in the occasional discussions with my mother, I resented his tampering. So this altercation also became contentious, one of many that we were to have, with my role often being that of the cross child. I was much too important to him, and in his attempts to protect me, he planted seeds of doubts about myself and the future which I feared

A Child Of Immigrants

My ongoing argument with my father was in part an old one, and had to do with the change that I saw in him after we moved to Montreal. As energetic and hard driving as ever, he suddenly appeared to have developed a fear of, perhaps even worse in my eyes, a respect for, all purported authority, a deference I didn't think had been there before. Doctors, among others, were prestigious figures he didn't question, and when he became ill sometime in his eighty-first year, he accepted his doctor's easier option of 'wait and see'. I called him one Sunday — it was early morning for him — to discover that he felt unwell. While in the shower, he experienced what sounded to me as a sub-clinical stroke. He seemed shaken and afraid, and when he saw the doctor the next day, he was told that he probably needed a MRI but that there was a two-month waiting period for an appointment. When I challenged this assumption, as I did to

question many of the experts in whom he put his trust, I was confronted with the usual “that’s the way it is”. We ere living in Brussels again, and I left for Montreal the following week, having scheduled all of the necessary tests by telephone and having arranged for him to see the essential medical specialists, he went along quite happily, still making excuses for the failure of his maven (expert) to provide the needed care. But the challenging, inventive, never–take-the-first-no-for an answer person that had been my father had gradually disappeared long before that.

How does one gracefully manage the gradual shift in relations between parent and adult child? Why did I expect my father to be what he had been before? I found myself double-guessing many of the decisions that he had made before and even being angry at times that we hadn’t left Europe before the war started. Primarily though I was angered by his tendency to use me, my existence, as the explanation for many decisions, including my mother’s abortion. ‘We need all of our resources for the child that we already have’, he had told my mother; she had reported that remark to me when she told me of her abortion. It seemed to me that once more I was responsible for something that was beyond my ability to understand. The decision deprived my mother of a child whom I assumed at the time that she had wanted, and me of a sibling that I longed for.

What complicated the relationship further was our inability to speak openly, whether it was about his fear or my frustration. He operated under the widely held premise that, as the parent, he should know better. When I pointed out to him that there were periods in both our lives when no one knew what decisions to make, his answer triggered my ever-present guilt response that somehow suggested that I was blaming him for the war in its entirety. Our differences were all post-war — his fear for me and exaggerated respect for assumed authority, and my petulant argument that I took no instruction from that authority. What was worse was that I couldn’t defend myself against his fears. This would normally be a common disagreement between a parent and an adult child, if the meaning where not so loaded with personal history. What I was never able to take into account until his death was that he might have been defending himself for somehow having failed me.

It saddens me to think of how much time he spent alone, how many operas and concerts he attended by himself. His life with us, during holidays and our visits, I now see as an intervention into what I know to have been his loneliness. And yet he never complained. At no time did he speak of how much our moving away must have hurt him. He enjoyed being with people but seemed destined to spend much time by himself. Loneliness is a legacy that I shared with my father in spite of many friends and a very busy life. There was always, there is always, an empty space. I suspect that this was also true for him and perhaps other people like ourselves who had somehow lost not only important context markers but also the people with whom we should have shared them. My father especially liked being with us; family was all. He didn't always join our noisy conversations but would often sit and smile or even laugh to himself, at some private reminiscence. We rarely enjoyed the jokes he shared with us as much as he did, because he would laugh throughout the telling, making it difficult for us to hear or understand.

A Life Of Émigrés

My husband flew to Montreal to take what was to be this last trip from Canada with my father. They stayed in my father's house, where he had lived these past thirty-eight years, and I am certain that my father also must have realised that this was to be his last night in his own home, the home that he and my mother had bought and lived in, the house from where I had left to be married, where as babies the boys had slept in the garden, the first home that my parents owned since leaving Horodenka. My father left the house the next day without looking back, as he had left other homes so often before. It was clear to me that no matter what comforts we were to offer him, no matter what we did, we could never replace the independence he lost in leaving his own home.

My father was to die of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma approximately two years after the initial diagnosis. He lived with us in Brussels during this period and it was a wonderful gift for me. For the first time in my life I could tell him what a privilege it was to be able to care for him, to do things for him. That rather than a bother, it was a joy to be able to reciprocate even in a small way for what he had always done for us. Where I had hesitated to let my father get too close to me when he was well, because

he never fully understood a boundary and tried to control me through criticism, finally I was able to do show my caring openly.

My father died in his own bed, as he had wanted to. In the weeks before, he showed confusion; he was baffled when he thought that a picture of himself was that of a long-dead brother, and cried when, in asking about his own mother, my husband told him that she had died. These were the first tears, to the best of my knowledge, that my father had shed for members of his own family. We sat around his bed after he died, reluctant to leave him, and tucked in his feet in case he might feel cold—on a hot day in May. We called our sons from his room and touched and patted him as we told them that their Zadie had died. Even in death, we remained this curiously displaced family. My father was to be buried next to my mother in Montreal. Jewish law requires a very quick burial, whereas Belgian laws obliges one to go through a set of legal manoeuvres which basically direct people to die in hospitals if they plan to be interred. My father was to remain at home until the next day, watched over by two pretty Catholic nurses who prayed all night at his side and a daughter who marvelled at this non-denominational send-off. He would have approved.

Alone

What in our lives prepares us for the profound aloneness of being the only one left from one's childhood? No brothers, no sisters, no uncles, no aunts. No parents who remember it all — the good and the bad.

It is difficult to lose one's second parent, perhaps more so when one is an only child. We bury with them a part of ourselves that no one knows, or necessarily cares about. Who will now tell the stories that have embarrassed us for many years but secretly still make us smile? When my father's coffin was finally placed next to my mother's under the double stone, I kept thinking that I should be there also, with them. It was where I belonged. They were the only ones who understood my story and where I had come from, who knew my unshed tears. As a young child I had replaced my language of origin, also as part of concealment, in an attempt to adapt —unknowingly — to a set of linguistic conventions that is necessary in order to speak the language like 'everyone else'. This was not my first attempt at speaking a foreign language. But it was the first time that the new language was supposed to supersede, to replace all

previous learning in order to create the new persona that I wanted to be. With my father's death, I suddenly became aware that I was alone with the memories of who I had been.¹⁰ My parents appeared to accept my self-imposed metamorphosis as they struggled with their own adaptation. They never called me by my childhood names (which I now miss) because I no doubt would have rejected the very thing that I suddenly longed for. As if the early Bella had suddenly died — and having been deprived of the opportunity to grow up with her, I was bereft, suddenly wondering who she could have, might have, been. My American husband could listen but never visualize what it had really been like, and I have little experience of conveying what it feels like to sometimes feel so empty inside, as if all of the important relationships had already been — a sense that those who had loved me, knew me best had all died. My children knew something of my life from my father, but had been raised, intentionally, with an agenda of disassociation from my past. They would mourn the grandfather they loved in a normal way. And I was abruptly left to also mourn the self that would now be lost forever. It is a lonely experience to be the sole occupant of a shiva chair. (During this mourning ritual, immediate family – not grandchildren – sit on low chairs.)

Eight years after his death, my grief for my father is very much with me but more in the missing than grieving. I still want to reach for the phone to ask how he is and convey the latest news. Although my grandson bears his name, I can't help the sorrow that I feel when I realize that my father will never see either him or his sister, and marvel that his very own grandson, Mark, the young man who was named after my father's father, is himself the father of these miraculous children. 'Imagine that I made it to see this', he would have said. My father always associated being alive with 'making it', and I sometimes perceived more pride than sorrow from this very kind man when he referred to contemporaries who 'hadn't made it'. Not to have lived to see his grandson as a father and the babies that he and his wife produced would have been judged as a major failure in "not making it".

My grieving has been prolonged in part I believe because it is, finally, mourning for all of those others for whom I never wept. I still had my father when my mother died, I could hold on a little longer to all those times that we had shared, the sad, the unimaginable, the triumphant and the amusing. But suddenly I am historically alone.

The bereavement since has been for all of those who I had allowed to leave without telling their story, because to tell their story I would have to tell mine and that was too hard, too dangerous. As my father would have said “What do you need it for?” But I do need it, as do all of my descendants, because these were their dead as well, their loss has in some ways been greater than mine because I at least had known some these predecessors that were our family and can be proud of whom and where I come from.

I am not alone in mourning my father; I know that my husband and children also miss him. I think that the difference lies in the connection that one’s parents provide as a bridge to the past. In the case of people like myself, our history began in a different language and in a different place, one that is now foreign to anyone in my present life. Emotional isolation is a weight that one carries in one’s heart. I made no preparation to be able to share the past.

Engaging Memory

After our fortieth wedding anniversary which my husband and I celebrated — where else? — in Montreal with our family and friends, I took some of the flowers to the cemetery to share with my parents and sat, for the first time, on the grass in front of their graves to tell them about the party, the children and their great grand-children who look at their pictures and know that they are their Daddy’s Bubbie and Zadie. It amazes me that I am speaking English to them, which I have done from the first year of our arrival in Canada. Somehow the very fact that we are an English-speaking family suddenly upsets me because it isolates me even more from the past. Would my children understand if I were to tell them that it still surprises me at times to realise that I live in English, a language that momentarily sounds foreign to my ears. I can hardly address my parents in my choppy German, which would at least connect me to them and to the past. My Yiddish used to make them laugh and suddenly I wish that I could express myself in the words they used when they spoke to each other. For the first time, since our very early years, I call them by the names that I used as a child but never learned to say in English. I tell them that I miss them and love them and that I had always dreaded that day that they would both leave me. Mostly I joke and even dare to ask if these beautiful caskets are more comfortable than our underground bunker. And immediately after referring to that which we have not referred to in all of these years, I feel as if I have transgressed, because, even now, I feel constrained from

evoking the past that we had shared. At no time did we ever sit down and reminisce about what it had been like.

I visit my parents graves, bringing flowers from our anniversary celebration.

“How goes it?” I ask. “See any people out there that we know?” Oops! Another transgression. Instead I tell them where I’m going, and make a joke about my always rushing away. And as I flee, I look back, and through my tears, see a couple standing nearby and smiling at me. I guess in this place it isn’t considered outrageous to sit and speak to your dead. I rush around, leaving more flowers on the graves of my parent’s friends, and stones on their monuments. I know that my mother, especially, would be pleased and that my father would smile and perhaps say *eins ober a rechts* (one but a good one). I drive away from this place where my dear ones stay, and feel alone.

For some reason I have always regarded loneliness in myself as a personal shortcoming, an unfortunate choice that someone like myself, who is skilled in the politics of living, may chose in order preserve my status of separateness. The years after my father’s death have made me aware that loneliness can also be a constant companion that at times defies all efforts of escape from emotional isolation. Since I have never been drawn to being sheltered inside a group, this is hardly the time that I am likely to seek out these relationships. Mostly I feel abandoned with my memories, better prepared at last to have the conversations with my parents that they and I managed to avoid all these years.

Reflections

Are these memories, the loneliness, lapses due to stressful memories, or are they an appropriate personal time of reflection, a ritual for one, to mourn the deaths in a way that I was not mature enough to do before?

Mourning, Trauma and Holocaust Survivors: Is Trauma Inevitable?

Richard McNally in the introduction to his is book titled “Trauma” (2003), writes “howremember trauma is the most diverse issue facing psychologists today. Some experts believe that rape, combat and other horrific experiences are engraved on the mind, never to be forgotten. Others believe that the mind protects itself by banishing

traumatic memories from awareness, making it difficult for many people to remember their worst experiences until many years later”.

He writes further that people remember horrific experiences only too well but that failing to think about it is not the same as not being able to remember it. What I learned at a young age was the necessity to go on with one’s life, and that was always, for me, somehow connected with the responsibility to those who’s life was grasped away against their will.

Survivors are distinguished by resilience and strength to overcome adversity.

Holocaust Survivors were, according to McNally (2003, p2) among the first to be called survivors as opposed to victims. The latter, who although also not to blame for their misfortunes, suggest themselves as a group who were somehow damaged by their perpetrators. (The term ‘survivors’ was then used to describe child of sexual abuse.)

As a professional, I am interested in ‘stressful memories’ but do not believe that they define the individual. I often –but not always- make distinctions between those and trauma, particularly as it pertains to managing one’s life in the face of terrible experiences. In the same way that loneliness is often mistaken for depression — the two may co-exist but are not mutually exclusive — trauma is often confused with anxiety that is the result of stressful memories, explicit and implicit.

Although holocaust survivors had often been diagnosed as suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, it is a diagnosis I have not necessarily concurred with. Nor do I believe that the Holocaust can be compared to a ‘crisis’ — an event that interrupts a normal life process. People who are caught in a crisis situation are usually dealing with the unexpected. The holocaust was not an intervention; it became a way of life. And many survivors refer to this period as a time during which they felt most alive because they used any number of skills to stay alive.

The world makes sense when we have a frame of reference. In a crisis situation the sense making frame of reference disappears. (Rijsman, 2005.) A short-term crisis may cause a disruption without violating the existing frame of reference to the world that

one lives in. In a major crisis, the sense-making frame of reference disappears. The Holocaust may be termed as a major crisis that never went away.

People caught in an ongoing crisis situation or emerging from one, attempt to continue adhering to a dominant frame of reference in order to survive, while they try to make sense of the world around them. For those who lived through the extermination camps and lived in forests and cellars during World War II, even though the dominant frame of reference to which they adhered disappeared, they were still able to create inclusive communities and support each other. In a sense they were able to create for themselves frames of reference that in some manner were in keeping with the values that they adhered to in what they would have called normal times. The question is, if an event continues for years, is it still a 'crisis situation' or do we require other language to describe it? How long can one sustain a siege mentality without gradually, or not so gradually, creating what may be termed a temporary frame of reference — or an indeterminate one — to cope? And if this is the case, how long will these newly acquired strategies last after the horror is over?

My parents, among many others, never appeared traumatized by the war in that the events that they had experienced at no time overwhelmed their coping skills. I have also heard patients speak of times of war as being their most productive because they thought of themselves as imbued with purpose, a state that they had not been able to recapture in what they termed as 'normal' times. If anything, difficult periods may sharpen people's acuity, and they may set themselves goals and developed strategies to achieve them. For any number of survivors, they had achieved the goal of survival and always spoke as if the rest was probably going to prove easier than what they had already conquered. My father behaved as if he could manage whatever the future presented. My mother never tried.

I live with explicit memories of stress. Part of surviving an event that results in the death of so very many — and few have equaled the losses, of Jews as well as non-Jews, that resulted from the Holocaust — is in the aftermath. How do you continue? What do you believe, how do you plan, how must one make sense of the past in order to live the future? As a child, these were not relevant questions because I believed in my adults and they had not failed me. As an adult, I am mindful of the necessity of

creating a boundary that both excludes and includes the past. I have not done that well. The need to incorporate the past seems clearer to me now. The difficulty is in differentiating between the way in which one lived and continues to live with the knowledge that life is not necessarily predictable. I did not burst into Montreal at age nine wholly innocent of my experiences. But how do you learn from a past that in some way shames you and that deep inside you perhaps you still fear?

The Meaning of Untold Stories

We never compared stories about the war. I have no memory of any of my parents' friends or acquaintances in the DP camps, in Lodz or after, discussing their escapes or their experiences. One does not reminisce about wartime events, unless it is to tell an amusing story, usually at one's own expense. This is also true of friends in Europe. If the subject were to come up, and we are confronted by the necessity to respond, we do so, very briefly.

It surprised me when my eldest son, in giving the eulogy at my father's funeral, chose to begin with the war, the fact that my father "had survived one of the most evil periods in human history". It was that, and yet I had never thought of it that way. I wonder why that is, unless the only way to take distance from the experience is to take one's self out of it, to separate oneself from such an event in the effort of perceiving oneself as 'normal'. I am able to cry for strangers, when I see their photographs and know of their fate. It has never occurred to me to cry for myself.

What Price Survival?

There have been times when I have attempted to understand what, if anything, I have learned from the experience of the wholesale slaughter that my parents and I were able to avoid. I have never believed that the Holocaust was a historical anomaly. Survival did not make one a better person. On the contrary, I think back to what I have seen and heard and wonder how these people, both Jews and German, could ever live afterwards in a so-called normal world. What explanations have they given to themselves for their actions, many of which cannot always be categorized as difficult choices that had to be made? How much has the experience of the Shoah dehumanized all of us so that we see pictures of skeletal children in Somalia and are outraged in our words but not in our actions? Who survived? Certainly not the better

people or those with more a profound belief in their religion. It does seem to have had something to do with age. The elderly at times appeared to have neither the opportunity nor the will to continue. Their time may have come a little earlier than they expected, but there was often grace in their acceptance and little effort in attempting to escape. Women were more vulnerable because they often had a child and were sent directly to the crematorium. They were not useful for heavy labor but were available for medical experiments and other forms of torture. As Jews, they had to die because they would carry the next generation, which was against the rules of *Die Endlösung*.

The desire to live, the objective that there was something to live for, certainly played a role, as did the strength to focus on something outside of oneself in order not to give in to the easier way out. For my father, there appears to have been an ever-present relentlessness, an inability to accept a fate determined by others, and the necessary nerve and skill to joust death at every turn. My mother was swept along by my father's resolve and her sisters' insistence. In the same way, lack of purpose caused my Aunt Celia to decide that it wasn't worth the effort. Money most certainly made a difference. The sheer will to survive at any cost is a repetitive theme, but I often ask myself at what price.

As a child, I remember being frightened by some of the survivors that I encountered. There appeared to be a desperation about them that repelled me. It was apparent in the way in which they ate or spoke and in their abrupt manner. Was their loss enough to explain their discomfort, or were there other demons that one can only imagine? My mother discouraged me from further discussion when I asked. She would only say that many people weren't *tzadiks* (holy persons) to start with. I am aware in retrospect about my decision, or need, to dissociate myself from what I had seen and the discomfort I felt in what I perceived to be barbaric behavior. It manifested itself in subtle and less apparent ways that are difficult to describe but I think I must have recalled what I had seen in the ghetto in peripheral vision and with a child's curiosity. My mother and my aunts never criticized the behavior of our putative neighbors, nor did they make any attempt to explain it. What explanations could they have offered that I would have understood? I detect now, along with the generosity of acceptance, a certain *noblesse oblige* that permitted my family to maintain the distance that they

needed, to make a necessary boundary in order to hold on to some idea of who they were and how they had lived. It seems in retrospect that their identity was re-enforced rather than narrowed by being juxtaposed with the unbelievable and the indescribable.

This distance was to guide many of my future decisions about who I wanted to be and the relationships that I would make in my life. Although I had no intention of being absorbed into another family through eventual marriage as a way of ridding myself of the traces of war, I wanted to be Canadian in language, mannerisms, dress, whatever. I had little contact with other children who had been in the war. In fact, few of us appeared to invest much energy in finding someone who had shared our experience. Consciously, I wanted a new beginning; I had no wish to be pursued by memories. When I attended professional discussions that turned to diagnosing patients who had spent the war years in Europe, I at first turned a deaf ear. When the so-called experts reached beyond acceptable levels of credibility, I would take exception but probably not vociferously enough. However, this was only relevant in the few years that I worked in America. In Europe, no one attempts to give all-inclusive, diagnostic explanations to the varied experiences of those who survived the war. In the past number of years, as more Jewish clients found their way to me, I have been privileged to explore with them their sorrows, not all of them related to the Holocaust.

I had been many different people in a very short period of time, few of them a consequence of my personal development. I was my family's child, and then I was not. In the home of my 'foster parents,' I was Basia and I watched them work out their sexual fantasies as if this also was normal. Somewhere in between I was the little blond girl that the German soldiers held in their arms, perhaps a momentary pretence that I was that little child that they had left behind when they went away to war. To the Jewish guards who attempted to take me away, I may have been the child of their own that they were not able to save. I became what I needed to be when the situation required it with the collaboration of others. I chose to recreate myself into a person with a mundane past who happened to have lived in Germany as a child and then in Canada, where, in my story, one might assume I really belonged. And who's to say that I didn't.

