

A Contextual Analysis of Holocaust Oral Testimony in Britain and
Canada

Madeline White

Royal Holloway University of London

PhD History

September 2020

Declaration of Authorship

I, Madeline White, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: 

▪

Date: 09/09/20

Abstract

This thesis is an interdisciplinary analysis of archived collections of Holocaust oral testimonies produced in Britain and Canada since the end of the war. It draws principally on the theories and approaches of oral history and archival science to illustrate the benefits of the contextualisation of oral testimony for the study of the Holocaust. As such, it contributes to a relatively new and developing literature on Holocaust oral testimony which examines the construction of audio and audiovisual testimonies within particular social, cultural and archival frameworks. This literature has hitherto focused almost exclusively on the US context; this thesis seeks to redress the imbalance by focusing on the comparatively understudied British and Canadian collections of Holocaust oral testimony. In addition to drawing attention to lesser known but equally valuable collections, this thesis demonstrates that engaging with oral testimonies in full awareness of the contextual specificity of the medium enhances our understanding of what the sources can tell us about the Holocaust, as well as what they cannot tell us and – crucially – how they tell us about the Holocaust.

Archivist Eric Ketelaar's concepts of archivization and archivalization provide a useful framework for a postmodern examination of oral testimony which illustrates how decisions made in the process of establishing an oral history project incontrovertibly shape the nature of the material produced. Building on this contextual analysis is an assessment of British and Canadian testimonial landscapes and an exploration of the ways in which oral history has been mobilised as an historiographical response to the Holocaust by communities, scholars and governments over time. To this end, this thesis advocates for the greater accessibility of contextual information relating to Holocaust oral testimony collections, in order that (re)contextualisation might become a standard approach to engaging with this source material by all who use it.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go first and foremost to my supervisor, Dan Stone, for his years of teaching and guidance and seemingly unwavering faith in my ability as an academic. I couldn't have asked for a more encouraging or inspiring mentor and I hope, more than anything, that this thesis does justice to the investment he has made in my development as a scholar. Thanks are also owed to Graham Smith for inspiring my interest in oral history and for his contribution to the supervision of this thesis in its earliest stages. The excellent teaching I received from both as an undergraduate sowed the seeds of interest from which this thesis grew, for which I am extremely grateful. I am also grateful to TECHNE for seeing the potential in this research and providing the funding that made it possible, and to the Friendly Hand Trust for funding a vital and incredibly fruitful research visit to Vancouver. It is only right that I also acknowledge how eternally grateful I am for Mrs Warren and Mr Edmunds, without whom I might never have discovered my love and aptitude for history and may well have lost faith in myself a long time ago. Who knows how different my life may have been if I hadn't been taught by them both.

I owe thanks to the many archival staff and individuals on both sides of the Atlantic who have supported my research in various ways, including Toby Simpson, Christine Schmidt, Rosalyn Livshin, Anna Skorupsky, Eszter Andor and Janice Rosen. Thank you all for helping me find things I didn't even know I was looking for. I am especially grateful to the staff at the VHEC – in particular Shyla Seller, Shannon LaBelle and Nina Krieger – who went above and beyond to source and index materials in advance of my visit and who made the three weeks I spent in Vancouver some of the most enjoyable of this whole process. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Elly and Esme Gotz for hosting me in their home and to Robert Krell, for giving their time to share their experiences and wealth of knowledge about the Holocaust and the Holocaust testimony projects with me. Their expertise is incomparable and this thesis is much richer for all that they shared with me.

Finally, I give my endless thanks to the many people who have held my head above the water for the last four years. To Katy Jackson and Jackie Teale for being

the only people who really understood and the only people capable of providing the many briefings and debriefings this PhD student needed. To Raeesa, the greatest constant in my life, for whom the love I have is beyond description. To my siblings Tom, Rhianna and Kieran, for being altogether excellent human beings and my best friends as well as my family. To Auntie E and Uncle G, two of my favourite people on the planet, for all the love, hugs and emotional guidance they have given me through the challenges of the last few years. To Alex, Ken, Rufus and Elias for being my second family and my home away from home. To Amy, for coming into my life at just the right time and giving me a much-needed place to escape to. It's impossible to thank everyone by name but I am grateful to every one of my friends and family members both here and in Canada who have tolerated my physical and emotional absence and yet still provided steadfast support to me and my family throughout it all. This would not have been possible without each and every one of them.

And last but never, ever least, to the two people to whom I owe it all: to my beloved dad, who never got to read this thesis but who I know would have been the proudest father in the universe; and to mum, for everything I have put you through, for everything we have been through together, and for everything that is still to come: thank you for always being there. This is your achievement as much as it is mine.

For Dad.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	8
Literature Review	15
Methodology	48
Part I – (Re)contextualisation: Unpacking the Oral Testimony Format	56
(Re)contextualising the Archive	58
A Legacy for Future Generations: Holocaust Survivor Archives	60
The Voice of the Past: Oral History as Social History.....	70
Performative Oral Testimony Archives.....	81
Summary	92
(Re)contextualising the Testimony	94
Interview Methodology.....	97
Audience	124
‘Insiders’ and ‘Outsiders’: Oral Testimony as Dialogue	144
Summary	167
Part II – Analysing the Testimonial Landscape.....	169
Oral History: The Elite, the Academic, and the Archival	172
Locating Oral Testimony as a Commemorative Activity	185
Establishing a National Testimonial Landscape	196
Towards a Standardised Holocaust Oral Testimony, and the Future of Holocaust Oral Testimony in Britain and Canada.....	225
Summary	245
Part III – Problematizing Holocaust Oral Testimony	247
The Limitations of Oral Testimony	248
Accessing Holocaust Oral Testimony	252
Perspectives of Re-Use	273
Conclusion	281
Bibliography	286

Introduction

It is undoubtedly true that the survivor testimony is at the centre of the now-pervasive Holocaust consciousness that characterises our present-day relationship to the event. The Holocaust is the subject of vast quantities of films, TV programmes and books; dedicated museums have appeared across the world as have Holocaust memorial days; and, at least in England, the Holocaust appears as a mandatory subject on the National Curriculum for secondary school education. At the heart of each of these various media is the Holocaust survivor, who appears on screen to relate their experience in films and documentaries, whose voice can be heard emerging from speakers in Holocaust exhibitions to bring a narrative to silent objects and photographs, and who is the mainstay of public commemoration events and educational programmes, delivering the reality of the Holocaust as one of its few living witnesses in the hope that by giving their testimony future generations will 'never forget'. The legitimacy of the moral imperative that has propelled the survivor witness to the forefront of this new consciousness is axiomatic and shall not be debated here. The issue at hand, rather, is what to make of this material as we move forward into the post-survivor era and our engagement with the subject comes to rely on the thousands of recorded testimonies now held in archives all over the world. Two questions drive my interest in this matter. What is it about oral history that has seen it mobilised in service of the mass documentation of survivor stories in recent decades? And how ought we to approach engaging with this material going forward, so that we might do justice both to the history of the Holocaust and the individuals who have communicated it to us?

Writing in 1987, Lawrence Langer summarised the characteristic differences between written and oral testimony, indicating in the process the need for different approaches to engaging with the two types of material:

After having spent twenty years reading and interpreting the implications of innumerable survivor memoirs...one approaches the viewing of videotaped survivor testimonies with a certain perplexity and trepidation. The experienced reader and critic come equipped with tools of the profession, as it were, prepared to confront questions of

style, continuity, character, authenticity, tragic vision, moral conflict, and spiritual growth. But what critical 'tools' are available to the *viewer* of this unfamiliar form of 'testimony,' and how does it differ from the familiar challenge of reading a written text? Is there such a phenomenon as an *oral* 'text,' which invites us to do more than simply sit as passive audience to watch and listen, shuddering at the unfolding horrors in the narrative without apparent structure and often without chronological sequence, dredged up from memory by a prodding interviewer and the witness's own voluntary determination to find a vocabulary for his or her ordeal? The vast majority of Holocaust survivors are not writers, even amateur ones, so the videotaped interview is the only chance they have to move from invisible silence to visible expression. But just as a written text is 'meaningless' without responsible readers, so oral testimony gains validity from viewer response, from the search for a principle of organisation concealed in the narrative that even the witness may not be conscious of.¹

Of particular note is Langer's observation that whilst there is an established tradition upon which one can draw to study the written testimony, there is a comparative lack of proven 'tools' with which to approach the video testimony. Despite more than three decades passing since Langer made this observation, there is still more than a kernel of truth in this statement. In 2013 Thomas Trezise asked why the phrase 'Holocaust testimony' was simultaneously used to refer to diaries, journals and reports written during the war as well as to legal depositions, oral histories and written memoirs produced in the years since,² and in 2015 Leah Wolfson similarly argued that 'the word "testimony" remains one of the most ubiquitous and yet ill-defined terms in Holocaust research,' referring to written texts composed from the words of survivors elicited through postwar interviews, written survivor memoirs, and the recorded spoken word, each with their own

¹ Lawrence Langer, 'Interpreting Written Memoirs and Video Testimony', *Facing History and Ourselves News*, 1987, Fall edition, 1, CJC Collection Holocaust Documentation Project DA 16 Box 1 File 11, Canadian Jewish Archives.

² Thomas Trezise, *Witnessing Witnessing: On the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 36.

degree of transparency (or opacity) regarding the constructed nature of their form.³ Speaking only of the audio and video recorded interview format, the Holocaust is now the subject of the most prolific body of oral testimony in existence and yet there is no comprehensive literature assessing the distinctive nature of this material. This is in no small part due to our preoccupation with its lessons as a moral imperative for our time, but though respect for these sources is quite justified the corollary is a lack of critical analysis: we ascribe such fundamental importance and value to these testimonies that we forget that they are as much a product of context – of time, place, and motivation – as any other historical source, and that to utilise them to their full potential they must be understood and approached analytically in these terms.

Langer, Trezise and Wolfson – among others – are right to suggest that the terms we employ to discuss this material are often poorly or conflictingly defined. For example, as an entity in its own right ‘oral history’ is more than just the use of recording technology to document the spoken word, which is why many scholars and practitioners have gone to great lengths to differentiate it from other historical methods, yet the term is frequently invoked by anyone with a tape recorder and an interest in people to describe the material they produce. Similarly the term ‘testimony’ is variously defined by its legal connotations, its moral implications and its relationship to an eyewitness, yet certainly in the present day and in the context of the Holocaust the term is freely used to refer to the stories a survivor or witness has to tell irrespective of the format in which they choose to tell them. In this thesis, I focus on the particular phenomenon of producing audio or audiovisual recordings of Holocaust survivors, often but not always in an interview situation, for inclusion or incorporation into an archive of some description.

Whilst this material is variously referred to as ‘Holocaust oral history’ and ‘Holocaust oral testimony’ both by those who produce it and those who work with it, I employ the phrase ‘Holocaust oral testimony’ as my primary term to refer to this material for a few reasons. Using ‘testimony’ rather than ‘history’ asserts the

³ Leah Wolfson, *Jewish Responses to Persecution Volume V: 1944-1946* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 433.

centrality of the testimonial imperative that is at the heart of all these recordings; though there are many varying practical considerations that lead an individual or organisation to launch a recording project, all the projects referenced in this thesis without exception exist at least in part to provide witnesses with a chance to speak on record – that is, to ‘testify’ about what they experienced – because they believe there is an inherent value to the enterprise. To this, I add the phrase ‘oral’ to distinguish this type of testimony from others, for example written, legal, or artistic testimony. The phrase ‘oral testimony’ moreover leaves space for ‘oral history’ to exist as something specific in its own right, both within and outside the realm of Holocaust studies. In contrast to ‘oral testimony’, ‘oral history’ has academic connotations, since it is employed as a research method by those interested in studying some aspect of the past through the experiences of those who were there. These distinctions will be made more clearly in the sections of this thesis that deal explicitly with project methodology, but in short I define ‘testimony’ as something that is given by a witness and ‘oral history’ as something that is collected by an interested party, and in doing so suggest that ‘Holocaust oral history’ exists as a type of – but is not synonymous with – ‘Holocaust oral testimony’. That said, there are occasionally instances where I nonetheless employ the term ‘oral history’ outside of my personal definitions, either because a project refers to itself as an ‘oral history’ and it is necessary for me to reference a project in its own terms, or because the term is more befitting than ‘oral testimony’ when discussing interviewing methodologies in a non-Holocaust specific context.

Clearly there is still much work to be done in this area. In this thesis I demonstrate how the specific contexts in which interviews are recorded necessarily influence the nature of their content, and furthermore I argue that if this is the case there cannot be a standard approach to utilising these sources in education or research: emphasis must be placed on contextualising these sources individually in order to extract the greatest depth and quality of meaning from them. The multifaceted nature of oral testimonies as sources – in particular their numerous axes of authorship – means that to historicise them – to situate them in and account for the influence of their historical contexts – one must account for several

factors: the history and context surrounding the interviewee; the history and context in which the interviewer operates and their personal or institutional agenda; the setting in which the interview is taking place; and the historiographical contexts of both the field of oral history and the culture of testifying at the time. The variables are numerous but the central point is the same: like any historical source, oral testimonies are a product of their context, in time, place and in temporal and spatial relation to their subject matter. The original contribution to knowledge that this thesis makes is primarily in enhancing our understanding of the very specific nature of Holocaust oral testimonies, with an emphasis on how the method and contexts of their creation shape their content. Most specifically it does so by analysing oral testimony collections produced and held in Britain and Canada, which have hitherto been overlooked in what little literature does exist on this topic in favour of the larger and more dominant US collections.

I situate my research in the context of several current academic trends. The first is the postmodern challenge to the concept of archival neutrality, which has called on archives and archivists in recent years to reassess their relationship to the materials they collect. Ellen Swain argues that 'Postmodernism shatters the notion that archivists are or can be objective caretakers of documents as their bias, interests, and backgrounds shape the ways in which they collect and maintain archival holdings...Postmodernists have placed archival practice under the microscope and concluded that both the individuals who use the archives and those who provide access to its holdings construct and author the meanings of "truth" of documents.'⁴ In subjecting archives of Holocaust oral testimony to a contextual analysis I support the deconstruction of the notion that archives are in any sense objective or impartial; far from being passive repositories of information about the Holocaust, these archives are curated to record and present a particular perspective on the event, one which centres eyewitness

⁴ Ellen D. Swain, 'Oral History in the Archives: Its Documentary Role in the Twenty-First Century', *The American Archivist* 66, no. 1 (2003): 147.

accounts but also consciously mobilises them to respond to contemporary issues concerning the documentation and commemoration of the Holocaust.

The second academic trend, present largely in the fields of oral history and sociology, is an increased interest in establishing how oral sources are constructed, with a particular focus on recontextualising archived oral histories which may well have been created for a different purpose to that which an archive user intends to put them. Since many archives of Holocaust oral testimony are responsible for the production of their own oral material as well as its storage, understanding the influence of context on content is vital not only for the benefit of users of the archive but also for identifying the inbuilt archival narrative. With oral history being employed as a tool for documenting the experiences of Holocaust survivors by individuals from a wide range of academic and cultural backgrounds – Holocaust survivor interviews and collections have been created by historians, psychologists, sociologists, museum professionals and survivor communities themselves, to name a few – the tools of re-use being developed by oral historians in particular are invaluable for future archive users to successfully unlock their potential. The work of oral historians is insufficient on its own however, given that much – if not most – of the existing body of Holocaust oral testimony has been collected by individuals who are not trained oral historians and may therefore differ in their motivations and methodologies. This research is therefore an interdisciplinary study, crossing into fields of history, oral history, memory studies, Holocaust historiography, archive studies and information science. Drawing upon literature and research methodologies from all of these fields facilitates the study of a subject which is inherently transdisciplinary. Given its implications for humanity, the Holocaust is no more the academic or intellectual property of history than any other subject, thus an interdisciplinary analysis of its most prolific source material can only be to the benefit of all who wish to study it. This research is also timely in that it responds to issues that are an ever-increasing priority for those engaged in so-called ‘Holocaust studies’: the impending loss of the survivor generation is prompting urgent conversations about how to re-centre education and commemoration efforts – which at present rely heavily on the survivor-speaker – onto the recorded

testimony, and moreover how to engage meaningfully and appropriately with oral history as source material when we are no longer able to turn to the original source of information for clarification. In addition to responding to these contemporary concerns, this research makes extensive use of access to information and resources which have only been made widely available – both globally and remotely – in the last decade, making this research also innovative in its use of previously inaccessible or difficult to access material.

The aim of this thesis is twofold: in what follows I utilise case study examples of British and Canadian Holocaust oral testimony projects to illustrate how (re)contextualisation can improve our understanding of individual testimonies and testimony collections, and moreover to demonstrate how this process can be used to develop our awareness of the historiographical role of oral history in studying the Holocaust – that is to say, how and for what reasons oral history has been mobilised by societies, individuals and institutions as a response to the Holocaust from the end of the war until the present day. Part I follows the methodological precedent of analysing Holocaust testimonies set by Noah Shenker and Jeffrey Shandler in their analyses of US-based oral testimony collections, and utilises the theoretical frameworks and practical recommendations of oral historians to explore how ‘Holocaust oral testimony’ is contextually produced. It considers how various social and cultural factors contribute to an individual or institution’s decision to launch an oral history project, which in turn determines the intended use to which the interviews produced are to be put and the methodological processes employed in the process, such as the thematic scope of the interview, specific questions put to interviewees, and interview structure. This contextual analysis is used to illustrate how project agendas work to shape survivor and witness testimonies and thus how collections of these testimonies propagate particular narratives about the subjects they represent. This section employs a comparative approach to its analysis, highlighting similarities and differences between case study projects to identify the source of particular testimonial or archival features and to illustrate how critical listenings or viewings of testimonies enhance our understanding of their content rather than detract from their value or

impact. Part II builds on the methodological groundwork laid in Part I, drawing upon the various features of the collections and testimonies to explore what these projects can tell us about Holocaust commemoration in Britain and Canada more generally. Analysing the projects against their historical backgrounds – notably the history of oral history and Holocaust memory in both Britain and Canada – facilitates an exploration of the ways in which oral testimony fits into the wider landscape of Holocaust historiography, both from the point of view of the survivors and of non-Jewish populations engaging with Holocaust commemoration and education. Part III summarises the implications of the arguments made in Parts I and II, identifying ways in which we can assess oral testimony on its own merits, both in terms of its strengths and weaknesses, in way that avoids violating the innate sanctity of the survivor narrative. The final section also problematises the ways in which oral testimonies and oral testimony archives are presented and accessed at present, to demonstrate how means and modes of access further shape the frame of reference a user has when engaging with this material, with a view to identifying some practical actions for archives to facilitate improved contextual analysis of survivor testimonies.

Literature Review

This research predicated itself on one simple claim: that despite the Holocaust being the subject of the largest body of oral interviews in existence, the corpus of literature on Holocaust oral testimony does not match it. That is not to say that little has been written about Holocaust oral testimonies so much as to suggest that much of the corresponding literature tends to use these interviews as source material for other intellectual inquiries rather than theorise the methodology employed in the process of creating them. It is necessary to conduct an initial survey of current literature on the subject for three reasons: one, because the ways in which scholars engage with the material on a theoretical level will naturally inform the ways in which these scholars and other practitioners commence conducting and collecting oral history material for archives and research projects; two, because the ways in which scholars and practitioners have written about Holocaust oral testimony is indicative of the ways in which this material has been

interpreted over time, an awareness of which in the present can facilitate a recontextualisation of the resultant material in the future; and three, because an assessment of current analytical approaches to re-use will highlight some of the inadequacies that may need to be overcome or challenges one might encounter in arguing for a new – or an extension to the current – methodological approach to use and interpretation. Drawing on the work of oral historians as well as Holocaust scholars, this review will follow a structure similar to that of the main thesis: beginning with a survey of existing literature that theorises oral history as a process and lays the groundwork for a contextual approach to re-use, this review will turn to examine how this process has – or has not – been applied specifically to Holocaust oral testimony before outlining some of the ways in which Holocaust oral testimony has been historicised as a response to the Holocaust. Assessing the various strengths and weaknesses of the approaches of the relevant scholars, I will then highlight some of the reasons for the deficiencies in these theoretical and methodological approaches, before reviewing some of the works that have begun to bridge the gap and indicating where my research will fit in to the ongoing debate about how to most effectively and meaningfully interpret, analyse and re-use Holocaust oral testimonies.

At this point, the literature on the unique and particular features of the oral method is well established. Oral history has achieved recognition in the academy as a viable and valid method of research for both historians and social scientists, and whilst critics of the method are dubious about its reliance on memory, as far as oral historians and practitioners are concerned there is much more to be said for the potentiality of oral sources than simply what they may be able to contribute to our objective knowledge about an event. Regarded as one of the pioneers of oral history as an academic research method, Paul Thompson wrote in the first edition of his influential work *The Voice of the Past* – published initially in 1978 and again in revised editions in 1988, 2000 and 2017 – that oral history can be ‘a means for transforming both the content and the purpose of history. It can be used to change the focus of history itself, and open up new areas of inquiry; it can break down barriers...[and] it can give back to the people who made and experienced history,

through their own words, a central place.⁵ These same words appear unchanged in the most recent edition of the book. Thompson's work summarises the many and varied ways in which oral history has been employed across time and throughout the world not only to document unwritten facts about the past but also to study people and societies whose stories and experiences are conspicuously absent from the historical record. In this regard, the value of the method for studying the lives of Holocaust survivors is quite apparent. Work by oral historians and social scientists to explore and expound the nature of oral sources to facilitate a deeper understanding of their function and value has led to a shift in focus away from a primary concern with objective details however, and toward a greater understanding of the value of their subjective features. Alessandro Portelli in particular is famed for his work on orality: in an article published in English in 1981 entitled 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', Portelli used the truism 'Oral sources are *oral* sources' to draw attention to the tendency of scholars to go to work on transcripts rather than recorded tapes, reducing and manipulating their value and messages in the process.⁶ The article goes on to identify some of the unique features of oral documentation, arguing for researchers to pay attention to the distinct benefits of the medium: users should not ignore the meaning of prosodic features of speech such as tone, rhythm, acceleration and emphasis; they should examine the process of narrative construction through speech; they should consider the attribution of meaning to specific events in memory; they should assess the credibility and reliability of accounts which depend on memory and the respective values of particularly 'reliable' or 'unreliable' accounts; and they should acknowledge the existence of a past-present dialectic which incontrovertibly informs the nature and content of the recollection, for 'today's narrator is not the same person as took part in the distant events which he or she is now relating.'⁷ Perhaps the most significant conclusion Portelli reaches in the article is that 'the

⁵ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 2.

⁶ Alessandro Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', *History Workshop Journal* 12, no. 1 (1981): 98.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 98–102.

first thing that makes oral history different...is that it tells us less about events as such than about their meaning.⁸

Since then, much work has been done on the construction of oral history. *The Voice of the Past* in each of its editions presents an up to date summary analysis of the history of oral history, but also reflects on good interview practice and gives advice on how to evaluate oral interviews for use in research. In the fourth edition, published in 2017, Thompson instructs the reader that 'you will need to evaluate your interviews in three ways: as texts, as types of content, and as evidence.'⁹ The wider literature does not neglect context: from the earliest days of academic oral history practitioners have demonstrated an awareness of the impact or the potential impact of a range of circumstances on the shape and content of their interviews. Largely these observations form part of an ongoing commentary on best practice, in articles and chapters titled 'Oral History Project Design',¹⁰ 'Theory, Method, and Oral History',¹¹ 'Doing Video Oral History',¹² 'Life History Interviewing'¹³ and similar, as practitioners persistently endeavour to find ways of mitigating the external influences that threaten to alter the value, purity or clarity of the interview – and indeed as they seek to establish a consensus on what these influences might be and what the ideal interview might look like. Many of the issues discussed by Thompson in the first edition of *The Voice of the Past* – such as how many people to have present in an interview room, the ideal location for conducting interviews, and how to facilitate the best working relationship between interviewer and interviewee – are still being debated today: Valerie Yow, Lynn Abrams and Donald Ritchie have all published monographs that now form part of the core literature on best interview practice, all of which have been re-published in

⁸ Ibid., 99.

⁹ Paul Thompson and Joanna Bornat, *The Voice of the Past*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 374.

¹⁰ David Lance, 'Oral History Project Design', in *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, ed. David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996), 135–42.

¹¹ Peter Friedlander, 'Theory, Method, and Oral History', in *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, ed. David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996), 150–60.

¹² Brien R. Williams, 'Doing Video Oral History', in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Donald A. Ritchie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 267–76.

¹³ Peter Jackson and Polly Russell, 'Life History Interviewing', in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*, ed. Dydia DeLyser et al. (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010), 172–92.

updated editions within the last five years.¹⁴ The focus of these methodological texts is to encourage best practice in the field, and together they provide a substantial corpus of literature upon which practitioners can draw to aid the navigation and accommodation of contextual factors when producing oral history. In other words, this literature is proactive: it discusses the processes involved in – and thus aids understanding of – the creation of oral history interviews.

Whilst there is also a substantial literature on the *use* of oral histories – that is to say, much is written by oral historians analysing the interviews they themselves have collected – there is comparatively little on the *re-use* of archived interviews, although interest in this area is growing. Alexander Freund observed that both time and technology are increasingly turning researchers over to re-use. All the while prospective research subjects are alive there is a temptation to rush out to interview them so that one might elicit the most relevant material for one's own research enquiry, but thanks to earlier oral historians archiving their work, there is now a great quantity of archived oral history material available for time periods which now have no living eyewitnesses, and the digital revolution has made accessing those sources easier than ever.¹⁵ This is certainly the case for oral histories of the Holocaust, as indeed Freund recognises when he cites the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive (USC VHA) as an example of this increased accessibility. The majority of the existing literature on re-use has been produced by sociologists and social scientists like Freund, who approach archived oral history as a type of 'data' and discuss extensively the practical and ethical implications of conducting qualitative data analysis of secondary source material.¹⁶ Graham Smith offers four questions to guide the (re)use process:

¹⁴ Valerie Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3rd ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 2nd ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016); Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹⁵ Alexander Freund, 'Oral History as Process-Generated Data', *Historical Social Research* 34, no. 1 (2009): 27.