Lemberg/Lvov: A Trip To The Past, A Final Good Bye

Thomas Wolfe's oft-quoted observation that you can't go home again, or back again, in my case, was proven true once more. Why did I have this need to return to this place, this inhospitable land? I thought of the ghetto with its tall buildings and narrow streets, of the concentration camp I had never seen and decided that it was time to say good-bye. And so we went to Lvov.

My friend's brother, the ever-resourceful David, helped to find a guide who was a journalist in his early seventies — Boris. With great trepidation we arrived at the gate only to be pulled aside and informed that it was necessary to buy Ukrainian medical insurance. My rather expensive Blue Cross coverage isn't sufficient, but am I going to argue with these people? I hadn't expected a welcome, but at least we are not being taken out of line for any of the alternatives my imagination can produce. (What? You're back? Haven't had enough?)

Boris is strutting back and forth behind the other greeters, in his brownish leather cap and coat, and comes to acknowledge us, if not necessarily to claim us. He is shelling nuts he keeps in his pockets. We ask about the car he had promised to reserve only to find that he thought it would be more economical to use his friend's automobile which, it turns out, is out of commission. We find a cab before he decides to have us carry our luggage across the city, and make our way to our hotel. Boris is not happy: the hotel is expensive and for just a little money we could stay at the apartment of some people he knows. Who, he insists, needs this expensive hotel?

Boris, I should add, speaks Hebrew, Ukrainian, Russian, and a smattering of Yiddish and no English or French. This at least explains why he wouldn't speak to me on the phone. His wife speaks English, but she, of course, is not present.

It's Friday, all is well and we arrange to go to the synagogue that evening. We walk the length of the town and I'm still pleading for the car, a taxi, a wheelbarrow — I really can't adjust to his pace! The first poignant moment comes when we arrival at what remains of the shul (synagogue). It is not in much better repair inside than the partially destroyed outside, but the lights and all the people make it feel warm. Of course this is an orthodox synagogue and the men sit downstairs in what looks like, from a distance, comfortable chairs. The women sit a few rickety steps up on hard,

backless benches. This is as it should be, within the tradition of the place of women in orthodox Jewry. I'm surprised to see so many women. They acknowledge my presence wordlessly: they stare. No one as much as smiles a greeting. I feel like a German tourist who has come to take in the sights. I am overdressed in a simple black jacket and skirt, with a scarf on my head. It doesn't cry out *Hermès* but it might just as well. I would gladly give them all my clothes and everything that I brought with me, but intimacy, that allows such acts, requires a shared relationship and language — both of which we are sadly lacking. A woman next to me makes a hesitant attempt to speak to me but we both shrug helplessly — we just don't understand.

There are no prayer books up here. Downstairs, the men are jovially singing their Sabbath portion while a few small children — who belong to the American Rabbi — run around them. I see almost no one of childbearing age. Upstairs, the ladies' club is in full swing as more women arrive and are greeted with questions or comments. I am invisible but at least I can observe. Sadly I realize that most of them are roughly my age but look at least a decade older. Their clothing, tidy and clean, nevertheless reminds me of what we looked like when we first left the Nana's barn. A number of the women appear to have partial wigs on their heads. These are definitely not the *shaitels* that traditionally cover the heads of the religious. These appear to be efforts to compensate for hair loss: understandable if anxiety and malnutrition are active partners in your life.

My ever-present cohort, guilt, chides me silently. But what can I do? How can I tell them that I was born here and lived through some of what they did? Two things occur to me: one is that there must be other returnees who come here to look, not knowing how to join — perhaps the other presumably rich Americans who got away. The other is that at some level people like myself may be more resented than real foreign-born tourists because, in leaving, we have created a boundary between them and us. And we, who come here to mourn our dead, appear to be the winners, the lucky ones. And who's to say that we aren't?

Looking down, I see Boris and my husband both gesturing for me to join them. The women also seem to be on the move, still chatting and holding on to each other. The steps are really treacherous. I join the men, meet the Rabbi and notice that tables have

been set up with food and drink. The reason that the synagogue is so full is that Friday night and Wednesday at noontime, meals are served to everyone present. We are invited to join but how can one eat their food when so little is available? For once it is still good manners to make excuses and refuse.

A man grasps my arm to tell me that he and I are the only two people in the room who were born in Lvov. The rest have come from Russia, Poland and smaller Ukrainian towns. I can't help remembering all those people from the villages marching by our door in Horodenka. The Rabbi gives us a tour and explains his mission, which is to educate and provide food when possible. Boris bristles. Apparently, he also has a school that competes for the same money and students. Our role as potential donors becomes clearer. The man is still holding on. I understand his Yiddish: he recently lost his wife and is lonely. I've come to visit my dead. I hadn't expected having to think about my debt to the living.

Boris is an endless resource, even if he does insist on saving us money by initially refusing all invitations to join us for meals and insisting that we walk everywhere because taxis are an unnecessary expenditure. Apparently, he knew my uncle who had lived several doors from his flat. One of my searches is over: my Uncle Isaac died in the eighties. A fine gentleman, Boris assures me, which is more than he can say for the wife Isaac married after the war, who is also deceased. A stepdaughter is alive, but perhaps not someone I would care to meet. I assure him that I would, news he greets skeptically but agrees to. We now need to search for my uncle's burial place. My father's cousin, a well-known oral surgeon, has also died but apparently I have a cousin, called Leon Zworn, my father's name. We meet, both with translators in tow. He's a neurosurgeon, the separated father of two daughters, with a mother who is ill. He cannot accept offers to leave the Ukraine because of family responsibilities. He's partner in a clinic that treats all comers without cost. We're definitely related.

This Is Where The Ghetto Was

It's time to visit the past more directly. The ghetto is our next stop.

We come to an industrial part of the town, far away from the beautiful architecture that once typified this medieval city. Through a small gate, we are confronted by a black stone mass sculpture of a man, a bearded giant figure. His arms are extended

towards heaven, hands raised, one with a raised palm, imploring, the other with a tight fist one can almost see shaking at the God that had forsaken his people. The sculpture's lower legs are encased in earth, towards which he's being pulled. He appears to symbolize, at the same time, anger and belief in a God who had somehow forgotten those in whose place the sculpture stands. He represents the dying, the anger and the despair.

The plaques along the walk, a memorial to those who never fled this place, testify to the numerous family members who have come here before me. Our dead are not commemorated in this way because we never discussed what happened in this place. The ghetto walls are to the right, taken over for some other purpose that we never discover. Access to the ghetto is forbidden.

We go to the railway station from which my Aunt Celia was probably taken away to be killed. There is a small sign explaining what happened here.

Farther along, we search out Janowska, also taken over to house some military. We can only stand outside and look in. The walls are gone but for me they are still there.

The fountain that glimmered in front of the church that I attended is lost to me. There are many churches with numerous fountains. None of them glimmer.

My uncle has no monument to identify his grave. I attempt to make arrangements to rectify this and my cousin, Leon, tells me that he'll look after it. So far, I haven't heard if he was actually able to do this without the stepdaughter's permission.

After we return to our hotel room, Boris comes barging in, even though he was cautioned that we needed to rest. He extends an accordion of photos which we, at first reluctantly, examine. They are baby pictures of me with my father that I had never seen before — in my bald glory. There are also pictures of my parents and of my father 'in camouflage' uniform, his hair darkened, a photo he had made for the false passports that he used for travel during the war. My uncle's stepdaughter apparently had them. While Boris shells his nuts with quick dexterity, we plan the rest of our trip.

I want to visit Obertin where my parents were born, Horodenka where we lived when the war started and Trochenbrod, which at one time belonged to Russia and from which my husband's father's family originates. Boris arrives with another bargain, a taxi that is unfortunately lacking springs, ready to convey us to our destination which is approximately a hundred and fifty kilometers away. Boris, with his energy and nervous mannerisms, has been there before and seen and done everything. We survivors have finally found our interest in the past, if not our voices.

It is in Obertin that I hope to find the graves of my grandparents, who died before the war. Unfortunately, the cemetery has been razed and the headstones thrown into a pile that we can only look at from a distance behind a fence. The town is pretty and a woman, digging for potatoes, tells us that the Jews were all taken away. She recognizes my father's family name and points in a general direction where they probably lived. My mother would be seriously annoyed that no one seems to remember her relations and the more palatial homes that they occupied.

Horodenka has a commemorative plaque on what was once the synagogue wall, in acknowledgement of the Jews who were taken away from this place to the extermination camps. I feel the sharp pain of identity with something that is hurtful. I don't remember Horodenka and, of course, I am badly served by the bits that I retain. Nearby, an old woman is grazing her goats on what was once the Jewish cemetery, while a truck is being loaded with the monuments that haven't as yet been destroyed. We are informed that people take them away in order to build their homes.

I wish that I could converse directly with some of the people we see on the street, even if I do feel that they are stealing something that belongs to me. It is a place that I may have ignored, but I am not certain that this holy ground should be theirs to destroy. I wish that I knew where I had once lived. I realize that I should have come back to these places with my children because this is also their past. But that would have required sharing information early on about their history that is rooted in this once hostile land. It would have been so wonderful to come back en famille and announce to one and all that we not only survived but that we are decent people, successful contributing members to our society, that we are not here for revenge but

only for our memories. And to ask them to please leave our cemetery alone. At least allow our dead to rest in peace.

The Ukraine may be the place that I was born but it is not where I'm from. I should have insisted that my father take this trip with us while he was still alive. But I never felt that I had the right to persevere that he confront the demons that he had put aside so long ago. So I became a co-conspirator of unshared reminiscences.

Reflections

For the Jews who remained in Europe, there appears to have been less opportunity or need to become someone else. Instead it seems that many have chosen to compartmentalize their stories, to be invisible as a population and to live with their pain. It is impossible to think that, after an assault on their house of prayer, Americans would so readily accept the idea that they cannot stand outside their schul and schmuz (gossip). Americans will not permit their rights to be compromised. But, of course, they have not walked the streets that not so long ago were forbidden to Jews.

This is, of course, not necessarily true for cities like Antwerp where men with paiote (side locks) hurry towards the diamond bourse and young woman with hair concealed under a shtremel (a type of wig) push baby carriages along the streets, laughing among themselves.

Other Voices: The Parentless Children

My friend Sigie is a survivor, the name given to those who stayed alive. In his teenage years, he was a resident of some extermination camps and was eventually liberated in Auschwitz. At some point during his stay, he would hear the fears of parents whose children were hidden in farms, convents and in the homes of Christian families who had given them shelter in order to save their lives. These were neighbors and strangers and observers, such as the woman who watched an SS man attempt to take an infant out of his crib while the family was driven out of their home. The neighbor quickly took the child away, claiming this unknown child as her own, explaining that the Jewish woman had only been watching the baby for her. The 'child' is now a man in his sixties; he also is a survivor.

The parents, recognizing that they would probably not be saved, voiced concerns about what would happen to their children and who would care for them. The seventeen-year-old Sigie took this responsibility upon himself. He promised, should he survive, he would find these children and make a home for them. Which, with the help of AJC (the American Jewish Congress) he did. He studied social work in Holland and took on the task of providing a place — a home — that would nurture and educate boys who either had no family or whose parents were too enfeebled to provide adequate care for a child.

Among the many stories that he tells — and Sigie is a wonderful raconteur of jokes and stories — is of a mother who would call late at night to speak with her son, to assure herself that he was alive. Sigie's boys, now men in their sixties, have been impressively successful as physicians, attorneys and businessmen. One of the interesting bits of information that I have gleaned from his stories and that of his 'boys' is that this population of young people held two diverse beliefs: there were those who accepted the fact that their families had been killed, that they would not magically emerge from the mass of survivors. There were others who, unable or unwilling to give up hope, maintained a never-ending search in the hope that perhaps someone would appear. It seems that the searchers tended eventually to marry women who were also survivors, whereas the others made found mates who were not.

We were privileged to meet some of men, who came from all over the world to celebrate Sigie and the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the homes, and to hear some of their memories. Other homes had been created to accommodate girls. They came back to Brussels with their own children and grandchildren. Yet Sigie never spoke to his own daughters about the past. Neither did his wife who endured the March from the Warsaw ghetto.* That changed for them when they had grandchildren, who have since heard the stories, visited Berlin where Sigie was born to see their great-grandparents graves and can take pride in their extraordinary grandparents.

Sigie remains connected to his boys — some of them regard each other as family. They have let some of us into this privileged relationship but we remain separate. We haven't shared their memories.

Others Who Came To America

Karla is a writer who survived the war with her mother, an uncle and aunt and two cousins. They also were freed by the Russians and she has written a book about her life after the war. When asked what was most difficult, she immediately refers back to a 'desperate need to fit in'. "I came from an educated family. I hated being a refugee. I didn't want to belong to this group of people who came from the DP camps with their strange Hungarian accents. I learned to speak English, had nothing to do with other survivors, married an American and never looked back. Until I wrote about it. The book has been well received".

Lonka left Germany in 1950, among the last to leave the DP camp for the United States, having been provided with visas by a distant cousin. She and her mother were concealed in a convent during the war where she was hidden away by the local farmers who came to help the sisters with the produce that they were required to provide to the Germans. She could only emerge in the evenings when all the outsiders were gone. 'I mostly stayed in a cupboard and didn't speak to anyone. Sometimes it would be a strain to speak after so many hours of silence —sometimes days, if my mother would be working extra hours'. She is not certain where her father was during the war. They reunited in Krakow and made their way to Germany together. 'After the war I lived in a fog. I got married shortly after our arrival in Brooklyn. My husband was also a survivor, a lot older than me and we never talked about the war. My best years were in the DP camps where I had friends and people to be with. My parents were overprotective but I think that I wanted that. I have never been able to recapture the years in the camp where we lived as a community. I wasn't expected to excel. I just was.

Reflections: Search for the Self in Deconstructing a Past

Having taken the journey, having attempted to examine the self that emerged from this experience, I have come to agree with Jerome Bruner that Self is not a substance or essence that exists before we describe it, as if all one had to do was to inspect it in order to discover its nature. If the self, created by reflection, is a concept constructed in the same way that we construct other concepts, which experiences have formulated the self that I have described? Because certainly that which emerges as the self, as

William James has suggested, incorporates family, community, friends, knowledge — all the extensions of oneself. The search on which I embarked, the story that I decided to tell, is selective in its construction, like any other kind of memory. However, the basis of the construction reveals more than referral to a singular self, the I that was — it is among other images about a child who in spite of all evidence to the contrary, felt safe; a family and a community that were destroyed but were still able to convey a set of belief systems which live on, and a decision erroneously taken that it was best to forget, to pretend at a seamless continuity that never was.

The Meaning of the Past

Writing this personal narrative, deconstructing a life I have finally chosen to think about, speak about and write about is one the most difficult things that I have ever attempted. Connecting this history to the influence it has had on my professional life has made me very aware that meaning fluctuates and that neither life nor therapy occur in a vacuum. Although I have been authentic in my relationships with clients, I have come to realize in writing this that the “loner” that I often refer to has somehow had more impact than I realized. I have become aware that I haven’t relied sufficiently on colleagues until they proved their worth. And, I, of course remained the sole arbiter of that worth. I also discovered that my self-view of being collegial refers to my willingness to share but not necessarily to rely on others. As a therapist, although moving in the right direction as “transparent”, I have a ways to go. I may at times take too much responsibility on myself and in this way deprive others of their need to work things through. I regarded myself as having “done better” with intelligent clients, which I now realize has been a need for recognition that I too am smart. I haven’t discovered an urgent need to hurl myself back into therapy. I am aware that I need to be even more self-reflective in the relationships that I co-create with clients. Writing this narrative has been a voyage of self-discovery but, of most importance, it necessitated my reading books about other people’s experience, talking about the war and listening to some of the tapes of people’s stories — very difficult to do. Most revealing is that I hide less behind the mantle of Montreal and answer more openly about my past. But not always, and not with everyone. Deconstructing one’s past is useful but not for sissies.

In the next chapter I will look back on a career and choices that were certainly influenced by the meanings that I have, had, and assigned to what came before. Two major influences that came from the past have been a respect for people, an awareness that meaning emerges from the joint activities of people interacting with one another and that therapists are partners facilitating, not arbiters. There is a noticeable fluctuation between my earlier references to patients and later to clients. It's consistent with the history of my work.

CHAPTER 3: THE PROFESSIONAL NARRATIVE

REFLECTIONS ON PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Therapists are influenced in their professional choices by a multitude of happenings in their lives. Because as therapists we spend large parts of our lives in front of people, these choices are also driven by the present, the people and situations we encounter and the world we live in. This chapter reflects one professional's journey that touched on three different countries – Canada, United States and Belgium – each with its own culture and rootedness in very different worlds, as well as an unwanted war – Vietnam - which tore the country apart and from which America has never recovered.

In the preface to his book “The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action” (1983), Donald Schon offers an epistemology of practice through an analysis of what it is that practitioners actually do. As a “practitioner” who has for many years taught and supervised “practitioners in training” – a number of these years spent with other professionals sitting on one side of a one way mirror – I have constructed dialogues about psychotherapists in action with many students. The participants behind the mirror had a double role; as therapists they were the alternative voice in studying the system that included the therapist who had joined that system and they focused on the impact they had on the family or couple. As students, they were also there to learn and ask questions – debrief – to understand why I did what I did. However, if I were satisfied with my own self-examination at that time, my transparency, if you like, I probably would not still be examining the connection between the life I had lived up to that time and my professional actions. Looking back I realize that “live” supervision is a good teaching and learning skill. The difficulty is in synthesizing one's personal learning – the why and wherefores of it - with a clear understanding of where it has come from and what it has meant.

Now, writing a narrative autobiography offers an opportunity to take the analysis back to the beginning. How do we come to choose these professions to which many of us devote the larger part of our lives? And how do we, as teachers, help our “students” find voices that reflect who they are.

To connect my choice, in part, to early experiences, I realize that whatever profession I chose, it would have included other people. There are a disproportionate number of holocaust survivors like myself, who have chosen psychotherapy, medicine or psychoanalysis as a life's work. In "Lost Childhood and the Language of Exile" (Szekacs-Weisz and Ward, 2004) more than twenty analysts and therapists tell their stories. A number of them have published books, including Hoffman (2004), Eros (1996), Pick (2001), Wilson (2003.). Jane Marks is only one of the professional writers who interviewed hidden children who were professional therapists. (Marks, 1993)

As a psychotherapist my personal and professional goal was to engage clients or patients into a conversation and relationship, with the result that they would gain the knowledge, strength and information to manage their own lives, to master their own destinies. If I had learned anything in my childhood it was that people – of all ages – need the tools to save themselves.

How do people plan their futures and when do they start? Where do these aspirations come from? And what about the child who was charged to represent a town, a community that "was" – what are her choices? My parents insisted on a practical endeavor. I visualized a future calling that was "hands on."

The profession that I eventually chose, projected me into the very questions that I began asking at a very young age. These queries had to do with how people learned, and how they managed themselves in this world, what they needed to feel safe and how those of us who had access to information – through education or life's quirks – could become resources to others. It seemed to me that informing would give longer term results than only 'helping'. (Informing involves the client in an exchange of receiving and providing information, and a on going dialogue as the information shifts and changes over time.) The next step was to learn by entering into a conversation, to become a participant. This required exploring the source of others' deliberations and the contexts in which they developed.

The fact that these preoccupations occurred at a very young age is not surprising if you consider what I had already lived through, the changes that as a child who had

survived Hitler's war, I had assimilated before the age of nine. Along with our elders, children like myself understood that 'learning' also takes place with a community of others in response to situations. We didn't question the fairness of what we were learning. Nevertheless, we somehow knew that being taken away from our parents wasn't 'fair', not having food or a bed to sleep in or anyone to hold us when we were afraid wasn't right, and that the unpredictable was the only predictable. Later in my adult life I was to discover that this is also the predicament of many of those among us, living in the time of peace – peace, paradoxically, being one of the very things that so many people lack. Although it seems as if for a number of people, 'help' appears to be available, it, in itself, is unpredictable because our society has been neglectful in creating a space for those who don't quite fit.

In the early years, my concerns about fairness were often at odds with my chosen profession of clinical psychology. Steeped in a methodology largely informed by psychoanalysis, my generation of therapists were trained to see most problems as being psychiatric, and most interventions required little or no transparency. We only told our colleagues what we really thought. Questions from parents who dared to ask whether we, ourselves, had children or other queries of a personal nature, were perceived as aggressive or acting out. Disagreements were termed as resistance and interpreted as such. Surely we were all either well enough trained or competent enough to divert questions that were too personal without making wholesale judgments about the negative motivation of our clients - even at times when the language of the queries was intrusive. What we missed was that part of the process of how 'they' (our clients) were attempting to construct a relationship with each other and with us. We "looked on" rather than attempt to "be in."

To some degree, this was the state of the field in the sixties in Canada and the United States just before I began the formal part of my graduate studies. I had already worked for a number of years, as a community group organizer as well as an untrained, but well supervised, member of staff in two psychiatric hospitals. The Alan Memorial in Montreal, with its weekly lectures for students as well as permanent staff, was a privileged education: we heard Maxwell Jones (Briggs, 1996) speak of milieu therapy and Ronald Lang (1959) – an unlikely invitee – recount the damage that we were doing to our patients.

My first 'job' was to participate in a study of the use of the emergency room by patients who were subsequently referred to psychiatry. I would conduct an interview with the subject as well as an informant who accompanied the prospective patient into the emergency room. The results indicated that most of these people were elderly and were coming alone in the early evening and were mostly lonely and afraid. We offered little help with either need. However, this work resulted in my receiving numerous phone calls from those who I had interviewed indicating that they wanted to come back "to tell me something that they forgot". I practically memorized Harry Stack Sullivan's "The Psychiatric Interview" (1954) but quickly realized that this was not so much about asking questions as about listening. I also learned that, in North America – even in Canada - there seemed little honor in growing old. Geriatric care was hardly a consideration in the sixties and, like many young mental health workers, I moved on to an endeavor that not only interested me but had more to do with testing creativity than taking care of people. I participated, with friends and colleagues from the Canadian National Film Board, in founding a community mental health center. I also used this newly minted credit to help establish a drop in center for adolescence and young people, many who were avoiding being drafted in the US and sent to Vietnam, a war that they didn't believe in – or at least didn't want to die for.

Family needs – my husband's wish to continue doctoral studies – relocated us and our three small children to Boston; not a happy place in 1969.

I found myself in two areas of work: a real asylum and working with a highly advanced center for the blind (mostly those who lost their sight due to juvenile diabetes, accidents or other degenerative loss of vision). Both were extraordinary opportunities for someone to work with groups and families and note first hand the courage with which people can manage adversity. (Since I have no sense of direction, the greatest hazard I presented to clients was directing them to the left rather than the right and possibly into shrubbery or worse. I'd like to think that I fostered independence in the partially sighted and newly blind.)

Eventually I also was able to create the time and space to begin my formal studies. The emphasis at the master's level at the university which I was finally to attend was

on client centered counseling and the prime theorists studied were Carl Rogers (1986) and Fritz Perls (1973). There was an introduction to the history of psychiatry including Freud and Jung. Some courses were offered on the neo-Freudians, particularly Karen Horney (1991), as well as the dominant thinkers in psychology at the time – Heinz Hartmann (1939), Abraham Maslow (1987), Eric Erickson (1950,1963), some of B.F.Skinner (1971) and Irving Yalom (1995) for groups. My primary interest was supervised psychotherapy (including play therapy), the use of testing as part of therapy (Stanford Binet, WISC), as well as group theory and practice. Family therapy, at the academic level, was not considered a high priority and what one learned about family therapy was through conferences and workshops.

These were the years of Vietnam. Classes were disorganized as students participated in strikes and it was not unusual to be sprayed with red paint (to simulate blood) nor was it unusual to have professors unavailable because they too were marching. It was a difficult time to live in the USA; it was also a complex time to be part of a couple – both students – with three children, a couple for whom going to school was an expensive luxury and the need to graduate and start working a priority. The ‘group’ psychology professors taught many of their courses away from the campus. I took so many of their courses that I was invited to enter the doctoral program and to teach a course section.

The client centered approach had some appeal to me because of its non-directive methodology, unique in the US at the time. I must say that I was caught between the more intellectual work going on in the field and didn’t fully appreciate Rogerian Therapy. until I had the experience to use it correctly. When I participated in a workshop with Rogers, I kept coming back to the fact that although I found his total acceptance of what was said seductive, I couldn’t imagine how it would flow in a conversation with seriously delusional patients. Many years later, when I worked with a woman who has been diagnosed as schizophrenic and who limited her answers to abstract images, in a moment of desperation I simply followed her logic and went where it took us, only asking questions for clarification and meaning. I sometimes think that was the moment that I became a rather worthy therapist. Nevertheless, I found Rogers himself a somewhat distant individual – which may be also be exactly what worked with my ‘schizophrenic’ lady.

Douglas Arbuckle, my primary adviser (1970) was a client centered therapist, influenced by his mentor Carl Rogers. He liked my work and basically encouraged me to do what interested me. And what interested me – so much of what was eventually to be taught – was not necessarily available in the psychology that was available to me, with its strong individual focus.

Eventually, psychology began the process of attempting the undoing of the legacy of a culture of individualism that had blocked the relational dimension in identity formation (Shotter,). Psychology remains many things to many people. Colleagues who are researchers often shrug at the struggles of those of us who use the face to face interview for an altogether different purpose. Psychoanalytic colleagues do not hesitate to comment that individuals must take into account their personal, inter-psychic history. I have personally found the work of research psychologists very helpful in attempting to better understand events or experiences in a larger context. Nevertheless, some recognition of the importance of the relational dimension has facilitated the process for those of us who teach psychotherapy in universities and hospitals – also as part of a broader training. We can more comfortably focus away from the historical preoccupation with the individual, the center of the spokes in a wheel, so to speak, and take into consideration not only the person, spokes and the wheel but also where the wheel is housed; what it is attached to and where the whole – including the second wheel – is situated. And, this allow us to also focus on how the wheels regulate themselves to attain stability on a changing terrain.

The changes in how we understand human behavior revitalized psychology. These changes have created the space both for narrative and autobiography as viable methods for studying human interaction. Autobiographies, from this view, are viewed as less about individuals and more about an era and all those who were affected in a complex process.

On Becoming A Family/Systems Therapist

In my belief in the necessity of creating communities that offer an extension to our lives as individuals, it is not surprising that my first pre graduate school full time employment was a housing project where one could find every form of family – one

parent homes, children being raised by grandparents, a mother living on one floor with a new partner while her children lived one level below with another care provider. The project was near the Chicago steel mills and the mostly Mexican residents had refused to allow the integration of six black families, thus creating the second worst racial riot in that city, a city that was not immune to clashes among the different races. I quickly found for myself a supervisor and was introduced to system's thinking many years before the theory was to launch a new paradigm in family and couples therapy.

The benefit of seeing a family together began fortuitously. I couldn't make sense of their separate stories which necessitated bringing them together in one place, or on one stoop. Lacking any expertise in what to do when I achieved this goal, necessity had me turn to the families for assistance. It was they who had to help me to create order out of all the confusion, and in doing so they began the process of constructing safer havens for their children.

Enlightenment came years later in the person of Nathan Ackerman (1966), one of the fathers of family therapy. An analyst, I remember him as a large bearded man of great stature, although in reality he was quite small and his stature was in what he brought with him into a therapeutic exchange. The place was the Alan Memorial Hospital at McGill University and the audience was seated in a seminar room when Ackerman welcomed the family onto the platform. He began the session with a few questions and at some point began to tell them that he was Jewish. I was thunderstruck. In this bastion of psychoanalytic training, one revealed nothing of oneself. I waited for the Gods of Freud to strike him down; for the chairman of the department to rise in remonstrance.

The session continued. To my amazement the audience did not come to their feet in protest. I was somewhat disturbed by all of us spectators, seated in rows; I wondered how one could create a relationship in the presence of all these silent participants who I experienced as an intrusion. Years later Peggy Papp was to refer to this 'observing system' as the Greek Chorus, (Papp, personal communication, 1974) and, like other teachers of family therapy, I learned over time how to involve students who, in my time, sat behind a one way mirror. I would include them in discussions with the

families and have them present another perspective to the session. However, I never learned to feel truly comfortable with their presence behind the mirror. Videotaping, another teaching tool which was introduced and regularly accompanied most sessions in clinics and teaching centers, came on the scene well after 1967 when I observed my first family therapy session. The tapes were not only useful for supervision but often revealed nuances that were missed in the session. When family therapy came into its prime a few years later, we worked in front of large audiences with 'live' families and the interview would be followed by a discussion, ideally first with a small group selected from the audience and followed by questions from other spectators. Many of the families appeared not to mind this spectacle for which they volunteered, and thought that there was a benefit from all of this expertise. And there very well may have been. Certainly we all learned from each other. However, I always missed the intimacy of the private conversation - and, at times, provocation.

The Ackerman session, as well as my year in Chicago, also made me aware of race and variations of color, and other "visible" hidden children who lived their lives in secret. It was Dr. Ernesse Brody, formally Chairman of African American Studies at Wesleyan University, who brought this more forcefully to my attention. Her own white grandfather and black grandmother have produced descendants who are either black or are blue eyed blonds. For some the mix was not so clear. Were the light skinned children of black families, when mistaken for white, also 'hidden' if they 'avoided' declaring themselves as black? Would life be easier for the obviously black? Would the ones who could pass for either black or white replicate the life of Colman Silk in Phillip Roth's "Human Stain" (2000) to be eventually punished for not being identifiably one or the other. "Showboat" and "Pinky" are both movies about beautiful black woman who attempt to live as whites, who "hide" their identity and also adjust their speech and their values to a white world. Identity formation is not simple for those among us who think that they know who they are - but what about the rest?

Years later, in my work with organizations, the diversified work force caused great concern, particularly to the newly combined companies, the result of buyouts and mergers. The primary focus was on differing nationalities, and, in America, gender and race. Companies such as Daimler Chrysler in Germany rushed their senior

executives into English classes, while Europeans were bowing and exchanging bilingual business cards, extended with both hands, to new Japanese partners. The business world was attempting to rush headlong into creating some homogeneity, while the families who were being relocated as part of this exchange were trying to hold on, particularly for their children, to some connection of who they were and what was now expected of them.

Some of these families would eventually participate in some of our family therapy extravaganzas of later years, since we, in Europe, were constantly importing American therapists and many of these families had the good fortune - for us and I hope for them - of speaking English.

Those were the years when Donald Jackson (1957) , Carl Whittaker (1982), Nathan Ackerman (1966) and Murray Bowen (1978) first sat together, on each side of a mirror, and put family therapy on the map. The therapist, a Dr. Peachy, brought a family for consultation – a process many of us were courageous enough to experience years later – and each of the four masters were to interview the family for half an hour while the other three observed behind the one way mirror. What a discussion this must have been: Ackerman, with his psychoanalytic training has been described as using a psychodynamic approach, Murray Bowen emphasized insight and family interactions, and Whittaker did his own somewhat abrasive directive and, at the same time compassionate, interventions.

There were those masters in the field who elicited affect, although not as an end in itself. Among them was Virginia Satir (1964), a tall, imposing woman who could reach out to children and adults alike with her warmth. Satir, who claimed to be a systemist but seemed to be more informed by an inter -psychic perspective, was the originator of her form of sculpting, or creating a living tableaux of a family to bring forth their problems. Peggy Papp, (1983) developed family sculpting from a systemic perspective and did the more in depth and creative family sculpting that everyone copied, Olga Silverstein worked with genograms (Keeny, 1986) and words and showed us that we could all improve. Silverstein was the therapist many of her colleagues sought out for their families and for themselves. Jay Haley (1976) made us conscious of the role of power in the family.

Systems Theory and Psychotherapy

Of course, “a view of living systems as self organizing networks whose components are all interconnected and interdependent has been expressed repeatedly throughout the history of philosophy and science. However detailed models of self organizing systems could be formulated only (after) new mathematical tools became available that allowed scientists to model the nonlinear interconnectedness characteristic of networks”, writes Fritjof Capra, an Austrian physicist, in his book *The Web of Life*, (Capra, 1996, p.112). And the mathematical tools he refers to did become available. It was this new mathematics, with its reference to fractals and the theory of chaos, that embodied the shift in emphasis in systems thinking, from objects to relationships, from quantitative to qualitative, and on to patterns. The latter had enormous importance to therapists like myself who, rather than dig into the past for understanding, looked at the past as well as the present in order to discern – to discover - the web of patterns and meanings that held those who consulted us in their grasp. Whatever their basis, whatever their origin, the meaning that they gave to their actions and the repetition of their rituals were difficult to abandon for explanations and a new understanding. Deconstructing changing patterns of behavior and assigning new meaning to actions became the driving force of the new systems based psychotherapy. Consultations were directive, but did bring about changes in self damaging behavior relatively quickly, which was more effective than what we had achieved with the more intellectual psychoanalytic methods.

I approached the origins of systemic ideas cautiously. So much was happening in any number of disciplines. WW2, which had a singular meaning in my life, had liberated psychiatry. The need to send shell shocked soldiers back to the front may have been an early death knoll that reduced the importance of psychoanalysis. The availability of a whole range of psychotropic drugs was reawakening a population of chronic patients who had, sometimes indiscriminately, filled the wards of psychiatric facilities, many of these facilities not all that different from the old style asylums. Group therapy had achieved wide acceptance. All of these were precursors in America of the 1960s Mental Health Act, that was characterized by pictures of hospital administrators proudly standing on the grounds of their hospitals, surrounded by the empty beds that had previously housed mental patients (many of whom were

not necessarily classical ‘mental patients’ but the retarded and those suffering from dementia and Alzheimer’s who had been part of the patient mix.) (Italy was to follow in the 1980s when they also established revised rules for hospitalization.) Although many of these changes were and are necessary, the number of homeless on American streets still has early roots in some of these changes. However, for those of us who worked in the more traditional and respected settings where psychoanalysis still reigned, all of the transformations around us were somehow kept separate from the guiding theory.

My earlier reading in systems began with Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1950), an Austrian biologist and member of the Vienna Circle (group of international philosophers and scientists) whose concepts of open systems (open because they needed to feed on a continual flux of matter and energy from their environment in order to stay alive) and general systems theory helped to establish in the early 1930s systems thinking as a major scientific movement. His goal was in part to replace the mechanistic foundations that were the underpinning of science with a theory of organized wholes. His was a mathematical discipline concerned with self-regulating machines. Nevertheless he is credited with the first formulation of a comprehensive theoretical framework that described the principles of organization of living systems.

Norbert Wiener(1954) named this major movement cybernetics (from the Greek, kybernetic or steersman) and defined it is the “science of control and communication in the animal and the machine. Wiener’s major contribution was in identifying the mechanism defined as feedback, which became a central concept of cybernetics. From the work of the interdisciplinary thinkers who convened in NYC for the Macy Conferences, emerged ground breaking ideas that included an understanding that the pattern of self-organization (the fact that living systems were both self-organizing and self-regulating) is the key to understanding the essential nature of life. Circular causality – as opposed to the linear “this happens because of that” – was identified as being the key to feedback. Human systems were further defined as ‘purposeful’ due to self-regulation through feedback which is the essential mechanism of homeostasis, the living organism’s ability to maintain itself in a state of dynamic balance.

To summarize briefly, what was relevant to therapy was that systems were self-regulating, self-organizing, and connected through a series of patterns that could functioned as feedback loops. The resulting therapeutic work further recognized the system's tendency towards its homeostatic state. This suggested that the notion of 'resistance' was the system's way of maintaining itself and therefore introducing change into a system had to account for that tendency. This theoretical framework would eventually be challenged by the work of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1987) in what was to be called "the Second Cybernetic".

But first the path led to Gregory Bateson, a godlike figure for many of us who were grappling with the application of systemic reasoning to our own particular fields. Anthropologist, scientist, theoretician, cyberneticist, one of Bateson's best known works – "Steps to An Ecology of the Mind" (1972) –and eventually "Mind and Nature" (2002) helped me first to understand the struggle of alcoholics: the need to control the bottle at the price of giving up on all of the other struggles.

There are elements in all theories that may suddenly clarify for the practitioner some idea or entity that she or he has been struggling to understand. Moving gingerly from psychodynamic explanations to a systems and connected view of the world, it was Bateson who metaphorically held my hand and led me into the promised land of clearer understanding.

Among his many contributions was the notion that "information is news of difference." Also, his work on the theory of the double bind, often attributed exclusively to Donald Jackson (1957), a Palo Alto psychiatrist and himself a major figure in the field, was significant. Jackson's contributions to psychiatry are many, particularly in the field of schizophrenia. The term "context markers", one I use frequently, stems from Jackson, who died too young to energize the field in a way that his colleagues who lived longer lives.

Korzybski (1958) who first coined the phrase "the map is not the territory", an oft quoted axiom that was to be refuted when we began to realize that the map was, in fact, the territory, was also a central figure at this time. Belgian biologist and Nobel

Prize winner Ilya Prigogine's (1984) work was brought into the field by Mony Elkaim (1997), himself an American trained Belgian psychiatrist.

Although the Mental Research Institute, in Palo Alto, influenced many future family therapists and researchers, particularly the books of Paul Watzlawick (1967,1974). The approach with the greatest number of adherence for many years were the structuralists - Minuchin, Haley and other of the 'Philadelphians'. The method was interesting in that it permitted one to manipulate the system, through suggestions and tasks as well as through physically moving individual members - for instance, mothers and sons who appeared enmeshed (a Minuchin term designating an over-involved relationship that was too close thus proving a constraint in the individuation process of the son) would be asked to change chairs or sit near someone in the family who they might more appropriately bond with. This is, of course, an oversimplification. The tasks that they assigned would also help to mobilize the rigid system away from the symptom and into more beneficial relationships. It seems simplistic and indeed it was very manipulative. It served up a temporary answer to many poor and disorganized families, as Kitty Laperriere has described, "a first step to sanity". Paul Watzlawick might have called this "first order change", which is to say that specific behaviors that were targeted would be modified, often very quickly, but the intervention would address itself to the symptom, rather than attempting to deal with what may be the real problem in the system.

Family Therapy

Most widely identified as a dominant figure in the field of family therapy is still Sal Minuchin, an Argentinian psychiatrist who founded the Philadelphia Center for Family Therapy, at one time a major teaching facility, also for many Europeans. A small, dark, intense man, his may be the only name recalled by psychiatric residents who are more biological than psychotherapeutic in their work with patients.

The structural approach was imminently successful in helping families to achieve first order change - how to deal with a parentified child whose symptom was in the service of helping the parents organize their relationship or take over their executive function in the family. If I sound less than enthusiastic about Minuchin, it's because I found his bias towards the power of fathers in the family unrealistic for many families,

including single parent families and mothers without whose participation these relocations that were the backbone of industry in the late sixties, seventies and early eighties, would have been much less successful. And structuralism and power meant Jay Haley who saw power as a major player in the world of couples. This put him into direct conflict with Gregory Bateson, (1972, 2002) who disputed power/control as a main theme in relationships.