¹⁶ For an extensive survey of the sociological literature on re-use, see April Gallwey, 'The Rewards of Using Archived Oral Histories in Research: The Case of the Millennium Memory Bank', *Oral History* 41, no. 1 (2013): 37–50.

What are the legal and ethical limitations, if any, in (re)using this evidence?

When and where [were] the interviews recorded[?]

For what purposes were they undertaken? As part of a larger project?

Who was involved in the interviews? (Interviewers/any others in attendance/interviewees/project team?)¹⁷

These questions are a useful starting point for data or information extraction but are not nearly sufficient for unlocking the full value of archived Holocaust oral testimony.

Surprisingly – although perhaps understandably – very little at all has been written on the re-use of archived Holocaust oral testimony. Given the vast quantity of Holocaust oral testimony material in existence, the amount of information we have access to is almost unlimited: as a result, its research potential extends far beyond the factual or even the historical. There is immense historiographical value in a body of potential source material that has been collected over more than five decades, in countries across the world, and in a whole range of disciplines, but a full contextual analysis of both interview and oral history project is needed to unlock these significances. In 2013, Malin Thor Tureby applied an archival science approach to ‘recontextualise’ the *Jewish Memories* collection held by the Nordic Museum in Sweden – an archive of 383 life stories of Jews who were either born in Sweden or emigrated to Sweden during and after the Second World War – on the basis that ‘doing so will allow us not only to understand the voices and narratives of the archived interviews but also to hear the tacit narratives of the archives and collections.’¹⁸ By analysing the methodology, execution and output of the oral history project, Tureby concluded that:

¹⁷ Graham Smith, *Oral History*, Historical Insights: Focus on Research (University of Warwick: History at the HEA, 2010), https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/heahistory/resources/rg_smith_oralhistory_20111015.pdf.

¹⁸ Malin Thor Tureby, ‘To Hear with the Collection: The Contextualisation and Recontextualisation of Archived Interviews’, *Oral History* 41, no. 2 (2013): 63.

The deconstruction of the tacit narratives of the archive and the collection has shown that the staff at the archive of the Nordic Museum, as well as the interviewers and interviewees, had the idea that the material could be used in the struggle against anti-Semitism and xenophobia as well as in documenting testimonies or narratives about the Holocaust or Jewish experiences of the Holocaust and/or the Second World War...I have shown how I came to understand Jewish Memories as one available discourse on Jewishness in the 1990s that the interviewers and the 'Swedish Jews' had to engage with. Understanding the collection in this way allows me to also hear alternative Jewish narratives and be aware of identities that might not fit into Jewish Memories but may exist in the collected narratives anyway.¹⁹

Tureby's approach to recontextualisation demonstrates how reading projects and their methodologies against the social, political and historical contexts of their creation informs interpretations of individual and collective oral history narratives, and has in this respect provided inspiration for the approach of this thesis.

The work of Henry Greenspan and Sidney Bolkosky provides an alternative method of interpreting archived Holocaust survivor testimonies, but also serves as a warning against reading too much into project methodologies. Greenspan and Bolkosky identify an absence of literature which systematically evaluates archives against their self-professed methodologies to identify whether or not they actually achieve what they claim to achieve, noting that 'not surprisingly, there is a certain amount of professional folklore, among those who gather and comment upon survivor "testimony," concerning the relative merits of the interviews generated in different projects.'²⁰ In response, they conducted a series of new interviews with Holocaust survivors who had given interviews to a number of different oral history projects, in order to elicit feedback from them about their experiences of giving

¹⁹ Ibid., 72.

²⁰ Henry Greenspan and Sidney Bolkosky, 'When Is an Interview an Interview? Notes from Listening to Holocaust Survivors', *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (2006): 437.

testimony on each of those occasions, noting that the feedback process is invaluable 'because there is a remarkable gulf between what actually happens in interviews and what particular theories and methods of interviewing suggest *ought* to happen.'²¹ Whilst there is clear value in critically assessing the nature of an interviewer-interviewee relationship – in all oral history interviews, but especially in interviews with Holocaust survivors – I am loath to make value judgments about the 'quality' of already-archived interviews: the fact is that these interviews exist, and soon they will be all that exists, thus we must learn to utilise them all on their own merits. Nonetheless Greenspan and Bolkosky raise an important point: archival, methodological analyses of Holocaust oral history collections are only meaningful if we also study the interviews born of that project on their own merits, to determine the extent to which planned methodologies have actually been implemented in the process of conducting an interview. Literature which effectively analyses interviews with Holocaust survivors in this way is scant.

One explanation for the comparative lack of literature on the re-use of Holocaust oral testimony is that the moral exigencies of the Holocaust have meant that the focus until now has – quite rightly – been on collection rather than use. Oral historian Jessica Wiederhorn has dealt directly with the issue of responding to the moral imperative in Holocaust oral history in an essay entitled 'Case Study: "Above All We Need the Witness": The Oral History of Holocaust Survivors', published in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* in 2011. Wiederhorn points out that the weight of the moral anxiety that surrounds Holocaust memory underscores the collection of Holocaust oral testimony as much as it does the use of it, if not more so for the time being as the passage of time foreshadows the loss of the survivor generation. Unfortunately, as Wiederhorn also points out, this has resulted in methodologies that see their value as self-evident: 'the need and desire to rush to document the experiences of "those who were there" before it's too late is how many oral history projects begin. Their architects only stumble upon the theoretical issues inherent in the endeavour...after it is has become apparent that there is little that is self-evident, direct, or unmediated in the process of producing oral histories

²¹ Ibid., 433.

of “eyewitness” accounts.’²² In saying this she argues that for those who recorded the oral testimonies of Holocaust survivors, as well as those who have subsequently utilised the recordings made, the moral imperative to secure testimonies before survivors pass on has fed into a discourse that has prioritised the ethical dealings with Holocaust survivors over the need to be critical and self-reflective in approaching the endeavour. Tony Kushner agrees with this analysis of the testimonial landscape, arguing that ‘the apparent obvious need and rectitude of collecting testimony almost as a form of rescue archaeology, as the survivors dwindle in numbers, has consumed almost all of the energy of those involved, even to the extent of obscuring the dilemma of whether it has been appropriate to the needs of all those interviewed.’²³ It is likely that as the collection of new interviews becomes increasingly impossible, literature on re-use will become more prolific. I situate this thesis at precisely this historiographical juncture.

A second explanation for the lack of critical literature on re-use is the way in which Holocaust oral testimony has been popularly theorised. Despite the commonplace use of the term ‘oral history’ to refer to interviews with Holocaust survivors, rarely is this material treated as such: the phrase ‘oral history’ is employed in the methodological sense of the term to refer to an audio or video recorded interview with a survivor or witness, but more often than not this material is conceptualised as ‘testimony’, taken as inherently and inarguably valuable, and – as Wiederhorn and Kushner have indicated – archived without any pre-established plan for its use. There is, I believe, a widespread misconception that interviewing a Holocaust survivor – that is, conducting an oral history interview with a Holocaust survivor – is tantamount to capturing their pure unadulterated testimony, with little consideration given to the ways in which the contexts of that interview shape the content of the testimony. This is due in no small part to the fact that unlike most oral history – by which I mean interview material produced by trained oral historians – much Holocaust oral testimony is a cultural product, and as such is

²² Jessica Wiederhorn, ‘Case Study: “Above All, We Need the Witness”: The Oral History of Holocaust Survivors’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Donald A. Ritchie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 249.

²³ Tony Kushner, ‘Holocaust Testimony, Ethics, and the Problem of Representation’, *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (2006): 275–76.

produced, theorised and utilised by individuals from a wide range of disciplines beyond both history and oral history specifically. Thomas Trezise points out that this under-theorising of the outputs of Holocaust survivors is widespread in the field and amounts to the conflation of testimony with genre, at the expense of a nuanced understanding of the diversity of survivor testimony:

testimony itself should not be confused or conflated with a genre...if the meaning of a term is really its usage, then we should be prepared to ask why 'Holocaust testimony' today not only refers to statements elicited from survivors by courts of law or simply for the historical record, as well as to the chronicles, diaries, journals, and reports produced during the war and the written memoirs and oral history produced after it, but also frequently encompasses other modes of expression to which survivors have had recourse, such as the short story, the novel, and lyric poetry.²⁴

In addition to Trezise, other scholars have begun work on distinguishing types of testimony from one another. In an article titled 'History, Memory, and the Genre of Testimony', Aleida Assmann explores how different forms of testimony transmit the experience of the Holocaust in different ways:

There are other significant differences between traditional forms of autobiography and the genre of video testimony stemming from their respective media. The autobiography is a written document that, more often than not, starts from an internal impulse and is composed in a formally coherent and monologic form. The video testimony may also have an internal impulse, but this depends on an external call, together with a framework of technical support. It has a less elaborated form that also leaves room for open-ended passages, such as pauses, periods of silence, uncompleted sentences, innuendo. It is dialogic rather than monologic.²⁵

²⁴ Trezise, *Witnessing Witnessing*, 36.

²⁵ Aleida Assmann, 'History, Memory, and the Genre of Testimony', *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (2006): 265.

Lawrence Langer's extensive bibliography includes work on the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (Fortunoff), in which he further clarifies the challenges unique to writing about oral testimonies versus written ones:

Writing about Holocaust *literature*, or even written memoirs, as I have done in my previous works, challenges the imagination through the mediation of a *text*, raising issues of style and form and tone and figurative language that – I now see – can deflect our attention from the 'dreadful familiarity' of the event itself. Nothing, however, distracts us from the immediacy and the intimacy of conducting interviews with former victims (which I have done) or watching them on a screen. Struggling to identify with the voices of the witnesses, who themselves are struggling to discover voices trustworthy enough to tell their *whole* stories (and not all have the courage or stamina or resources to succeed), I often found myself naked before their nakedness, defenseless in the presence of their vulnerability. Perhaps my own effort to develop a style and form and tone and language to capture the implications of their ordeal, in addition to reflecting a tribute to their raw frankness, represents a desire to find moral and intellectual garb more relevant than my discarded attire.²⁶

Zoë Waxman also engages in this work, positing that 'the challenge is to find a way of working with testimony that unlocks it from the hermetically sealed, very specific literary genre it has been placed in, in a respectful manner that manages to also retain its specific qualities.'²⁷ At stake for Waxman is a full understanding of what it is a survivor is trying to tell us, be it factual, moral, emotional, spiritual, or something else entirely. This work is vital to enabling meaningful engagement with and use of Holocaust oral testimony; I agree wholeheartedly with the need to establish generic specificity within Holocaust testimony, both to establish exactly what this material can tell us about the Holocaust, and also *how* it tells us about the

²⁶ Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), xii–xiii.

²⁷ Zoë Waxman, 'Transcending History? Methodological Problems in Holocaust Testimony', in *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 143.

Holocaust. However much, if not most, of this literature is still underscored by a focus on the testimonial impulse of the survivor, with a specific concentration on the transmission of the event by the survivor rather than on its reception – or active acquisition – by contemporary audiences. In this way, much of the methodological discussions about how to engage with this material focus on how to approach Holocaust survivors and how to interpret their narratives, especially as part of a wider testimonial tradition, but often at the expense of a meaningful look at the individuals and institutions on the other side of the dialogue. The role of the interviewer, the impact of particular methodologies and the agendas of collecting institutions are often overlooked in these analyses.

In addition to the literature which explicitly conceptualises and theorises Holocaust oral testimony, we can also look to how oral sources have been employed in research more widely to establish how oral history has been variously understood and interpreted by those engaged in Holocaust studies. Since the end of the war Holocaust oral history has, broadly speaking, been approached from one of two perspectives: one which looks at what it can tell us about the Holocaust as an *event*; whilst the other seeks to discuss the Holocaust as an *experience* that is transmitted and mediated through the medium. In general terms, the former undertakes to explore what it is that oral history can contribute to our historical knowledge about the Holocaust, whilst the latter seeks to engage in an interpretation of the Holocaust through oral history. Studying literature which has used – or re-used – Holocaust oral testimony helps us to access a deeper understanding of the material by highlighting the perceived value that has been attributed to oral sources by scholars and educators. This, in turn, presents us with an opportunity to reverse-engineer the creation process, by identifying the intended use to which these sources were to be put by those who created them and the methodological procedures used to achieve the end result. Such an analysis is crucial for a contextual assessment of societal engagement with oral history as a means of interacting and engaging with the Holocaust over time.

The work of Holocaust historians – referring here specifically to those scholars who seek to write the history of the Holocaust as an historical event –

typically falls under the first of these two categories. This literature tends to zero in on the specificity of the subject and, overcome by its moral sensitivity and/or poorly trained in the proper use of oral history, ends up prioritising its relationship to the Holocaust over critical analysis and contextualisation of its source material, by which I mean a meaningful consideration of the implications of its specific status as an oral source as well as its origins and provenance. Somewhat crudely, I further distinguish this category into two approaches: those who use oral history as *a* source of information about the Holocaust and integrate it as such into historical writing, and those who use oral history as *the* source of information about the Holocaust, substituting the spoken words of survivors as the history of the Holocaust. The first of these is typically the approach of conventional historians, for whom 'oral history' has taken on a somewhat more objective role in practice, who discuss it primarily in terms of its usefulness and validity as a legitimate source for historical study. Having overcome the dismissive accusations of unreliability levied at a source that relies almost entirely on human memory,²⁸ the realisation that there were some aspects of the history of the Holocaust about which scant documentation existed resulted in historians turning to oral history to fill in the blanks. In 1976 Raul Hilberg was among the first to use pretrial testimony in writing the history of the Holocaust, using the testimony of former Reichsbahn officials to write a history of the German railroads under National Socialism. Hilberg elected to use testimony in spite of its 'pitfalls' in order to compensate for documentation that is so patchy that 'not even the most experienced researcher of the Jewish Holocaust could reconstruct a coherent picture from such pieces.'²⁹ Two works by Christopher Browning – *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, published in 1992, and *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*, published in 2003 – are both constructed on a similar premise: in the former, Browning utilises the postwar testimony of perpetrators to map the activities of Reserve Police Battalion 101 in Poland in 1942;³⁰ and in the

²⁸ Christopher R. Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 40.

²⁹ Raul Hilberg, 'German Railroads/Jewish Souls', *Society* 14, no. 1 (1976): 62.

³⁰ Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1993).

latter he employs the oral testimonies of 173 survivors of Jewish factory slave labour camps in Starachowice, Nazi-occupied Poland, to reconstruct the history of 'a camp complex rarely mentioned in surviving German documentation'.³¹ The corollary of this attitude towards the use of oral history in the writing of academic history is an appreciation of the value of oral sources – and thus an approach to the collection, preservation and dissemination of such material – derived from the contribution to the historical record that they stand to make. Hilberg later described Holocaust oral history as 'a collection of open-ended accounts from witnesses, with a view to preservation and possible use at a later time by other persons',³² a view which echoes Kushner's notion of 'rescue archaeology' and, as I will show, underscores the production of a significant number (if not to some extent all) Holocaust oral testimony projects. Emerging here is a discourse in historiography which characterises oral history in terms of the contribution that testimonies can make to our knowledge of the Holocaust as an historical event and discusses the practice of collecting oral testimonies specifically for the purposes of contributing material to the historical record.

The most common output of the second of these historical approaches – usually the approach of popular rather than academic historians, who use oral history as *the* source of information about the Holocaust – is the anthology text, in which extracts of oral testimonies are selected and edited together to present a history of the Holocaust 'as told' by those who were there. Sylvia Rothchild's *Voices from the Holocaust*, published in 1981, is one of the earliest collections of oral testimony published in book format and thus one of the earliest examples of oral testimony being made publicly accessible and consumable. Rothchild's commitment is primarily to the humanisation of the historical narrative, emphasising the ways in which listening to survivor testimonies can contribute to a more dynamic understanding of the history of the Holocaust. She writes: 'The Holocaust tapes made it possible to think of those years in a new way. Individual stories offered a human view of an inhuman time. Complicated truths emerged. Stereotypes

³¹ Browning, *Collected Memories*, 44.

³² Raul Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 44.

dissolved...They included a record of individual responses to danger, culture shock, severe loss and displacement, and told about human endurance and the capacity for recovery'.³³ Her acceptance of their content is not blind: she acknowledges in the introduction various particularities of her testimonial material, for example 'the errors that revealed the chasms separating the memoirists from the typists who recorded their words'³⁴ and the style of individual responses, including 'survivors [who] responded to questions as if they had been privately rehearsing the answers all the years they had been waiting to be asked.' And yet, her observations of these particularities are not made with an eye to a critical exploration of their content, for they are taken no further than this: she fails to follow through with the identification of these characteristics within the testimonies themselves, which are presented without commentary in the rest of the book. These comments are designed instead to exemplify the humanistic nature of the content – she describes such features as 'poignant' and 'complicated' – for the emotive impression it may make on the reader, but ultimately the book intends to contribute primarily to a descriptive, narrative understanding of the Holocaust: on the issue of selecting testimonies for inclusion in the book, Rothchild states that she chose 'those most concerned with getting the facts straight.'³⁵ Operating under the belief that the testimonies of the survivors speak for themselves, there is a substantial anthology-style literature that has followed in this fashion: *48 Hours of Kristallnacht: Night of Destruction/Dawn of the Holocaust, An Oral History* by Mitchell G. Bard; *Kinderlager: An Oral History of Young Holocaust Survivors* by Milton J. Nieuwsma; *The Liberators: Eyewitness Accounts of the Liberators of Concentration Camps* by Yaffa Eliach and Brana Gurewitsch; and *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust* by Lyn Smith are but a few examples of this practice.³⁶ The use of the term 'oral history' in

³³ Sylvia Rothchild, *Voices from the Holocaust* (New York: New American Library, 1981), 8.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 12–13.

³⁶ Mitchell G. Bard, *48 Hours of Kristallnacht: Night of Destruction/Dawn of the Holocaust: An Oral History* (Guilford: The Lyons Press, 2008); Milton J. Nieuwsma, ed., *Kinderlager: An Oral History of Young Holocaust Survivors* (New York: Holiday House, 1998); Yaffa Eliach and Brana Gurewitsch, eds., *The Liberators: Eyewitness Accounts of the Liberation of Concentration Camps. Liberation Day: Oral History Testimony of American Liberators from the Archives for the Center for Holocaust Studies*, vol. 1 (New York: Center for Holocaust Studies, Documentation and Research, 1981); Lyn Smith, *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust: True Stories of Survival - From Men, Women and Children Who Were There* (London: Ebury Press, 2006).

the titles of many of these volumes is misleading, not least because the 'oral' aspect of the history is lost when the recorded interviews are converted to printed text. 'Oral history' in this sense is used to refer to the history that is written when oral testimonies are cut up and patchworked together, often on the misapprehension that this uncritical and somewhat superficial retelling of the past somehow constitutes 'history'. Zoë Waxman is critical of any approach to Holocaust testimony – of any kind – that does not account for the circumstances in which it was given. She writes:

Simply treating testimony as a literary text—exploring the mechanics of writing and representation—may be insightful, but such an approach often leaves little room to examine the social and historical climate of Holocaust testimony. In other words, testimony is not used to inform but provide illustration or simple evocation...critics such as George Steiner go so far as to argue that testimonies are so sacred all we can do is simply repeat them word for word. By ignoring the factors that mediate the writing of testimony—language, tradition, politics, identity—we might gain a vivid picture of the conditions witnesses were forced to endure but we will gain no greater understanding of the events of the Holocaust.³⁷

This strand of literature holds the value of Holocaust oral testimony as being self-evident: the survivors and witnesses tell us what they saw, and our knowledge of the event is better for having listened to them. However this – and the approach of historians such as Hilberg and Browning – lies somewhat at odds with the concept of 'oral history' as held by oral historians engaged in methodological practices dedicated to the oral/aural form who, as I have shown, hold that there is much more to be said for the potentiality of oral sources than simply what they may be able to contribute to our objective knowledge about an event.

³⁷ Zoë Waxman, 'Testimonies as Sacred Texts: The Sanctification of Holocaust Writing', *Past & Present* 206, Supplement 5 (2010): 327.

I will now turn to look at the second of the perspectives on Holocaust oral history that I outlined earlier: the material which seeks to discuss the Holocaust as a particular historical *experience* rather than an event. This area of literature on Holocaust oral testimony emerges largely from a psychological and psychiatric discourse which sees oral history as an opportunity to engage with the memory and psychology of perpetrators and witnesses and to access the event as understood by and mediated through them. Understanding this thread of literature is important from both a methodological and historiographical perspective: the approaches that these authors take have informed the establishment and creation of some of the most major collections of Holocaust oral testimony, and thus by logical extension must inform any analysis of the content of these collections too. David Boder and Dori Laub are two key examples of this: Boder – an American psychologist – conducted his own interviews with displaced persons (DPs) in Europe in 1946, the earliest known example of testimonies with Holocaust survivors recorded in audio format; and Laub worked for several years as a clinical psychiatrist before he initiated what would later become known as the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies in 1979.

David Boder's attitudes and approaches are especially important despite the fact that his project and writings were produced and published over seventy years ago. Their significance lies not just in how they help us to understand his own recordings – and thus aid us in situating his work in the historiography – but also in the fact that his interviews were to some degree pioneering in the use of oral history as method, not just as a means of documenting the Holocaust. Though Allan Nevins is largely credited with 'fathering' oral history in the United States at Columbia University in 1948, the Oral History Association – a marker of its broader, more mainstream acceptance as a valid research method – was not established there until 1967.³⁸ Besides, Boder's approach was virtually the antithesis of the early American oral historians, who saw the value of oral history in 'capturing the memories of the great' and who set to work on the interview transcript as the primary document, to the extent that many of the original tapes were destroyed

³⁸ Willa K. Baum, 'Oral History in the United States', *Oral History* 1, no. 3 (1972): 17.

post-transcription;³⁹ Boder, by contrast, rejected suggestions of interviewees made to him by group leaders in the displaced persons shelter houses he visited, on the basis that those who volunteered were individuals who had had exceptional wartime experiences whereas Boder wanted to record 'the rank and file experience,'⁴⁰ and though he did transcribe his interviews for the purposes of translation, most of the recordings survived and are still accessible today. We can see through the work of Boder that the origins of recorded Holocaust oral testimony emerge very early on independent of 'academic' oral history: Boder clearly set something of a precedent in terms of methodology, influenced by his background in psychology. Boder was interested in obtaining the stories of witnesses to history in the most authentic and unmediated form possible, to the point where he prohibited his interviewees from using pre-prepared notes and conducted his interviews sitting behind the interviewee – as was customary of psychological interviewing at the time – 'so that he [the interviewee] would not be influenced by the facial expressions of the interviewer.' 'It was not the purpose of the expedition to gain a comprehensive picture of the whole problem of the DP's' he writes. 'The intention was to gather personal reports in the form of wire recordings for future psychological and anthropological study.'⁴¹

Dori Laub is another key player in the literature on Holocaust testimony, developing further the psychological approach that broadly defines the interpretive strand of analysis. Laub responds to the other strand of literature I have outlined which, he argues, is so driven by the pursuit of historical knowledge that scholars such as Raul Hilberg and Lucy Dawidowicz have focused so intently on 'the primary, the documentary' that they have overlooked oral sources completely, such that 'no attempt was made to obtain the personal eyewitness experiences...that would tie them together.'⁴² Laub does not dispute the importance of developing an extensive historical knowledge of the events of the Holocaust but, in an essay entitled

³⁹ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁰ David Boder, *I Did Not Interview the Dead* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), xii.

⁴¹ Ibid., xiii–xiv.

⁴² Dori Laub, 'Breaking the Silence of the Muted Witnesses: Video Testimonies of Psychiatrically Hospitalized Holocaust Survivors in Israel', in *Lessons and Legacies Volume VIII: From Generation to Generation*, ed. Doris L. Bergen (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008), 175.

‘Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening’, he is keen to point out that that is not the whole story, that the trauma of the event is an experiential aspect that is equivalent in importance and equal in interest, but, ‘as a known event and not simply as an overwhelming shock’ has been vastly under-documented in comparison. To Laub, oral history is a medium by which the narrative of trauma can be both spoken and heard, and is, therefore, ‘the process and the place wherein the cognizance, the “knowing” of the event is given birth to.’⁴³ By his argument these sources are considered more than purveyors of factual information, in fact it is the very nature of the oral communication method in allowing the witness to speak – indeed, to ‘bear witness’ – in front of a listener who then becomes a ‘co-owner of the traumatic event’, that invests these sources with meaning. To illustrate his argument, he recalls a psychoanalyst’s response to hearing a woman testify inaccurately as to the number of chimneys blown up during the Auschwitz uprising. The psychoanalyst – who, it turns out, is Laub himself – states that ‘the woman was testifying...not to the number of the chimneys blown up, but to something else, more radical, more crucial: the reality of an unimaginable occurrence...She testified to the breakage of a framework. That was historical truth.’⁴⁴

Aleida Assmann, building on the foundations of psychoanalytic theory laid by Laub with respect to survivors of the Holocaust, is more blunt in her approach. She quite explicitly states that ‘the survivor witnesses do not, as a rule, add to our knowledge of factual history: their testimonies, in fact, have often proven inaccurate,’ citing Laub’s example of the inaccurate testimony about the Auschwitz revolt to demonstrate her point. It is here that the contrast with the literature from the previous strand can most patently be seen: Assmann explicitly refutes the idea that testimony in general stands to contribute anything to our knowledge of the event as history. She draws strongly upon the psychological discourse generated and developed by Boder, Laub and others, arguing that the questions historians ask

⁴³ Dori Laub, ‘Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening’, in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (London: Routledge, 1992), 57.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

of testimony should 'concern less the events themselves than the experience and aftermath of the events in the lives of those who experienced them and those who decide to remember them, together with the problem of how to represent them'.⁴⁵ At the same time, publishing likewise in the early 2000s, Christopher Browning argues strongly in favour of the value of oral history in filling gaps in our objective historical knowledge and does so convincingly in his case study of the Starachowice slave labour camps, which is rarely mentioned in surviving German documentation.⁴⁶

There is no reason why oral history cannot do all of these things. We only have to look to one article – 'The Peculiarities of Oral History' by Alessandro Portelli – for evidence that oral historians have long been aware of the multitude of potential applications and benefits for the study of the past that the oral method has. Portelli recognised the value of oral history for what it could tell us about people for whom no other historical documentation exists: 'The disregard of the orality of oral sources has a direct bearing on interpretive theory. The first aspect which is usually stressed is the origin of oral sources – in that they give us information about illiterate peoples or social groups whose history is either absent or distorted in the written record.'⁴⁷ But he also recognised that that was not its only value, and indeed, as Laub and Assmann and Waxman and others have argued, that may not even be its primary value: 'The first thing that makes oral history different...is that it tells us less about events as such than about their meaning...They tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did.' In Portelli's view, every oral history interview or oral source has potential value, irrespective of its so-called 'accuracy', if only one knows how to access it:

The credibility of oral sources is a *different* credibility...the importance of oral testimony may often lie not in its adherence to facts but rather in its divergence from them, where imagination, symbolism, desire

⁴⁵ Assmann, 'History, Memory, and Genre', 263.

⁴⁶ Browning, *Collected Memories*, 44.

⁴⁷ Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', 97.

break in. Therefore there are no 'false' oral sources. Once we have checked their factual credibility with all the established criteria of historical philological criticism that apply to every document, the diversity of oral history consists in the fact that 'untrue' statements are still psychologically 'true', and that these previous 'errors' sometimes reveal more than factually accurate accounts.⁴⁸

A true oral history approach to Holocaust oral testimony – by which I mean one which introduces all the analytical concepts of the oral history discipline to Holocaust studies, including orality, aurality, contextualisation, and dialogic – can only serve to benefit both our historical and historiographical interpretations of the event and all the ways it has been engaged with by individuals, institutions and societies.

Underlying all of the approaches examined thus far is an overriding commitment to doing justice to the subject matter at the expense of any discerning thought about how to most effectively approach this material for what it is. Thomas Trezise believes that no self-respecting historian would approach a source without first 'considering its form, its provenance, its intended use, the conditions under which it was produced, and its significance in relation to other available evidence', yet it appears that the moral exigencies of Holocaust testimony unwittingly permit it in this field. Trezise makes this indictment in response to Dori Laub's anecdote concerning the Auschwitz revolt testimony in which the historians – who are represented as having disputed the validity of the testimony on the grounds of its factual inaccuracy – 'appear to approach such testimony in complete disregard of its generic specificity, as though it were just another source of historical documentation.'⁴⁹ By this Trezise is arguing that they are accused of focusing so intently on factual objectivity that they disregard testimonies for being unreliable without considering their alternative value, which to Laub means their value as products of psychological intrigue, but Trezise dismisses this accusation in the belief that sound historical training should negate this issue. This may be the ideal, but I

⁴⁸ Ibid., 99–100.

⁴⁹ Trezise, *Witnessing Witnessing*, 32.

would dispute that it is the case that scholars always apply such a rigorous approach to Holocaust oral testimony in their writings: the extensive body of historical literature mentioned above which uses oral testimonies purely for illustrative purposes or in the anthologies-as-histories format says otherwise. Why then, despite historians being used to critically analysing and contextualising sources before using them in historical analyses does the same not hold true where the Holocaust is concerned? Why, despite dealing with the same material and with a shared commitment to doing justice to this most extreme and serious of subject matters, is there not a greater sense of collective academic endeavour amongst the various disciplines engaging it? Why does historical usage of Holocaust oral testimony persist in its failure to account sufficiently for its oral specificities? And why do those who study it for what it can say about the negotiation of traumatic memory and how individuals understand and respond to their own experiences continue to ignore the extent to which orality plays into and is a governing feature of how this material is presented? I offer two explanations for this. In part, it is due to the relative side-lining of oral history as an historical method within historiography more generally and, as we have seen, methodological approaches to Holocaust oral testimony emerging largely from psychological and psychiatric discourses rather than primarily or strictly historical. In addition to this, the moral extremity of the subject matter has resulted in scholars being largely fearful of engaging critically with survivor testimonies for fear of causing offence by highlighting factual inaccuracies, or hesitant to make arguments about the construction of narrative memory which may be in opposition with the idea that these are pure unmediated accounts that are valuable as – and because – they are.

Whilst there is some debate about the best application of the medium, no-one is denying the inherent value of oral history for the study of the Holocaust. Indeed while early critics of the wider oral history movement questioned the value of oral history due to perceived issues of unreliability and the fallibility of memory, Holocaust oral testimony has had almost the polar opposite reception, being revered to the point where it has widely been considered beyond critique. Zoë Waxman explored the sacrality of Holocaust testimony, situating it in the context of

an almost secular sanctification of Holocaust ‘relics’ that is at odds with ‘the strictly monotheistic and iconoclastic tendencies of Judaism’. The theological rejection of the sacrality of objects led Waxman to conclude that ‘in search of the sacred relics of the Holocaust, then, the historian is forced to abandon any notion of the relic as material fact—as an artefact or object—and look instead at the relic as immaterial remains, as text.’⁵⁰ This veneration of testimony is in fact driven both by the claims of those who write it and by scholars in their fear to use it. Waxman identified Elie Wiesel and Emil Fackenheim as two survivors who speak to the enduring sanctity of Holocaust testimony arguing that, in the process of elevating its status to that of scripture, such claims overlook the contextual specificity of testimony and other factors which mediate its production, such as a desire to produce an historical record that can – quite intentionally – be appraised by scholars. The corollary of this veneration was, as Waxman saw it, a tendency for scholars to avoid critical engagement with testimony as source material:

Given this culture of deference and awe – and the controversy that surrounds the use of Holocaust testimony – it is not surprising that historians have been reluctant to engage seriously with it, if indeed they have used it at all. When they have been forced to use it – for example, in the absence of alternative documentary evidence – they have tended to be highly instrumental, simply mining the material for evidence, illustration, or just background colour...in fact, much comment on testimony is reducible either to moralising or to the merely instrumental.⁵¹

Moreover, imbuing Holocaust testimony with an ineffable and untouchable quality such as that of scripture not only decontextualises it, but also raises issues of authenticity. The Wilkomirski affair is one notable example in which a failure to critically engage with Holocaust testimony did a fundamental disservice to the cause: in 1995 Bruno Dösseker published a memoir (published in English translation in 1996) under the name Binjamin Wilkomirski entitled *Fragments: Memories of a*

⁵⁰ Waxman, ‘Testimonies as Sacred Texts’, 321–22.

⁵¹ Waxman, ‘Transcending History?’, 145.

Wartime Childhood, which he claimed recorded his snapshot memories of living as a child in a Nazi concentration camp. The memoir was met with critical acclaim and Wilkomirski was revered as both a witness and expert; only three years later was the memoir revealed to be a hoax and Wilkomirski condemned for fraudulently assuming the identity of a Holocaust survivor.⁵² The affair raised questions about the need for critical engagement with Holocaust survivor testimony, as summarised by Tony Kushner in 2006: 'It is crucial for scholars and others to be sensitive in their use, or absence of use, of Holocaust testimony. They have to take such testimony seriously, as revealing its own internal dynamics, which might mean revealing its strong mythologies and contradictions – the real nature of any life story. For scholars and others to lose that critical perspective is ultimately not to honour the survivors but to do them damage, as has become so apparent with the Wilkomirski *Fragments* affair.'⁵³ This critical engagement need not – and indeed, should not – amount to a blanket distrust of survivor accounts, but ought to encourage scholars to explore the potentiality of testimony as source material in a way that accounts for both its veritable strengths and inherent weaknesses. Dori Laub and Alessandro Portelli, amongst others, have demonstrated how understanding the reasons for factual inaccuracies in testimony can enhance rather than diminish the potential value of oral history for researchers. It is fundamentally true that unlocking the true value of survivor testimony requires an engaged approach to use. It is also true that we can reasonably critique survivor testimony without it constituting an ethical violation; in Waxman's words, 'despite the enormity of the task, we need to commit ourselves to comprehensibility and not allow the elevated position of the witness to imbue testimony with a sacred status that prevents us from exploring it further.'⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the approach to oral sources developed among oral historians, practitioners and social scientists worldwide, which increasingly seeks to encourage the contextualisation of oral sources as well as the critical analysis of their content in terms of both objective accuracy and explanations for subjective features such as

⁵² For more information on the Wilkomirski Affair, see Stefan Maechler, *The Wilkomirski Affair: A Study in Biographical Truth*, trans. John E. Woods (New York: Schocken Books Inc, 2001).

⁵³ Kushner, 'Holocaust Testimony', 283.

⁵⁴ Waxman, 'Testimonies as Sacred Texts', 340.

memory and narrative construction, has rarely been applied in full to oral sources that deal with the Holocaust, either in their creation or in re-use.

The first aim of this thesis is to illustrate how (re)contextualising oral testimonies can inform our understanding of them, both as collections of source material that have something to say about the Holocaust, and as individual narratives that communicate survivor stories to us. Irrespective of whether or not it is true that Holocaust survivors have the ability to communicate something ineffable about the event – or even about humanity – to us, it is always true that those communications are circumscribed by the archives and institutions that finance the preservation of those memories in the form of audio recordings. Approaching the contextualisation of oral testimonies with a full view of the archival structures and procedures which underpin their collection is paramount for a meaningful analysis and is therefore central to the work of this thesis. Stephen Naron outlines this process in his archival analysis of the Fortunoff collection:

Often located within the confines of some larger historically-situated institution, the archive influences content and form through the development and application of an array of policies and methodologies, some based on national or international standards, others on proprietary and idiosyncratic local guidelines. An archive develops its own ‘culture’ even a shared ‘foundational narrative’. It grows its content according to a more or less well-defined collection development strategy, which reflects its home institution’s culture or mission.⁵⁵

Naron’s assessment of the archive, in which he examines ‘its mission, methodology and its roots in the survivor community’, lays the groundwork for a much more informed study of the interviews contained within and, additionally, situates the

⁵⁵ Stephen Naron, ‘Archives, Ethics and Influence: How the Fortunoff Video Archive’s Methodology Shapes Its Collection’s Content’, ed. Werner Dreier, Angelika Laumer, and Moritz Wein, *Interactions: Explorations of Good Practice in Educational Work with Video Testimonies of Victims of National Socialism*, Education with Testimonies, 4 (2018): 42.

archive in the wider historical context of Holocaust remembrance: Naron points out that the archive

did not 'accumulate naturally', and was indeed 'brought together' to specifically 'illustrate' a point or theory...The founders of the Fortunoff Archive intended to unambiguously take sides, to stand *with* the survivor...They were not there to study the survivors as some unknown phenomenon, but to join in an effort of 'self-help', to provide a space where a 'contract' between interviewer and interviewee could be formed, to give survivors an opportunity to express their voice and their story the way they desired. In a sense, it was also 'partisan' in its pursuit of a counter-narrative to popular cultural representations of the Holocaust – a desire to inform the public and posterity about how 'things really were'.⁵⁶

Though it is beyond the scope of Naron's article to include examples of how the Fortunoff methodology can be observed within the interviews themselves, his work clearly invites researchers to view and engage with the testimonies on these terms.

In addition to Naron's work, there is a small precedent for this kind of archival analysis of Holocaust oral testimony collections that has been set in recent years. Perhaps the closest the literature comes to engaging in the full kind of critical analysis I am arguing for – the kind of analysis that appreciates the valuable contribution that oral history can make to both our objective and subjective knowledge and understanding about the Holocaust whilst acknowledging and accounting for its unique features as an *oral* source – is the work undertaken by Noah Shenker in *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*. In this book, Shenker coins the notion of 'testimonial literacy', which he defines as 'an eye and ear for sensing the layers, ruptures, and tensions that mark the processes of giving and receiving accounts of the Shoah.'⁵⁷ This text develops a methodological approach to engaging with audiovisual testimonies given by Holocaust survivors to three main collections

⁵⁶ Ibid., 50–51.

⁵⁷ Noah Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 2.

in the United States, which form the case study upon which his argument is predicated: The Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies; the testimonies recorded by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM); and the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive. Shenker's efforts to locate 'the institutional voices of Holocaust testimonies' enable us to see the mitigating influences of the archival methodologies on individual testimonies taken from each collection, illustrating how survivors and witnesses are required – and therefore obliged – to relate their testimonies within a predetermined and at times conflicting framework. This institutional mediation of oral history is explored through the kind of close analysis of oral features that I have demonstrated is common practice in oral history but largely absent in Holocaust studies; the frames of interpretation that Shenker gives as an indication of his method are worth presenting in full here. He lists seven of these 'frames':

- the methods interviewers use to engage witnesses in discussions on how they became aware of the events they describe on tape
- the kinds of narrative outlines the archive uses to attempt to structure testimonies, often into coherent, sequential units
- the degree to which subjects are given adequate space in which to assert their own agency in delivering their stories
- the labor of testimony...those moments in interviews that capture a witness's physical gestures, vocal expressions, reenactments, and general performance of memory, both in dialogue with the interviewer and framed through the modes of production
- the interplay of common and deep memory
- off-camera dimensions of testimony
- the ways in which interviewers and witnesses attempt to assert their respective conceptions of individual and collective memory, official history and personal experience, and the obligation to give voice to absent victims.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ These 'frames' are all quoted directly from the book, though are not presented in list format there. *Ibid.*, 13–14.

Shenker's deliberate selection of three American archives of Holocaust testimony also enables him 'to explore how audiovisual testimonies of witnesses have in part facilitated the Americanisation of the Holocaust', which he defines as the 'process by which the events of a defining European event have been imported by, and adapted to, the cultural narratives, institutions, and political contexts of the United States.'⁵⁹ It is precisely this kind of approach – an archival analysis which seeks to identify the impact of archival methodologies on interviews, combined with a contextualisation that provides an explanation for why those approaches and methodologies have emerged in the way they have – that I apply in this thesis to the collections of Britain and Canada.

Given their considerable size and global influence, it is unsurprising that what literature does exist on archives of Holocaust oral testimony focuses almost exclusively on US collections. In *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age*, Jeffrey Shandler reads the Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive against the priorities and preoccupations of the digital era, exploring what new media has meant for Holocaust studies and commemoration in the present day. Jan Taubitz's chapters on the *Institutionalisierung* [institutionalisation] of Holocaust oral history in his book *Holocaust Oral History und das lange Ende der Zeitzeugenschaft* focus exclusively on the Fortunoff Archive, the USHMM, and the Shoah Foundation VHA.⁶⁰ This is matched by a sizable literature on the 'Americanisation of the Holocaust'⁶¹ – and an equally sizable lacuna of literature on the similar institutionalisation of oral history and adoption of Holocaust memory in other countries and regions, particularly in the West. Even in spite of the American global influence it is not sufficient to assume that the processes at play in the US are mirrored or replicated elsewhere; to this end, this thesis intends to expand the

⁵⁹ Ibid., xi.

⁶⁰ Jeffrey Shandler, *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age: Survivors' Stories and New Media Practices* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017); Jan Taubitz, *Holocaust Oral History und das lange Ende der Zeitzeugenschaft* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2016).

⁶¹ Note in particular Hilene Flanzbaum, ed., *The Americanization of the Holocaust* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); and Peter Novick, *The Holocaust and Collective Memory: The American Experience* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000).

literature to diversify it regionally by focusing exclusively on the British and Canadian contexts, with comparisons to the US where appropriate.

The second aim of this thesis is to examine how these contextual methodologies reflect the historiographical role of oral history in Holocaust history. Some scholars have already begun to capitalise on the opportunity afforded to them by hindsight to write books and articles that attempt to map changes over time. Within the last decade, Annette Wieviorka, Laura Jockusch and Zoë Waxman have all written such pieces on the history of Holocaust testimony, reflecting critically about the process of giving testimony as a contextually contingent event. Annette Wieviorka, in *The Era of the Witness*, examines how the process of giving testimony – or of ‘bearing witness’ – has changed in response to cultural movements and contemporary discourses, from the testimonies left by those who did not survive the Holocaust through a period she terms ‘the advent of the witness’, referring to the emergence of the witness as a social figure around the time of the Eichmann Trial in 1961, to ‘the era of the witness’, which is characterised by a modern fascination with the witness to trauma and has manifested in the collection and production of mass archives of witness testimony.⁶² In full acknowledgement of the influence of context on content, Wieviorka states that through her analysis her aim is ‘to contribute to this movement by studying the conditions under which testimonies are produced and how these conditions change over time.’⁶³ On a somewhat smaller scale, Laura Jockusch maps the history of those she calls the ‘early chroniclers of the Holocaust’, including those who gave written and recorded testimonies in the first few decades after the war, identifying how their willingness to speak – and indeed, how their audiences’ willingness to listen – influenced the testimony they gave.⁶⁴ Zoë Waxman goes one step further, charting developments in specifically historiographical responses to Holocaust testimony over time.⁶⁵ Each of these texts

⁶² Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, trans. Jared Stark (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), xv.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, xiv.

⁶⁴ Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁶⁵ Waxman, ‘Transcending History?’

however stops short of examining exactly how these contexts manifest in the oral testimonies they produce: none of the three makes a sufficiently clear distinction between oral testimony and other kinds of postwar testimony in terms of how context influences their production and neither, therefore, do they offer any real indication of how the context can be read back into Holocaust oral testimonies by a researcher approaching the sources from the outside.

A final strand of literature that this thesis draws on – although does not intend to replicate – is the growing literature on comparative testimony. Three texts in particular have had an influence on this thesis. The first, *Testimony and Time: Holocaust Survivors Remember* by Sharon Kangisser Cohen, investigates changes in survivor testimonies over time through a comparison of multiple interviews given by the same survivor to different projects at different points in time, in order to examine how the survivor's relationship to the past changes with time and thus affects the way in which they give their testimony.⁶⁶ Among the most significant of Kangisser Cohen's conclusions is that there is a 'remarkable consistency' in the core narrative of Holocaust survivor accounts which remains largely unchanged over time, irrespective of who is interviewing them or where or why they are being interviewed. In fact, Kangisser Cohen concludes, so encompassing is the survivor's impulse to testify that their relationship with their interviewer has little bearing on how the testimony is recounted:

After reflecting on the interaction between interviewer and interviewee...I maintain that over the past six decades the relationship between the two does not alter the way the survivors relate to the task at hand. They are committed to giving an account of their wartime experiences, and for the most part they are willing and compliant interviewees...Perhaps the dynamic between the interviewer and

⁶⁶ The majority of survivors in Kangisser Cohen's case study gave their testimony first to David Boder in the DP camps of Europe and then again to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum from 2000 onwards. The other source of early interview material was the Jewish Historical Commission in Poland; other sources of later interviews were Yad Vashem, the Melbourne Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre, and the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive. Sharon Kangisser Cohen, *Testimony and Time: Holocaust Survivors Remember* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2014), 18.

interviewee is irrelevant to the survivors' need to tell their stories. Their obligation to remember and to pass on stories, not only their own but also those of people who are no longer alive, is paramount. This is part of the explanation as to why the chronological core narrative remains remarkably consistent.⁶⁷

That is not to say there is no difference at all between early and later testimonies. She notes that one of the key differences between the two is in how survivors perceive their testimony to relate to the world in which they are giving it:

Survivors who are relating their experiences 50 or 60 years later also understand the role their testimony plays in their contemporary setting. The later testimonies are infused with dates, specific details and, most important, the names of victims. It is in the later testimonies that the survivors have a keen sense that their accounts are not only historical but also commemorative documents. The way in which survivors tell their stories later, using constructed dialogue, gestures and familiar codes, attests to their understanding that their task is not only to report their experiences but also to communicate them...In the later interviews, the recollection of individual names and the fate of others is an important indicator of the commemorative function of testimony.⁶⁸

Kangisser Cohen's work is in part the reason why this thesis focuses primarily on the actions and agendas of the interviewer and the collecting institution rather than on the survivor's intentions. My work is a complementary exploration of the ways in which oral testimony projects circumscribe the survivor's narrative by determining what the survivor is allowed to say, or encouraged to say, or prevented from saying, in the process of shaping an interview to meet the needs of the institution that has sponsored its collection.

The second text is an edited volume of essays entitled *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor: Holocaust Testimony and its Transformations*, edited by Jürgen

⁶⁷ Ibid., 224–25.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 228.

Matthäus, in which the contributing authors examine multiple interviews given by Holocaust survivor Helen 'Zippi' Tichauer and analyse them through various lenses, including artistic, social, and educational frameworks. Matthäus and colleagues reinforce Kangisser Cohen's conclusion that fundamentally survivor testimonies remain the same over time. In compiling this volume, Matthäus' most significant contribution to the literature is his observation that even when a survivor's testimony changes little, 'outside intervention can significantly transform testimony in its content and connotations' and that 'in deciding how to use Holocaust testimony, we are, in this as in any other research project, guided by scholarly as well as personal and societal considerations and factors.'⁶⁹ Scholars wishing to utilise archived testimony should take note: it is imperative we remember that not only is testimony produced in certain contexts, but we also bring our own intellectual, social and political contexts to the table when we elect to use this material in our research. Part III of this thesis examines how users of testimony can best negotiate the medium, analysing it both for its own strengths and weaknesses and accounting for the influence of their own perceptual and operational biases and predispositions in the process.

The third text, *Ecologies of Witnessing: Language, Place, and Holocaust Testimony* by Hannah Pollin-Galay, takes a slightly different approach to Kangisser Cohen and Matthäus, instead comparing testimonies for geographic rather than temporal differences. Using the experiences of Lithuanian Jewry as a case study, Pollin-Galay compares the testimonies given by Lithuanian Holocaust survivors in modern-day Lithuania to those given in Israel and North America in an effort to characterise the 'social ecology' within which a survivor gives their testimony and establish the impact this ecology has on the ways they construct and reconstruct their memories in a testimony setting. She concludes that the testimonies produced in each ecology can be categorised into different 'genres': the *personal-allegorical* genre of English-language American testimony; the *communal-momental* genre of Hebrew-language Israeli testimony; and the *collective-forensic* genre of Yiddish-

⁶⁹ Jürgen Matthäus, 'Conclusion: What Have We Learned?', in *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor: Holocaust Testimony and Its Transformations*, ed. Jürgen Matthäus (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 121.

language Lithuanian testimony.⁷⁰ Pollin-Galay's approach to testimony alerted me to the potential value of an international – or transnational – comparison of testimony collections as a tool for drawing out national narratives in testimony and testimony collections; whilst it is most likely true that most if not all of the testimonies I engage with in this thesis fall into the personal-allegorical style (though it should be noted that it is not the intention of this thesis to prove or disprove this assumption), the comparison between British, Canadian and American contexts has proven invaluable in identifying the features unique to each context and the resultant impact these differences have had on their national testimonial landscapes.

Perhaps the most damning observation I made in the course of conducting this literature review is just how scant the literature on British and Canadian Holocaust oral testimony collections is. Even beyond the paucity of work explicitly contextualising archival collections of testimony – the majority of which, as I have shown, focuses on American collections – there is little that discusses or even uses interviews from British and Canadian collections, besides a handful of articles and chapters written by the people responsible for producing them. So dominant is the influence of the USC VHA – and increasingly easy to access – that I worry researchers and educators are overlooking smaller collections of testimony that may be just as if not more useful for their purposes, simply because they are lesser known and less understood. That is not to suggest the VHA is not a useful resource – its sheer scale and scope provide almost infinite research potential – but so endemic is the reverence of the resource that upon visiting the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre in Toronto and enquiring about the history and background of their testimony collections I was directed straight to a workstation that had access to the VHA and pointed in the direction of its resources, rather than the Centre's own. This thesis is my contribution to restoring what I perceive to be an unjustifiable imbalance in this regard.

⁷⁰ Hannah Pollin-Galay, *Ecologies of Witnessing: Language, Place, and Holocaust Testimony* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2018), 5–6.

Methodology

The working title for this thesis, generated when I submitted my proposal for a PhD in February 2016, was *A History of Holocaust Oral Testimony*. At that time, I envisaged the project as an international study of the development of Holocaust oral history from the end of the war until the present day, from the work of psychologist David Boder in the DP camps of Europe in 1946 and the interviews conducted for the Nuremberg Trials, to the mass audiovisual testimony archives of the present day. It quickly became apparent – after a year spent working on only two British testimony collections – that this was much too ambitious for a single PhD thesis: the need for an in-depth analysis of a small number of collections rather than superficial analysis of a large number was clear, so I made the decision to drastically reduce the scope of the thesis accordingly. Initially I focused on analysing British oral testimony projects, researching the backgrounds of collections held at the Wiener Holocaust Library and the British Library, and drawing on research into the Imperial War Museum (IWM) Sound Archive collections that I conducted for my MA Holocaust Studies thesis research in 2016.⁷¹ In addition to listening to interviews from each collection and examining how the project methodologies and institutional imperatives shaped the testimony recording process, I was keen to situate these methodologies contextually, to historicise the process in order to understand how oral history as a method had been engaged as an historiographical response to the Holocaust by various organisations and individuals over time. I decided that the most effective way to identify the influence of national (social, cultural and political) contexts on the development of these collections would be to compare the British landscape to another national landscape.