The Milan Centro De Famiglia

The Americans were doing innovated work and we, in Europe, paid attention. Two of those taking notice were Italians Gianfranco Cecchin and Luigi Boscolo. Graduates of Padua University Medical School, they had gone to New York to study psychiatry, where they went to hear a presentation of a fellow Milan psychiatrist called Mara Selvini Pallazoli, an analyst whose early work with families was at first to be more eagerly accepted in the US than in Italian academic circles. (In telling me of the difficulty of receiving academic attention and approbation for the work she was doing with a systems approach, she mentioned a woman in a California Italian government because of her grasp of how systems functioned.) Along with psychiatrist Juliana Prata, the four became the most influential writers, teachers and therapists in the field. However, they also first called in Paul Watzlawick, of the Palo Alto Mental Research Institute, an institute that was a leader in the field of communication and the original home of Donald Jackson. Much has been written about Selvini, Prata, Boscolo and Cecchin. Their seminal publication was "Paradox and Counter Paradox" (1978) which served as a bible for an entire generation of therapists. Separately, Boscolo wrote, with , as well as .. Cecchin began to interest himself in social constructionism (1992). References are still frequently made to "the post Milan period", particularly where the work of narrative and constructionism are concerned. Many of us have been in their debt because they influenced our work as well as the direction it would eventually take.

Before describing the work of the Milan group and their global influence, it is necessary to make a distinction between self learning and institutional learning, both of which require a different change process. For me, adapting to, and being adopted by, the Milan people, was an intellectual reawakening. Their work required creativity as well as curiosity and not all of this was worked out with the family. The rigid

approach of psychoanalysis which was the “religion” of the hospital where I trained, required work that I was prepared to do. I first learned to work with individuals because at that time it was one way, and perhaps the quickest, to be taken seriously as a therapist. That's how you won your stripes. Group and family therapy were two ways of diversifying work with individuals which allowed one to deal with a broader context of their lives. A systemic approach, which I first learned from Boscolo and Cecchin, eventually was to present two limitations: the context was too narrow since they always dealt only with the family. The second problem, that has since been remedied, was a distance, an intellectual presence that lacked empathy. Since my own identity was forged on the proposition that we live our lives in relationships, I was concerned that we modeled very little in that regard.

From an institutional perspective, the process was more complicated. Our students, psychiatrists and psychologists who were fulfilling academic requirements, also included older, more experienced professionals who were attempting to expand their practices. They came into a program that was informed by a structural family therapy approach that had been introduced by my predecessors and were in the process of struggling with how this fit with their earlier training. Excited by the possibilities, I attempted to convert one and all to my new religion, while I was still in the process of learning the catechism.

Milan insisted on a team approach, for therapists as well as supervisors. The fact that they spoke Italian and English, while my people spoke French and Flemish became the lesser of our problems. It was the language of this new therapy that was difficult - it required not only a new way of interviewing and discussing issues and familiarizing oneself with a entire new literature that was more Wittgenstein than Satir, it necessitated a different way of understanding and a different organization to support all of these efforts. I owe an enormous debt to some of my colleagues who had faith in what I was endeavoring to create. There are those former participants in our training program to whom I always feel the need to apologize - however as a number of them are now heads of hospitals and training programs, the harm seems minimal - perhaps. My major error was the nature of involving others. One can state one's intentions, explain the reasons and offer leadership while encouraging conversation. One can build on other people's experience, even if at first it seems incongruent, but part of the

process needs to be in bringing it together. That's what leaders are supposed to do. When I was to work with organizations in the future, my own brief experience with managing a learning system became infinitely helpful. While I was in the midst of simultaneous discovery, integration and teaching, I wish I knew then what I know now.

The Milan Centro de Famiglia, was to make many contributions to the field, including Selvini's early work on anorexia and bulimia, circular questions (hypothesis, circularity and neutrality), and much that have been integrated into the work of many of us, including Peggy Penn (1985), Lynn Hoffman (1981), Karl Tomm (1985, 1987a, 1987b, 1987c), Helm Sterlin and the Heidelberg Group, and Tom Andersen (1992among many others.

The 'piece de resistance' for many was the "prescription" which was delivered after the group behind the mirror deliberated at some length in order to develop a number of hypotheses about the issues in the family that maintained its rigidity. The prescription would be delivered with great aplomb by the therapist, often accompanied by tasks to be performed by different members of the family. In the early years the prescription would be based on a paradoxical injunction which hopefully would lead the family to attempt another form of behavior. This involved assigning a different meaning to the actions that the family was taking that were perpetuating the symptom. If in fact they wished to preserve the meaning, they had to consider altering the action.

The Milan group was to separate in the late seventies, with Boscolo and Cecchin continuing the Center while Selvini and Prata, joined by Selvini's son, would continue their work separately. Selvini's best known work in those years was possibly the Universal Prescription (1988) , a feedback to the family, designed to bring about change, which would have general applicability to all systems and all situations. It never quite caught on.

Selvini spoke French and I invited her to work with my department at the Catholic University of Louvain, only to discover that this brilliant woman, whom I will always

respect and value, was more of a researcher than a teacher. The following year I asked Boscolo and Cecchin to meet for one week in Brussels with a group of family therapy leaders from many European countries, including England, Wales, France, Holland and Belgium. (This was in 1975 and the selection of the group was also dependent on everyone speaking English. This group met for two years. It was the first time that the two men had been invited to work in Europe outside of one conference).

For many of us, this required a shift from a more psychodynamic perspective to a hypothetical position. Interpretations were replaced by the therapists, as well as the observing team, developing and testing hypotheses. This gave greater latitude to the family to explore their own opinion than trying to make sense or find a fit for what the therapist suggested was operative. This approach also gave therapists better opportunities to explore secrets - i.e. "Should it happen that the family had a secret that it wanted to protect or a family story about someone - even an ancestor who is no longer alive - who would be most likely to reveal it/who does it bother the most/ who is least likely to talk about it/who will possibly be most angry if it is revealed?" "What impact to your mind has this secret had on the family - who most, who least?" The unique use of the questions that the Milan group had developed (1980) made a circular, or reflexive, rather than a linear form of conceptualizing operational. One had the possibility of creating a safe environment for sharing "forbidden" information.

In the early years, the Milan group worked with schizophrenia in a very specific manner. They would see the family monthly, in part because a number of the families traveled considerable distances to reach them. Although designed as a research study, the results were never formally published, only referred to in very general terms. It appears that the families, unable to sustain the month long wait, and having no other support systems such as those that exist in America, would consult other mental health professionals in the interim. Being either temporarily inspired by this method or despairing in the difficulty of working with some families, I attempted this approach - with the same results.

When their fame had reached many countries around the world, Boscolo and Cecchin held summer conferences for foreigners and, one year, invited a group of us to teach

along with them - Lynn Hoffman, Peggy Penn, Karl Tomm, Phillippe Caille, myself, among others. I attempted to introduce an approach which dealt with the problems experienced by a family with a sick child and the multiple groups of professionals that the family dealt with regularly when referred for help. The role play was not my most accomplished presentation (I could also tell because my colleagues were so loving, unchallenging and supportive afterwards) but it dealt with something other than families - the larger systems which have now been integrated into many training programs. My real sin was in deviating from what I had learned from Boscolo and Cecchin as I was to discover when everyone showed tapes of interviews and described the prescription with which they ended the session. (In fact if participants did not wish to partake in a number of activities that were made available, they would watch instead tapes of families and the final prescription.) In our first open disagreement, Cecchin accused, "why that was so Jay Haley". This was a truer insult than he imagined because, although I consider it a complement to be compared to Haley, I was to discover years later that Haley did not understand large, non family systems (personal communication, 1986) I, on my part, told Boscolo - he was easier to argue with - that they were perpetuating only part of what they offered - who could be as good as them in designing prescriptions. Eventually someone would be, and even their greatest admirers would need to expand their own learning. This eventually was to happen when Karl Tomm was to invite Humberto Maturana and Francesco Varela to Calgary, two Chilean biologists who introduced many of the ideas that shifted family therapy and systemic thinking into a revised consideration. Boscolo and Cecchin were always prepared to at least listen to new ideas. They toyed briefly with the work of communication experts Barnett Pearce and Vernon Cronen (1980) of the University of Massachusetts, but were once more caught up in cybernetics.

When I interviewed Gianfranco Cecchin for my book about the lives of world famous therapists who treat couples, he had become interested in constructionist theory, had authored a chapter (1992) and was planning to participate in writing a book. He was killed in a car accident three days before I was to conduct the second part of the interview. He had become interested in non family systems and joked about how he was supervising a subject which he knew so little about - but he was having fun and I don't doubt that those who consulted him were learning. A troubled man, Cecchin was

one of the most brilliant people in the field and was himself always open to learning. He was a lonely man who had many friends.

In the beginning, systems theory and Milan were, for me, part of the same story. I had read the work of the early cyberneticists, most specifically Norbert Weiner (1954) and von Bertalanffy (1950). The structuralists and Virginia Satir have also been described as 'systemists' but their approaches lacked the circularity and the self organizing aspect of systems thinking, and their interviews were not designed to enhance the reflexivity of the system, something that circular questions achieved so readily

The work with systems underwent its first major shift with the introduction of the 2nd Cybernetic. This challenged the more mechanical aspect of the 1st cybernetic in that it was not machine driven. The role of the observer was no longer outside the system but could only be part of it (von Foerster, 1970). Reality was co-created and there were multiple realities with equal authority. The question of intentions was put to rest, replaced by the fact that things happen. As a therapist who never believed in what was gained by assigning blame and had herself experienced many varied realities, this theoretical shift fit well with what I was already doing.

REFLECTION: Theory of Practice, Theory of Thought

It has been said that therapeutic skill has important intuitive and creative aspects that are difficult to teach – that you can't "borrow" someone else's insight that has been nurtured by personal experience. I don't necessarily agree with this dictum. Certainly new therapists require close supervision and, I would almost say, nurturing. We don't train clones and, even in their late twenties, students have some life experience to build on. They need to be in touch with what they feel, not try to "sell" themselves as something that they are not and be grounded in some theory that they can believe in.

It is perhaps necessary to make once again the distinction here between theory of practice and theory of thought. I require coherence between what I do, what I believe and theoretical information that provides a direction and structure that is necessary for each consultation. The inter-psychic explanations tend to put all of the eggs in one basket. Ego Psychology and Object Relations held less professional appeal to the practitioner in me, in that each offered a particular perspective in the psychodynamic

framework, whereas I was at that time less interested specifically in individual behavior. Interpretations appeared to rely on singular explanations and were rarely challenged by patients. My early training, particularly in groups, had been informed by a psychoanalytic as well as a psychodynamic point of view. Of interest intellectually, I enjoyed learning about groups, which included the Tavistock Group Relations (Rice, 1965), T-groups (Lewin, 1976), Transactional Analysis (Berne, 1996) as well as psychoanalytic work in groups with couples (Massachusetts Group Psychotherapy Association). I questioned some of the underlying theories: the Tavistock was informed by an analytic approach and encouraged anger and acting out, T-Groups seemed to have less to do with Lewin and in action presented a mix of what everyone had to say from Maslow to Perls and so on. Transactional Analysis was friendly but put fixed labels on people and their behavior. One learns from all of them but I had concerns about each. Also, I was searching for a guiding theory that dealt with people, relationships and context.

The theories that interested me were those that went further than the ones they replaced in identifying the vagaries of human behavior. Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1988) provided biological descriptions at a time when the genome was of more interest than quantum physics. It was the time of glasnost in Russia, the Solidarity movement in Poland and, perhaps most important, biology was the key that was beginning to unlock the mystery of our bodies; so why not also our behavior?

Autopoiesis And Systems

I believe it to have been Canadian psychiatrist Karl Tomm who introduced Chilean biologists Maturana and Varela to family therapy. He, with a number of members of his team, has worked diligently to introduce new ideas into the field. The fact that there was such ready acceptance of their ideas couched in a language that was not always simple to grasp, suggests to me that we were ready to move on – certainly the constraints of working systemically with a mathematically driven model, although enlightening at first, was not working for any of us. We had lost something of the relationship with our clients and had never fully believed in the black box. Harry Goolishian and Harlene Anderson (1988), among others, began to speak of therapy as conversation and Michael White and David Epston (White and Epston, 1990) in Australia started writing about narrative therapy. Although both sets of ideas were not

entirely new to the field, the approach our colleagues were introducing was creative and satisfying. Chileans were received readily by many of us who were seeking out additional explanations to what we were observing in systems, particularly the larger ones not necessarily focused on the nuclear family. Along with the relationship, we were interested in how change happened.

Before I elaborate on the impact of the Santiago Theorists on my practice and teaching, as well as the field of my specialty in general, it is necessary that I make three qualifying comments; a number of my remarks are the result of conversations with Maturana when I was first introduced to his ideas and was filling the dialogue with many “yes, but” inquiries. Also, I collaborated with Varela in a workshop dealing with the application of his and Maturana’s ideas to non-family systems. Lastly I have been very much influenced by the work of Fritjof Capra (1996), an Austrian physicist who has written extensively and with great clarity on the philosophical implications of modern science. His book, “The Web of Life” has served me in organizing my own ideas about Maturana and Varela. A number of explanations that one can find in this excellent book are identical to what I heard from Maturana – and less frequently from Varela – and I will therefore not always credit Capra directly for that material. I will however acknowledge both his mastery of the subject of systems and its invaluable help to me when I first read it.

It is difficult to simplify in a few brief paragraphs what Maturana and Varela proposed. Their theory is centered on the notion of autopoiesis, which describes how living systems interact with one another and their environment. The word autopoiesis is derived from two ancient Greek words, ‘auto’ meaning self and ‘poiesis’ denoting production or creation. For Maturana the theory of autopoiesis was a way of understanding cognitive phenomena. Simply put, the theory was based on the way living systems address and engage within the domains in which they operate: all living systems are cognitive because living is a process of cognition – of knowledge. All living systems are defined by the following criteria – structure, pattern and process (Capra, 1996, p. 67). Maturana and Varela distinguished between structure and organization: organization according to them was about the patterns in which systems were ‘organized’, or self-organized - their shape and sequencing for instance – the way in which the component parts relate to one another to evoke a description of

what purpose they may possibly serve. Structure refers to the physical as opposed to the descriptive elements of an object or person – their chemical composition that makes them what they are.

Both the context and the structure adapt to each other over time. Change happens through what they called structural coupling which is the underlying process of cognition. The structure may change according to the elements introduced by the environment, but one cannot predict what that change will look like.

My personal experience, that has remained with me all of these years, was when Maturana – waving his long scarf while he made circles with his arm – said to me that when we speak we are only moving air, we have little idea of what the listener has made of our comments. This dramatically opened yet another door to the notion that we know what we know and learn through other methods than explanations. (I found this very reassuring for some reason, perhaps because it meant that I had always been right about therapists who gave advice that was only received if the ‘hearer’ was prepared. And that we had no idea how this advisement was understood.)

Family Therapy In The 21st Century

Family therapy has been blessed with a number of interesting individuals who introduced ways of working with clients and new ways of describing their work. Michael White of the Dulwich Centre in South Australia, best known for his contribution to, and leadership in, the work of narrative therapy, came into the field via a study of social work, from a blue collar occupation. His work is directive, somewhat in the spirit of Milton Erickson (1980). One example of the work of this very creative therapist is the technique of giving an identity to a symptom and referring to it in the third person - as the ‘kaka’ for instance in a situation of encopresis – thus suggesting that it was not in the control of the individual who everyone is attempting to ‘cure’ of this rather bad habit. White, along with New Zealander David Epston, has also written extensively about their experience with the narrative form of therapy, including White’s book on transparency in therapy (White, 1997).

The need for a more ethical, open and transparent posture gradually did away with the “behind the mirror” conversations about the family to the reflecting teams that have conversations in the presence and with the family. The dark viewing room with its one way mirror that separated the “supervision team” from the “therapist team” was powerful stuff. We could call each other out or telephone in all sorts of information that we either wanted to know or were imparting – as long as it was a secret from the family or the couple. Until one day we decided to share these discussions with our clients. Many people have been credited with this shift and one of the first to describe his work in writing about it was Norwegian psychiatrist Tom Andersen (1987) . Like many others, I abandoned the enclave behind the one way mirror many years ago, in part out of sheer discomfort and the conviction that our clients know a great deal about their own story when provided with a safe venue in which to tell it.

Years of work, as well as a public educated in the vagaries of psychotherapy, has led me, and others, to the conviction that psychotherapists needn’t and shouldn’t work in the self protective shroud of mystery. This will be discussed further in Chapter 4, which deals with the person of the therapist as well as secrecy.

My own work gradually led me away from the focus on the family and the inclusion of other systems in people’s lives, including that of work. This was reflected in training psychiatrists by beginning with an inquiry into their patient’s entire system, with an emphasis on work. Who were the people the patient worked with and what did they do; what were those relationships like? I discovered that many physicians had no idea what an organizational chart looked like. This approach has also reduced the conceit among young therapists of knowing it all. A little humility is not a bad thing.

The advantages of the extended systemic focus, as well as distinctions shed between therapy and consultation that discouraged pathologizing, were soon apparent to my group of trainees as they became more skilled in understanding the broader life of those with whose care they were charged. They quickly learned that families had multiple roles and that their patients belonged to multiple systems.

Focus On Alcoholism: An Accidental Specialty

For many years, my own work with families was largely defined by who came into the clinic. As a teacher, supervisor and clinician I was able to see a great variety of people with an assortment of complaints. Although alcoholism was not of particular interest, the number of people referred to us made learning more imperative. Among prominent family therapists working with alcoholism, was Peter Steinglass (1976), who is now the Director of the Ackerman Center in N.Y. The American literature was over represented by writing on children of alcoholic families and even Steinglass represented this point of view in his writing, although at a more sophisticated level. A non systemic researcher and one of the most brilliant to examine all form of substance abuse, remains Howard Schaffer of the Zinberg Center at Harvard University (Schaffer, 1981).

We saw families and couples and wondered if we were doing any good. Curiosity led me conduct a follow up study of twelve families with an alcohol abusing member two years after treatment. George Valiant (1983), who has done the most extensive study of male alcoholics over forty years suggested to me that two year follow ups do not constitute research. However, I had discovered that three of the individuals that we had seen in the clinic, who had taken great strides in changing their lives, had died. One male of the group was over fifty, the other female and male were in their late forties. Two had died of cancer, one of liver disease, which was less surprising. Of the other nine, six had moved out of Belgium. The association with early death after detoxification, of something other than pancreatic or liver disease, or changes in brain cell activity, was not documented in the literature and I was therefore concerned as well as curious. After further inquiries into the health of “recovering” alcoholics, I was more confused then before. However, I was equally interested to understand better the impact of interventions with these families. The Americans are sobriety driven: in Europe we also prioritize detoxification, without always insisting on total lifetime withdrawal. I had no answer as to why these people had died, nor what it was that we were doing that might also be harmful. I had a few untested hypotheses: one was that if there was to be change, it would have to be in the larger context and that it should not be forced. This seemed a somewhat generic observation in that the system appears to organize itself around a symptom – in this case excessive consumption of alcohol – so that any connection to the system needed to be part of an existing story.

What is it that makes the drinking unacceptable? It is rarely the actual consumption of a product; it is usually some behavior that is associated with that consumption. And who is the most bothered and how do they manifest that concern? My other two hypothesis that one of the higher powers often referred to in the treatment of alcoholism might reside somewhere in the larger context that also included the family and that secrecy, not only about the drinking, played a role in isolating these people from what should have been their daily lives.

I referred to this higher power as “the system of influence”, those in the system who held the power, either through information or an authority with which we were not familiar. (I postulate that this nucleus could also be found in other systems.) One can further hypothesize that all of this influence does not necessarily come from the wife, often perceived as the partner in helping to maintain her husband’s symptoms in what has been called enabling. Nor inevitably the colleagues at work who help with the cover up, but a combination of efforts that are not necessarily coordinated but maintain the self-regulation of the system, which includes not only the drinking but the accompanying behavior. Based on that hypothesis, it becomes a therapeutic goal to understand better what other purpose this ‘system of influence’ serves and who is helped by it. Unlike most “programs” that dealt with alcoholism, my decision was not to develop an intervention strategy for the family/system but to enter into a discussion in which they were the experts of their shared problem, if that is how they saw it. Also, I opened the door to exploring how they had been successful in dealing with other “problems” that they had confronted. It is the family that was knowledgeable about how they had dealt with similar concerns, as well as disagreements. Also what were some of the resources, should they find themselves wishing to “do” something additional that they could call on. It was important to me that therapists were viewed as transitional figures, as resources rather than saviors.

And so I found myself thrust into an unexpected “specialty”. With the help of then psychiatry department chief, Dr. Leon Cassiers, and under the chairmanship of Dr. J.P. Roussaux, we set out to create a context in which to test some of our ideas.

Necessity is the Mother of Invention

I am not certain how to introduce my own contributions to therapeutic work into this dissertation, other than to say that they are representative of how one’s thinking can

be transformed by relationships, as mine was by a burgeoning clientele of people who drank, their families and my colleagues. I have not always been satisfied with the relationships that we co-created with clients, and this was especially true of those who drank. There was largely a stereotypical attitude towards drinking problems. Wives or partners were quickly identified as co-dependents and patients, often to be found on medical wards and treated with disrespect. In America they lectured them, as if this was supposed to be helpful and in Europe we were also not especially respectful. Families would present themselves with a reluctant drinking member and we found more elegant methods of blaming them than the Americans.

What follows was an effort of breaking the cycle of blame and broadening the context of help. I was fortunate to work with Drs. Roussaux, Derely and Mme. Van Den Bosch who were knowledgeable collaborators.

THREE PHASES OF TREATMENT OF EXCESSIVE USE OF ALCOHOL (As classified by WHO)

We divided the consultation process into three phases: the first was to identify, with those present, the system that somehow aided and abetted in the no-change aspect of the system; and what purpose it served. Most important, the first call for help in a system with alcoholism is usually initiated by the spouse or partner, with a reluctant “patient”, who has been identified as the problem holder, coming along unwillingly to be “taken care of” by the experts.

We decided to begin with the person requesting assistance, almost never the designated “alcoholic” and most frequently the spouse or partner. In other words, we would say “Please come and explain the issue to us and bring everyone else in the family to help – but we need you because you’re the one who knows, and you are also suffering.” This was explained when someone first called for an appointment. By changing the roles of troubled and helper, we immediately eliminated a large part of the ‘blaming game’. We also created a certain amount of perturbations, by focusing on the problems of the person who had sought us out, so that the system could not quite operate on a “business as usual” basis. This tended to immediately modify the story. It also encouraged a change in the language and in some of the rules. Often, the drinking individual would argue to take back the role of the problem bearer and we

found that this also facilitated entry into detoxification, when it was indicated. This could be phase two and was administered by the hospital. However, hospital staff who were exposed to our changed definitions would, over time, adapt to a changed perspective. Having scarce hospital beds occupied by someone identified as an alcoholic often angers hospital staff, particularly since this type of patient is often a repeater. It is not unusual, in the French language, to hear alcoholics referred to by the familiar 'tu' while others are addressed by the honorific 'vous'.

The first phase of the intervention that I designed was focused on the following; for family members to begin taking responsibility for their own needs, not only those of the alcohol abusing member and to better understand the role of drinking and being a drinking person in the system. It also focused on identifying the system of influence.

The second dealt with detoxification, usually carried out in a hospital, under the care of a physician. Although Dr. Roussaux conducted several "at home" supervised detoxifications, I was personally rarely involved with this process. My own experience suggests that a detox on a medical rather than a psychiatric ward has some benefits – the primary one being that the problem is not immediately perceived as a psychiatric symptom. Also, the medically supervised detox can identify health problems more efficiently.

The third phase normally takes place in the hospital. This involves bringing together all of those who are likely to involve themselves in the life of the family, others who we thought should, and particularly those powerful few who have been identified as the system of influence. Basically, we ask each member of the extended family, including the children, to invite someone who would come as their exclusive support. The individual who abused substance also is required to choose someone other than their partner. The first session in this phase, which would continue for some time on a monthly basis would take place before discharge, or two to three weeks after admission.

This phase is largely defined by the needs of the family and their extended system. It is often part negotiation but the negotiating is managed by the family with assistance from the therapist only for the purpose of clarification and meaning. (What does this

process mean to the family? How has it influenced their joint actions as well as their interactions?) The therapist can also be helpful in encouraging them to each tell their stories and eventually to move on. This is not supposed to serve as a reporting session about drinking. The focus should not be on the person who drinks or drank. If there is concern about continuing alcohol consumption, it should be dealt with by the primary care provider, not family and friends.

Women And Alcohol

I cannot leave this subject without insisting on how badly women who drink have tended to be treated . Men's drinking used to be attributed to stress, overwork and other reasons of significance to the survival of the family. Women, on the other hand, were given little respect: they were perceived as being neglectful of their family tasks, mothering and taking responsibility for their duties as homemakers. This was true even if they also happened to be employed. "Nice" women did not drink. At a series of meetings that I convened with female colleagues in the 1980s (Ann Owen, an internist, Arlette Seghers, a psychiatrist and Maggy Simeon, a psychologist), we came to the conclusion that it was more honorable in our society to take prescription medication and to have psychiatric symptoms than it was to drink. Many of the women we saw at the clinic were self-treating depression - as were the men - but the women were more readily treated with anti-depressants which they readily took.

Treatment of women alcoholics has improved over the years as clinics were established with that singular purpose. However, when I suggested this at that time I was basically told that women were more interesting as patients and no one wanted to treat men only.

Americans were taken by the theory that alcoholism runs in families, especially among the children of alcoholics. There were studies of twins who were separated at birth but had a biological parent who drank excessively that supported some of these ideas. My curiosity led me to interview forty-four sets of siblings with at least one drinking parent. They ranged in age from late teens to fifty-four. Their stories were filled with memories of abuse, neglect and anger as well as disrupted relationships, in and outside the family. However, I was never convinced that the drinking was necessarily hereditary. Among the siblings, there were those who could be termed

alcoholic but what was most marked was how the drinking of a parent was disruptive to the brothers and sisters ability to function as a sub-system: one may have become the care taker, another may have withdrawn as much as possible from the others and maintained this into adulthood. One of their losses was that which they could have gotten from each other, both in support and in learning.

In the last dozen years, my interest has been directed more and more to non family systems – hospitals and corporations. Although I've been involved in the development of managers, it is working directly with the system itself and co-creating a context in which they find alternative ways of working that has been singularly satisfactory. Because the ideas are generated by the members of the system themselves and are not prescribed or suggested by consultants, the changes begin to take place even at the very point of exploration. The team is always addressed as a system. Good fellowship is not an objective, nor are their personal relationships. There is a built in value system based on the need to treat employees correctly and almost always it emerges from the program participants. If it is not apparent, in the tradition of “circular questions”, I or a colleague may ask “If it were to happen that people’s rights were not being taken into consideration, who in or outside the company would raise this as an issue?”

As the need for families and, most particularly couples, to deal with the needs of two careers, growing children and aging parents, becomes more prominent in the US, the boundary between family and work is less defined. It is no longer a question of balance but more of management, of self and others. For women of my generation, the choice of career was often not ours to make, and, in my age group, frequently in the face of criticism as well as admiration. For young families today, often one parent families, the choice is often guided by the expediency of a monthly salary.

If I appear to have involved myself in a number of different enterprises rather than to have stayed the course with substance abuse or consulting or one of the areas of work that I have explored, I can only add that I've always been a working psychotherapist and teacher, one who has perhaps relocated more often than she wished to but has also learned from that experience. Like many of us who come from the culture of hospitals and clinics, I have always attempted to understand therapeutic relationships form a

societal perspective and search out ways of being with clients that was relevant to what was going on in the world – theirs and mine. My interest for quite some time has been in the therapist as opposed to the therapy: who are these in whom people put their trust?

In Chapter Four I will elaborate, from the existing literature as well as my own experience, how therapists navigate personal and professional boundaries, particularly in their work with couples and families. It is not an easy world to live in, politically, socially and for many economically, the minimum that we can give is our full competence, attention and respect. I remain interested in exploring when it is useful and when it may be damaging to the therapy to be transparent. The chapter will also deal with identity because it is apparent that in any relationship – and especially in this one – it seems essential to understand identity formation, including one's own. This chapter will examine memory – the reconstruction of experience – as well as secrets, how they have been dealt with in the literature as well as in what we refer to as therapeutic work.

CHAPTER 4: THE PERSON OF THE THERAPIST, IDENTITY, MEMORY AND SECRETS

‘The true story of a therapeutic exchange begins not with the patient’s present problem but with the healer’s past.’

This chapter will deal with the person of the therapist and refer to identity, memory and secrets in order to clarify the components of a therapeutic relationship. The primary therapeutic relationship to be examined will be that which is transparent: I consider this to be a necessary direction for the issues that I perceive will be important to clinicians in the 21st Century. My perception is supported by the emerging literature that will be cited.

Therapists’ identities have long been a mysterious component of the psychotherapy relationship. Therapists hear secrets as well as keep them, about themselves as well as others. Narrative autobiography is a valuable tool for researching and recovering memories, along with developing an understanding of the ways they are co-generated. In order for a therapist to be authentic, it would seem to me more important than ever for a therapist to know her background and what influences have contributed in defining what she is about.

The subject of this chapter is guided by a certain type of therapeutic relationship — one that is authentic, open when appropriate and committed to the notion that therapy is, in the final analysis, co-generated in the relationship and interaction with clients. This relationship is based in part on transparency and self-disclosure. This kind of relationship is not always accomplished with ease, especially for those clinicians among us who have worked extensively in psychiatric clinics and by training were restrained in the information that we shared with clients. This method may be complicated further by the concealment, conscious or unconscious, of issues in our private as well as our professional lives. The identity and secrets that make up the self are critical for understanding who therapists are. It is not a method of conducting therapy; it is more of a belief system that those who consult are valuable human beings and should be treated with the respect accorded to anyone who thinks well enough of us to seek our help

The literature discussing transparency in therapy is a developing field of study, and although some of the newer literature is tentative in nature, it is attempting to establish a basis for further study. Self-disclosure, which has a long history that goes back to Freud, refers to that information that the therapist chooses to reveal about her- or himself. Self-disclosure, whether intended or not, is always a by-product of any relationship, including therapy. However, it may be used strategically to arrive at certain reactions and results. The term transparency refers to a more general description of the philosophy or belief system that the therapist has accepted as a mode of behavior in the therapeutic relationship. At the same time, it is also the description of a therapeutic relationship. It may begin with a therapist asking a client about the central issues that concern him and asking about what he wants to know. The therapist shares information about her perception about the relevant issue in the client's complaint and gives feedback while being attentive to the concerns of the client. It is a relationship of equality, in which the therapist may remain the expert in her domain, but the client is also an acknowledged 'expert' on a variety of subjects, including what ails him. The therapist makes information available to the client and may share charts as well as notes. The therapist may choose to disclose personal information, but that is not the *sine qua non* of the relationship.

A discussion of transparency requires an enquiry into the notions of identity and self, since the identity of the therapist, the self that interacts with the client, is important to the type of therapeutic relationship that will eventually be established. This exploration of identity and self are guided by a social constructionist perspective, and also concerns the subjects of memory and secrecy. In therapy, the use of narrative autobiography raises issues about the meaning of memory. Also, how one deals with secrecy — the therapist's as well as the clients — is an important aspect of understanding what therapists do with their secrets and how they approach the secrets, shared and unshared, of their clients.

Before continuing, I wish to take a side trip, as it were, into popularly held misconceptions about therapy and therapists, psychology and psychiatry. And particularly about transparency as a relational choice. Such a commentary is

necessitated largely by the confusion between the different types of psychotherapy and a tendency in the public domain to assume that to be open somehow does not meet with the seriousness expected from the traditional view. This misconception is based in part on images and tales of patients stretched out on couches in the presence of a silent therapist. Transparency is not about the type or style of psychotherapy, nor is it about whether it is a psychiatrist or a psychologist who is the therapist. (In America, it can also be an M.S.W.) Clients searching out therapists have also been known to associate transparency as something that non-medical people do.

As most of us know, there are many times that medical knowledge is both necessary and helpful, and psychiatrists can prescribe the medication that is necessary for many of those that seek help. I wish to avoid the debate about the growing importance of the medical bias in all of psychotherapy. And, in a short period of time, psychologists in America will also be dispensing medication.

Psychology has many facets. Neuropsychological, for instance, as a sub-specialty, is most useful in cases that resist neurological evaluation. Instruments like the Wisconsin Card Sort or the Rey-Osterreith Complex Figure test pull up problems in attention and information processing that are especially useful for patients with, for example, prefrontal injuries that may present with temper-control problems. They may also manifest discreet personality changes that they describe make them feel 'like different from what they were before'. Fascinated as I am by this subspecialty, I know less about it than I would like to. This is not a paean to clinical psychology but in many areas the training in psychotherapy, the two professions of psychiatry and psychology are more similar than they appear to the public. The idea sometimes appears to be that if you need 'support therapy', a psychologist is your specialist of choice.

Transparency has nothing to do with what we sometimes call 'supportive therapy'. Although expressions and acts of support are at times helpful, this may also be the last thing that people require even when they are hurting. In the hands of the inadequately trained, too much joining — which is not what we mean by transparency — can cause harm by creating overdependence on the 'good and ready advice' that some therapists provide. The therapist who may mention that they have seen a member of their own

family treated for depression with success, the neuropsychologist who provides the patient with information and full explanations, the psychopharmacologist who elaborates for the patient exactly what the medication does to the brain, and may even mention that a member of his or her family was helped by the same prescription — those forms of self-disclosure may also be the decisions towards participating in a transparent therapeutic relationship. It should be clear that the therapist does not give up her or his professional role in the relationship. One can offer more than only professional expertise because there many facets to who we are. Transparency refers to how you take others into account.

SELF-DISCLOSURE AND TRANSPARANCY: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It seems relevant to begin the discussion on the relationship between client and therapist at its earliest source, psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytic literature that addresses itself to counter transference , the therapist's personal reaction to the patient, is rich and goes back to Freud (1909) and Winnicott (1949). One does not have to be a psychoanalyst to appreciate Epstein, Feiner, (1979) who, in contradiction to earlier theorists, understand counter transference to be an inevitable and useful tool in the therapeutic process.

Among family therapists, positions on self-disclosure and transparency have been emphasized by Bowen (1978), the feminist therapists Goldner (1985) and Hare Mustin (1978), narrative therapy by White, Epston (1990), Whittaker (1982), and the introduction of reflective teams by Andersen (1992), as well as Bortolino and O'Hanlon (2002) in their focus on collaboration. Feminists writing about self-disclosure and transparency were among the first, as in Mahlick, van Ormer and Simi (2000).

The current literature dealing more directly with the person of the therapist includes a diverse group of writers. Rowan and Jacobs' (2002) work is an eclectic, somewhat loose approach to examining the 'selves' of the therapist that they identify as instrumental, authentic and transpersonal (p.5). It is also in part an attempt at commenting on what is changing in psychology. The narrative view is well

represented by White (1997), and White, C., and Hales (1997). Michael White, the author of the first book, puts forth the interesting view that in becoming a professional, the therapist disqualifies and marginalizes 'the knowledge that has been generated in a person's history . . . for the formal and expert knowledge of the professional discipline' (p.1). The consequence of this is that in the 'formalization of knowledge, persons become differently knowledged' (p.17); the price is a disconnection with one's own context of reference. White continues, 'To know that we know what we know, and to consciously embrace this knowledge as we live our lives, it is necessary for us to experience a degree of authenticity in our knowledge claims' (p.13). In an entirely different vein, and dealing more directly with the clinical than philosophy and personal belief systems, is Weiner (1978, 1983). This book is clearly written by a knowledgeable, long-time clinician, and in that way the most thorough of the ones that I have read. Although operating primarily from a psychodynamic, individual and group therapy perspective, Weiner deals effectively with the pros and cons of self-disclosure in a clinical setting.

What is especially significant in the literature dealing with the topics of both transparency and self-disclosure is the number of journal publications on that topic; including Roberts (2005), Horne (1999), Harris, Dersch, and Mittal (1999), Timm and Blow (1999) Carlson and Erickson (1999). They largely address themselves to issues regarding supervision, except for Roberts who takes on the subject of the therapist as well as supervision. Much of this writing, including the books by both Whites (and Hales) reflects a personal nature and suggests that much of the more serious research and academic work is still to come.

In therapy, the way in which one establishes relationships differs whether one is working with an individual or a couple or family. Rowen and Jacobs (2002) suggest that in systemic therapy no distinction is made between the self of the therapist and the role she or he takes up in the family, and that therapists and their team are 'seen as simply parts of a larger whole'. (P.15) Furthermore, they point out that 'the therapist becomes just an instrument of the team, following orders given by them' (p.15). This assumption typifies the lack of understanding, or misunderstanding, about what is meant by 'roles'. Unless one is referring to a role-play, being a psychotherapist is only one of the many roles that one has in one's relational life. We are also multiple selves.

Does that mean that when I'm in the role of 'mother', I'm not being my 'real self'? Or are we saying that in the role of mother — as in the role of therapist — I speak with the voice that is called forth by that relationship and the needs of the situation? The values, the belief system, the world view of the person who is the therapist — or the mother — may or may not be the same. It is how you use them that is relevant. How you 'use' yourself. And finally, it is the context and those others involved who co-determine the role and the behavior.

Self - Disclosure and Transparency: In the Service of the Therapeutic Relationship

Psychotherapy is a professional relationship in which a clear contract is established to provide a service for monetary compensation or as part of a professional obligation. The role of the therapist is in part dictated by the rituals of therapy, but even those can be modified to meet the circumstances. Family therapy requires the therapist to hold a conversation and be attentive to the messages of more than one person. But the goal is to listen while you create a context through your questions for them to speak to, and about whatever is important to them and to each other (Selvini, Cecchin, Prata, Boscolo, 1978). Family therapy is not a series of one-on-one dialogues: it is about a group of people, connected by blood, obligations, experience, wants and concerns, to find a new pathway to managing this most complex of relationships — the family. The hard part for the therapist is to feel the pain and the anger, the regrets, the losses and the frustration, to empathize with each of them. It is also difficult for the therapist to be aware of her or his feelings about what is going on and not to allow these feelings to intrude. If there is any disclosure at this point, it shouldn't cut across the family's conversation: it should be directly related to what they are talking about and should not be triumphant information about how the therapist resolved the issue. If anything, one can empathize with the difficulty and support the resourceful way in which they are approaching the issue.

As for the relationship with the observing team, even while in supervision, the neophyte therapist can be called upon and instructed, but finally she can do it her way. The earlier models of family therapy were more intrusive — those outside the room could call the therapist out, telephone or send in messages (Minuchin, 1974). The people behind the mirror appeared to the family to be a power that they could not influence, but it was nevertheless the therapist who made many of the decisions and

was always what she could only be — a human being with her own values and feelings and ideas. The journals, particularly *Family Process* and *The Networker* are beginning to reflect the need to continue this process of self-examination.

Earlier family therapy did not guide us towards openness. Sal Minuchin, Jay Haley and the other leaders of the structural and strategic movement insisted on clear boundaries between therapists and the family that were to be rigidly enforced. (I've often wondered how much the slight arrogance of a Minuchin and the discomfort with people of the equally brilliant Haley contributed to this decision.) The loose cannon was Carl Whittaker who could come close and be distant, but his style was largely informed by provocation, which often worked, and sometimes didn't (Whittaker, 1982).

Sitting behind the mirror or in the audience, I saw Whittaker put a somewhat overweight adolescent on his knee and talk to him about being adopted into his family. The boy immediately took on the affect of the lost child — well, it worked for Whittaker.