There were a number of reasons for choosing Canada as the comparative case study. Whilst the US initially seemed like an obvious choice, I ultimately decided that the contexts were too distinct from one another for the comparison to have any nuance: not only were the historical contexts too different – Britain and the US had distinctly different postwar refugee policies, for example – but the

⁷¹ I have since published a journal article based on my MA thesis. See Madeline White, 'A Museological Approach to Collecting Oral Histories: A Case Study of the Holocaust Collections at the Imperial War Museum', *The Journal of Holocaust Research* 33, no. 2 (2019): 138–56.

survivor population is also much larger and sources of funding are much more abundant in the US than in the UK, which has resulted in oral testimony projects that are quite obviously different in nature, size and scope. Moreover, the fact that what little literature does exist on Holocaust oral testimony collections focuses predominantly – if not exclusively – on US oral testimony projects rendered the need for original research in this area somewhat redundant. A greater similarity between the histories of Britain and Canada vis-à-vis refugees and Holocaust survivors during and after the war provided a better basis for a meaningful comparison of the particular factors that influenced the development of Holocaust oral testimony in each country, and the comparison also provided me with an opportunity to research the equally under-studied Canadian collections of Holocaust testimony and spotlight their potential research value and historical significance in the process. Acknowledging the fact that Canada is geographically vast and thus there was a risk of homogenising a diverse historical and social landscape by treating all collections produced in the country as ‘Canadian’, I chose to study collections from Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver as a geographically widespread selection, and also to ensure that all the locations of major Holocaust survivor communities were covered in this thesis. Initially I hypothesised that there would be clear differences between projects initiated in Britain and those initiated in Canada, due to differences in the integration of Holocaust survivors into their respective new communities and differences in the development of oral history theory from one country to the other. The reality however was that the differences did not manifest themselves as concretely as that: there are, certainly, differences between projects conceived in the two countries as this thesis will show, but there are also differences in projects that transcend geographical boundaries, as well as differences between those conducted by survivor organisations and research institutions, and by those conducted in response to different motivating factors (e.g. Holocaust denial vs. research needs). The structure of this thesis has been designed to reflect this.

To select which projects and collections would form the case studies for this thesis, I first compiled a list of as many projects from both countries as I could

identify, noting the date range of each project's activity, the number of interviews each collection contained and the means by which they could be accessed. Four factors informed the final selection: first was size and accessibility, on the basis that the largest and most easily accessed interview collections were likely underscored by significant financial backing, typically provided within the context of government or institution sponsorship and therefore most subject to the influence of – and indeed responsive to – contemporary academic culture and Holocaust consciousness, and moreover were the most likely to be (re)used in the future; second was geographical location, in order to ensure that where possible case study projects represented the geographical distribution of Holocaust survivors across each country; third was the dates of project activity, to ensure that when taken together case study projects spanned as wide a date range as possible, so that changes in approaches over time could be accounted for; and finally, I retained the right to include collections that did not necessarily fit any of these criteria but were nonetheless of some significance.⁷² I made the conscious decision at this stage to exclude collections of perpetrator testimony from this study on the basis that such oral history projects require a somewhat different methodological approach to both collection and re-use in order to account for the specific practical and ethical issues that arise when interviewing offenders about their crimes.

When selecting specific interviews from each collection to listen to or view, my concern was to ensure I balanced the need to listen to a 'representative' selection to get a sense of each collection as a whole with a desire to replicate the relative randomness with which interviews may be accessed or viewed by potential users of an archive; essentially, it would do a disservice to the argument to only listen to 'good' interviews, or those in which the proposed methodology was executed most accurately, given the broad qualitative spectrum that may exist in any one collection. I recognise and acknowledge that my inability to listen to interviews in languages other than English is a limitation in this regard, however I believe this is mitigated by the conscious decision that most British and Canadian

⁷² The Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives collection is a case in point. I cover the significance – and the perceived insignificance – of this collection later in the thesis.

projects made to interview exclusively in English; aside from a small number of interviews conducted in French in French-speaking regions of Canada, the vast majority of interviews to which I had access were originally conducted in English. To facilitate the selection of interviews and to enable me to accurately compile lists of interviewees, as well as to generate quantitative data for each collection (for example, to assess the chronological spread of interviews or the average interview length for each collection), I compiled my own interview databases for each of my chosen case studies. This also enabled me to cross-reference all collections to identify interviewees who had given interviews on more than one occasion to more than one project. Though this represented a small minority of interviewees, I recognised the rare opportunity to compare the application of project methodologies that this provided me and selected a number of these individuals and their testimonies as case studies. I then made the decision to select a minimum of ten interviews from each collection to provide the material for analysis. This is a somewhat arbitrary number, but I believe it constitutes a large enough number to be sufficiently representative in the drawing of conclusions about projects as a whole, but small enough to be manageable given time constraints; I estimate that in order to meaningfully listen to and take notes on a single interview it takes three times the total length of the interview itself, which in the case of the longest interviews – upwards of fifteen hours for the longest interview consulted for this thesis – constitutes a significant amount of work. After identifying and selecting which repeat-interviews to listen to, the remainder for each case study was made up of a cross-section of experience types, a range of lengths, and a variety of interviewees, ensuring that the most prolific interviewees for any one collection were accounted for in the selection.

In principle, the analytical methodology employed herein has been standardised as much as possible across all testimony collections, taking as its basis the approaches of oral historians that call for full contextualisation of oral sources, both as parts of a collection and as created within wider social, historical and historiographical contexts. In practice however, these approaches were further and more specifically outlined by the nature of each individual project, delineated by

the information and supporting material available for each. It is the case, for example, that a far greater quantity of background documentation was available for Canadian projects than British ones, likely because of the archival heritage of Canadian oral history and the comparative wealth of the Canadian Jewish community (and their control over the production of Holocaust oral history in their country) making it possible to resource its storage. Ten key questions on the subject of Holocaust oral history posed by Sara Leuchter guide the contextual analysis:

1. What are the objectives of the project?
2. Who will be interviewed, and how is this to be decided?
3. Will enough time be available to the interviewer(s) to prepare for the taped discussion?
4. Who will conduct the interview?
5. How will the interviews be conducted?
6. What kind of equipment and supplies should be used?
7. How will the taped interviews be qualitatively evaluated?
8. What happens after an interview is completed?
9. Who owns the tapes (and indexes, transcripts, etc.)?
10. What products may result from the tapes of an oral history project?⁷³

Retrospectively asking these questions of an oral history project enables us to identify the major methodological principles according to which a project was conducted, and provides especially useful guidance for inferring such information in instances where little background paperwork or information exists.

Though I have endeavoured to prevent this thesis from being merely a presentation of individual case study histories, it was necessary to study the collections this way in order to fully understand the nature of each and its position in the wider testimonial landscape. To this end, my research commenced with an institutional history – that is, whether the project was launched by a museum,

⁷³ Sara Leuchter, 'Oral History with Holocaust Survivors', in *The Holocaust: An Annotated Bibliography and Resource Guide*, ed. David M. Szonyi (New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., 1985), 372–74.

library, education centre or otherwise – in order to establish the ideologies and methodologies that governed the project at its inception and, if applicable, changes to approach made throughout its duration. I then gathered as much information as possible about the history of each project, including as far as possible all of the following: details of the intended audience; the purpose and function the collection intends to fulfil; criteria for selecting interview participants; the demography of selected participants; the names and background of interviewers and the number of interviewers used; the interviewing style adopted; the thematic interests and boundaries of the project; and the quantity and length of interviews completed, either to date if ongoing or at the time of the project's completion. This information was obtained by studying references to oral testimony projects in published literature, archival collections of project paperwork and, where possible, interviewing individuals involved in the creation and implementation of the projects. I used this information to analyse the nature and style of the interviewing approach employed in each project, accounting for the use of any 'preliminary interviews' or pre-interview questionnaires, the intended aims and outcomes of the project, the questions posed and the interaction between interviewer and interviewee. For each project, I also made a conscious effort to look at how the material has subsequently been preserved and presented and how accessible it is to a potential user, prompted by concerns such as whether the interviews are accessible online or by visiting the archive only; whether material has been digitised; the state of cataloguing; the presence and quality of indexing and summaries; availability and accessibility of the collection to researchers and/or the general public; transcription and translation; and whether copies have been made and deposited elsewhere, for example at a larger institution or archive such as the British Library or the USC VHA.

Once the archival and institutional background of a project was established, I commenced a close listening or viewing of each of my selected case study testimonies to examine how these factors and features manifest in individual interviews. For each, I paid close attention to concrete information such as the number of recording sessions; the length of the interview; the location of the

interview; and the people present, including the presence of an interviewer, camera operator, multiple interviewees and family members or friends, and the influence these factors may have had on the dynamic of an interview. I also placed particular focus on the questions posed by the interviewers, since these are more likely to reflect the institutional imperative of a project than the responses of the interviewee. I was particularly interested in questions that ‘outlie’ the natural dialogue of the interview, by which I mean questions that were not posed in response to something an interviewee said – for example, follow up questions such as ‘so what was the journey like?’ or ‘tell me more about the living conditions in Auschwitz’ or ‘how did you feel when you watched your father beaten?’ – but rather the kinds of questions that represent a ‘signposting’ on the part of the interviewer to move the interview in a particular direction, prompting the interviewee to consider a new topic, to ask reflective or philosophical questions, or to backtrack when the narrative is moving forward too fast. These questions tend to represent an interviewer’s efforts to extract from the interviewee the information that they have been tasked to obtain, and is often the difference between an interview which allows the survivor to record their Holocaust story on their own terms and one which is a comprehensive life history, or one which is an ‘oral history’ which profiles a particular element of the individual’s story, such as the refugee or immigrant experience.

Once the contextual and methodological analysis of the interviews and collections was complete, it was possible to identify similarities and differences between collections both within and across the national boundaries. It was then necessary to conduct extensive background research in order to be able to situate these observations meaningfully into their historical context. I concentrated my efforts in two areas in particular: the history of the oral history discipline in both countries, in order to identify trends in practice that may offer explanations for why certain projects approached interviewing Holocaust survivors in the way that they did; and the history of the Holocaust as it has concerned Britain and Canada respectively, with a particular focus on wartime and postwar refugee policy and national engagement with Holocaust memory, with a view to establishing who has

driven the use of oral history to engage with the Holocaust and the impact their motivation has had on the ways in which they have done so. Combined with the archival and interview-level analyses conducted previously, this enabled me to draw some conclusions about how oral history has functioned as an historiographic response to the Holocaust in the two case study countries. I conclude this thesis with a reflexive look at the role of the researcher in (re)use and the impact of researchers' perspectives on the analytical framework. I also reflect on the access issues I experienced in the process of researching for this thesis – namely a lack of ready or easy access to interviews and/or the supporting documentation needed for (re)contextualisation – and problematise existing archival interfaces and presentations with a view to encouraging further reflection on how this process can be improved – and (re)contextualisation facilitated – in the future.

Part I – (Re)contextualisation: Unpacking the Oral Testimony Format

There is, I believe, a tendency for us – as scholars, students, archivists, the lay public – to homogenise ‘Holocaust oral testimony’ when we speak of it: our perception is that a survivor or witness to the Holocaust sits in front of a tape recorder or video camera, an interviewer asks them questions about their life, and the interviewee narrates their experiences on record. This record is thenceforth referred to as a ‘Holocaust testimony’ or a ‘Holocaust oral history’, stored in an archive to be occasionally used by a researcher or educator, but largely to preserve the stories of these individuals for when the time comes that they are no longer able to tell them to us themselves. Whilst there is a degree of truth in this basic characterisation of the medium, in fact the number of variables involved in the process is so substantial that there can be significant variations between collections. For us to have any idea of what Holocaust oral testimony is, what it does, or what it potentially can be used for, we need to have more than a basic idea of how it is constructed. On one side of the recording table is a Holocaust survivor or witness who has consented to participate in the interview or recording session for any number of reasons: they feel a moral obligation to speak on record about what they saw or experienced; they wish to communicate their life story to their children and grandchildren; they want to use their experiences to educate future generations; or perhaps they have been approached to participate and are simply glad to do so. On the other side of the table is an interviewer, who comes with their own agenda and set of operating criteria, often acting on behalf of a project or institution to which they are ultimately accountable. Sometimes these agendas are in contention and other times they operate cooperatively, but regardless of the nature of the interaction between the two it is always the case that these agendas circumscribe the way in which a testimony is given. Understanding context is therefore critical to understanding testimony. The arguments put forward by Zoë Waxman, Lawrence Langer and others go some way to performing the contextualising work of which I speak, but focus largely on the actions of the witness as the testifying agent. Whatever our views on the testimonial imperative possessed by survivors or the

incontestability of their words, it is always true that those memories and those narratives are conveyed to us and documented via a process that is contextually contingent, necessarily selective, and ultimately limited by the capabilities of technology, the needs and requirements of funding bodies, and the aptitudes and personalities of participating individuals. Thus the process of contextualisation ought to be mandatory when utilising these materials from the archive.

This part of the thesis is designed to introduce oral history theory to the specific issue of the (re)use of archived Holocaust oral testimonies, and its approach is based on Paul Thompson's statement in the first edition of his influential oral history text *The Voice of the Past* that 'the material has to be interpreted with a full awareness of the context in which it was collected, the forms of bias to which it is liable, and the methods of evaluation which are thus needed.'⁷⁴ Specifically, it seeks to understand first how collections of interviews with Holocaust survivors by virtue of institutional frameworks present a particular, necessarily selective account of the event, and second to explore how the methodologies employed in the process of conducting and archiving interviews shape the way individual survivor narratives are (re)produced in the interview situation. Noah Shenker, whose work on US-based collections of Holocaust survivor testimony analyses the performance of testimony within archival and technical frameworks, writes that

fundamental to inheriting Holocaust survivor memories is the recognition that the faces, bodies, and voices of testimonial subjects not only provide necessary interpersonal and ethical underpinnings for attending to the suffering of others, but that they also work in conversation with an array of archival infrastructures. Testimonies emerge from an individually and institutionally embedded practice framed by a diverse range of aims that cannot be reduced to their empirical historical content or visceral impact.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 1978, 208–9.

⁷⁵ Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, 1.

By employing a similar contextual analysis to Holocaust oral testimony, this work is a contribution to a relatively new but increasingly important conversation about the ways in which the processes of testimony collection have shaped the nature of the material that we now have access to in archives around the world and increasingly online; material which will undoubtedly – and intentionally – become the foundation of research and educational and memorialisation efforts in the future. Archivist and scholar Eric Ketelaar has published extensively on archiving theory and has in the course of his work come up with two concepts that are a particularly useful way of understanding this kind of analysis. Ketelaar draws a distinction between the concepts of ‘archivalisation’, that is to say ‘the conscious or unconscious choice determined by social and cultural factors to consider something worth archiving’, and archivisation, the processes that bring the document into being and into the archive.⁷⁶ In what follows, I engage these concepts in a case study analysis of the main British and Canadian oral testimony collections to explore how ‘Holocaust oral testimony’ is contextually produced, both as archives of material that are embodied responses to the Holocaust and as individual records of the event. The first section – ‘(Re)contextualising the Archive’ – focuses on the process of archivalisation, to identify various processes that prompt individuals, organisations and institutions to launch oral testimony projects focusing on survivors of the Holocaust and the bearing this has on the nature of the resultant archives; the second section – ‘(Re)contextualising the Testimony’ – follows this process through to the archivisation stage, to examine how conscious and unconscious methodological decisions made in the process of recording a testimony shape what it records and how it records it.

(Re)contextualising the Archive

There are a multitude of ways in which a survivor might choose to give testimony: in written form, as part of a legal deposition, in an interview setting, or as part of an educational or public lecture or workshop series, for example. In question here, however, are the coordinated efforts to utilise the oral method to produce large-scale collections of interviews with or recordings of Holocaust survivors and/or

⁷⁶ Eric Ketelaar, ‘Tacit Narratives: The Meaning of Archives’, *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 132–33.

witnesses in audio or video format, but always with a view to preserving authentic records of personal memories. The production of such collections is necessarily intentional, underscored by the motivations and incentives which drive an individual, organisation or institution to source potential contributors and commit time and resources to recording them. As such, these collections and archives are never serendipitous, but are wholly contingent upon the contexts which enable and facilitate their creation and consequently are far from objective, passive repositories of data; as Bhaskar Sarkar and Janet Walker argue 'an archive is no mere aggregation of documents: it is driven by its internal logics of selection, classification and organisation, orchestrated to produce a single and cogent corpus.'⁷⁷ In the case of these 'archives' of Holocaust oral testimonies, these internal logics begin to bear an influence long before the interviews themselves are conducted; this is the process of archivalisation described by Eric Ketelaar, which he explains thus: 'Archivalisation precedes archiving. The searchlight of archivalisation has to sweep the world for something to light up in the archival sense, before we proceed to register, to record, to inscribe it, in short before we archive it...By differentiating archivalisation from the subsequent inscription or archiving, which is then followed by capture and archiving, we gain a better comprehension of the tacit narratives of the archive.'⁷⁸ The point at which we understand that each archive possesses a tacit narrative of its own is the point at which we begin to understand how Holocaust oral testimonies are constructed and produced, rather than merely recorded or given.

To understand the tacit narrative of the collection we must first look to the origins of the project. Virtually all Holocaust testimony collections are incentivised – or at the very least claim to be incentivised – by the passing of time. Child survivor Robert Krell, who conducted some of the earliest recorded interviews with Holocaust survivors in Canada and is thus widely regarded as the 'grandfather' of Holocaust oral testimony in the country, gave his motivation for recording survivors

⁷⁷ Bhaskar Sarkar and Janet Walker, 'Introduction: Moving Testimonies', in *Documentary Testimonies: Global Archives of Suffering*, ed. Bhaskar Sarkar and Janet Walker (New York: Routledge, 2010), 15.

⁷⁸ Ketelaar, 'Tacit Narratives', 133.

in 1979: 'We too must tape as many of our survivors as possible so that their stories will not be forgotten and, even more importantly, can be retold for the countless young persons who will need to be educated in the future.'⁷⁹ This anxiety has only increased in the decades since, reinforcing the moral imperative to preserve these stories in the process. In many ways, all Holocaust oral testimony projects have therefore acted to some extent or another in the manner of what Tony Kushner called 'rescue archaeology', collecting material in a race against time often at the expense of an awareness of the appropriateness of their methods or the use to which their material might be put.⁸⁰ Such a motivation alone is insufficient to initiate an organised recording effort and to produce a substantial quantity of oral testimony material however. To do so requires a coordinated infrastructure of personnel, finances and equipment, plus a location (ideally an archive) in which the material produced can be stored, maintained, accessed and hopefully used. Such projects can rarely be initiated without clearly defined intent, for the acquisition of such resources typically has to be justified to funding organisations or bodies as well as the cultural or academic institutions in which many of them are housed. This intent – this 'archivalisation' – is consequently the theory that underpins the actual activity of interviewing or recording survivors. Examining the intellectual and institutional histories of these oral history projects is therefore the key to understanding what, exactly, each collection can tell us about the Holocaust. What follows is an analysis of only a small number of examples of types of Holocaust oral testimony archives taken from the British and Canadian case study collections, but in addition to providing an illustrative assessment of those particular archives it is designed to highlight the benefits of the recontextualisation process and to serve as a template for analysing any archival collection of oral testimonies.

A Legacy for Future Generations: Holocaust Survivor Archives

What happens, for example, when the demand for a testimony recording service comes from within the survivor community itself, driven not by the pursuit of historical evidence but an innate need to testify? Whilst a number of the case study

⁷⁹ Robert Krell to Morris Saltzman, 'Letter Re. Funding for the Videotaping of Survivors', 18 May 1979, 1, Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 52 File 2, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

⁸⁰ Kushner, 'Holocaust Testimony', 275–76.

projects in this thesis represent testimony collections created by and for the survivor community, particularly those in Canada, I use two here to analyse the specific nature of projects governed by this testimonial impulse: the Holocaust Survivors' Centre in London, UK, and the testimony collection held at the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre in Toronto, Canada. United in their desire to provide a recording service for survivors wishing to testify, there are also key differences between the two collections that also offer an opportunity to discern some of the contextual specifics at work in organisations that aim to serve particular communities, rather than a wider and more abstract notion of 'research' or the 'historical record'.

The Holocaust Survivors' Centre (HSC) in London was established in 1993 by social worker and child of a survivor Judith Hassan, in response to her growing awareness of the need to provide therapeutic and social services for Holocaust survivors in the UK. The Centre opened next door to Shalvata, Jewish Care's therapy centre, and its design was 'based on the idea that mutual support amongst survivors is more healing than most professional interventions.'⁸¹ At Shalvata, which was set up in 1990, more formal psychotherapeutic services are on offer for survivors and refugees to deal with their trauma. The HSC is somewhat unique in its provision of services for Holocaust survivors in that it exists solely for the benefit of the survivor community, without an accompanying mandate to provide educational or commemorative services for the wider community. Two factors led to the establishment of a recording facility at the HSC, which are directly related to the dual services provided by Shalvata and the HSC. The first was the psychological concern observed by Judith Hassan in the course of her therapy sessions with survivors and refugees at Shalvata. In her experience, psychiatric and psychoanalytic approaches to dealing with Holocaust survivors tended to conclude that the trauma experienced by these individuals had caused irreparable damage and thus was best left in the past.⁸² By offering tailored therapeutic services to

⁸¹ Judith Hassan, 'Memory and Remembrance: The Survivor of the Holocaust 50 Years after Liberation', *Cahier International #1/International Journal on the Audio-Visual Testimony* 1 (1998): 106.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 104.

Holocaust survivors, Shalvata provided them with an opportunity to engage directly with their trauma and understand rather than overlook the relationship between their past and their present circumstances. Recognising the benefits of the reflective process to the survivor, Hassan perceived the value of providing a more formal recording service for survivors, 'to ensure that these eye-witness accounts were recorded and kept for posterity [and] to make a link between the past, the present and the future.'⁸³ In addition, a proliferation of testimony recording projects at this time – including three projects underway in the UK (the Imperial War Museum Sound Archives, National Life Stories, and the British Video Archive of Holocaust Testimonies) and the large-scale projects in the United States – led to the survivors themselves requesting the provision of a testimony-recording facility in the soon-to-be-opened Centre. In a letter to the membership written in 1992, Patricia War, co-ordinator of the Holocaust Survivors' Centre, wrote of the establishment of the Centre's testimony recording facility: 'One of the requests we are often asked, is for a facility for members to record their stories – not just their wartime experiences, but also what life was like when they were small, and what has happened since the War – the development of their lives since arriving in the UK and their families. As a result we are very pleased to tell you that we are in the process of training suitable interviewers to assist in our testimonial recording programme.'⁸⁴

The Holocaust Centre of Toronto was also a community enterprise but unlike the HSC its primary beneficiary was to be the general public, operating foremost in the service of education rather than therapy. Franklin Bialystok situates the establishment of the Centre within the context of a wider conversation within the Toronto Jewish survivor community about the direction of commemorative efforts: in 1972 when the Toronto Holocaust Remembrance Committee was established it identified remembrance, education and the combatting of

⁸³ Judith Hassan, *A House Next Door to Trauma: Learning from the Holocaust* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), 13.

⁸⁴ Patricia War, 'Letter from Patricia War, Co-Ordinator for the Holocaust Survivors' Centre, to the Membership and Interested Parties.', December 1992, HOL, Wiener Holocaust Library.

antisemitism as its top priorities.⁸⁵ According to Bialystok, whilst there was a consensus within the community over the importance of teaching about the Holocaust, issues such as convincing educational authorities to incorporate the Holocaust into the curriculum, whether Jewish or non-Jewish students should be the primary targets, and how to fund and resource any initiatives, divided the community and intense debates over the pragmatics of commencing any educational programmes delayed its efforts. Bialystok argues that by the mid-1980s ‘the frontier had been crossed’; a new international interest in the Holocaust as well as changes in the structure of the educational system in Ontario and the emergence of a more cohesive Jewish community in Toronto broke the stalemate. It was within this context that the Holocaust Centre of Toronto – later renamed the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre – was opened in 1985, a product of ‘the commemorative activities of the Holocaust Remembrance Committee of the Toronto Jewish Congress, a forerunner to the present UJA Federation of Greater Toronto (UJA Federation).’⁸⁶ In contrast to the HSC, the impetus to begin recording testimonies in Toronto came not so much from the Toronto Jewish community but from the wider Canadian Jewish community. The funding for the recording of survivor testimonies in Toronto came from a surplus of funds left over from the first Canadian Gathering of Holocaust Survivors held in Ottawa in 1985, which was divided between the communities in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver.⁸⁷ The Toronto Holocaust Remembrance Committee dedicated its share of the funds specifically for a testimony recording project and two years later, Nathan Leipziger, then the Chairman of the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, instigated the recording of testimonies through the Centre, picking up the mandate for local Holocaust Remembrance Committees set by the Canadian Jewish Congress in the early half of that decade: ‘Regarding survivors who have come forward, but are not going to be videotaped [by the Canadian Jewish Congress

⁸⁵ Franklin Bialystok, *Delayed Impact: The Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), 201.

⁸⁶ ‘Who We Are’, *Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre*, 2019, <https://www.holocaustcentre.com/about-us/who-we-are>.

⁸⁷ Esme Gotz, ‘Notes on a Meeting with Nate [Leipziger] Re. Holocaust Survivor Toronto Testimony Project’, 12 October 2013, 4.

Holocaust Documentation Project⁸⁸], it was decided to request the [local] Holocaust Remembrance Committees to organise audio taping at a local level.⁸⁹ According to a 1982 letter issued to local HRC's regarding the matter, the Toronto Holocaust Remembrance Committee with the aid of the recently formed Children of Survivors Committee had already taken up the mantle of interviewing, though it was not until the receipt of funding in 1985 and the assistance of local businesspeople in donating resources that the recording project began in an earnest and organised manner.⁹⁰

Though there is clearly a distinction to be drawn between the two contexts, particularly in their relationship to the external (i.e. non-survivor and/or non-Jewish) community, for both organisations the decision to record survivor testimonies – the archivalisation – was motivated by the desire to leave a legacy for future generations. At the HSC, survivors were encouraged to recognise their own need to create a record of their experiences to pass on to future generations and to facilitate the communication of their story to their own descendants. In this situation, oral testimonies were seen as ‘the means through which communication can take place between the first and second generations’,⁹¹ as well as to give ‘some reassurance that the memories would not be lost once the survivor was no longer alive’. Judith Hassan was vindicated in her belief that testimony could have therapeutic properties for the survivor, having observed through her discussions with survivors that ‘many did feel relief at having recorded their memories for posterity.’⁹² In Toronto, Esme Gotz – wife of Holocaust survivor Elly Gotz, both of whom committed a significant amount of time to the processing of the testimony collection some decades after it was created – reflected on the archive: ‘When the survivors recorded their testimonies and shared their memories of a way of life lost,

⁸⁸ For more on the history of the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, see Part II – Analysing the Testimonial Landscape.