The Milan group in the early years was also distant, and spoke to, rather than with, the family, except for Gianfranco Cecchin, who, with his impish sense of humour, managed to get closer. The distancing style changed with the advent of the second cybernetic and the greater involvement of the persons behind the mirror. The more critical rebellion of some of us students may also have modified the rules of association.

Whether working with individuals, couples or families, transparency remains a way of negotiating a psychotherapeutic relationship which is open to information sharing and feedback. It requires the therapist to focus on issues that are central to the reason for the consultation, while maintaining an authenticity during the exchange.

The essential factor, whether it is individual or family therapy, is an understanding of what is central to the client's concerns. The early part of the session does not seem to me to be the moment to connect with the client by saying that you share in the concern. If it is very close to an unresolved issue that the therapist is also dealing with, this may be the moment for the therapist to have the discussion elsewhere. I

remember a man in Boston consulting me because of a specific problem he was dealing with. He told me that he had first called Lynn Hoffman who had told him that his problem was too close to something that she was attempting to resolve and that he would be better off with someone else. It is best to do this when the person first calls for an appointment or to understand it very early on in the session so that there is no sense of rejection. But it is necessary to be open about it. Transparency requires therapists to be open and authentic but to remember that it is the client's story and needs that come first.

The relationship between therapists and clients has always been of concern. Transparency in the form of openness and self-disclosure may have begun with Freud who, in the midst of a therapy session with his client the Wolfman, shared the information that his son had been in an accident and had been hurt but was recovering (Freud, 1909). Other clues about Freud's personal discussions with clients have been talked about but, nevertheless, he criticized Sandor Ferenczi for showing too much affection to his patients as a way of compensating for their lack of parental love.

Leston Havens, a valued and much respected professor and analyst, once interjected, in the midst of Grand Rounds at Harvard, that it is often important for a therapist to act against the patient's transference by injecting a note of personal reality into the therapy. This apparently was meant as a note of warning that even the traditional among analysts needed to step out of the rigid and distant posture that they maintained.

I think back to Carl Rogers and his client-centered therapy that troubled me so many years ago. Roger's dictum was that genuineness, unconditional positive regard and empathy were the backbone of properly executed psychotherapy (Rogers, 1957). Why did I, a strong proponent of transparency, have such difficulty in accepting that? Was it because the man himself was distant and seemed to be using his model of therapy as an instrument — which he had every right to do without being judged by a newcomer like myself to the profession. Or did it perhaps have something to do with the politics of the time? The Vietnam War was a disturbing event for many of us, and the general result at the university (and no doubt elsewhere) was summed up in the slogan 'let's make love not war'. In psychotherapy, especially groups, it was the moment of

encounters, of bonding and holding and hugging clients, a physical boundary I could not cross for many years — and then, very rarely and primarily with women who had been sexually abused or otherwise violated. I agreed with Karl Meninger who has been quoted as calling the transgression of physical contact between therapist and client taboo. However, in the seventies, when even in training, the focus was on self-revelation, I remember freezing up.

The humanistic psychology movement may have begun as a reaction to the sterility and neutrality of psychoanalysis, but it left me in a quandary. I argued at many admission meetings for the need to focus away from psychopathology, towards human potential. But I also felt that at times the therapist's attitude of neutrality permitted a more open discourse with a client who needed space to talk about severe problems of despair and confusion. Therapists may understand this theoretically and intellectually, but we haven't felt the pain. (Even if some of us have felt pain in our own encounters.) And the client doesn't want to hear that we fully accept her or him no matter what; sometimes they need to talk about not being accepted, not being understood. My telling clients that I also had survived the Holocaust had to be dealt with carefully, and with great finesse. (This was not a self-evident task and one that I often ignored with my silence.) Timing seemed more important than what was said. The new understanding in the humanistic approach was that healing in therapy will emerge from the therapeutic relationship, but this fragile relationship needs to be managed with honesty, with good clinical judgment and with great care.

Self-disclosure means that from time to time therapists divulge something of their own experience to the client. It can be helpful. It can open up and make available venues that the client has not been able to walk through or work through. It can also be perceived as a form of competitiveness. (I did it.) Usually, it works. It did for Freud. As to whether this was because the Wolf man was purported to be suffering from something that Freud identified as infantile neurosis, I have no idea. Like other efforts, it has to be used with discretion.

It sometimes doesn't work with clients who are manipulative and can use it against the therapist. Also, clients do not live with the same rules of confidentiality as therapists. (If you don't want the entire hospital to know that your brother was

addicted, be careful how you frame it.) What's important — and it at times became a mantra that I repeated to my students — is to remember that self-disclosure is not a gimmick, nor can it simply be a response to the therapist's need, or even wish, to share. And it can never be about the therapist; it has to be about the therapy. There always has to be a reason for self-disclosure, that it connects you in a way that is helpful in managing this co-generated relationship.

The decision that it is necessary for psychotherapy to become more transparent was not taken by the profession alone. It has emerged as a result of a better-informed public. There are still, of course, clients who wish to be led blindly to a satisfactory result, often by therapists whose advice is sprinkled and driven throughout the relationship. There are other clients who are frightened, either because of the specificity of their illness — delusions, vivid hallucinations — or medically induced confusion, even from medication that is necessary, although it results in creating ghost-like figures without will. There are therapists who exaggerate their openness and availability, at the risk of client's seeing it as yet another trick, a manipulation. There are always indications in therapy when the client wants information, wants something more. The final decision as to whether someone can benefit from therapist's self-disclosure is also the clients'. And their message is often clear. The therapist may choose to disclose personal information, but that is not the sine qua non of the relationship.

As Sheila MacNamee has written, transparency and self-disclosure do not replace the understanding that therapy is being created in engaged activities with others that are in constant flux and (one in which) possibilities are open. (McNamee, 2005).

THE PERSON OF THE THERAPIST: THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY

Psychotherapy may be described as a story told by two or more people, the therapist and the client(s). Both their identities are constructed in the stories that they tell about themselves. (Murray in Shotter and Gergen, 1989). And both draw on this shared narrative to make sense of the world (Sarbin,1986) in order to define their place in the social order.(Harre, 1983). Which identity, or identities, evolve and emerge in this minor drama that we call therapy, depends on the relationship that they are able to

realize. In a therapy that is transparent, the person of the therapist is required – or allows – a number of identities to emerge that both represent her or him and are deemed to be necessary for the client and the relationship at that moment in time. The identity of the therapist, the self that interacts with the client is important to the type of therapeutic relationship that will eventually be established.

What then do we mean by identity? Each of us has any number of identities that distinguish us. We are professionals in our work and mothers or fathers, sisters, brothers or someone's daughter or son in our private lives. We are Canadian or Dutch, male or female, Caucasian or Asian – and so it goes. These are but a few of the characteristics that we draw on: these ideas of self are all constructed in our relationships with others. Self and identity have an important place in any study of who we are as people, as they are both at the center of making sense of one's life. Who people eventually become is further influenced by the views that they hold of what they are like, the way that they would like to be, how they want to be perceived, and what in all of these wishes seems possible. We do not decide singly on who we are or may become; that knowledge is constructed in language practices of people in relation to one another, because we create our realities in interaction with others. Also, conceptions of one's evolving self, one's 'advancement' as it were, are re-examined and re-evaluated in relationships. The meaning that we give to this development is co-created in the culture in which it takes place and is further influenced by a multitude of forces. However, we may be able to position ourselves to draw on the "conversational resources of different communities of speakers". (Cecchin, taken from an interview about therapy with couples.)

Further theories of identity suggest that identity is also a result of environmental factors, and that our identities, developed in interactions with others, are only a small part of a larger picture of who we become. Among these theories are those of the social constructionists. Gergen (1991) argues that technological advancements have altered the identities of individuals in many ways: the effect of this', he writes, 'has been to shift to an understanding of the self from the essentialist one — the contained and stable self of earlier centuries — to a self whose identity is rooted in a postmodern plethora of relationships'. Systems theory has always given primacy to

relations over the study of individuals (Bateson, 1972). The assertion is that who we are emerges in the relationships that we make.

Sampson (1989) argues that each 'person is the mediated product of society and also, in acting, reproduces and potentially transforms that society' (p.6)

Sampson further writes that although the Western or American culture regards as ideal a 'self-contained individualism' (p.11), this is a view he suggests that has also supported psychology's assumption that the individual 'is a natural entity with attributes that (psychology) can empirically study' (p.1). Geertz (1973) takes this observation further, writing that 'The Western conception of the person is as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment and action, organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively against other such wholes . . . ' (p.229). Both authors assert that psychology has still not moved perceptibly from that position.

Feminist writers' efforts to disengage from the archaic concept of women's identity that had been defined by a paternalistic society has resulted in writers such as Carol Gilligan (1982), the Women's Project of the Ackerman Institute (Carter, Papp, Silverstein, and Walters, 1988) and the numerous articles and studies that have been conducted by the Center for Research on Women at the Stone Center at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, in redefining how women's identity evolves.

Eric Erickson's assertion (1950, 1963) that identity development occurs in stages and is age related, troubled me until I accepted it as a hypothesis that was not always relevant. A conflicted world produces 'old' young children. 'Identity is a life story', writes Dan McAdam, in 'The Stories We Live By, (1993), 'a personal myth that an individual begins working on in their late adolescence and young adulthood in order to provide his or her life with unity or purpose, in order to articulate a meaningful niche in the psychosocial world.' (p.5). I am a great admirer of McAdams. However, my personal experience supports the notion that questions/concerns about identity may begin at a much earlier age, as in my struggle with divergent social and relational requirements about my identity: Catholic or Jewish, survivor or victim, European refugee or Canadian immigrant? How was I to prepare – how can any child not born

into a world that is more or less at peace, prepare - for the future, with such differing definitions?

Social constructionists describe selves, including individual psychological traits, as social and historical constructions. I have found myself captured by the social-constructionist view of identity as proposing a different way of understanding the self of the therapist and the influence that this may have on the therapeutic process. It would direct therapy away from extensive 'symptom-centered discussion' and towards the meaning that people, including therapists, ascribe to the very behaviors that are most troublesome.

Gergen (1991) looks back on traditional communities 'where relationships were reliable, continuous [when] a firm sense of self was favored'. 'One's sense of self was broadly and continuously supported' (p. 147). For some of us these patterns were disrupted, not by social saturation but by constant contradictions. For me, growing up, identity became a ping-pong game of 'who are the people who are asking'. There not only was no extended familial and community confirmation of the self, because those groups no longer existed; but also many of the actions that seemed spontaneous were in fact preceded by a self-directed query of what was appropriate in the newly created contexts, always directed to the goal of staying safe.

Shotter (1989) describes social accountability as the time that 'one ontologically learns how to be this or that kind of person' in conversation with others (p.138). Shotter further states that it is in the interface between the individual and the culture — in the structure of this interpersonal dialogue — that identity formation is indirectly executed. Furthermore 'the rise of self that as the subject of autobiographical discourse dates from the child's initiation into a life long practice of self- narration. (Norbert, 1962).

Defining a self is not simply the result of thoughtful reflection. What meaning do I, and others like me, give to what we have lived through that will assist us in understanding the self that we have become? There are similarities in our stories, also related to the age we were when the war changed the equilibrium of our lives. Some of us had wealthy parents and some of us were poor, our families were orthodox or

totally assimilated into the larger culture, we were girls and we were boys, we lost one parent or both or were fortunate to be left with two. Our dreams, our nightmares and our memories are unique to a group of children who survived a war that was designed also to annihilate them, and who, with that beginning, with that foundation, were left with the task of creating a productive life. And a self.

We've established that identity formation is a complex process that is never static and directly related to the context in which one finds oneself. This is not only true for the person of the therapist but also for the client. The client, in anticipation of what the expectation she or he may have of therapy, will also draw on a number of selves, including the one in pain, the one who has been injured, the one who needs help. But the engaged self may also be the one who is judiciously assessing the therapist. Both therapist and clients are attentive to this dance. For therapists and clients, the context is a relationship between two or more individuals, two or more strangers, who will sit together, often for a lengthy time, to explore what is basically the human condition. They will be temporary partners in what has been called a difficult, at times hazardous and hopefully rewarding enterprise. (Borwick unpublished paper.) The theory and the techniques may differ, as do the professional descriptions, but whether it is called counter-transference, self-disclosure or being authentic — no matter which voice comes out of the many that are available — both are informed and changed by the relationship.

MEMORY: Moving Backwards and Forward in Time.

Memory has an important place in narrative autobiography. I will deal with this only briefly since the subject can also lead to a number of paths that I do not wish to explore at this time. They include false memory and how people remember. It is not central to the topic, so I will limit myself to a few paragraphs.

The emergence of memory as one involves oneself in the process of reconstituting a past brings to mind those very 'bad things' that are in fact never forgotten. If one chooses not to dwell on it — to take a chapter out of my early history and 'not talk about it' — it won't go away. Because silence is also a form of talk. So what does a child, eventually an adult, do with memories of one of the most atrocious periods in human history? What was learned and what does one do with that learning? For

many, the majority, the answer has been ‘we just won’t talk about it’. ‘It’s past, finished.’ But is it? Can it ever be? The ‘forgetting’ not only erases any possibility of making sense of experiences; it obliterates any differentiation between bad and good experiences. It lays a foundation for privately held thoughts that are not tested and therefore never verified in the changing contexts of one’s life.

Of course, uncomfortable memories of difficult episodes in our lives do not define us as individuals. Nor do they characterize the relationships in which we will participate. Silence may eventually be transformed into another form of dialogue.

To draw on Kenneth Gergen’s work, in what he calls ‘the immense repository of our past encounters and our reflexive capacity to turn around on the past and alter the present in its light’, as well as ‘our intellectual capacity to envision alternatives — to conceive of other ways of being, of acting, of striving’, he refers to ‘the turning around the past’ as one way of learning even from horrendous experiences like the Holocaust. This is confirmed by the many reports that I have read extensively from former children of the war (see bibliography). Gergen goes on to say that we are both creatures of history as well as autonomous agents. It is by opening up the door to the past that I am belatedly attempting to make a connection between the present and the influence of all that went before — the intelligence and risk-taking of a grandfather who cared for others at his own peril, the bravery and ingenuity of parents, the kindness and shared responsibility of aunts and uncles who rejected all efforts of being dehumanized and never forgot who they were. In the same way that I am examining a reconstructed self, therapy can help clients to become the editors of their own stories. Their narrative, like mine, is open to adjustment and change.

SECRETS

I have found it significant to examine the role that secrets play in our lives because it is central to the work of psychotherapy, and particularly to this story. We create walls of withheld memories — of secrets — but it is not clear who is best served by this decision. I have attempted to examine some of the gains as well as the losses of stories that I have been unwilling to share about the Holocaust. As well as those told to me by clients. I have asked myself who can they damage and how can they help.

But I am also aware that transformation of the experience may at times have to be written by the next generation. There are the withheld memories of the Holocaust which served a purpose at one time, but on reflection, I have come to believe that in the light of new relationships, the purpose needs re-examining. Because once a system operates on partial — or false — information, its point of reference is forever distorted, as is the sense that its members can make of who and what they are — of their identity, of their perceptions of their own history.

What is not surprising is that many of us withhold information quite naturally. We see this most persistently in families, and most often it is perceived as a service to those who are being kept in the dark. An additional problem with secrets is that over time they become integrated into one's reality until they gradually replace that which was once understood and believed — those memories replaced by what we have constructed in an attempt to create pasts that are easier to live with. I have encountered in my work so many secrets that shaped the lives of people, catching them up in its web. Individuals may hide from themselves as long as they don't hide from the relevant relationships that connect them to their present and future lives.

Secrets and Their Role:

Although one may be judicious in the information that one shares, eventually drawing a veil over one's past, or present, may become a constraint to intimacy. That is good for some relationships, less so for others. I think it's important from a therapeutic perspective to at least raise the issue about what is being held back and what purpose it serves. There are numerous situations where secrets may distort the way in which a family, a couple or an individual functions. Families, as well as organizations, at times suffer from repressed and suppressed memories that change the ways in which their members deal with information and manage relationships dramatically. To choose not to identify or define certain memories may well be the system's rule to hold off change. The task for a therapist then is not to reveal but to include — to create a context for a new dialogue where new meaning can be constructed. It is an opportunity to give new meaning to information and actions taken.

As therapists we have been too ready to homogenize certain experiences by labeling them. We are often guilty of creating formulas called treatment for couples,

alcoholics, family business and survivors of war. Consultants in organizations often do not have the opportunity to seek out elusive patterns. Nor are they necessarily trained to do so. More and more, we live in the world of facile explanations and a modicum of meaningful conversation. The self, saturated with an overload of information (Gergen, 1991) can find ready escapes in order to avoid lengthy explanations — it has become that much easier to hide.

The secrets that I refer to are eloquently discussed in Sissela Bok's excellent book, appropriately titled 'Secrets'(1982). She begins by quoting Samuel Johnson, the originator of the first English dictionary. In the dictionary, the noun 'secret', is defined under three entries:

1. something studiously hidden
2. a thing unknown, something not yet discovered
3. privacy, secrecy: invisible or undiscovered state

Secrets that are intentionally concealed are in some ways the most obvious, because they are central to human relationships. We hide information for a number of reasons, usually either to protect something or someone or in anticipation of a negative reaction. All of these circumstances hold true for survivors of wars. We lie because we think, can those who have not shared in the experience ever really understand? We also lie to prevent our perceived differences from setting us apart or at the extreme, to make us unacceptable. We can become part of a conspiracy of secrets because of information that has been withheld from us, something we suspect, as well as the unsuspected and unexpected.

A client of mine, nineteen-year-old Pierre and the eldest son, suspects that his parents were never legally married. Conscripted into the Belgian army, he requests a birth certificate from the parish, but the document only lists the mother. The parents have been together for a long time, in what he describes as a reasonably loving relationship. But is his father really his biological sire, he wonders? And what will this revelation mean to the family? How will this family deal with this disclosure? As it happens, Pierre's parents needed only to reassure him that he was wanted, and not a solution to their problem, to resolve the confrontation that he organized and that they so feared.

Secrecy that protects our personal privacy is that rare right that we may well stand to lose. Students, patients in hospitals, prisoners as well as others whose freedom has been restricted to life in an institution, have no boundary to protect them from an environment which constantly transgresses the boundary that most of us consider as personal. However, not all secrets are bad. At times we require a boundary of non-intrusion to protect someone else's privacy as well as our own.

Nevertheless, all families have secrets: parents have secrets from their children and at times from each other. Children, as they reach adolescence have secrets from their parents. Some of this secret keeping is necessary to maintain family boundaries — children need not be involved in parental decision-making. Some of it is normal. When secrets intrude on the life of the family, either through the exclusion of some members or by patterning a life based on some long-held secret which may no longer be relevant, the life of the family may be distorted — without anyone understanding why that is.

Of course, there are other secrets, including incest which can not only destroy the life of the family but deprive the children of their childhood and interfere with the possibility of having them develop into well-functioning adults. The families that I have worked with where incest was the long-held family secret, most often involved the woman, now an adult, who was forced into a sexual relationship by her father. In one situation, the young girl had also been used in a prostitution ring. Not surprisingly these women enter adulthood with low self-esteem, confused sexual identity and shame, and eventually enter into difficult marital relationships. And they become experts at keeping secrets while always being worried that they will be found out.

It has been my privilege to work with these women as they attempted to put their lives together. However, I learned that while they were in the process of learning about boundaries, I needed to be available to them — especially in the early period — to reassure, symbolically hold and care. Their healing was a gift that confirmed my belief in therapy as well as in human strength.

Evan Imber Black writes in her book 'Secrets in Family and Family Therapy' (1998) that secret-keeping is a way in which we attempt to avoid shame, but shame and

secrets often exist in an escalate dance with each other — the more shame, the more secrecy, the more secrecy the more shame.