⁸⁹ Kathy Faludi, ‘Minutes of a Meeting of Committee of Consultants to the Holocaust Documentation Project - November 1981’ (Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, 11 November 1981), 2, CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 10, Canadian Jewish Archives.

⁹⁰ Esme Gotz, ‘Notes on Meeting’, 4.

⁹¹ Hassan, ‘Memory and Remembrance’, 106.

⁹² Hassan, *A House Next Door to Trauma*, 195.

families lost and youth lost, they thought that they were doing something important. A legacy for future generations.⁹³ In both cases, this legacy work involved the children of survivors, members of the so-called 'Second Generation', who had taken up the task of commemoration before the establishment of the formal recording projects. Both the HSC and the Holocaust Centre of Toronto employed children of survivors to conduct the interviews, and both issued a copy of the recording to the survivor for their own personal use.⁹⁴ In each case, the testimony recording facility emerged as a response to one of the most pressing needs of its respective survivor community – therapeutic need in the case of the London community, and educational demand in the case of the Toronto community – and in both cases, ensuring the preservation of a legacy for future generations was a key motivating factor.

With the realisation of a legacy at the heart at the heart of these testimony projects, it is perhaps unsurprising that as archives they consist almost exclusively of testimony given by Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. Unlike other projects – such as the Canadian Jewish Congress' Holocaust Documentation Project, as I will come to show – which aimed to create comprehensive records of the Holocaust as an event and thus included liberators and aid-givers amongst their interviewees, the focus of these two projects was on offering survivors – the primary beneficiaries of the organisations' work or the individuals on behalf of whom they operated – the chance to speak on record. For the Holocaust Survivors' Centre this refers to those who were in Europe during the war, including in camps, ghettos or in hiding, as well as refugees, in particular those who came to the UK after the 1938 November Pogrom.⁹⁵ In both cases, testimony was recorded at the initiative of the survivor who approached the project, rather than by specific invitation from the institution; whilst the Holocaust Centre of Toronto did not have a ready membership in the same way as the Holocaust Survivors' Centre did, it published an open invitation to the community to participate: 'If you are a survivor who spent the war in Nazi-occupied Europe, whether in the camps, in hiding, passing as a non-Jew, or in the

⁹³ Esme Gotz, 'Article First Draft', n.d., 3.

⁹⁴ Hassan, *A House Next Door to Trauma*, 195; Esme Gotz, 'Notes on Meeting', 4.

⁹⁵ Judith Hassan, 'To AJR Members: A Letter from Jewish Care', *AJR Journal*, June 2008, 3.

resistance, the committee would like to record your story on videotape'.⁹⁶ Any contribution of the original testimony to other research-oriented archives was a secondary concern and required additional permission, as highlighted by one reporter who observed of the HSC collection that 'those recorded interviews are primarily for the survivor and his or her family but in addition, where permission has been given, the recordings are copied and lodged with a bona fide museum or library such as the National Sound Archive of the British Library, the Wiener Library, or any other preferred by the interviewee.'⁹⁷

Because the Holocaust Survivors' Centre project was less interested in producing an archival corpus or a collective history of a particular group than it was in offering an opportunity for survivors to speak, the interviewee's agenda was largely prioritised in the recording. Though interviewers for the HSC received training from qualified oral historians and therefore understood the value of also recording an interviewee's memory of pre- and post-war life, the extent to which this full life-story approach manifests in the collection varies, ostensibly depending on whether or not the interviewee wished to engage in the process in this manner. Ivor Perl's three and a half hour long interview, for example, is an in-depth exploration of his life from birth and childhood in Mako, Hungary through his time in Auschwitz to his new life and family in the UK. The interview ends with the interviewer, Linda Glancy, posing a series of reflective questions, many of which are befitting of an institution with close ties to a therapeutic service: 'Were you pleased you did that journey [back to Hungary]?' 'What about your children how do you think it's affected them?'⁹⁸ On the other end of the spectrum are recordings in which it is clear from the audio that interviewees are reading pre-prepared 'scripts': from their literary style and the absence of prosodic features of speech it appears that they have written their testimonies in advance of the 'interview' and are using

⁹⁶ 'Holocaust Documentation [in Toronto]', *Unknown Publication*, n.d., Current Project Files File Name: 'Potential Interviewees & Survivor Lists', Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

⁹⁷ Martin Dix, 'Jewish Care's Holocaust Survivor Centre's Testimony Project', *Reform Judaism*, 19 April 2018, <https://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/jewish-cares-holocaust-survivor-centres-testimony-project/>.

⁹⁸ Ivor Perl, Interview for the Holocaust Survivors' Centre, interview by Linda Glancy, 25 September 2013, C830/154, British Library Sounds.

the opportunity to perform and record their testimony in audio format. The testimony of Fanni Bogdanow is one such example. The recording opens with the 'interviewer' – Linda Berman – speaking the line 'This is the testimony of professor Fanni Bogdanow, on the 4th of April, 1996, taken by Linda Berman', but the voice of Berman does not appear again for the duration of the 33 minute-long interview. Professor Bogdanow continues:

Lest we forget, childhood memories of the Holocaust. I have never forgotten the Holocaust years, but it was the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings in May 1994 which first moved me to record my childhood memories of those years. For the D-day landings have for me a very special significance. Just three and a half months later, on the 23rd October 1944, the allied expeditionary forces were to liberate my mother from the notorious camp at Vittel in France, where she had been taken on the 19th January 1944 from the equally notorious death camp Bergen Belsen. Perhaps my most vivid memories are those of the 9th November 1938, the infamous Kristallnacht, when I was a little girl of eleven [...] ⁹⁹

Stylistically the interviews in this collection span a spectrum from question-and-answer style interviews to testimonial monologues such as Bogdanow's, but in each the chosen style is evidently a response to the needs of the survivor, who has chosen to commit their story to the record in this environment. There is, therefore, more apparent freedom for interviewees to direct the entire narrative from beginning to end than in other, more structurally demanding collections.

The Holocaust Centre of Toronto project by comparison is generally more consistent in its structure: all interviews are question-and-answer format, follow a general chronological order, and are recorded on video rather than audiotape. As previously mentioned, as an offshoot of the parent project – the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project (CJC-HDP) – the Toronto testimony

⁹⁹ Fanni Bogdanow, Interview for the Holocaust Survivors' Centre, interview by Linda Berman, 4 April 1996, C830/019, British Library Sounds.

recording project benefited from a degree of shared methodology: according to a report on the CJC-HDP, 'an interviewer's kit was prepared by the Project Director (see Annex A) which was distributed to volunteer coordinators in cities across Canada. This kit contained information on how to interview survivors and thereby ensure that the quality of interviews on audio-tape would be consistent with the high quality attained in the video-taping.'¹⁰⁰ Like the HSC interviews, the Toronto interviews tend to include a section of reflective questioning at the end, much of which concerns the transmission of memory or the lasting impact of the Holocaust experience: 'how has the Holocaust affected your life?', 'did you talk to your children about your experiences?' 'why do you talk about your experiences in the schools?'¹⁰¹ That said, there is a degree of interviewee ownership over the recordings that is not always present in other collections, particularly those which have stricter participation criteria or interviewing approaches. This ownership manifests most clearly in moments when it is clear the interviewee – the survivor – has exerted control over what is recorded, if not how it is recorded. One clear example of this is the interview given by David Gold to Roz Lofsky in 1992, which Gold himself describes as 'a continuation of a tape, that er was taken in Montreal at McGill University, the interviewer was Dr Yehuda Untermann [sic] and, I would like to add a few more er, stories to it'.¹⁰² The interview to which Gold refers was given to Yehudi Lindeman for the McGill University *Living Testimonies* collection earlier that same year and is a more detailed, comprehensive account of Gold's experiences; it is clear that in the intervening months Gold recalled a number of additional anecdotes he wished to have recorded and used the opportunity presented by the Toronto project to have these stories documented. What is notable about this instance is the willingness of the Holocaust Centre of Toronto to expend resources recording this partial, complementary narrative. Many projects which have to be or choose to be more selective about who they interview – *The*

¹⁰⁰ 'Report to the Multiculturalism Directorate on the Holocaust Documentation Project' (Canadian Jewish Congress, 10 November 1982), 6, CJC Collection Holocaust Documentation Project (HDP) 1981-1987 DA 16 Box 1 File 15, Canadian Jewish Archives.

¹⁰¹ Howard Chandler, Interview for the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, interview by Paula Draper, 1989, No. 524, Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre.

¹⁰² David Gold, Interview for the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, interview by Roz Lofsky, 10 June 1992, 54101, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Living Memory of the Jewish Community or the CJC-HDP are two examples – would not be able to accept this kind of interview due to limited resources, yet the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, much like the HSC, solicited material based on what the community was willing to give over and above what an intended audience might ‘need’.

Frustratingly, there exists very little documentation concerning either of these archives with which the researcher can contextualise the collection. This is, I believe, in itself a reflection of the type of archive being produced. These are not ‘oral history archives’ in the sense of having had considerable and extensive research ploughed into methodology, archiving, use or re-use, though both projects did call upon oral historians and/or individuals with some experience of conducting oral history projects with Holocaust survivors in their inception – Bill Williams and staff of the National Life Story Collection in the case of the HSC, and Paula Draper and the experience of the CJC-HDP in Toronto. Both archives are collections of volunteered testimonies, containing material from anyone who wished to contribute and by and large recording that which the individual wished to contribute, as opposed to specifically researched, sought out, and selectively produced so that the archive contains only material that the institution perceived to be immediately valuable. This also contrasts with the next type of archive which, as I will show, uses a research mandate to drive the collection of testimonies (or interviews) based on a defining characteristic or experience type in order to curate an archive of thematically similar material presented in the form of a collective history. These survivor organisation projects existed simply to serve their communities and as such little background material exists for these collections. The reality was that these institutions prioritised the role of the survivor in the giving of the testimony, rather than the act of the recording in the service of some greater aim; the concern was primarily with recording memories rather than producing them in service of historical or documentary archives, or educational initiatives, or museum or commemorative efforts. As a result, the material collected by the Holocaust Centre of Toronto went unused for almost two decades, stored in boxes

in a factory and almost forgotten about.¹⁰³ The Holocaust Survivors' Centre fortunately benefitted from a relationship with the National Sound Archives from the outset which has seen the material indexed and large quantities of it made available online,¹⁰⁴ but to the best of my knowledge the HSC has itself made no further use of its own material since it was recorded.

The Voice of the Past: Oral History as Social History

Another 'type' of oral testimony archive I have identified in the course of this research is those created by academics or individuals from academic backgrounds, which are thus underpinned by scholarly trends and are created with a primarily research clientele in mind. What distinguishes these collections from the previous type is in part a grounding in oral history theory from which their respective interviewing methodologies are generated, but also an approach to studying the Holocaust which engages oral history as a means of studying Holocaust survivors as a social group or community, whose lives have been shaped by a particular historical experience – in this case, the Holocaust. Writing in 1978, Paul Thompson made the following observation about the particular value of the oral history method for social historians: 'For the social history of any minority group the limitations of written documentation are such that the use of oral sources introduces an entirely new dimension to the subject.' In particular, Thompson observed a growing interest in the use of oral history to study immigration, both 'as a form of social pathology' and, increasingly, in 'examining the ordinary experience of immigration, the process of finding work, the assistance of kin and neighbours, the building of minority community institutions, and the continuance of previous cultural customs as well as problems of racial tension and discrimination'.¹⁰⁵ Several organisations have taken up the mantle of applying this oral-history-as-research approach to interviewing survivors of the Holocaust. In Britain and Canada, there are three main projects which fit this archival approach: *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community*, a subsidiary project of the National Life Story Collection in the UK; The Association of Jewish Refugees' *Refugee Voices* video archive; and the

¹⁰³ Esme Gotz, 'Notes on Meeting', 6.

¹⁰⁴ Accessible at <https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Jewish-Holocaust-survivors>.

¹⁰⁵ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 1978, 88–89.

Holocaust Working Group of the Concordia University-based oral history project *Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced by War, Genocide, and other Human Rights Violations/Histoires de vie des Montréalais déplacés par la guerre, le génocide et autres violations aux droits de la personne* (Life Stories of Montrealers). All three projects are researcher-led and are based in or have links with academic institutions. In the case of these archives, it is primarily the perceived benefit of the recorded testimony to research and the research community which has motivated the interviewing of Holocaust survivors; the research-focused archivalisation of these archives is what defines and directs their activity in theory, though how this plays out in practice – the archivalisation – can differ between the projects as the different institutions variously interpret the research mandate.

Commencing in 1988, *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* (LMJC) was the third project to be launched by the National Life Story Collection (NLSC), an oral history project created by Paul Thompson. NLSC was intended to produce a 'National Biography in Sound', aiming to compensate for the lack of any kind of national collection of information that 'embrace[d] people from all social classes, cultures and religions of the United Kingdom' by capitalising on the potential that new recording technologies offered as a means of documenting the reality of the nature and functions of society.¹⁰⁶ The project was the brainchild of Jennifer Wingate, a lawyer by profession, who was introduced to NLSC upon reading a letter addressed to her mother-in-law in which Paul Thompson detailed his plans for establishing the National Life Story Collection. A year after NLSC was launched, Wingate approached Thompson with the idea of conducting a project with members of the British immigrant population, a key demographic of the UK population who were likely at that stage comparatively undocumented in national archives. According to Wingate, at that time 'it was nothing to do with the Jewish community, it was just immigrants.' Wingate's proposition fit neatly with the aims of NLSC and complemented contemporary trends in oral history, which at the time was increasingly concerned with minority populations. But whilst its intentions

¹⁰⁶ National Sound Archive, 'The National Life Story Collection' (National Sound Archive, 1988), 2, R2 013, Wiener Holocaust Library.

were noble, it soon became clear that the project was too broad and ambitious to be resourced by NLSC in its current form and the decision was taken to focus specifically on the immigrant Jewish community. In the course of establishing the project Thompson and Wingate learned of Elisabeth Maxwell's plans for the first 'Remembering for the Future' conference to be held in Oxford, which was to end with a meeting for Holocaust survivors in London. The knowledge of this meeting is given by Wingate and Thompson as the impetus for the decision to focus recording efforts on Jewish survivors of the Holocaust.¹⁰⁷ After launching the project at Maxwell's conference in 1988, Wingate and Thompson had amassed a wealth of contacts who would later assist in the execution of the project, including a number of historians, potential volunteer interviewers, and a substantial list of Holocaust survivors interested in giving their testimony. By the time of the launch, according to Jennifer Wingate the aim of the project 'was to interview as many survivors of the Nazi Holocaust as were available and willing to be interviewed, the only proviso being that they now lived in the United Kingdom.'¹⁰⁸

As a collective history enterprise *Life Stories of Montrealers* was not dissimilar to NLSC, though operated on a city-wide rather than a national scale and focused specifically on the refugee/immigrant population rather on the whole general populace, of which Holocaust survivors were a subset. The project endeavoured to produce an archive of life stories which reflected 'the experiences and social memories of Montreal residents displaced by mass violence, ranging from the Holocaust to war and atrocity crime in Rwanda, Cambodia, Latin America, Haiti, and South Asia.'¹⁰⁹ As a Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) project, *Life Stories of Montrealers* operated both in the community and in the academy, designed to simultaneously benefit the local community by raising awareness of the experiences of this particular sub-group of the Montreal population and the associated issues, and to create an archive of material that

¹⁰⁷ Paul Thompson and Jennifer Wingate, Interview for Oral History of Oral History in the UK, 17 January 2008, C1149/04, British Library Sounds.

¹⁰⁸ Jennifer Wingate, 'The National Life Story Collection (London)', *The British Journal of Holocaust Education* 1, no. 2 (1992): 127.

¹⁰⁹ Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, '2011 September - CURA General Training Guide' (Concordia University COHDS, 2011), 40, <http://storytelling.concordia.ca/toolbox/ethics>.

would preserve the memories of these individuals for the benefit of researchers.¹¹⁰ The Holocaust Working Group was one of seven clusters that made up *Life Stories of Montrealers*: four were cultural community based projects, exploring the background and experiences of the Rwandan, Cambodian, Haitian and Jewish communities in Montreal; the other three were issue-based projects, covering education, performance and refugee youth and were 'organised along the line of shared methodological approaches and key questions.'¹¹¹

Refugee Voices, by contrast, was not part of a larger project but was also a research effort designed to produce an archive of potential source material. In 2002, historian and researcher Dr Anthony Grenville and oral historian Dr Bea Lewkowicz in conjunction with curator Carol Seigel curated an exhibition for the Jewish Museum London entitled 'Continental Britons: Jewish Refugees from Nazi Europe', for which Lewkowicz produced a film consisting of edited extracts of interviews conducted with former refugees. Following the success of the exhibition and having observed the impact of the testimonial film on visitors, Lewkowicz and Grenville submitted a proposal to the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) for a large scale video oral history project documenting the experiences of refugees to Britain. The AJR – an organisation established in 1941 to support and represent Jewish refugees who had escaped to the UK from Nazi Europe – recognised the value of an archive that would preserve the history and memories of these refugees and agreed to commission the project.¹¹² Lewkowicz wrote of the project that 'the aim of *Refugee Voices* was to capture the experiences of "ordinary" German and Austrian Jewish refugees who have settled across the UK. *Refugee Voices* is an oral history archive and was inspired by the aims of the general oral history approach, which attempts to gather evidence of historical events and at the same time gives space to individual memory and the creation of narratives.'¹¹³ The project was

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹² 'About *Refugee Voices*', *AJR Refugee Voices*, 2019, <https://www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk/refugee-voices>.

¹¹³ Bea Lewkowicz, 'Refugee Voices (The AJR Audio-Visual Testimony Archive): A New Resource for the Study of the Kindertransport', in *The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies*, ed. Andrea Hammel and Bea Lewkowicz, vol. 13 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), 240.

undertaken in two waves: the first commenced in January 2003 and ran until 2008, with a second initiated in 2015 when it became clear that there were still a significant number of potential interviewees who wished to put their memories on record.¹¹⁴

In all three instances it is refugee status rather than Holocaust survivor identity that is the issue at the heart of the project and therefore characterises the process of archivalisation for each. In the case of both LMJC and *Life Stories of Montrealers*, the survivor interview collection emerged as part of a broader research inquiry into the lives and experiences of minority populations, and whilst *Refugee Voices* emerged as a project in its own right, its relationship to the Association of Jewish Refugees similarly demarcates it as a project which owed its origins to a commitment to documenting the experiences of a minority group. The relationship between the Holocaust survivor and the archive is, in all three instances, one of researcher to research subject, and as a result each project asserted somewhat stricter criteria for participation than seen in previous examples. The Holocaust Survivors' Centre and the Holocaust Centre of Toronto would interview any Holocaust survivor who responded to the call for testimonies, but by contrast these research-based projects recruited and selected interviewees on the basis of the relevance of their experiences to the narrative of the archive being produced, which included a selection process to ensure the suitability of prospective interviewees.

The journey that *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* underwent in coming to fruition essentially dictated a number of selection criteria which would determine the 'types' of individuals that the project would interview and thus the diversity of the experiences which were to be represented in the final collection. First, the fact that LMJC was a subsidiary of the parent project – the National Life Story Collection – mandated that its participants were to be British residents. Second, they were to be immigrants, i.e. were not born in Britain and were therefore a minority population; third, they were to be Jewish; and fourth, by the

¹¹⁴ 'About Refugee Voices'.

time the project was officially launched, they – and their immigrant identity by association – were to bear some relationship to the Holocaust. Jennifer Wingate recalls that there was considerable discussion in the early stages of the project about how to define both a ‘survivor’ and ‘the Holocaust’. Ultimately, the decision was made ‘to interpret “event” as meaning the experiences of the several European Jewish Communities in the Nazi Holocaust in Europe, and a “survivor” as being an individual belonging to one of those communities who remained alive after the defeat of the Third Reich in 1945.’¹¹⁵ The official launch of LMJC at the ‘Remembering for the Future’ conference in July 1988 yielded 90 potential interviewees, of whom 70 were actually interviewed for the project, with the others being rendered ineligible for various reasons including that they were not resident in the UK, had previously been interviewed by the Imperial War Museum, or had withdrawn their consent for personal reasons.¹¹⁶

On the subject of interviewee recruitment, Concordia University had this to say with regards to *Life Stories of Montrealers*:

The project approach is one of coordinated decentralisation. That is to say, each working group is responsible for their own recruitment processes, in accordance with general guidelines that have been developed by the project...Recruitment may take place in a variety of ways, including through existing networks and word of mouth. The goals of the working groups are to ensure that interviewees represent a broad spectrum of backgrounds from within the communities involved in the project.¹¹⁷

Historian Frank Chalk, who conducted much of the interviewer training for the Holocaust Working Group, informed prospective interviewers that there were a number of ways in which a survivor might find out about the project, including through the Canadian Jewish news, Temple or Synagogue newsletters, or simply through word of mouth. This initial community-project contact was followed by a

¹¹⁵ Wingate, ‘National Life Story Collection’, 128.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹¹⁷ Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, ‘CURA Training Guide’, 8.

selection process to ensure the project met two key needs: the prioritisation of those individuals who had not been interviewed elsewhere before, and to ensure specific priority experience groups were accounted for in the final collection.¹¹⁸ A second Holocaust group interviewer workshop emphasised the fact that the project was archive-based and operated on a mandate of community-university cooperation, so emphasis was to be placed on reaching the Sephardic community as they were generally underrepresented in existing interview collections.¹¹⁹

The recruitment process for *Refugee Voices* was similarly selective. Though the project was sponsored by the Association of Jewish Refugees, not all interviewees were members of the AJR and the call for interviewees was open. The AJR network, however, was a useful network for distribution of information: announcements regarding the launch of the project were placed in the AJR's own publication, the *AJR Journal*, one of which read as follows:

Since most of the existing interviews with Jewish refugees from Hitler in Britain have been carried out in London and the South-East, the AJR has decided to redress the balance by having many of the interviews for this new project conducted with members in other regions of the UK...Anyone wishing to be interviewed should first contact their regional organiser. But prospective interviewees need to bear in mind that 120 interviews (40 per year for three years) is not a large number, considering the likely demand. Apart from a quota set aside for the AJR's Day Centre, interviews with members living in the London area will probably have to be limited to exceptional cases. Preference will also have to be given to those who have not yet been interviewed by other organisations.¹²⁰

Project staff recognised that for their archive to consider itself a collective history of refugees from Nazism now based in the UK it had a responsibility to ensure that

¹¹⁸ *Holocaust WG Training Session*, DVD (Concordia University, Montreal, 2008).

¹¹⁹ *Holocaust Related Workshop*, DVD (Concordia University, Montreal, 2009).

¹²⁰ Anthony Grenville, 'Refugee Voices: AJR Oral History Collection Launched in the North', *AJR Journal*, January 2003, 2.

interviews were conducted with a representative sample of the refugee population. In particular this meant interviewing outside of London, largely because as the primary area of refugee settlement London had been the locus of interviewing activity up until that point, but also because there was a sizable Orthodox Jewish community living in the north of England who for the same reason – and also for reasons of seclusion – were underrepresented in existing interview collections.

In all three instances, the archivalisation – that is, what made NLSC, the Concordia CURA project and the Association of Jewish Refugees interested in recording Holocaust survivors – was a desire to study Holocaust survivors as a minority population and refugees as a social phenomenon. This academic angle is notably distinct from the approaches of the HSC and the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, who interviewed Holocaust survivors and witnesses as a means of studying the historical event rather than the survivors as historical agents. The academic framework of all three projects was also reflected in stricter participation criteria. Research projects such as these carry with them some distinct limitations – most notably on time, finances and resources – which are generally imposed upon them by funding bodies or institutional budgets. Such limitations are not always present in survivor organisation projects, which can often afford to commit time to repeat rounds of fundraising to extend their recording efforts in ways that academic projects cannot. The scope of these types of projects, therefore, tends to be narrower but also more clearly defined than in other instances.

A further commonality between projects of this kind is the chronological and thematic scope of the actual interviews. Whilst there is a general acceptance of the value of chronological recounting when recording Holocaust survivor accounts – with a specific emphasis on the value of recording the pre-war period as a point of comparison and a marker of the impact of the event on the individual and their community – this structure tends to be more explicit in the methodologies which underpin oral history-based collections such as these, and is often more rigorously implemented in projects where interviewers and/or project coordinators are trained oral historians. In contrast to the Holocaust Survivors' Centre and the Holocaust Centre of Toronto testimony projects, topics to be covered were more

heavily mandated in these collections so as to ensure that the final archive contained the kind of material that would be useful to a speculative future research audience. This is evident from the extensive information issued to interviewers for each of these projects. Jennifer Wingate wrote of the methodology for *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community*:

Focused around the years prior to, and during, the Second World War, they [the interviewees] were to be asked about their family life and upbringing, the extent to which religion had played a significant role in their personal and family life, and their experiences of anti-Semitism and any segregation from school and friends. The questions would then lead on to any experiences in the Nazi-created ghettos and camps, where relevant, then to liberation, their journeys [sic] from Europe to arrival in the United Kingdom and settlement into a new life here. Finally, they were to be asked to give more general impressions about their lives and what their present feelings were about those experiences.¹²¹

This reflective life history approach is mirrored in the project paperwork for all three of these collections. Bea Lewkowicz of the AJR *Refugee Voices* collection described its holdings thus:

All the interviews are life story interviews, covering the interviewees' lives from childhood to today...As the interviews also explore the post-war lives of the interviewees, the testimonies contain a wealth of material on the lives of the interviewees in Britain after 1945: on the manner of their settlement, the obstacles they encountered, the degree of their integration, their sense of identity and their religious affiliation, as well as their professional development, their attitudes to Britain, Israel and their native lands, their family life as well as their hopes and aspirations for their children...Another important aspect of the Refugee Voices interviews is the reflective section at the end of each interview.