This description has certainly been true of families who endured the Holocaust and have never found the language to explain to their children, as well as to others, that they cannot discuss their survival without examining their losses, as well as experiences they would just as soon forget. The one repeated fact in speaking with and reading about Holocaust survivors is how much information was not shared and how little even those of us who were present, for the most part, do not know. And what we know least about is how it affected our parents. And now our own children do not really know how these memories influence us.

However, writing about secrets, especially family secrets, in America presents one with a contradiction. Although people seek out consultation to deal with what they consider damaging information that under any circumstances should not be shared, television talk shows, and at times, conversations at the next table in a restaurant are equally revealing. In America, couples marry on television and the audience selects their clothing, their wedding feast and even the location for their honeymoon. Support groups for any variety of illnesses offer more options to discuss one's problems, but they are almost always open to the public. Well-known public figures discuss their post-partum depressions on an open-line morning television show. What I find most troubling about these discussion forums is their tendency to treat people like damaged goods even when everyone sounds truly sympathetic and may even frequently identify with the misfortunes. So what's a secret?

How do you manage secrets in an intimate relationship? I must admit that I have been known to tell couples that you don't have to tell everything. The final decision is theirs and is directly related to both their formal and informal 'contract' about sharing information.

Finally, we can become part of a conspiracy of secrets due to information that has been withheld from us, something we suspect as well as the unsuspected and unexpected. However, we can also destroy lives by at times sharing too much.

The person of the therapist is a receptacle of other people's memories and secrets as well as their concerns about an identity that they believe to be flawed. But what about the therapist and her memories and secrets and concerns about her various identities?

In the succeeding chapter, the conclusion to this dissertation, it is my intention to discuss the meaning of a personal reconstruction of a life and profession – a restorying of the past in order to move on to the future. I will also illustrate how the person of the therapist and the characteristics that are necessary for a transparent relationship – one of equality, respect and information sharing – will become more important in the world of mental health as we advance further into the 21st Century.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Although this is the final chapter in this dissertation, I perceive it more as a beginning, because the work that remains to be done is challenging and exciting. The dissertation has been in part description, in part testimony, of a voyage of self-discovery and learning. It has also been reflection on the field of family therapy as it has evolved during this period from the point of view of a person who had a role in its development in Europe. (The UCL – Catholic University of Louvain - training program in family therapy which I directed was for a number of years the only one of two that was recognized and taught at a university). The process of writing has been an all-absorbing one, and I recommend it only if the person who attempts it is willing to recognize just how difficult it can be, emotionally as well as intellectually.

What I discovered was that issues that I managed to avoid discussing both in psychoanalysis and therapy, were unavoidable when I confronted myself in my own story.

It is difficult to take up an academic student role after one has passed one's middle years. It is also complicated, at times, to put aside what one knows to look at new material with a fresh eye. The advantages overcome the months of hesitation, especially when one has arrived at almost the end of this particular phase of reading and writing and, with reflection, going back to the beginning again.

This dissertation has been a conceptual, professional and personal undertaking. The conceptual part has been an important learning experience in that, although I am a confirmed systemic thinker, I have learned about social construction and the role it has assumed as a guiding philosophy in psychotherapy. Both the conceptual and the personal aspects have succeeded in helping me to rethink myself as a person as well as a therapist. I still have part of this journey to take because this has been a most difficult process. There have been many, many months, that I decried my choice of topic. On the purely academic side, but also related to my professional history, I have had difficulty referencing some of the material that I myself have taught, struggled with, spoken about at conferences and even, on occasion, written about.

The three areas to be examined that were cited at the beginning of this dissertation as a necessary component on the road toward transparency in the psychotherapeutic

relationship, were the use of narrative, narrative autobiography and the person of the therapist. The importance of transparency has been related directly to the changing field of therapy where the client enters the relationship informed by sources outside this relationship, including the internet and the self help literature. Also that the changing landscape that more and more includes insurers as influential third parties, necessitates a re-examination of the information that therapists usually share with clients.

Jerome Bruner writes that stories always have a message (1986). What then is the message of this narrative? My concern was that the very drama of my early life would overshadow the importance of unexpected collaboration and relationships that were important in my very survival, as well as the eventual evolution of my life as a practitioner. How does the beginning of this story, a beginning that risks overshadowing my life and my body of work, connect with events that came after? I often repeated to myself that human actions are not isolated but come from somewhere, from shared pasts, and eventually will lead to something that we learn to value in the future. I've always been determined in my assertion that I will not be defined by Hitler's war. I define myself as a product of a family, a culture and a context that will always include the pain felt by many in the latter part of this century.

In what way has my professional life been influenced by some of these beliefs? Because as a professional, I have not been the only one to experience losses and pain. Like many others, I sublimated any number of concerns as I went on with the business of living. I participated in the renaissance years of a form of therapy – family therapy - which changed the landscape of how therapists viewed, and addresses themselves to, some of the major problems in the field of mental health. I'm a parent who raised three sons in the midst of the feminist revolution, and an academic who, having had the opportunity to teach some of the brightest, waited so very long to complete my own formal qualification.

As a narrative, this work reflects on a career that has been focused on both people and ideas. I have been interested to see that two of my areas of concentration, the holocaust and the person of the therapist, have become even more current since I began this dissertation. The newsworthiness of the holocaust is no doubt due in large

part to the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camps. Reconstruction is informed by the interest in the person of the therapist, one of the necessary stages that one may need to pass through in order to better understand one's own identity as a person who is also a therapist. Stories of the holocaust will recede with time, as new atrocities replace those of that particular war. The stories about therapists, who they are and a new therapeutic relationship will only increase.

I have dealt with a number of issues. There are times as an adult that I bring to awareness the two wars that I have experienced — the war of the child and the war of the mature individual. For many years I created a false dichotomy. The child's war may have been less significant than the experiences of the adult, because the child did not fully understand the consequences and the dangers. The war the adults experienced was not mine to comment on because I was only a child, so I excused myself from the experience. I was not a survivor; I was a child of survivors, and in that role I would wonder at my parents' experience and think less of the importance of my own. Except that I both lacked the curiosity of such children and carried original pictures imprinted on my mind. I chose for many years not to deal the dilemma of how my view of the world and decisions that hinged on that experience were informed. I had deprived myself of a long-term view of myself. In my edited vision, I had not been touched by the war, and therefore it could not easily influence my relationships, present or future. After all, I wasn't angry or vengeful, and my memories were not filled with visions of atrocities which, with the collaboration of my parents, I had carefully edited. Other partners in evasion were all of those who, because of their personal losses as well as my silence, never mentioned the war.

What I have learned in writing this dissertation is that each time I sit with a family or couple, my past and all of its important participants sit right along with me. I had romanticized the notion of family and, although that can work for or against, the choice was properly not mine to make. I had hidden important parts of myself while feeling confident in my ability to assist people and their families into a more accepting view of themselves. I think now that I have always plunged ahead with some notion that people, even those with debilitating problems, can overcome them. It might have been that that a client has had to try too hard and too quickly in a

relationship with me. I have gained another understanding that, with me, everything has always had to happen rapidly because I've never really had confidence in tomorrow. I created a charmed past for myself — yes, I really have seen it as being somewhat charmed. I was spared, wasn't I? Sheila McNamee once cautioned me that I didn't do it alone, it wasn't all for me; and of course she's right. I may have been neglectful in conveying to my clients that they also could not do it all alone, it wasn't only for them.

My choice of profession is consistent with a value system that was co-generated in a number of contexts, each which encouraged a perspective of collaboration and support, as well as a belief in people. I have accepted a certain burden, an inheritance from the past, about being alive to carry on for others, to try to be a good human being. If indeed I am successful at being that 'good human being', it may be not only because I believe in people, but because others have believed in me.

Do I think that a search for the submerged self — a narrative autobiography — is necessary if we are to enter relationships, especially with clients, with a fuller self-awareness? I think that some deconstruction of the past is very necessary as an ongoing process. Although it has not always been a primary professional technique/strategy, narrative, or re-storying, has the advantage of being re-examined. It is a continuous and useful means for editing one's life story as it is lived. It serves as both a written and oral conversation with oneself in the company of others about whom we write. And it is, of course, possible to include others in the conversation.

Again, from a conceptual perspective, I am a persuaded believer in the use of stories, storying and re-storying. Our lives are extraordinary stories as are those of our clients, and re-storying as part of a therapeutic conversation is invaluable for both client and therapist. The use of re-storying in therapy will open up choices that talking alone doesn't accomplish.

The other knowledge that was necessary for this dissertation is the theory of social construction. Although not yet having mastered this field of inquiry, I have read extensively and am an informed learner. I am persuaded that a greater focus on relationships, on the fact that we co-create the very things about which we feel

individually responsible, opens up an important vista for reconsideration, by which I mean that a primordial element in psychotherapy is also created in collaboration and, most importantly, is fluid. It is the notion of meaning's not being static, that behavior and meaning are explicitly linked, that offers up numerous options for therapy.

Deconstructing the professional life has been in part disturbing because, one becomes newly aware of the political changes and their impact on the therapist as well as the therapeutic relationship. Even a cursory examination gives evidence of the enormity of the changes. I must make a distinction here between my Canadian and American experience and working in Belgium. Although Canadians have the benefit of socialized medicine, this was not the case when I last worked in Montreal. In America, the field of mental health has changed dramatically in the past twenty-five years. Before I left North America for Belgium for the first time, in 1972, insurers reimbursed ninety percent of the charges for therapy, and there were few restrictions on frequency or duration of visits. The clients seeking consultation increasingly shifted in number from the worried and curious to a diverse population representing a cultural, ethnic, religious, socio-economic variety as well as those with differing sexual orientation. We therapists began to see more domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse, criminal offenders and a variety of drug- and alcohol-related problems. Here the national borders each had an impact on treatment. In Canada even a student who ingested a psychedelic substance was by law to be reported to the Canadian Mounted Police.

When I returned to the United States in the early eighties, I re-entered a new world, one of managed care. There was the deluge from the drug epidemic and, of course, there was AIDS. But the Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) really changed the landscape. Psychotherapy became 'a spiritually fulfilling and emotionally draining human endeavor' (Kuttler, 2003, p.9). Most practitioners were too frustrated, angry and deskilled to feel much fulfillment. The length and number of sessions were, and still are, dictated by the insurers, and managed care restructured the ways therapists worked. Kuttler tells a story of how a colleague of his was consulting with a woman who was delusional and insisted that she had nine snakes in her belly. After several weeks, she reported that there were three left. The insurer declared her greatly improved and ended the therapy.

Technology also introduced changes. Meetings to discuss client care were replaced by computer messages, and both clients and therapists reached out to the Internet for instant consultation. The impact on therapy and the therapeutic relationship has been dramatic, and, I believe it has been an additional factor in the major turn to medication, influenced by those changes and, of course, the pharmaceutical industries' obliging production of new — and often improved — drugs.

What Bertolino and O'Hanlon (2002) have called the 'third wave' in therapy is where I wish to situate the therapist of the twenty-first century, as well as the therapeutic relationship that the new wave entails. Unless one is able to bypass the insurance problem, the new therapeutic relationship is a triad: I think it is important to recognize that the insurer is a shadow third party who influences the length and duration of the process. In family therapy this may well set up an important distinction between solution-focused (de Shazer, 1985) and narrative therapy (White, 1990), and although therapists will not necessarily need to choose sides, but they will be confronted by options, not necessarily of their own choice

A change in therapy that I think to be necessary will be away from the intense focus on the family as the 'cause' and nest of pathology. Although it is essential to begin with whatever is central to the clients' concerns, the inquiry will be extended to other systems and people — not necessarily the clinic, the social worker, or even the referring school, but work, the neighborhood, the city or town, the political world, the culture, the church, and so on. This approach suggests that all issues have been affected by a renewed context. A journalist wrote recently in a French magazine that he is proud to be a New Yorker but ashamed to be American because of the present government. Whether Americans love or hate President Bush, his election is a co-creation, an expression of the populace, Democrats included. That is the value of social construction: one always is confronted by one's own role in whatever occurs.

Transparency in therapy — which I perceive to be a necessity for the postmodern therapist of the twenty-first century — is in itself an undertaking that requires an in-depth examination of the experiential as well as the intellectual and professional story of the person. I have a vision of that therapist, a person far removed from the rigid and

distant figure of the early twentieth century. Presumably we have all learned something in the last series of 'modern' wars to understand that because of the way relationships shape what we become, it is perhaps time that we adjusted our understanding to accept that we don't accomplish or even reflect without the complicity of others.

The postmodern client is better informed and looks beyond our professional qualifications, although some form of legitimacy is crucial. This is a group of people who are less afraid of therapy, even family therapy. They want to know who the therapist is. A therapist is not obliged to share her life story, but, if the therapist values transparency in the relationship, she can't hide forever behind delayed, informed nods and polite evasions. Rigid boundaries signify not only distinctions but barriers. Permeable boundaries allow for a negotiated relationship. What is most important is the role of information. People appear to regard information as their natural right. It is readily available, even to dispossessed clients who seem light years away from the Internet as well as the popular press. I have noticed that televisions in waiting rooms in hospitals always seem to be loudly proclaiming some news we should not ignore, as do other forms of the media.

If, in this discussion, I appear to omit the very disturbed who come to hospitals, with or without family members, I would like to share a brief story. Monique had been diagnosed as schizophrenic with frequent episodes of psychosis. She doesn't work or participate in family life. She has, what are described as, temper tantrums and, on occasion, is guided in her actions by a radio that transmits messages through her teeth. She was not communicative when she came to the clinic and very preoccupied with the 'radio in her head'. She came into our consultation room at a time when we were preoccupied with negotiating rules about smoking. On the door was a large sign proclaiming that smoking was forbidden. On the table in the center of the room was an ashtray. Monique preceded her parents into the room, clutching a brown paper bag in which she kept her cigarettes, forbidden by her doctor and father. She smiled broadly at me and waved her bag full of contraband in the air. She shrugged and, still holding her cigarettes, pointed first to the sign and then to the ashtray. Hospital patients, the chronically ill, spend a lifetime dealing with contradictions that they don't know how to discuss. It's enough to make you crazy.

What is the future for transparency in family therapy specifically, and in psychotherapy generally? We seem to be moving in the direction of accepting it. As Roberts points out, relevant research needs to be conducted not only to compare clients' feedback but also to assess therapists' understanding of when and where it works and when it doesn't. The political climate appears to be moving us inexorably in that direction. Unless we wish to become caught in the middle of insurers, government and clients, we need to help our clients negotiate for themselves. In order to do that, the information that we share needs to undergo some major changes.

There is much to say and much more to write about. In *Meditations on Don Quixote*, Ortega y Gasset declares, 'I am myself plus my circumstances' (1984). I thought my generation had lived with only possibilities, but I used to feel somewhat sorry for the future therapists, living with constraints. Now I rather envy them. They have the potential for new horizons in therapy relationships — those that are more honest, more open, more transparent. I wish them luck.

The question is whether someone who has experienced a dramatic or traumatic early life is defined by that alone, or, as William James has asked, whether one must consider the social, spiritual and material self that has emerged during those years of growth. Paul John Eakin, in *How Our Lives Become Stories*, comments that identity formation is not available for conscious inspection because it is a process. For this reason, rather than to attempt to witness what he calls the emergent self, we are best served to get on with the business of living.

The question that confronts us as therapists 'who have gone on with the business of living' (with a few reflections on how much of our stories we have found it necessary not to tell) is that clients tell us stories that conceal more than they reveal. It isn't useful, but it isn't pathological. Most clients have been trained by the medical system to convey data, predetermining what we may or may not find relevant, or what they themselves find relevant. They further choose not to share information that they fear may present them in a poor light. Finally, part of therapy is also about giving meaning to the secrets that plague the clients. What they chose to hide is interesting in itself — if we can hear it. However, how much of our own stories have we decided is not

relevant, and how much of that burden do we pass on to those who come to us for help?

Transparency in psychotherapy is not nirvana. Knowing yourself and your own history – professional and personal - does not signal an immediate change in the person who is the therapist. (However, it is very difficult indeed to step backwards and ignore what one has learned.) Both a renewed therapeutic relationship and a newly aware therapist are information about transformation, a changing world, a shifting context and a new paradigm that waits for no one.

SUMMARY

This dissertation is a qualitative inquiry into the nature of the therapeutic relationship, with a specific application to transparency with clients. Transparency is characterized by the need for clients to be fully involved in the decision making process, which requires a sharing of information that is new to the therapy relationship. Transparency in relationships is further defined as one that is open, authentic and contained by boundaries that are flexible and regulated by the unique requirements of each situation.

The dissertation further addresses itself to the self reflexive inquiry – of a personal and professional nature – that is required in order for therapists to be available to manage the type of relationship that will be required to meet these newly emerging needs in the field of mental health. This includes the changes in the theory and practice of psychotherapy as reflected from Freudian psychoanalysis to systems and social construction as well as those specific to the life of the therapist.

The first chapter, Methodology, compares qualitative and quantitative research and justifies the use of autobiographic narrative research.

The second chapter, The Personal Narrative, deals with the Holocaust and the child's experience of the war. The autobiographical narrative, written in the first person, is interspersed with constructionist descriptions of the ways meanings are constructed in interaction with others, and is intertwined with the adult therapist's reflections on how the various incidents in the child's experience have influenced the adult's therapeutic decisions.

The third chapter, The Professional Narrative, examines the major themes – the evolution of the profession(al) and the influences – that have guided the author's process of development. It also serves as a bridge between the early and later experiences in the author's life and their relevance to the practice of psychotherapy and the person of the therapist.

The fourth chapter, *Transparency and The Person of the Therapist: Identity, Memory and Secrets*, connects the theory with the conceptual material of the narrative – the person of the therapist and the construction of identity. Threads from these considerations are also connected to other issues: the role of memory and secrets, and their place in both identity formation and the therapeutic relationship.

The fifth chapter, *Conclusions*, summarizes the use of narrative autobiography as a method of studying new issues in psychotherapy that involve client/therapist relationships, and in particular those that are connected to the potential place of transparency in the changing demands of the profession of psychotherapy in the twenty-first century.

SAMENVATTING

Deze dissertatie is een kwalitatief onderzoek naar de geaardheid van de therapeutische relatie, met een specifieke toepassing op het gebied van de doorzichtigheid met klanten. Doorzichtigheid met klanten vloeit voort uit de behoefte om klanten volledig betrokken te laten zijn bij het nemen van beslissingen, hetgeen vereist dat er informatie wordt gedeeld die nieuw is voor de bestaande therapie-relatie. Doorzichtigheid in de relatie wordt verder gedefinieerd als een omgang die open is, authentiek, en die zich beweegt binnen de flexibele grenzen zoals die worden bepaald door de unieke vereisten van elke situatie.

De dissertatie kijkt ook naar het zelf-onderzoek, zowel op het persoonlijke als op het professionele vlak, dat nodig is om therapeuten in staat te stellen tot het aangaan van het soort relatie wat voortvloeit uit deze nieuwe behoeften in het veld van de geestelijke gezondheid. Dit slaat zowel op de veranderingen in de theorie en praktijk van de psychotherapie, zoals weerspiegeld in de Freudiaanse psychoanalyse, systeembenadering, en sociaal constructionisme, als op de veranderingen die eigen zijn aan het leven van de therapeut zelf.

Het eerste hoofdstuk, Methodologie, maakt een vergelijking tussen kwantitatief en kwalitatief onderzoek, en biedt een rechtvaardiging voor het doen van autobiografisch verhalend onderzoek.

Het tweede hoofdstuk, Het Persoonlijk Verhaal, gaat in op de Holocaust en op de oorlogservaring van het kind. Dit autobiografisch verhaal, geschreven in de eerste persoon, is doorspekt met constructionistische beschrijvingen van de manieren waarop betekenissen worden gemaakt in interacties met anderen, en is ook doorweven van reflecties van de volwassen therapeut over hoe de verschillende gebeurtenissen in de ervaring van het kind de latere beslissingen van de volwassen therapeut hebben beïnvloed.