¹²¹ Wingate, 'National Life Story Collection', 134.

We wanted to make sure that the interviewees have space to reflect on their experiences by asking questions like ‘What impact did your experience have on your life?’, ‘How different would your life had[sic] been if you had not been forced to emigrate?’, and ‘How would you describe yourself in terms of your identity?’ guided this reflective process.¹²²

The CURA general interview guide which was published to support the *Life Stories of Montrealers* project was issued as a foundational guideline for the different working groups, so may not have exactly matched the operational methodology of the Holocaust working group in practice, but it gives a useful indication of the expectations of a project which claims to collect ‘life histories’. The guide consists of the following sections with sample questions given for each, an extract of which is provided here:

- I. Biographical information
- II. Family Heritage
- III. Childhood
- IV. Youth/Schooling
- V. Work/Community
- VI. Marriage and Children
- VII. Reasons for leaving/migration
 - a. What were the events that led to your leaving?
 - i. What was the first news of violence in your country?
 - ii. How did you and your community react to this news?
 - ...
 - c. What were your own experiences with violence?
 - i. How did you respond?

¹²² Bea Lewkowicz, ‘The AJR Refugee Voices Archive: A Resource for Scholarship and Learning’, ed. Nicolas Apostolopoulos, Michele Barricelli, and Gertrud Koch, *Preserving Survivors’ Memories - Digital Testimony Collections about Nazi Persecution: History, Education and Media*, Education with Testimonies, 3 (2016): 75.

ii. How did others in the community respond?

...

e. Did you ever make efforts to hide or to mask your identity because you felt threatened?

f. Can you tell me about the weeks and days leading up to your leaving? g. Who do you feel you left behind?'

VIII. Montréal

IX. Going Back

a. Have you been back to your home country?

...

X. Memories/looking back

...

b. How/when/where do you talk about your experiences with violence?

...

e. Do you think of yourself as a survivor?

...

j. What would you most like others outside of your community to know about your experiences?¹²³

Despite the fact that all three of these projects focus on Holocaust survivors – and can, therefore, be considered (and consider themselves to be) archives of Holocaust oral testimony – each approaches the subject matter from a specific and particular social history perspective. For *Life Stories of Montrealers* this was the experience of being a Jewish refugee in immigrant Montreal; for *Refugee Voices* it was the experience of being a refugee from Nazism now living in the UK; and for *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* it was the experience of being a member of the Jewish immigrant community in the UK, to include the descendants of Holocaust survivors as well as the survivors themselves. In addition, therefore, to recording

¹²³ Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, 'CURA General Interview Guide' (Concordia University COHDS), 1–6, accessed 25 October 2019, <http://storytelling.concordia.ca/toolbox/ethics>.

individual Holocaust ‘testimonies’, these interviews were designed to function together as a collective social history. Since their mandate is to document the lived experiences of particular minority groups, the relationship between archivalisation and archiving hinges even more crucially on the life history format in these projects. This approach is designed to give space to the survivor to detail their experiences during the Holocaust, but also to provide the interviewer – who represents the interests of the parent project in the dialogue – with the means to acquire a wealth of additional material of potential future historical interest and, moreover, to ask specific, targeted questions that focus in on what it means to belong to the identity group under scrutiny. In this way, these archives are collective histories as much as they are collections, and they are simultaneously broader and narrower in scope than many other Holocaust oral testimony projects, since they record in much greater depth the experiences of a particular demographic subset of the global Holocaust survivor population.

Performative Oral Testimony Archives

Paul Thompson observed in the first edition of *The Voice of the Past* that ‘the use of interviewing for historical presentation in broadcasting is of course long-standing,’ describing it as ‘a fine tradition of oral history techniques which goes back many years.’¹²⁴ In recent years, the value of the eyewitness as an illustrative or complementary voice in television, film and museum exhibitions has increasingly been recognised, and this has applied as much to the realm of Holocaust studies as other areas of modern history. Moreover, as the eyewitness testimony takes on an increasingly prominent role in Holocaust education and commemoration its presence in other media has increased too, with the visceral and emotional impact of watching and hearing a survivor giving testimony being harnessed for its pedagogical benefits. There are a number of collections of oral material produced specifically for media and cultural purposes, and these archives present an altogether different narrative to those created for the sake of the community or for use in research. When I speak of performative oral testimony, I speak of a specific type of project in which the recordings are intended from the point of inception to

¹²⁴ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 1978, 12.

be used in a TV programme, film or exhibition, thus are produced in a very specific way so as to illustrate the Holocaust or to appeal emotionally to a viewer or visitor. The priority in project design is therefore the end use of the material, which is typically in service of an institution or company that has a vested interest in representing the Holocaust in a particular fashion, rather than specifically – or solely – a commitment to archiving material in the service of Holocaust commemoration.

There are two British and Canadian projects that I cite as providing an example of this kind of project. The first is found within the Imperial War Museum Sound Archives: the October Films collection consists of audio-visual interviews conducted with Holocaust survivors specifically for inclusion in the IWM London's Holocaust Exhibition, opened in 2000. According to the exhibition project director Suzanne Bardgett, the project team initially considered the use of survivor testimony in the exhibition to be inadvisable, for reasons including a fear of overloading the main narrative with extraneous information in an already information-heavy exhibition; a disconnect between the modern image of the survivors in the present and the historical appearance of the contemporary historical artefacts which would comprise the majority of the exhibition material; and a fear that a focus on survivor testimony might misleadingly give the impression that survival was the norm. After closer examination of the merits of the medium of video testimony and the persuasive efforts of October Films, who by then had already been selected as the company chosen to take care of the audio-visual side of the exhibition, the decision was taken to interview survivors specifically for inclusion in the exhibition.¹²⁵ Recording began in 1998, with sixteen survivors being interviewed by filmmaker Annie Dodds for between a half to a full day each.¹²⁶ Extracts of these interviews appear on screens at various points throughout the exhibition, offering a montage of testimonial material from the sixteen interviewees to personalise the narrative being told by the exhibition. The

¹²⁵ Tony Kushner, 'Oral History at the Extremes of Human Experience: Holocaust Testimony in a Museum Setting', *Oral History* 29, no. 2 (2001): 90–91.

¹²⁶ Suzanne Bardgett, 'Witness Statements: Testimonies at the Holocaust Exhibition', *Museum Practice*, no. 25 (2004): 54–56.

second example of this type of project are the special projects conducted by the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre (VHEC) for use in various exhibitions from the late 1990s onwards. To date there have been three such exhibitions: *Broken Threads – The Destruction of the Jewish Fashion Industry in Germany and Austria: From Aryanization to Cultural Loss*, a 1998 exhibition focusing on the lives of five Holocaust survivors living in Vancouver who had links with the pre-war German and Austrian clothing industries; *Shanghai: A Refuge During the Holocaust* which opened in 1999, for which six Vancouver-based survivors were interviewed about their experiences of emigrating to Shanghai as one of the last safe havens available to Jews during the war; and a two-year project which ran between 2010-2012 entitled "*Enemy Aliens": The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-1943*, for which sixteen refugees were interviewed, all of whom had been interned in Canada during the Second World War.¹²⁷ In each case, VHEC staff conducted the interviews for the express purpose of procuring information and audiovisual material to be used in the relevant exhibition, although there was also an understanding that the recorded testimonies would be archived alongside the VHEC's existing oral testimony collection. In addition, according to the current executive director of the VHEC, there was a further set of re-interviews done from 2008 onwards for an exhibition idea that never materialised focusing on the Vancouver Holocaust survivor community, in particular with local survivor speakers and educators, with a view to spotlighting their contribution in the local community.¹²⁸ Though the exhibition never came to fruition, some of these interviews still appear in the VHEC sound archive.

In the case of oral testimony projects such as these, interviewee selection is more heavily determined by the institutional mandate than in projects with a broader remit. Two primary factors drive recruitment in these cases: interviewees must be individuals who can contribute something of interest and value about the event being studied; and they must be individuals who can communicate their experiences in a way that is powerful, emotive, or illustrative, depending on the

¹²⁷ 'History of the Holocaust Testimony Collection', *Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre*, accessed 15 November 2019, <https://collections.vhec.org/Testimonies/history>.

¹²⁸ Nina Krieger, in conversation with the author, 14 June 2019.

desired impact. For the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, this was clearly delineated by the subject of the planned exhibitions: specifically, individuals with particular pre-war professional experience, Jews who followed a particular emigration pattern (i.e. from wartime Europe to Shanghai and eventually on to Vancouver), and refugees who had been deported from the UK to Canada and interned as 'Enemy Aliens'. In the case of the latter, the interviewers at the VHEC conducted interviews across Canada – in Toronto and Montreal as well as in Vancouver – to ensure a multiplicity of perspectives was accrued.¹²⁹ All of these projects are particularly valuable contributions to the wider corpus of Holocaust testimonial material as they focus on sub-sections of the Holocaust survivor population whose experiences have been underrepresented even within the existing corpus of Holocaust testimony. For October Films the subject remit was broader since the material was to illustrate all aspects of the Holocaust in the exhibition, and interviewees were chosen to ensure a representative sample of experiences for inclusion in the final product. This involved listening to survivors whose interviews were already housed within the IWM's Sound Archive and compiling a shortlist of individuals, 'noting those whose stories were especially well told, or who were special for some historical reason...whose reminiscences they had found particularly striking...[and] whose stories would stand for the experiences of millions.'¹³⁰ Given limitations on the project – i.e. the time and resources available to bring the project to fruition within the timeline of the development of the exhibition – it was only possible to interview a small number of survivors and the scope needed to reflect all aspects of the exhibition narrative as it was intended for audiovisual material to be used throughout, thus the range of experiences covered by the final sixteen interviews included persecution, ghettoisation, concentration camp experiences, death marches, different types of resistance, and liberation. The opening room of the exhibition in which the sixteen

¹²⁹ Vera Rosenbluth, 'Interviewing the Internees', *Zachor: 'Enemy Aliens' The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-1943*, May 2012, 13.

¹³⁰ Suzanne Bardgett, 'The Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum: Challenges of Representation', in *Representing the Unrepresentable: Putting the Holocaust into Public Museums*, ed. Rainer Schulze, vol. 1, *The Holocaust in History and Memory* (Colchester: University of Essex, 2008), 34.

individuals appear on a screen recalling memories from their pre-war lives immediately reflects this diversity, with anecdotes evoking images of affluent, poor, orthodox and liberal pre-war family lives.

Before one even studies the methodology employed in the production of these particular collections it is clear that they are carefully produced according to very specific criteria, the effects of which permeate deeper into the project methodology on the level of the individual interview. The exhibition or programme framework is evident in all interviews, whether the design for the programme or exhibition came first, as was the case for the IWM Holocaust Exhibition, or was decided on the basis of the material procured, as for the Vancouver special projects. In the case of October Films, the exhibition narrative can be read clearly into the interviews. The idea for the exhibition preceded the decision to conduct interviews – and in fact gave way to it – and when we view these interviews as having been created for specific use as exhibition material in the newly proposed IWM Holocaust Exhibition, we can see how they were designed to fulfil a very different function to the archival style interviews conducted by other projects. Filmmaker Annie Dodds and October Films were given ‘the freedom to develop the programmes as they saw fit, having agreed [with curators] an outline of their content’;¹³¹ the audio-visual survivor testimony ‘films’ present in the Exhibition are incorporated into several sub-sections of the exhibition narrative, indicated by headings as the viewer progresses through the exhibition. Close analysis of the interviews in full suggests that the material for each of these short ‘films’ was obtained through specific lines of questioning relevant to each particular sub-topic. The sub-headings and examples of relevant questioning in the interviews with Barbara Stimler and Rudi Bamber are outlined below.

Life before the Nazis: ‘can you tell me, um, a little bit about your, um, whether you were a religious family or a secular family’; ‘tell me about your childhood, how would you describe it?’

¹³¹ Bardgett, ‘Witness Statements’.

Outcasts: ‘could you tell me a little bit more about how the Jews were singled out by the Germans and what you remember about that?’; ‘we come to the Nazis coming to power in January 1933, what immediate impact did the Nazis and their arrival in power have on you and your family?’

Nazi Policy towards the Polish Jews: ‘can you tell me how you and your family felt about having to wear yellow stars’

Ghettos: ‘so just tell us a little bit about the description of the Łódź ghetto and your sense of being cut off and isolated’

Death Marches: ‘could you explain, um, why you were taken from the labour camp on the march what you understood at that time, why you were taken on the march’; ‘did you have any sense [...] that they were going to, that they were trying to take you further into Germany’

Reflections: ‘do you have any sense of forgiveness towards the Germans, or what is your own attitude?’; ‘why do you think, it’s it’s taken so long for people to want to listen to your your witness and to other people who survived the Holocaust?’¹³²

In this way, the interviews were subject to a far more rigid agenda that was determined not by the interviewee but by the interviewer: Suzanne Bardgett, project director for the Holocaust Exhibition, stated that October Films ‘understood our need for programmes that supported, rather than led, the main historical narrative.’¹³³ The October Films interviews were designed to elicit information from the interviewee about specific aspects of their experience, irrespective of the personal significance attributed to these particular memories by the interviewee.

By contrast, the Vancouver exhibits were designed around the material procured through the interviewing process. Nina Krieger describes the process of

¹³² Barbara Stimler, Interview for October Films, interview by Annie Dodds, 14 August 1998, 19787, Imperial War Museum; Rudi Bamber, Interview for October Films, interview by Annie Dodds, 22 September 1999, 19779, Imperial War Museum.

¹³³ Bardgett, ‘Witness Statements’, 54–56.

producing the *Enemy Aliens* exhibition in 2012: ‘Toni-Lynn [Frederick] and I worked to craft the large volume of footage we had to work with into thematic assemblies that appear at various points throughout the exhibit. In each assembly, the comments of a number of internees are woven together in an attempt to offer a coherent yet nuanced glimpse into the complexity of this history.’¹³⁴ Interviewer Vera Rosenbluth elaborated on the process of working with videographer Toni-Lynn Frederick to shape these thematic assemblies from the testimonies:

As Toni-Lynn and I continued to gather memories and reflections, the themes of the VHEC exhibit slowly emerged: the unspeakably terrible conditions on the ships that took the men to Canada or Australia, the reception they received by Canadians who expected dangerous prisoners-of-war, the conditions in the camps, the relationships with each other and the camp guards, the creative and courageous ways the men coped with the situations they found themselves in, the circumstances of their release, their integration into Canadian society.¹³⁵

A similar process of post-interview exhibition narrative construction occurred for *Shanghai*, which centred the experiences of the Gottfried family. Based on information obtained through interviewing, the exhibit was divided into themes such as:

- Pre-war Life
- Recognizing the Need to Leave
- The World’s Doors Were Closed to Jewish Refugees
- After Kristallnacht
- The Long Journey to Shanghai
- Jewish Refugee Life in Shanghai
- Religious and Cultural Life in Shanghai

¹³⁴ Nina Krieger, ‘Internment Remembered, Internment Exhibited: “Enemy Aliens” Recalls a Historical Moment as It Recedes from Living Memory’, *Zachor: ‘Enemy Aliens’ The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-1943*, May 2012, 6.

¹³⁵ Vera Rosenbluth, ‘Interviewing the Internees’, 14.

- The Japanese Occupation
- Finding Out About the Holocaust
- Leaving Home Again – Where and When to Go?¹³⁶

Despite the fact that the actual exhibition narrative came after the interview stage in both cases, the thematic scope of the interview was already predetermined by the exhibition theme, which is reflected in the questions put to the interviewees. In the case of *Shanghai*, these were

Questions focused on five stages of the Gottfried family's experiences: their time in Vienna, their Journey to Shanghai in September of 1939, Arrival, Life in Shanghai, Getting Out Again..., which were then reflected in the exhibit's focus on 'document[ting] [...] [the] pre-war lives, Holocaust experiences, post-war circumstances, the process of emigrating to Canada, [...] [the] journey, expectations, settlement and adult lives in British Columbia as well as reflections on their immigration and history' of Jewish people who immigrated to Shanghai from Europe before, or during the Holocaust in Europe¹³⁷

Edgar Lion's interview given to the VHEC for the *Enemy Aliens* project centres heavily around his experiences as an internee, a fact which is all the more clear when this interview is compared with another he gave to the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre (MHMC) a year later. The two interviews are comparable in length, but the VHEC's interview for *Enemy Aliens* focuses largely on the experiences of internment both in the UK and after being deported to Canada, to the extent that the questioning becomes intensely specific in a manner not replicated in other projects that take a more standard life history approach to interviewing: 'I wanna hear about the camps in England as well as the ones in Canada, can you just list the camps you were in and how long you were in each one'; 'when you think about the camp what sounds do you think about? [...] I think

¹³⁶ 'The Exhibit: Shanghai - A Refuge During the Holocaust', n.d., Current Project Files File Name: 'Testimony Timeline Project: Shanghai Exhibit', Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

¹³⁷ MS, 'Timeline Project Testimony-Related Content: "Shanghai"' (Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 13 August 2015), 6–7, Current Project Files File Name: 'Testimony Timeline Project: Shanghai Exhibit', Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

I'm just imagining you as this European kid coming into the Canadian wilderness, I'm just wondering what, you know, what the sounds were that you heard that were different?'; 'I've heard there was a camp song?'; 'do you see antisemitism as part of the internment, or the length of time you were interned?'¹³⁸

The 'performative' aspect of this kind of material relates specifically to the expectations that the interviewer or project director places on the interviewee rather than the interviewee's approach to the interview. In many cases, in particular the case of the October Films material, it appears as though the interviewee does not perceive any difference between this particular experience of giving their testimony and any other. Barbara Stimler, who recorded her testimony on multiple occasions including to LMJC in 1988, to the USC VHA in 1995, to the IWM Sound Archive in 1997, and to the Holocaust Survivors' Centre in 1998, approached her interview with October Films in 2000 much like she did the others. Stimler is attempting to tell her story on her own terms, as she has done so many times before; on the one hand October Films are keen to allow her to talk as freely as possible in order to elicit the most natural testimonial material which could speak for itself, was delivered in full sentences and which could be understood when segmented and presented in isolation in the exhibition, but on the other hand they needed to ensure that the material obtained was relevant and would fit the exhibition narrative. To produce the required material in the allocated time, the interviewer took control of determining the narrative structure. The interviewer did not *ask* questions so much as instruct Stimler what to talk about: 'could you start by describing to us what life was like for you as a child before the war'; 'okay Barbara so just tell us a little bit about the description of the Łódź ghetto and your sense of being cut off and isolated'. The structure of the narrative is not Stimler's; the interviewer and videographer frequently halted the interview, cut Barbara off or prevented her from recounting certain elements of her story, which they deemed unnecessary for the exhibition's purposes. The conflict this created is most readily apparent in the following extract:

¹³⁸ Eddie Lion, Interview for 'Enemy Aliens', interview by Vera Rosenbluth, 27 March 2011, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

BS: and one polish woman notice what we are doing and start shouting 'the Jews are here the Jews are here!' so he went over to her and gave her a slosch in the face to go to sleep, and that's how we got there, and then I don't, you know I'm getting a little muddled up with this it's very very difficult for me to remember that, becau-

AD: I think, we'll cut there I think, Barbara, we will cut there

BS: Yes okay but I wanted to say that we also went-

[tape cuts]

AD: so Barbara could you explain, what it, why you were taken from the labour camp on the march¹³⁹

This is Barbara Stimler's story, but not as she herself wishes to tell it. It is a curated performance that is designed to deliver the emotion and the impact of a Holocaust narrative to a public audience but is not designed to be viewed as a whole recording, thus lacks the authenticity of a testimony which is given on the survivor's own terms. Moments such as these are common in performative testimony projects in which the priority is procuring useable, well performed material or soundbites over providing space for the interviewee's individual narrative style. Though we can reasonably assume that Stimler had been made aware of the specific purpose of this interview prior to recording, she resists the interviewer's attempts to contain her narrative within the framework being imposed upon her which manifests in moments of conflict such as this. A not dissimilar conflict emerges in Edgar Lion's testimony for *Enemy Aliens*, in which he struggles to respond to some of the more unusual lines of questioning, for example about what types of sounds he heard whilst in the internment camp. These types of questions reflect the illustrative, evocative and sensory kind of material that the curators wished to procure for use in the exhibition, but Lion's difficulty answering them is indicative of the fact that he is not used to thinking about or recalling his experiences in these terms. Lion, like many witnesses in these interview situations, struggles to reconcile his will to give his testimony and talk about the things he sees as important with the needs of his interviewers. As a result, both interviewer and

¹³⁹ Stimler, Interview for October Films.

videographer interject frequently to request that Lion repeat answers or speak them in a certain way, for example:

TL: could you get him to say 'I was in five camps altogether' and name them just in that order

VR: Toni-Lynn is just saying could we just say, could you just say, I was in maybe it's six counting the police station, in six different locations altogether and just name them. The police station, Huyton, Isle of Man, and then the three in Canada.

EL: Oh yes. Altogether I would say I was in six different locations, three in England or Scotland if you like, and three in Canada [...]¹⁴⁰

In these instances, the archivalisation that underpins the establishment of the projects is significantly different to that which prompted survivor organisations or oral historians to interview Holocaust survivors, which results in characteristically different collections of interviews. In addition to being smaller and much more carefully curated collections than other types of projects, many of which emphasise quantity, the interviews that these performative projects produce are carefully curated to evoke a particular response from an audience, or to produce a certain kind of material that can be edited, adapted, and used to illustrate or complement an external narrative. The effort expended in producing valuable soundbites for use in this particular manner has an inevitable impact on the narrative flow of the interview and on the scope of the experiences covered within. Without the knowledge that these interviews have been conducted for these specific purposes, to the listener these moments seem at best incongruous and confusing and at worst a rude and obtrusive interjection on the part of the interviewer. Understanding the origins of the interview allows a viewer to be more forgiving; the October Films interviews for example, with their many abrupt interruptions and heavy interviewer control over the narrative, seem less inappropriate and offensive when one is able to take into account that

¹⁴⁰ Eddie Lion, Interview for 'Enemy Aliens'.

these individuals have all been interviewed previously – in a much more sensitive and comprehensive manner – by the Imperial War Museum before being subjected to this more controlled interview process.

Summary

In drawing a distinction between archivalisation and archivisation, Ketelaar points out that it is not just *how* an archive collects its material that shapes it as a corpus on a particular subject, but *why* it chose to collect that material at all. Even in the case of Holocaust survivors, where it might seem to us now that the purpose of archiving their testimonies is self-evident, there are a multitude of reasons why an individual or organisation might launch a Holocaust oral testimony project. When we view these projects in this way, it is clear that the methods and practices of oral history have been mobilised in response to the Holocaust in a number of different ways. For the Holocaust Survivors' Centre, the Holocaust Centre of Toronto and similar organisations in both Britain and Canada, oral history was a service they could provide to their members to create a permanent record of what they had seen, heard and experienced, for various reasons including the transmission of their stories to their families and simply the therapeutic activity of speaking their stories out loud for the first time. For historians and sociologists, oral history was a means of studying the lives of Holocaust survivors and Jewish refugees who represented comparatively undocumented minority populations in the cities and countries where they now lived. For October Films oral history was a means of bringing to life the narrative of the Holocaust, of driving the visceral impact of the event home to a potential public, a way of illustrating the history with the voices of 'those who were there'. In each case, the 'why' of the project is intricately linked to the personal or professional background of the individual or institution who commenced the project, which is a fundamental characteristic of the relationship between archive and institution: David Lance, Keeper of the Department of Sound Records at the Imperial War Museum from 1972 – 1983, pointed out quite succinctly that 'Archives are established usually for quite specific functions that are defined by their founding authorities. Their activities are guided generally by the policies of the institutions they are a part of...fieldwork is determined by the nature of the

institution carrying out the programme.’¹⁴¹ Whilst I have only examined the archivalisation of a handful of the case study projects here, the theory has universal utility. The Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, for example, was the product of increasing anxiety amongst the Canadian Jewish community and the Holocaust survivor community in particular regarding increasing national levels of antisemitism and Holocaust denial; in this context, oral history was mobilised as a means of producing a collection that represented a cross-section of Canadian survivor experiences, supported by the recollections of Canadian liberators and aid-givers, to support the creation of an educational resource that could be used in schools and universities across the country. The main Holocaust collection of the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive, on the other hand, has a history inextricably linked with the theoretical remit of the IWM itself: only when the IWM expanded its definition of the Second World War to include reference to the genocide of the Jews did the Sound Archive begin recording the experiences of Holocaust survivors. A similar analysis can be made of any and all Holocaust oral testimony collections.

It is clear that the recontextualisation of Holocaust oral testimonies should begin at the level of the archive, in an understanding of the contexts and structures which have granted us access to the material in the first place and an appreciation of the ways in which individual testimonies form part of a corpus, that by virtue of the process of selection and production presents its own narrative about the Holocaust to the world. As I have demonstrated, the archival narrative is usually co-produced, an effort between an archive, institution or individual who has perceived a need to record, and a witness who has chosen to speak. Understanding the narrative of the archive is a process of understanding how these two agendas work together, or occasionally conflict in the process of producing an interview: for example, how the Holocaust Survivors’ Centre forgoes questioning to spotlight the survivors’ own narrativisation; or the process of interviewee selection that goes

¹⁴¹ David Lance, ‘Oral History Criteria for Selection in the Field’, in *Selection in Sound Archives: Collected Papers from IASA Conference Sessions*, ed. Helen P. Harrison, IASA Special Publication 5 (International Association of Sound Archives, 1984), <https://www.iasa-web.org/selection/oral-history-criteria-selection-field-david-g-lance>.

into producing oral history collections such as *Refugee Voices* and *Life Stories of Montrealers*, which spotlight a specific element of the survivor life experience. By analysing context on the level of the archive, we are able to understand the perspective each collection as a whole holds on the event, or the window that it offers on to the Holocaust from the point of view of those who survived and witnessed it; we understand, as Eric Ketelaar put it, the ‘tacit narratives of the archive.’

(Re)contextualising the Testimony

According to Ketelaar’s archival theory, the process of archivalisation is followed by archiving, or the processes which bring the document or object into being: ‘at the front end of a recordkeeping system documents are *captured*, that is accepted by the system. *Archivisation* extends beyond capture, it includes the creative phase before capture.’¹⁴² In the context of oral testimony, this includes not just the moment of the interview, but the decisions that are made when discussing and deciding upon the methodological processes that will be used to conduct the interviews, including but not limited to: the technology used (whether audio or video); the scope of the interview; the style and structure of the questions; the location of the interview; and who to employ as interviewers. The methodology of any given project sets out a series of expectations: expectations about how the interviewer will behave; expectations of how the relationship between interviewer(s) and interviewee(s) will develop and how the dialogue between them will play out; expectations of what narrative and thematic ground will be covered; and expectations of what needs to be done to produce the kind of material the institution or project envisages creating. I have already explored some of the ways in which archival expectations shape content, particularly in terms of interviewee selection and thematic scope, but it is important to consider how each individual interview is also constructed with these expectations and methodological imperatives in mind.

¹⁴² Ketelaar, ‘Tacit Narratives’, 132–33.

The impact of the archiving stage is particularly acute in the case of oral history, wherein the material to be archived is actively created and not just passively collected in the process. The source material is co-produced by the interviewer – who represents the interests of the institution or project – and the interviewee – who, particularly in the case of Holocaust survivors, represents their own needs – in a dialogical process shaped by the actions, agendas, and personalities of both parties. Alessandro Portelli explains how this feature of oral sources is intensely personal and therefore unique to the medium:

Written documents are fixed; they exist whether we are aware of them or not. Oral testimony is only a potential resource until the researcher calls it into existence. The condition for the existence of the written source is its emission; for oral sources it is their transmission...The content of the oral source depends largely on what the interviewer puts into it in terms of questions, stimuli, dialogue, personal relationship of mutual trust or detachment. It is the researcher who decides that there will be an interview. Researchers often introduce specific distortions: informants tell them what they believe they want to be told (it is interesting to see what the informants think is wanted and expected, that is what the informants think the historian is). On the other hand, rigidly structured interviews exclude elements whose existence and relevance were previously unknown to the researcher and are not contemplated in the question schedule; therefore such interviews tend to confirm the historian's previous frame of reference.¹⁴³

With this being the case, the need for (re)contextualisation – the need to read the processes of creation back into the archived interviews before we use them – is readily apparent: it is only by this process that we can hear not only what is said, but *why* it is said and, perhaps most importantly, also get a sense of what is *not* said.

¹⁴³ Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', 103.

I have already alluded to some of the ways in which methodology underpins the tacit narratives of oral testimony archives and the resulting variations in their contents, which can range from full life histories to guided recounting designed to produce exhibition-quality or broadcast-quality soundbites. But as Noah Shenker warns, 'the challenge remains for archivists, scholars, and users of testimony to avoid reducing witnesses to particular archival expectations.'¹⁴⁴ It is important to acknowledge that the sheer number of variables associated with an interview situation alone means that rarely – if ever – is an interview produced in exactly the manner intended by its designers. As Henry Greenspan and Sydney Bolkosky said, 'there is a remarkable gulf between what actually happens in interviews and what particular theories and methods of interviewing suggest ought to happen.'¹⁴⁵ This issue is often compounded in the case of Holocaust survivor interviews because of the traumatic nature of the experiences under discussion, as Shenker acknowledges in his contextual analysis of Holocaust oral testimony collections in the US, which examines the dynamic that exists between institution and interviewee in the production – in the archiving – of Holocaust testimonies through oral history. He writes:

While certain infrastructures serve to advance a particular archive's representational and institutional cultures and aims, the spontaneous and fragmentary dimensions of personal memory are not always easily integrated with or subordinated to those preferences. An examination of specific interviews in relation to particular institutional frameworks can demonstrate the dynamic and often contested performances of testimonies, as well as how the traumatic registers of memories often disrupt or transcend archival attempts to contain and instrumentalise the stories of the Holocaust.¹⁴⁶

Archivalisation may give us an idea of the general aims or ideal output of the project, but evidently it is insufficient to assume that because an archive or project

¹⁴⁴ Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, 6.

¹⁴⁵ Greenspan and Bolkosky, 'When Is an Interview an Interview?', 433.

¹⁴⁶ Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, x–xi.

has outlined a series of expectations or intentions at the point of the project inception that these have always been carried to fruition in the moment the actual interview is conducted. In this section I consider the external and internal influences that bear upon individual interviews from a number of the case study collections, to examine both the extent to which the intentions of the project come to fruition through the measures that are put in place to try and elicit those responses – specifically the particular methodology employed by a project and the skills a project seeks in its chosen interviewers – and also the less controllable factors which mean interviews often subvert archival expectations, in particular the ‘audience’ to whom an interviewee performs and the nature of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee.

Interview Methodology

Paul Thompson identifies three overlapping forms of oral history, variously employed by different scholars and practitioners in pursuit of their goals:

The first and broadest is *oral history*, the term most used by historians and community workers, but also by broadcasters and many social researchers, for the recording of any kind of memory of the past. Oral history often focuses on just one theme, or one phase in life. The second form, which has been practiced especially by anthropologists and sociologists as a way of understanding societies and social change, is the *life story*: the recording of the story of a whole life, from childhood through to the present. Thus while oral history often is not a life story, recorded life stories are always oral history...The third form, most often recorded by anthropologists, ethnologists, or folklorists, is *oral tradition*, memories of the past handed down orally between generations.¹⁴⁷

These three forms are defined largely by the thematic scope of the recorded memories, and to this I add a fourth form specifically (though not exclusively) relevant to the field of Holocaust studies: the oral testimony, in which the scope of

¹⁴⁷ Preface to the Fourth Edition, Thompson and Bornat, *The Voice of the Past*, viii.

the memories recorded is determined by what is tellable according to the interviewee. Whilst all of these forms by nature testify by virtue of the fact that a living survivor bears witness to what he or she experienced or observed during the Holocaust, I believe there is an active methodological distinction to be made between oral history and testimony, one which involves an understanding of the division of agency between participants in an interview scenario. In 'oral testimony', the agency lies primarily – if not squarely – with the interviewee; the audio recording is used simply as a method of facilitating the recording of memories, providing both a means of documenting the sound of the survivor's voice as an additional form of historical evidence and also an oral/aural method of communication, which benefits both those who are less literate or less comfortable writing their stories than they are speaking them and/or those who wish to utilise the audio recording to communicate their stories to their loved ones. In addition to Thompson's categories, I also draw upon three types of oral history interviews defined by their methodological approaches to oral history, as outlined by Richard Lohead in the mid-1970s: the archival, academic, and journalistic. Lohead defines them thus:

The distinguishing features of the journalistic approach to oral history can be stated as an emphasis on people as source material and on the free-flowing interview as the method for eliciting this information...it is the journalistic approach, when done well, which can go beyond a straightforward interpretation of facts and convey the true feelings and atmosphere that surround a particular epoch in history...As opposed to the journalistic approach, the academic approach to oral history is characterised by its emphasis on preliminary research in some library or archive and on planned interviews which seek answers to questions developed from a preconceived analytical base. The information gleaned from the interviews serves as supportive evidence for the theses that the academic has chosen to advance...Norman Hoyle, in his excellent article in Library Trends, even makes a case for a strictly archival definition of oral history. 'The purpose of the oral history

interview is to create new archival materials for other writers to use [...] Because of its emphasis on meeting the information needs of the scholar of the future, oral history implies further the archival preservation of the document resulting from the interview and its eventual if not immediate availability to the scholarly community.’¹⁴⁸

The ‘types’ of oral history referred to by Thompson and Lohead represent different processes of oral history archiving. I draw upon these definitions not in an attempt to pigeonhole Holocaust oral testimony projects into different ‘types,’ but in an effort to expand the frameworks within and by which we can interpret Holocaust testimonies. Understanding the methodologies by which an interview was conducted enables us better to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the resultant archived testimonies and, therefore, to engage with and use them meaningfully in research and education.

‘Testimony’ versus ‘Oral History’

Methodologically speaking, the most unregulated interviews considered by this thesis – and therefore the most ‘testimonial’ oral histories – are those recorded by the Holocaust Survivors’ Centre. My analysis of this collection and its archival narrative has already referenced the stylistic disparity of the recordings in this collection, but it is worth reflecting on the implications of its open recording policy. Though interviewers were trained in oral history interviewing techniques and alerted to the value of recording the pre- and post-war lives of survivors, generally speaking less effort was made to encourage interviewees to explore these aspects of their life stories in any great depth, particularly when such an effort interfered with the interviewee’s own narrativisation. Free from the constrictions of a more heavily regulated or mandated project methodology, these interviews – or recordings, as many of them may more accurately be described – give a more organic insight into the testimonial priorities of the survivor witnesses. Nicole David’s interview for example gives us an insight into how a child survivor remembers, a process which is characteristically distinct from those who

¹⁴⁸ Richard Lohead, ‘Three Approaches to Oral History: The Journalistic, the Academic and the Archival’, *Canadian Oral History Association Journal* 1 (1976): 6–10.

experienced the war as adults. The interview opens with the following question from the interviewer: 'Could you please tell us a little bit about the background of your mother, of your father, their origins, their developments and their occupations'. The interviewer provides a small amount of guidance to assist David in relating details of her religious background and her earliest memories of the impact of Nazism on her family, then David speaks uninterrupted for almost an hour. In this time, she takes us from her memories of the invasion of Belgium in 1940 through her experiences fleeing with her family to France and then back to Belgium, then being placed into hiding in orphanages and safe houses until her eventual liberation and reunion with her father after the war. Given her young age at the time – she was three and a half when the Nazis invaded Belgium – her narrative is delivered in a series of anecdotes and snippets of remembered emotions. Many of her memories are second hand, told to her after the war by her father, including one notable incident in which she and a friend were given chocolate and a doll in a display of generosity from a group of German soldiers who, unaware that the family were Jewish, stated to her father that their allegiance to their Führer was such that they would nonetheless have no qualms in shooting the two children should they be ordered to do so. This anecdote enables David to articulate the fear that she recalls feeling from a very young age: 'I was immediately told by my, both my parents to forget German, not to speak another word of German, I was absolutely forbidden from that day on so I think in those days one was very aware of danger very quickly', David recalls.¹⁴⁹ David's interview is less a factual record of the persecution as it is a testament to trauma, and it is in permitting David to recount these second hand memories that she is given space to construct her own fragmented memories into a coherent narrative.

These second-hand anecdotes are common in this type of oral narrative. They come not just from interviewees who were too young at the time to possess clear and concrete memories of what happened to them, but also from those who carry with them stories of family members they lost, either during the Holocaust or

¹⁴⁹ Nicole David, Interview for the Holocaust Survivors' Centre, interview by Brendan Beder, 1 June 1993, C830/060, British Library Sounds.

who subsequently passed away. When presented with the opportunity, survivors often testify not only for themselves but also for the dead. Pola Friend for example is describing how she met her husband when her interviewer asks, 'What nationality was your husband?' Friend's response demonstrates her wish to testify on behalf of her husband, who died after the war at the age of 58: 'He was Polish, neighbouring town. Can I say som- what happened to him?' Friend then relates how he escaped with his family to Russia, only to be arrested by the KGB and deported to Siberia:

And they said to him the Poles said to him, 'in Poland you were cutting off your hands, your nose you made yourself deaf not to go to the army, were you pushing yourself here little Jew? What can you do for us in the army?' so my husband said to him, 'I play for you', so he said 'look here, boys he's going to play the little Jew is going to play for us!' so he says 'yes, what will you play?' 'well I can play you the oboe, the trombone, I can play you the the violin I can play you the piano', 'alright Jew we'll see, tomorrow you play in the church'. In the morning, he must have been dead scared, they produced a violin, which my little granddaughter plays now, and they they said 'come on, show us what you can do'.¹⁵⁰

Friend met her husband in England after the war so experienced none of this first-hand but relates – with her interviewer's tacit permission – stories of persecution that would otherwise be lost. This testimony-by-proxy occurs with regularity throughout the Holocaust Survivors' Centre interviews. Judith Hassan, who founded the HSC, explains the philosophy of testimony that permits testimonies such as these to contain arguably very little first-hand eyewitness material: 'From a therapeutic point of view the accuracy of the memory is not paramount, but the recording of those memories with a

¹⁵⁰ Pola Friend, Interview for the Holocaust Survivors' Centre, interview by Rosalind Monnickendam, 13 October 1994, C830/005, British Library Sounds.

survivor becomes a tool through which they can pass on, not only their experiences, but a way of remembering those who perished.¹⁵¹

Fanni Bogdanow's testimony, as I identified earlier, is one of a number of recordings in this collection in which the survivor appears to read rather than spontaneously relate their story. In these instances, which comprise sometimes all and sometimes part of a recording, the interviewer is removed from the process of narrative construction. That the survivors are permitted to recount their stories in this way is one of the features that sets this mode of recording survivor testimony apart from the dialogic method that is more commonly associated with oral history. Henry Greenspan makes a not dissimilar distinction between 'recounting' and 'testimony', arguing that "'Recounting" may also better suggest the emergence of retelling within conversation, in contrast with testimonies as one-way transmissions that listeners simply "get" or "gather".¹⁵² Greenspan's definition is predicated largely on an appreciation of the more spontaneous – or in his words, 'provisional and processual' – nature of the spoken word as compared to the written, which is characteristically more formal and polished. The HSC arguably records both 'recountings' and 'testimonies' by this definition but, for the most part, leaves the survivor in control of the agenda, to transmit what they wish to transmit in the mode most suited to their needs, rather than involving them in a process of active interrogation. It is most likely for this reason that in HSC literature, individuals who conducted recordings with survivors on behalf of the HSC are referred to by Judith Hassan as 'testimony takers' rather than 'interviewers.'¹⁵³

Judith Hassan's understanding of the function of survivor interviewing contrasts directly with that of the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, initiated in 1981. Whilst Hassan was unconcerned about the accuracy of the information being conveyed in HSC interviews,

¹⁵¹ Hassan, 'Memory and Remembrance', 105.

¹⁵² Henry Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998), xvii.

¹⁵³ Hassan, *A House Next Door to Trauma*, 195.

project paperwork from the National Holocaust Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress stated that 'It should be emphasised that first-hand information is required, that is personal experiences or eye-witness testimony of events.'¹⁵⁴ If the HSC was a testimonial endeavour designed to record whatever a survivor wished to say, then the CJC-HDP was an event-centred, academic oral history enterprise designed to produce the most comprehensive account of the Holocaust through the eyes of Canadians as possible. 'Academic' in this instance refers not to the project's relationship with a university – it was a community effort rather than an institutional one – but to Lohead's definition of academic oral history as being characterised by preliminary research and conducted in service of academic theses, in this case to procure irrefutable evidence of the Holocaust. The archiving procedures of the CJC-HDP were thus shaped in service of these aims and the interviews produced as a result are characteristically very different from those conducted by the HSC.

In the interview of Mr and Mrs Kohn conducted by Josh Freed for the CJC-HDP in August 1981, for example, the narrative of the interview is driven largely by the interviewer, who poses questions about the interviewees' observations of or reactions to their experience of the Holocaust. Questions such as 'what did the Germans do when they came in in terms of institutions, schools, synagogues, what happened when they arrived?'; 'how did your family find out [about ghettoisation]?'; and 'the Nazis, when they carried out their beatings and their selection, did they do it as though they were obeying orders or did they take some kind of joy in it, some, kind of sadistic joy? How, how, what were the SS like?' encourage the interviewees to recall factual details about their own experiences of key moments of the persecution. On one occasion, Freed specifically asks Mr Kohn to summarise a particularly significant historical moment: 'could you give me some idea of the chronology of the Łódź ghetto? At what point did they begin the liquidation of the ghetto and how do you recall that?' Interviewer-led questions

¹⁵⁴ Avraham Weiss, ed., 'A Guide for Oral History on the Holocaust' (National Holocaust Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress, January 1978), 2, File Name: Oral History Projects - Canadian Jewish Congress MTL, Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

were designed to elicit historical evidence from interviewees, with a specific focus on what the interviewee personally witnessed and therefore knew to be true. Mr Kohn gives his response to the questions about the ghetto liquidation in fairly generic terms; Freed, as a result, asks three more times about the liquidation to obtain a more personal account of events ('so can you describe a bit to us how that came to pass and your life? How you found out about the, the liquidation and what happened?'; 'can I ask you your own experience? How did you find out about the liquidation and what happened from there to, you're you're you're deported'; 'and how did they, did they remove you or how did you end up leaving?') Descriptions of events are complemented with individual emotional responses and reactions, which personalise the record of the event and illustrate its impact, an aim which is delivered through further targeted lines of questioning: 'how did you react to wearing the Jewish star for the first time?'; 'how was life in your family and your community affected by this?'; 'and in that two weeks [in Birkenau], what did those two weeks do to your human dignity?'¹⁵⁵ Without question, the Holocaust is the topic of all these oral testimony projects, but the event-centric nature of the CJC-HDP and the oral history methodology used to execute it sets the scope of each individual interview by mandating what is considered relevant information, and by giving the interviewer control over what is recorded.

The imposition of an event-focused narrative on the interview by the interviewer is even more apparent in interviews with non-Jewish witnesses (in particular liberators and aid-givers) for, unlike Holocaust survivors, they do not come to the process with their own testimonial impulse but are instead invited to participate by the project coordinators specifically to enhance the quality and comprehensiveness of the collective history being produced. These particular interviews are therefore conducted in such a way as to focus predominately, if not exclusively, on the individual's interaction with the events of the Holocaust rather than their complete life history. The interview given by liberator Alan Rose to the CJC-HDP opens with the question: 'Could you just tell us a bit about, just a

¹⁵⁵ Joseph Kohn and Sue Kohn, Interview for the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, interview by Josh Freed, 7 August 1981, 53560, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

thumbnail sketch of your life; how you ended up in the army and the seventeen years that led you there' and ends with a discussion of his current role as the executive vice-president of the Canadian Jewish Congress – the organisation sponsoring the Holocaust Documentation Project. In a moment of conversation caught on camera at the beginning of the second tape, interviewer Josh Freed emphasised to Rose the importance of description, encouraging him to describe exactly what he saw, not just relate what he did that day.¹⁵⁶ This methodological approach to interviewing non-Jewish witnesses can be observed in other collections (particularly Canadian collections) that have also chosen to include liberators and aid givers in their project. When Robert Krell interviewed liberator Halford Wilson for his own independent project in 1982, the interview began with a short dialogue about the political activities that led him to participate in the liberation of a concentration camp, followed by a detailed interview regarding his experience of that liberation, including the examination of several photos and maps of the area. When the interviewee moved on to discuss his military activities after liberation, Krell brought him back to his experience of the camp: 'To get back to the camp for a moment er you said you were in there just the one day, did you have to make arrangements to have the commandant arrested?' Wilson previously stated that he was in the camp for less than a day; as an interviewee, he possess a great many more memories of wartime experiences outside of the concentration camp, but it is his knowledge of the camp that brought him into the interviewing room thus Krell redirects the conversation back to it, since it is this that contributes most significantly to the collective corpus of material on the Holocaust. The methodological difference in approaches to interviewing survivors versus liberators and aid givers reflects the processes of archivalisation that underpin their inclusion: liberators and aid givers are not there because their personal experiences are considered of equal value or interest to that of Holocaust survivors, but rather because they can contribute an additional perspective that stands to illustrate or illuminate the experiences of Holocaust survivors, and the scope of their interviews is limited by the archivalisation process accordingly. Moreover, the inclusion of non-

¹⁵⁶ Alan Rose, Interview for the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, interview by Josh Freed, 17 March 1982, 53619, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Jewish witnesses is a means of lending legitimacy to the archival narrative, which is particularly pertinent in collections that formed in large part as an effort to refute the claims of Holocaust deniers and antisemites.

'Oral History' versus 'Life History'

What if, however, the event is not at the centre of the interview, but the focus is instead on the person who experienced the event? Projects such as *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* and *Refugee Voices* are by all accounts collections of oral interviews with Holocaust survivors, but in adopting a life history methodology – as opposed to an oral history or testimonial approach – the resultant interviews are not only broader in scope but also have a tendency to probe deeper into the emotional and metaphysical components of the experience, exploring issues such as identity, the intergenerational transmission of trauma, the attitude of Holocaust survivors towards Israel and their reception of various modes of Holocaust representation. American oral historian Donald Ritchie distinguishes life history from oral history thus:

Oral historians speak of conducting 'life histories', by which they mean full-scale autobiographical accounts that allow interviewees to relate their entire life, from childhood to the present...Conducting life histories usually means selecting fewer interviewees and devoting more time, and multiple interview sessions, to each one. Life histories give the interviewee enough time to relate what both the interviewer seeks and the interviewee wants to tell.¹⁵⁷

This is not to say that 'oral history' style projects do not concern themselves with the pre- or post-war period; many demonstrate at least a nominal concern with these areas of an interviewee's life, and almost all express a commitment to chronology, both because this is the most logical structure for exploring the impact of an event on an individual's life and because methodologically it is the surest method of ensuring that all areas of interest are covered. The key difference between the approach to pre-war life in the oral history and life history methods is

¹⁵⁷ Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 40.

the extent to which it is considered an item of value in its own right versus an area of the life experience to be covered because it sets up a point of comparison for the impact of the events that follow. In the interviews of the CJC-HDP for example, interviewers ask Holocaust survivors about their hometowns and childhood experiences but typically these questions are framed as an exploration of Jewish life in general rather than specific personal experiences, or as a way of setting the stage for an understanding of the impact of a subsequent event. Throughout Josh Freed's interview with Paul Kagan, Freed uses Kagan's hometown of Vilna as a way of eliciting historical information and measuring the impact of events, as the examples below show.

In tape 1

'Can you tell us a little bit about what Vilna was like, just, when you grew up really'

'What was, was it a Jewish city? How big a city was it?'

'Was the Jewish community like strong in Vilna?'

'What if, if you were sitting in Vilna again what would the street look like? What would I see in the middle of a busy street?'

'Was life in Vilna, how would you say life in Vilna was different than Jewish life today?'

'Was there always antisemitism in Vilna? Even, even, even before the war?'

'Do you remember at all how the war began to affect Vilna? When and how?'

In tape 2

'Was it [the ghetto theatre] a typical theatre like you would see in Vilna before?'

In tape 3

'In the meantime, what had happened to everybody else? In Vilna?'

'So how many [people] were left and how many had started out?'

In tape 5

'What was left [in Vilna]?'¹⁵⁸

Typically in a Holocaust 'oral history' interview an interviewer will ask a few cursory questions regarding the interviewee's family background and the Jewish community in which they grew up, before moving on to the wartime narrative relatively quickly in comparison to a life history interview, in which an interviewer will commit a substantial period of time to asking questions about an individual's biographical background, childhood memories, schooling, family life and traditions and so on, without necessarily linking those experiences directly to the changes that occurred when the war or experience of persecution began. Two of Barbara Stimler's recorded testimonies provide a useful point of comparison here. In the interview which Stimler gave to the Imperial War Museum in 1997 – an interview designed to contribute historical information to the IWM's collection of material on the Holocaust – she is asked the following series of questions regarding her pre-war life by interviewer Lyn Smith: 'And if I could ask you first of all Mrs Stimler, if you could tell me something about your family background this would be in Poland I believe, before the war started, erm sort of where you were born and brought up and erm...the sort of family you came from'; 'and how about your family how big a family were you? You your aunts and uncles and cousins'; 'who were they? Could you explain who the people [family members] in England were?' Less than ten minutes in to the recording, the following question moves the narrative on to her experiences of persecution under Nazism: 'do you remember how life changed for you as the 30's went on...when war was approaching, were you aware of that?'¹⁵⁹ By comparison, Stimler's interview with Jennifer Wingate for *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* – a 'life history' project – runs to seven and a half hours to the IWM interview's two and a half hours. For over an hour, Wingate guides Stimler to recall various aspects of her pre-war life through gentle questioning: 'were you a religious household?'; 'about your social life [...] did your parents entertain much,

¹⁵⁸ Paul Kagan, Interview for the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, interview by Josh Freed, 17 January 1982, 53610, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

¹⁵⁹ Barbara Stimler, Interview for the Imperial War Museum, interview by Lyn Smith, 28 May 1997, 17475, Imperial War Museum.

did they entertain friends and family?'; 'are there dishes dishes your mother used to make traditional Polish dishes?'; 'what sort of games did you play with your friends [...]?'¹⁶⁰

The comparison of Stimler's two interviews reveals another important difference between the two interviewing styles: life history interviews tend to cover an interviewee's biography – their full name, the names of family members, ages, dates of birth, addresses and so on – in much greater depth than an oral history interview, which does not require this level of detail in order to make sense of the event in question. Pre-war questions in the CJC-HDP interviews for example typically focus less on the interviewee's biography and more on their experiences during the pre-war period. The following questions form the extent of Paula Draper's questioning of Rena Rosenberger vis-à-vis her pre-war life:

- '-start by telling us your name?'
- 'What year were you born?'
- 'and what was your father's occupation?'
- 'And would you say you were middle-class, upper middle-class?'
- 'How many children were there?'
- 'What was your religious upbringing?'
- 'Was that unusual to be from a wealthy family that was so orthodox?'
- 'What about your education?'
- 'How did you feel about being German and Jewish?'
- 'Were you involved in any Jewish community organisations when you were older?'
- 'What was your husband's occupation?'
- 'So you had the same economic status once you were married?'
- 'When you were growing up were all your friends Jewish?'

¹⁶⁰ Barbara Stimler, Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community, interview by Jennifer Wingate, 17 November 1988, C410/004, British Library Sounds.