Het derde hoofdstuk, Het Professioneel Verhaal, onderzoekt de manier waarop twee majeure thema's, d.w.z. de evolutie in het vak en de invloeden van het kind, hebben bijgedragen aan de verdere ontwikkeling van de auteur. Het dient ook als brug tussen

de vroegere en latere levenservaringen van de auteur en van het belang hiervan voor haar psychotherapeutische praktijk en haar persoon als therapeut.

Het vierde hoofdstuk, Doorzichtigheid en de Persoon van de Therapeut: Identiteit, Herinneringen en Geheimen, verbindt de theorie met het conceptueel materiaal van het verhaal – de persoon van de therapeut en de opbouw van de identiteit. Vanuit deze beschouwingen worden ook verbanden gelegd naar andere zaken, meer bepaald de rol van de herinnering en geheimen, en wat dit betekent voor de identiteitsopbouw en voor de psychotherapeutische relatie.

In het vijfde en laatste hoofdstuk, Conclusies, blikken we terug op de verhalende autobiografie als methode voor de bestudering van nieuwe vraagstukken in de psychotherapie met betrekking tot de klant/therapeut verhouding, en dan met name de mogelijke plek van doorzichtigheid in de nieuwe eisen die het beroep van psychotherapeut in de eenentwintigste eeuw aan ons stelt.

COMMENTARY NOTES

1. It was pointed out to me that I have said little about the training of therapists to become more transparent in their relationships with clients. I can only repeat that my focus has been the experienced therapist who is attempting to integrate many changes – from availability of information, to government sanctioned disclosure clauses, from insurance to medication – in their work. As I have said earlier, the “new” therapists have inherited a different world. They have less autonomy because of the power of insurance but have been trained to take into account many changes in the relationship with clients. At present, the focus is on a more biological form of care. Their clients have access to the internet and a plethora of information or misinformation. Those of us who thought we were being respectful in rejecting one way mirrors and sharing our process notes when relevant (or writing very few), still have a long way to go. We have to begin the journey of self discovery and try to understand what it means.

2. Although it is true that I did not initially do justice to John Paul Eakin, I have attempted to amend this oversight. Please see the last two pages in Chapter 1, dealing with methodology. Eakin is not against autobiography. His postmodern reflections have been influenced by the importance of relationships – as have mine.

3. I have not re-interviewed the therapists that I spoke with in my initial desire to understand what influenced ‘famous’ colleagues. This will necessitate creating and testing an open ended set of interview questions which was difficult to do while I was in the process of writing this dissertation. I’m only now getting a sense of what questions I might explore. Any suggestions from my respected readers will be very welcome indeed.

4. I refer to the post WW2 years, especially the 60s and 70s as a “renaissance time”. I have no idea who will be the ‘new’ Carl Rogers, Fritz Perls, Sal Minuchin, Abraham Mazlow, Selvini, Boscolo and Cecchin, John Bowlby, Irving Yalom, Jacques Lacan. But this was also probably said about Freud.

5. I believe that I first heard the term 'charitable amnesia' from Sigie Hirsch. It is a rather good example of one way of dealing with traumatic experiences and going on with the business of living.

6. The picture that I refer to, a dress for a growing child made out of the only available material, the brown and off white prisoners' uniforms, is once more referred to in #8 in these reflections. It still exists, yellowed by my mother's tears.

7. The reference to Bowlby seemed too self serving in the earlier re-writes of this dissertation. It meant a lot to me when I very cautiously attempted to explore with him my own sense of safety. Did he think that it was false? Thankfully, he did not.

8. See #6.

9. It was the writer Saul Bellow who asked questions about that first Seder at a Seder celebration at mutual friends home that led me, for the very first time, to ask questions of Jewish Belgian friends about how their families had survived. The Belgians were and are kind people.

10. My father's death brought to life the theory that our identity is always bound up with others.

11. Although part of our study of becoming a psychotherapist encourages a personal therapy or analysis, it is not usually a requirement of study. The work is also not necessarily focused on how your personal experience will interface with what will confront you as a therapist. In training family therapists, I have always designed exercises that examine those parts of the trainee's life story with which they may have still been struggling. We also included family genograms that allow the opportunity for trainees to bring forth some of the rules and issues in their own families. However, the intent was self learning, rather than how their personal history would impact their future work as a therapist.

12. The Holocaust refers most frequently to the approximately six million Jews who were systematically murdered between the years 1939 and 1945 in Nazi occupied Europe. The term appears to have been introduced by historians in the 1950s, possibly as an equivalent to the Hebrew word 'shoah', i.e. catastrophe. It shares the same meaning as 'genocide' which is the deliberate killing of people based on their ethnicity, nationality, race and religion. See Ronnie S. Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust* (London: IB.Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1992.)

13. My eldest son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren are presently living in Cologne, Germany.

GLOSSARY OF BASIC GERMAN TERMS

Anschluss

Literally 'annexation' or 'joining together'. In this case Austria's annexation by Hitler's Germany on 12 March, 1938.

Blitzkrieg

German term, literally meaning 'lightning war', used to describe the intensity and speed of German military onslaught against their enemies' territory.

Bund

Jewish socialist movement founded in tsarist Russia in 1897. Committed to secular non-territorial nationalism, Jewish cultural and linguistic (Yiddish) autonomy, and strongly antagonistic to Zionism.

Concentration Camp

A camp for the detention of perceived enemies of the Nazis. Originally set up after Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, the concentration camp regime involved forced labour and systematic use of terror. Massively extended to territories and people coming under Nazi occupation during the war, usually with a high percentage of Jewish prisoners.

Death Camp

As distinct from both labour and concentration camps, a centre whose sole purpose was to annihilate its inmates. The main Nazi death camps were sited on Polish soil - Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor and Treblinka.

Death Marches

The evacuation and forced marches of camp inmates during the latter stages of the war, when the Nazis felt threatened by the proximity of Allied troops. Tens of thousands of victims died while on these marches.

Der Starmer

Nazi propaganda weekly, luridly antisemitic, founded in 1923 and edited by Julius Streicher.

Deportation

Process whereby Nazis removed people from their normal place of residence, often via a deportation centre, to a labour, concentration, or death camp.

Hitler Youth

Organization originally founded in 1926 to inculcate racial, social and militaristic values into young Germans. After 1936, membership for 10 to 18 year olds was obligatory.

Landslute

Those persons who come from the same region.

Displaced Persons

Those millions of Europeans - Jews and non-Jews - who, by the war's end, had been forced out of their homes, both by Nazi decrees and by the overall effects of the war.

Judenrat

German term meaning 'Jewish Council'. used to describe the Jewish representative body established by the Nazis in various ghettos and communities. The purpose behind their establishment was to provide the Nazis with vital administrative and supervisory assistance and to implement Nazi decrees.

Judenfrei

Free of Jews; cleansed of Jews

Einsatzgruppen

Special mobile units organized by the Reich Security Main Office for the elimination of the Nazis' enemies in countries occupied by them. Primarily responsible for the large-scale massacres of Russian Jews, communists and intellectuals during Operation Barbarossa, 1941, and for the slaughter of Poles throughout the war years.

Labour Camp

A camp contributing to Germany's wartime production through the use of slave labour, mostly involving prisoners of war, Jews and foreign nationals.

Final Solution

The term used by the Nazis for their plans for comprehensive annihilation of European Jewry.

General Government

Administrative area in central and southern Poland created by the Nazis following the country's partition between Germany and the Soviet Union. Became the centre of the death camp system.

Reichstag

German parliament, largely ornamental during the Nazi era.

Ghetto

The quarters of European towns in which Jews were compulsorily required to reside in the Middle Ages. Resurrected by the Nazis following their takeover of Poland.

SA (German, Sturmabteilung)

Literally Stormtroopers, also known as 'Brownshirts'. Shock troops of Nazi Party founded in 1921. Eclipsed by the SS after Kristelnacht (also known as the Night of the Long Knives) of 30 June 1934.

Genocide

A term created by the international jurist Raphael Lemkin in 1943 to denote a conscious attempt at the physical destruction of a defined group of people.

Gestapo

The German state secret police. Directly under the control of Himmler from 1936.

Holocaust

SS (German, Schutzstaffeln)

Literally 'protection squads', also known as 'Blackshirts'. The paramilitary body created in 1925 to protect the Nazi Party and its leader, Hitler. After the Nazi seizure of absolute power, Himmler turned it into the most powerful organization within the state. All functions of the concentration and death camp system were controlled by it.

Vichy France

Puppet regime set up in southern France after Nazi conquest. Northern France continued to be ruled directly by Nazi Germany.

Weimar Republic

The democratic republican regime which was established in Germany after the First World War. Lasted until Hitler's destruction of democratic government shortly after his accession to power.

Wehrmacht

German regular armed forces.

White Paper, 1939

British policy statement of May 1939, rigidly adhered to throughout the war years, restricting the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine to a total of 75,000 over the subsequent five-year period (i.e. an annual average of 15,000 per year).

David Ben-Gurion

Zionist leader of the Jewish community in Palestine. Given its slender resources, he was opposed to rescue efforts which might detract from his primary goal of building a Jewish national home in Palestine. In 1961, as Israeli Prime Minister, he used the Eichmann trial as a way of bringing world attention to the facts of the Holocaust.

Zionism

Jewish nationalist movement which sought a response to antisemitism in the founding of a Jewish national home. The outcome would be the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

Walther Darre

Nazi head of the Race Office, Agriculture Minister and advocate of the special German relationship between 'blood and soil'. Argued that only pure 'Aryans' could own land and in a series of laws eliminated from all aspects of German agricultural production and trade.

Adolf Eichmann

Career bureaucrat in the SS, who became a specialist in 'Jewish affairs'. He oversaw first the expulsions of Jews from Greater Germany and later the transport and other administrative arrangements necessary for the implementation of the Final Solution. Sprung by Israeli agents from Argentina where he had gone into

GLOSSARY OF HOLOCAUST TERMS*

Anschluss

"Joining together," annexation. On March 12, 1938, Hitler annexed Austria to Germany

Antisemitism

Systematic prejudice against Jews. Notice the absence of a hyphen (-); there has never been any such thing as "Semitism." The term "antisemitism" is, properly one word.

Aryan

In the Nazi ideology, the pure, superior Germanic (Nordic, Caucasian) race.

Auschwitz

The city of Auschwitz, Poland, located in southwestern Poland, was the site of one of the largest of the Nazi extermination camps. The camp was expanded in August, 1942. Camp II was named Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Babi Yar

A deep ravine outside the Ukrainian city of Kiev, on the Dnieper River where the Einsatzgruppen killed and buried 34,000 Jews in one or two days (September 29-30, 1941).

Belzek

Death Camp located in the Lublin District of Poland. More than 600,000 Jews were gassed at Belzek between 1941 and 1943.

Blitzkrieg

"lightning war," used to describe the speed, efficiency and intensity of Germany's military attack against their opponents.

Buchenwald

Concentration camp established in 1937 between Frankfurt and Leipzig in Germany. While it was primarily a work camp in the German concentration camp system and not a major extermination center, thousands died there from exposure, over-work and execution.

Bund

A socialist movement among Jews in the Pale of Settlement in western Russia in the late 1800's. The Bundists supported Jewish linguistic and political autonomy. Their nationalism was cultural rather than territorial and, thus, they were at odds with much of the Zionist movement.

Capo

Jews who worked inside the death camps. Their tasks including transporting victims of gassing to the ovens, cleaning the gas chambers of human excrement and blood, removal of gold from the teeth of the victims, shaving the heads of those going to the gas chambers.

Chelmo

Generally thought to be the first of the six death camps in Poland to become operational. At the beginning, the camp was under the direction of SS Major, Christian Wirth, formerly administrative head of the Euthanasie Programme. Located in the Wartheland. Between December 1941 and fall 1942 and again from May until August 1944 gassings by means of carbon monoxide from motor exhaust gas took place. Altogether more than 150,000 Jews as well as 5000 gypsies died at Chelmo.

Concentration Camp

Any internment camp for holding "enemies of the Third Reich." The construction of concentration camps began almost immediately after Hitler gained power in Germany. There were several kinds: labor camps, prison camps and death camps.

Dachau

A concentration camp located in Upper Bavaria, northeast of Munich. In 1942 a gas chamber was established at in connection with the medical experiments of the chief

company commander of SS Dr. Rascher also a few experimental gassings were undertaken.

Death Camps, or Killing Centers

A concentration camp the distinct purpose of which was the extermination of its inmates. Almost all of the German death camps were located in Poland: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmo, Madjanek, Sobibor, Treblinka.

Death Marches

At the end of the war when it became obvious that the German army was trapped between the Soviets to the east and the advancing Allied troops from the west, the Nazis, in an attempt to prevent the liberation of camp inmates, forced them to march westward. Thousands died in these marches.

Deportation

The removal of people from their areas of residency for purposes of resettlement elsewhere. With regard to the Jews of Europe, deportation meant removal either to a ghetto or a concentration camp in preparation for yet another removal to an extermination center.

Einsatzgruppen

Mobile killing units ("task groups") under the command of Reinhard Heydrich which accompanied German Troops when they invaded Russia. Their task was to dispose of, liquidate, undesirables who posed a threat to the Reich.

Final Solution

Euphemism for the extermination of European Jewry.

Fuhrerprinzip

See "leadership Principle."

General Government

The Nazi-ruled state in central and eastern Poland. Headed by Governor Hans Frank.

Genocide

The systematic annihilation of a whole people or nation.

German Military Rank Provided by Richard Breitman in *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution*. New York: Alfred A.Knopf, 1991

Oberstgruppenfuehrer	General
Obergruppenfuehrer	Lt. General
Gruppenfuehrer	Major General
Brigadefuehrer	Brigadier General
Oberfuehrer	between Brigadier & Colonel
Standartenfuehrer	Colonel
Obersturmbannfuehrer	Lt. Colonel
Sturmbannfuehrer	Major
Hauptsturmfuehrer	Captain
Obersturmfuehrer	1st. Lieutenant
Unterscharfuehrer	Corporal
Rottenfuehrer	Private, First Class
Sturmann	Private
SS-Mann	No equivalent in U.S. military

Gestapo

The German internal security police - secret police. The Gestapo was organized in 1933 to protect the regime from political opposition. Under Himmler's command after 1936.

Ghetto

A Yiddish word referring to a walled section of a city in which Jews were required to live during the Middle Ages. The concept was revived by the Nazi regime as part of the Final Solution to the Jewish Question.

Holocaust

A Hebrew word (*olah*) meaning "burnt offering. In the Septuagint version (translated Hebrew Bible into Greek during the reign of Ptolemy II, 3rd century B.C.), the

word, olah, is consistently translated by the Greek word, holokauston, "an offering consumed by fire."

Juden

The German word for Jew.

Judenrat

Jewish community authority, appointed by the Nazis for administration within the ghetto.

Kristallnacht

"Night of broken glass," November 9, 1938, pogrom against German Jews, Jewish businesses and synagogues orchestrated by the Gestapo in retaliation for the assassination of a minor German embassy official in Paris by a 17 year-old Jewish youth named Herchel Grynzspan. 7,500 businesses and 101 synagogues were destroyed, almost 100 Jews were killed and several thousand were arrested and sent to concentration camps. The beginning of the Holocaust.

Leadership Principle

Ger. *fuhrerprinzip*, the ideological and administrative principle established by Hitler early in his rise to power of one vital party controlled by one, and only one, leader to whom all subjects owed absolute and unquestioning obedience.

Lebensraum

One of Hitler's motivations for invading Poland and, later, the Soviet Union, was to acquire *lebensraum*, or additional "living space," to be colonized by German people.

Madagascar Plan

In 1940, before the invasion of the Soviet Union, the Nazis seriously considered moving all Jews under their authority to the island of Madagascar, a French possession off the east coast of Africa.

Majdanek

Located in the Lublin district, general government of Poland. The concentration camp existing since September 1941 turned into an extermination camp when between April 1942 and November 1943 mass shootings took place to which 24,000 Jews fell victim. In October 1942 also two, later three gas chambers were built. In the beginning the killings in these were done by means of carbon monoxide. Later Zyklon B was implemented. Up until the dissolution of the camp in March 1944 about 50,000 Jews have been gassed. The camp was closed in 1944 after a major inmate riot occurred and several inmates escaped.

Nazi

National Socialist German Workers' Party - the political party which emerged in Munich after World War I. The party was taken over by Adolph Hitler in the early 1920's. He created the SA (Storm Troopers, also known as "Brownshirts") in 1921 and chose the swastika as the party's symbol.

Nuremberg,

A city in Germany where the Reichstag met in September, 1935 to promulgate the Nuremberg Laws. A decade later, an International Military Tribunal convened there to hold trials of Nazis accused of War Crimes in connection with the Holocaust.

Operation Barbarossa

The military code name for Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union. The invasion began in June, 1941.

Operation Reinhard

The code name for the entire process of building extermination camps, deportation of Jews first to ghettos, then to the camps for extermination and incineration. The Operation was named for Reinhard Heydrich.

Pink Triangle

The Nazi concentration camps developed a system of badges to be worn by inmates depending on why they were imprisoned. Those convicted of sexual deviance,

primarily homosexuality, were required to wear a pink triangle. Jews were required to wear the yellow Star of David. Purple designated Jehovah's Witnesses, red for political criminals, black for asocials, including the Roma, and green for criminals.

Pogrom

A Russian word meaning *devastation* used to describe an organized, systematic discriminatory action against Jews.

Reichstag

The German Parliament under the Weimar Constitution. It was purely ornamental during Hitler's dictatorship.

SD

Sicherheitsdienst - The SS Security Service Sonderkommandos.

SS

Originally Hitler's elite guard. Under Himmler's leadership, the SS was in charge of the death camps.

Shoah

A Hebrew word meaning "Desolation." Shoah has come to be the preferred term for the Holocaust by Jewish scholars who feel that "Holocaust" has lost much of its significance through overuse.

Sobibor

Located in the Lublin District, (general government) received in April 1942, three, later in September 1942 six gas chambers and until October 1943 it was "in operation". During this period at least 200,000 Jews were murdered through carbon monoxide gas.

Third Reich

Nazi Germany from the end of the Weimar Republic to the end of World War II.

Treblinka

Located in the Warschau District of the general government in eastern Poland. From the end of July, 1942 on, Treblinka had three gas chambers and at the beginning of September, 1942, installed ten larger gas chambers. Up to the dissolution of the camp in November 1943 altogether 700,000 Jews were killed there by carbon monoxide.

Vichy, France

After the Nazis conquered France, a puppet government was set up here.

Wannsee Conference

A conference held on January 20, 1942 beside Lake Wannsee in Berlin. At this conference it was decided and made official Nazi policy that the total annihilation of European Jews was the only rational means of a "Final Solution" to the Jewish Question.

Yad Vashem

A museum in Jerusalem dedicated to the memory of Holocaust victims. The name of the Museum is taken from an Old Testament passage in Isaiah: "I will build for them a name and a memorial." (Isiah 56:5).

Zionism

The fervent desire of Jews of the Diaspora to return to their ancestral homeland of Palestine. This ideal is at least 2,500 years old, dating to the Babylonian Captivity. Its first statement is found in Psalm 137:1, "By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept as we remembered Zion. Political Zionism which emerged in the 19th century and ultimately resulted in the creation of the modern state of Israel in 1948 is an outgrowth of spiritual Zionism.

Zyklon B

Hydrogen cyanide, a poisonous gas originally developed as a fumigation agent to remove pesticides. In October, 1941, it was used experimentally on Soviet prisoners of war. The success of these experiments had devastating consequences for millions of Jews who were gassed in the Nazi death camps.

* Taken from the website “Ben Austin’s Sociology Corner”. Available at:
<http://www.mtsu.edu/~baustin>. Accessed January 4, 2005.

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