The next question – ‘How did you react to Hitler coming to power?’ – occurs less than ten minutes into the interview.¹⁶¹ Crucially, despite asking Rosenberger how many children were in her family Draper does not ask her to name any of her family members; in the AJR *Refugee Voices* life-history interviews by comparison, interviewer Rosalyn Livshin devotes a significant amount of time to eliciting the names of all members of an interviewee’s immediate family members (parents and siblings, and occasionally grandparents, aunts and uncles), as well as the interviewee’s full name, Hebrew name, nicknames and maiden names where appropriate. In Vera Schiff’s interview for the CJC-HDP on the other hand, Schiff only mentions her children once in the whole interview, in passing; she does not name her children or her husband, nor her sister whom she expresses a great deal of love and admiration for, and the interviewer does not prompt her to relate any of this information.¹⁶² Indeed it is more common in the CJC-HDP for interviewers to ask survivors to give the names of perpetrators than friends or family members.

I have already accounted in some detail for the specific nature of *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* and *Refugee Voices* as archival collections of survivor testimonies, but it is worth revisiting how each interview forms part of the collective archive, since the motivation of many of these projects is the construction of a collective corpus of material which reflects the experiences of a particular group of individuals rather than a particular historical event, which defines the archiving process. LMJC was established as part of the National Life Story Collection, which was initiated as a large-scale effort by oral historians to produce a national biographical oral history archive. The project acknowledged the self-proclaimed responsibility to produce the first national collection of Holocaust testimonies, but it was designed first and foremost to paint a picture of the historical and contemporary experiences of the Jewish Holocaust survivor or refugee community as a part of the wider national community. In pursuit of its aims, LMJC therefore employed a ‘life history’ approach to interviewing, ensuring

¹⁶¹ Rena Rosenberger, Interview for the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, interview by Paula Draper, 16 November 1981, 53581, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

¹⁶² Vera Schiff, Interview for the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, interview by Paula Draper, 22 November 1981, 53591, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

that interviews did not focus solely on an individual's experiences of the Holocaust but explored in-depth their pre-war and post-war lives in equal measure, to give context to the impact of the Holocaust on their lives as individuals and context for their position as members of a Jewish community. The extent of the scope of the life history methodology is evident in the sample list of questions provided by historian Bill Williams to LMJC, which contain the following headings and subheadings:

Questionnaire for Survivors

1. Family Background
2. Early Life
3. Adolescence/Marriage
4. Early Adult Life/Prior to becoming a refugee, arrest, flight
5. The Rise of Fascism/Up to emigration, arrest, flight into hiding
 - Earliest experience of the Nazi Party in Germany:
 - Memories of Fascist activity in Austria prior to the Anschluss:
 - Memories of the activities of Action Française in France prior to the German occupation:
 - Russia and Poland would include:
 - Hungary would include:
 - Earliest memories of restrictions on Jewish life in Italy
6. The War Years/following decision to emigrate/arrest/flight into hiding
 - Conditions in the camp:
7. The Post-War Years
8. Postscript [possession of additional documents/photos/records]

Supplementary Schedule on the Kindertransport

Questionnaire for the Second Generation

1. Personal Details of the Interviewee
2. Sharing the Holocaust Experience
3. The Parental Background

4. Life of the Interviewee

5. Beliefs and Attitudes of the Interviewees¹⁶³

The Association of Jewish Refugees' *Refugee Voices* project employed a life history approach to a similar end:

'Refugee Voices' is not an archive devoted solely to the period of National Socialism and the Holocaust. Since they explore the interviewees' entire lives, the interviews contain a large amount of material about the Jewish communities from which they came, going back well before 1933 and setting events in the various countries of origin in the context of a broader historical evolution. Similarly, the collection contains a wealth of material on the lives of the interviewees in Britain (and elsewhere) after 1945: on the manner of their settlement, the obstacles they encountered, the degree of their integration, their sense of identity, and their religious affiliation, as well as their professional development, their attitudes to Britain, Israel and their native lands, their family life, and their hopes and aspirations for their children.¹⁶⁴

As its name suggests, *Refugee Voices* is not just an archive of Holocaust testimonies but is a repository of interviews which tell the stories of the lives of individuals forced to become refugees as a result of the Holocaust.

When these projects state that they are life history collections, by that they mean they are very much collections of life history interviews with Jewish individuals to whom the Holocaust happened as much as they are collections of oral history interviews with Holocaust survivors. This is a semantic distinction, but one which reflects the distinction between the kind of life-history interviewing that is the methodological approach of these two projects and other testimonial oral history projects, which seek to record the details of individual Holocaust

¹⁶³ Wingate, 'National Life Story Collection', 138–54.

¹⁶⁴ Anthony Grenville and Bea Lewkowicz, 'Special Announcement: Refugee Voices, the Association of Jewish Refugees Audio-Visual Testimony Archive', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 31, no. 2 (June 2009): 182.

experiences. The consciously extensive coverage of pre- and post-war life experiences is one method by which this theory of archivalisation – a desire to record the stories of Jewish individuals who survived or fled from the Holocaust – is delivered in practice. As already mentioned with reference to Barbara Stimler’s interviews, the LMJC interviews in particular are significantly wider in scope, possessing extensive pre- and post-war coverage in their interviews that is frankly unmatched in other collections; even projects which state outright in their methodologies that they intend to cover the survivors’ life in their new country rarely cover the interviewees’ postwar lives in as much detail as the life history interview method encourages. Ilse Sinclair’s early questions to Manfred Heyman in his LMJC interview include the following: ‘Did you feel happy in your childhood?’; ‘Did you celebrate all the festivities, like you had a Seder at home did you, for Passover?’; ‘And you got on well with your parents?’. Towards the end of the interview, Sinclair asks questions about his employment and living arrangements in London, his relationship with his wife and the birth and life trajectories of their two children, as well as more reflective questions about the sharing of his story (‘the boys know that you’ve been in concentration camp [...] [But] You have never been able to tell them about details?’), his emotional responses to the Holocaust and memorial culture in the present day (‘Does it upset you when you see things, like your experiences, on television?’), and his connection to his Jewishness (‘And do you live a Jewish life?’).¹⁶⁵ Rosalyn Livshin’s interviews for *Refugee Voices* contain extensive coverage of the interviewee’s personal biography, soliciting not just names of parents, grandparents and siblings but often also the professions of each and their ancestry, where the interviewee possessed this information. In Livshin’s interview with Berta Klipstein, in addition to extensive biographical questioning about Klipstein and her parents Livshin asks about her home and hometown (‘can you describe to me the home that you lived in?’; ‘how big was the community?’), everyday life before the war (‘where would you go for holidays?’; ‘tell me about your schooling’), and relationships with the local community (‘and how did you get on with the non-Jewish neighbours?’; ‘did you mix at all with the non-Jewish

¹⁶⁵ Manfred Heyman, Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community, interview by Ilse Sinclair, 29 December 1989, C410/064, British Library Sounds.

population?'). Towards the end of the interview Livshin poses a series of reflective questions on topics such as her relationship with her children ('did you used to speak to your children about your experiences?'), her sense of identity ('in terms of nationality, how would you describe yourself?'; 'do you think you've got any kind of continental identity?'), her relationship to Britain ('do you feel different to the British in any way?'; 'do you feel that you haven't been accepted here?'), as well as exploring in depth the life she made in Britain after the war.¹⁶⁶

In the case of life histories with Holocaust survivors, survivors are attempting to give their Holocaust testimony whilst the interviewer is attempting to elicit information about the survivor's entire life. In order to achieve an effective balance of the two agendas in such a situation, Paul Thompson suggests that the 'free-flowing interview' – i.e. one in which the interviewer's questions influence the testimony to the least extent – is most effective in producing 'a "subjective" record of how one man or woman looks back on their life as a whole'.¹⁶⁷ The notion that interviewing style should vary based on the desired output is important here. In the case of *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* and also *Refugee Voices* by comparison, two – sometimes conflicting – agendas were present in the methodological approach to interviewing. On the one hand, the precedent set by NLSC for full 'life history' interviews necessitated some kind of effort be put in to maintaining a chronology in LMJC interviews, in order that the pre-war and post-war lives of Holocaust survivors as well as the nature of European and British Jewish communities be sufficiently accounted for in the course of each interview. On the other hand, LMJC hoped it would give Holocaust survivors a platform upon which to break their silence. According to Wingate, the hope was that 'this will give them the opportunity to speak at last...In their own words, they will give their own personal histories'.¹⁶⁸ Though not strictly in contention, LMJC had to figure out how to reconcile its own agenda with its desire to provide an open platform for Holocaust survivors to tell their own stories. The following extract from Wingate's article

¹⁶⁶ Berta Klipstein, Interview for *Refugee Voices*, interview by Rosalyn Livshin, 11 January 2004, #46, AJR *Refugee Voices*.

¹⁶⁷ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 199.

¹⁶⁸ Brigit Grant, 'Testimony of Survivors to Be Taped', *Jewish Chronicle*, 6 May 1988, 5, *Jewish Chronicle*.

about the project illustrates how LMJC approached this issue and claimed to manage it in its methodological approach to interviewing:

As few restraints as possible were placed on interviewees at each session, where they were encouraged to be discursive and to speak for as long as they wished. Although initially they would be guided to relate their thoughts and reminiscences in a chronological sequence, this was never a rigid rule. If anything, for much of the time the interviewers were almost in the hands of the survivors, given the fact that for many of the latter, those meetings were the first occasions upon which they had allowed themselves to articulate long-suppressed memories and emotions of the most painful kind.¹⁶⁹

A similar approach was in use in *Refugee Voices* interviews: interviewing Judith Steinberg, Rosalyn Livshin follows her biographical information-gathering by asking 'And what is your earliest memory as a child?' This open kind of questioning leaves space for the interviewee to consider and recount memories of particular value to her, functioning as a means of sharing control of the interview in precisely the manner described by Donald Ritchie above. Steinberg takes the opportunity to paint a colourful picture of her life growing up in Hungary:

So, I just give you an outline of the type of life we lived. Obviously very far from what we live today and they, your own grandparents will tell you life was different to them as well. We didn't have all this technology to be entertained, we had to find our own [...] We, first of all, we used to make up our own plays and we did our own play in the gardens, and we were busy with that and entertain us [...] And we used to love going out to the orchard picking cherries and apples and whatever. There were loads of, where I come from, it was full of orchards. It is a beautiful place, really. I was born on the bank of the Danube. One side was the most beautiful forest, the other side hills. And on top of the hills, this is most fascinating, Turkish and Romanian remains on the top, and the city

¹⁶⁹ Wingate, 'National Life Story Collection', 135.

was built, there is a little city, was quite pretty. My daughter came, I took her to Paks, and my son Josh said, 'How can you live in Manchester, after this pretty place?' It is pretty, it is not big but it was a very close community, great respect for one another and we very much outdoor because it is so beautiful in the summer. You got all these acacia trees and you had the Danube, the Promenade, and in the evening it was lit up. And it was ice creams and a lot of gypsy music. And that was this sort of life, and it was natural, normal, the family gets together and sing [...]

Livshin then takes the lead from Steinberg, following up with questions about the home she grew up in ('About your home, describe the bungalow. What was it like?') and her relationship with other members of the community ('How did you get on with the non-Jewish pupils?'). Often in the case of life history interviews with Holocaust survivors, the testimonial impulse of the survivor causes them to jump straight to their experiences of persecution, skating over pre-war memories which they perceive to be less important to their testimonial narrative. A skilled life history interviewer negotiates the survivor's need to testify with their own desire to capture as much information as possible about the survivor's life, which Livshin does in the course of her interview with Steinberg. To adhere to the life story structure, when Steinberg responds to a question about the size of the Jewish community in the area with an estimate based on the number of people present at the moment the community was deported, Livshin resists Steinberg's turn towards the Holocaust and persists with questioning about religious and cultural practices. Livshin introduces the Holocaust narrative slowly, not by asking about her initial encounters with occupying forces or deportation but with the actual beginning of the war in 1939, five years before Hungary was invaded: 'When the war started in Europe in 1939, did it make any difference at all to Hungary at that point?'¹⁷⁰ Steinberg speaks very freely and confidently in relating her story; she requires very little prompting from the interviewer, thus the interviewer interjects or poses

¹⁷⁰ Judith Steinberg, Interview for Refugee Voices, interview by Rosalyn Livshin, 2 August 2005, #100, AJR Refugee Voices.

questions primarily to solicit additional information and prompt explorations that may not have come organically, not to take control of the narrative or force to interviewee to recount specific anecdotes or produce their narrative in a particular way. Of the three 'types' of interviewing discussed here, this methodology is arguably the most co-produced: the interviewer does participate in maintaining chronology and bringing discussion topics to the table, but also allows ample time for the interviewee to narrate her story as she wishes. Jennifer Wingate, co-creator and interviewer for LMJC, displays similarly skilful interviewing in her ability to make available the space for the interviewee to relate anecdotes as they see fit, but also to bring them back to the chronology to cover the topics that she as the interviewer wishes to cover.

Pre-Interview Questionnaires

Sara Leuchter's ten key questions for conducting oral history interviews with Holocaust survivors – mentioned in the methodology section of this thesis – raise an interesting point with regards to the pre-interview process. In response to the question 'how will the interviews be conducted?', Leuchter speaks of the value of 'an unrecorded, preliminary interview [which] is helpful in building rapport, completing personal-background questionnaires, explaining the necessity for a legal-agreement form, and finding a noise-free place to conduct the taping.'¹⁷¹ Later in the chapter she elaborates on the ideal process:

Once the project's goals have been established, the staff should prepare a preliminary questionnaire to be completed by both interviewer and interviewee during the initial interview. This questionnaire will serve as a skeletal outline of questions, based on the interviewee's experiences. Questions should focus on genealogical history (date and place of birth, names of parents and their dates/places of birth); school attendance; religious education and family religious life; the subject's experience during the Holocaust, including relevant places, names, dates, and circumstances surrounding liberation; contact with surviving family members after the war; immigration to the United States (or to another

¹⁷¹ Sara Leuchter, 'Oral History with Holocaust Survivors', 373.

country, if the survivor did not come immediately to this country); places of residence and employment to the present date; and pertinent information on the interviewee's spouse and children.

The preliminary interview should run at least 1½ - 2 hours in length. The interviewer should attempt to limit the responses of the survivor to relevant information, to ensure that he/she does not relate a fascinating story which should be saved for the tape-recorder. (More often than not, the first telling of a story is its best.) Should this happen, the interviewer should make a note to ask the survivor to relate the story in a pertinent place during the taped interview.¹⁷²

In pursuit of a representative and comprehensive oral account of the Holocaust, the CJC-HDP elected to utilise the pre-interview as a means of ensuring that the recorded interview contained the most complete and accurate record of the individuals' experiences as possible. This is another archiving decision which results in the interviewer exerting greater influence over the course of the interview than in other, more open collections. The use of a pre-interview questionnaire [PIQ] – in this case a written document filled out in advance with the interviewee which gives an overview of the individual's biographical and experiential background – enables the interviewer to conduct background research on the interviewee's experience in advance of the interview and to ensure that all aspects of their experiences are recorded during the interview session. The guidelines for the Holocaust Documentation Project demonstrate the perceived value of the PIQ:

Before the tape recorder is turned on, the interviewer should discuss with the survivor all the elements of the story, in order to be able to guide the interview later on. This is known as the pre-interview and has some distinct differences from the interview... [The interviewer] wants to elicit all the information but leave out the details of the stories so

¹⁷² Ibid., 376.

that the survivor can relate them on tape, sounding fresh and unrehearsed.¹⁷³

A number of other projects employed a similar approach – in particular Canadian projects, a large number of which were based on the CJC-HDP – including the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, whose project paperwork demonstrates the additional understanding that the PIQ would enhance the interviewer-interviewee relationship during the interview: ‘the Montreal centre insists on a pre-interview, face to face; that way, even before videotaping begins, the basic facts are clear and a relationship has been established between the questioner and the survivor.’¹⁷⁴

In terms of the impact on the level of the individual interview, the real benefit of this approach is evident in moments when it is clear that it is only as a result of the pre-interview conversation that certain anecdotes have made it to the recording. The following exchange between interviewee Paul Kagan and interviewer Josh Freed is one such example:

JF: did you ever get caught?

PK: Many times I got caught

JF: how did you get away?

PK: How did I get away? I, I always looked, I was even in the Vilna ghetto jail, in the ghetto they had a jail and they caught me once smuggling food and then they let me out somehow, it was in the Jewish er section.

JF: What about the time you were caught by your cousin I think?¹⁷⁵

When Kagan does not respond to the subtle prompt of the initial two questions, Freed confronts him outright with the anecdote, which Kagan then relates in detail. Moments like this illustrate the value of the pre-interview questionnaire: without it, the anecdote might never have made it on to the record, if the interviewee had forgotten to bring it up in the moment. Since the interviewer knows many of the

¹⁷³ ‘Holocaust Documentation Project Interview Guidelines’, n.d., 3, CJC Collection Holocaust Documentation Project (HDP) 1981-1987 DA 16 Box 1 File 15, Canadian Jewish Archives.

¹⁷⁴ Mark Abley, ‘Survivors: First-Hand Accounts Could Be Used to Refute Holocaust Deniers, Videographer Says’, *Montreal Gazette*, 11 December 1994, 4, File Name: Witness-To-History Public Relations and Media, Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

¹⁷⁵ Kagan, Interview for CJC-HDP.

anecdotes in advance, they are able to ensure they are referred to in the interview and thus are included in the historical record. In the MHMC interview with Rachel Maltz the value of the PIQ is more subtle, but nonetheless evident. Maltz states in the opening minutes of the interview that she was one of six children, but does not name her siblings nor state how many brothers or sisters she had. Interviewer Sara Tauben, possessing this knowledge from the pre-interview, subtly encourages Maltz to account for each of her siblings as she moves through the narrative. 'And what about your brothers?' Tauben asks when Maltz discusses the work each of her family members undertook in the Łódź ghetto; 'so you went with your two sisters?' she queries when Maltz describes leaving Auschwitz, having mentioned that on arrival her mother was taken away with her youngest sister.¹⁷⁶ Tauben skilfully uses the information obtained during the PIQ to bring clarity to Maltz's narrative, which in turn enables the listener to better understand the complexity of the family dynamic throughout the period and some of the ways in which the persecution impacted Maltz's personal relationships. In instances where the memory of an interviewee is failing or their verbal communication is poor, the PIQ and pre-interview research stage enables the interviewer to take a more active role in the construction of the narrative than they may do with an interviewee who is more forthcoming. When Hodie Kahn interviewed Chaim Gutman on behalf of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre in 2016, the information obtained during the pre-interview stage and in her pre-interview research furnished her with the ability to 'feed' the narrative to the interviewee: 'Can you share with me some special memories about your father I I know I read a little bit about one episode when he was teaching you about time'; 'So, do you know if this is correct because this is information that you helped give me earlier when we spoke before so, Uncle Tuvia and Aunt Hinde had four children Yacov, Elie, Wigdor and Baltschie is that correct? [...] And Uncle David's wife, Surke, together they had three children,

¹⁷⁶ Rachel Maltz, Interview for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, interview by Sara Tauben, 3 July 1996, 54696, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Heniek, Baltchie and Elchanan, is that right?'; 'You told me that you used to sneak out food for your mother, was that when the camp was still a work camp?'¹⁷⁷

Whilst it is true that the use of a PIQ provides the interviewer with the ability to assist the interviewee in their recounting and to ensure that all anecdotes of perceived value make it onto the recording, there are also significant negative consequences to pre-interviewing a prospective interviewee. In the interview given by Muguette Myers to Yvonne Bensimon for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre in January 2017, it is clear that the interviewer has significant prior knowledge of the interviewee's story. As a result of her familiarity with the narrative, on multiple occasions throughout the course of the interview Bensimon slips into narrating Myers' story on her behalf, pre-empting the stories that Myers will tell, commentating on the story and rushing to fill in the details that Myers cannot recall instantly. 'I can help you if it doesn't come back right away – in 2006?' Bensimon offers when Myers cannot recall the date of her mother's death. Multiple times throughout Bensimon dictates what anecdote should come next: 'I think you had told me at one point erm, you discovered many years later that the mayor had also protected you in a particular way, can you remind me of the story?' she prompts at one point; at another, she directs Myers to retell a story she personally found interesting, before allowing Myers to return to the main narrative: 'okay. So that was just a little bit of an aside I think that's a wonderful story again a miracle that in the in the lining, basically the hem of a coat you found the information which you might not have been able to find easily otherwise. Erm, so you were in Champslost and it was already probably 1944.' On occasion, Bensimon goes so far as to almost position herself as a co-narrator of the story, giving 'teasers' to the audience of what's to come: 'That's wonderful, she had that desire to to learn. I think she transmitted it to you because, when we listen to your story a little bit more, we'll see how much you enjoyed school and how well you did.'¹⁷⁸ In another example, taken from the McGill University *Living Testimonies* collection, the

¹⁷⁷ Chaim Gutman, Interview for the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre Survivor Testimony Project, interview by Hodie Kahn, 11 September 2016, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

¹⁷⁸ Muguette Myers, Interview for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, interview by Yvonne Bensimon, 17 January 2017, 57131, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

knowledge possessed by an interviewer as a result of a pre-interview results in them cutting an interviewee off mid-recollection in order to cram a different anecdote into the recording before the tape runs out. The following extract is taken from the interview of Edward Kemnitz, given to Renata Skotnicka-Zajdman in October 1995:

EK: [...] And I was always very anti-German, because there was a tradition in Poland, German was our friend our enemy our enemy for many many years for hundreds of years you see, and they never accepted our western frontier, established by the city of Versailles in 1919 you see they never never said- they wanted the Polish corridor they wanted Silesia they wanted Poznań they wanted all these Polish territories you see-

RSZ: -I would like to ask you one more thing before we finish, you told me you were very worried about your blue eye and blonde children, that they might be kidnapped, there was a case with the children from Zamość were you aware of the, programme and there was a rescue at one time in Warsaw

There are also a number of incidents in this interview where the version of the story he has given on the tape is different to the version of the story he gave in what we can assume to be a pre-interview, but the interviewer wants the story he gave initially to be recorded, so prompts him to retell the story the way he told it before. On one such occasion the interviewer confronts him directly about an inconsistency:

you once told me, I'd asked you another time, about taking these risks and you said that, a life of slavery is not a life, but you, because I wanted to ask you before why, how it is that you never compromised, but you didn't tell me the same thing you once said before, and is this something that you would still say, that a life- that you could never compromise or one should not compromise with a life of slavery or, or it

was a moral thing you said it was a matter of, a crime against God and man¹⁷⁹

Evidently there are both pros and cons to using a pre-interview questionnaire. Regardless, it is undeniably the case that the methodological decision to employ a PIQ in the process of interviewing Holocaust survivors fundamentally changes the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, since it introduces a familiarity with the narrative that cannot be ignored by either party when the recorded interview is conducted.

There is a clear contrast in the dynamic of these interviews in comparison with the Holocaust Survivors' Centre recordings. The methodologies of projects such as the CJC-HDP, and especially of the Vancouver and Montreal Holocaust centres, do not remove all agency from the interviewee – there is no doubt that the witnesses are offered space in which to formulate and narrate their memories with a degree of control – but the overall framework is prescriptivist in a way the HSC recording project is not, and the interviewer possesses far greater control over the topics covered and the entry points into various topics. When the interviewer comes to the interview possessing prior knowledge of the interviewee's life and experiences and uses that knowledge to affect the direction of the conversation, agency is taken away from the interviewee in the construction of the narrative. Whereas the greatest strength of the more testimonial recordings is that they provide us with an insight into the moments of an individual's life story that bear the greatest significance for them and/or an appreciation of the perspective the survivor has on their own history, these oral history interviews provide us with an arguably more complete view of the events experienced by an interviewee, albeit at the expense of that insight. Taken together, the interviews produced by this method for oral history collections represent a comprehensive, well-researched and in depth account of the history they represent which, certainly in the case of the

¹⁷⁹ Edward Kemnitz, Interview for Living Testimonies, interview by Renata Skotnicka-Zajdman, 26 October 1995, 54766, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

CJC-HDP, is designed to work in service of the aims of education and the combatting of Holocaust denial.

Audience

Richard Lohead's analysis of different approaches to oral history departs from the assumption that oral history is an inherently archival enterprise, conducted by archivists, academics and journalists for the benefit of current and potential future research projects. His article, published in 1976, defines oral history 'as a method for the gathering and preserving of historical information in oral form by means of a tape recorded interview.'¹⁸⁰ Whilst Lohead's approach is a valuable framework by which to analyse methodology, by characterising oral history as a means of collecting information rather than a process of co-creation he does not sufficiently account for the agency of the interviewee in the construction of the narrative. Alessandro Portelli, by contrast, defines oral history in the following way:

oral sources are not *found*, but *co-created* by the historian. They would not exist in this form without the presence, and stimulation, the active role of the historian in the field interview. Oral sources are generated in a dialogic exchange – an *interview* – literally a looking at each other, an exchange of gazes. In this exchange questions and answers do not necessarily go in one direction only. The historian's agenda must meet the agenda of the narrator; what the historian wishes to know may not necessarily coincide with what the narrator wishes to tell.¹⁸¹

Portelli recognised that both interviewers and interviewees approached the recording situation with a particular agenda that may correlate or conflict with the other, and that the dialogical exchange that takes place during an interview is as much a forum for negotiating these agendas as it is for the giving and receiving of historical information. When (re)contextualising Holocaust oral testimonies we must therefore account for the interviewee's intentions as well as the interventions

¹⁸⁰ Léo LaClare, quoted in Lohead, 'Three Approaches to Oral History: The Journalistic, the Academic and the Archival', 5.

¹⁸¹ Alessandro Portelli, 'A Dialogical Relationship: An Approach to Oral History', *Expressions Annual*, 2005, 1.

of the interviewer if we are to gain a full appreciation of the ways in which oral testimonies are constructed. In a chapter entitled 'Performance' in her book *Oral History Theory*, Lynn Abrams explores the various ways in which oral history is constructed as a relationship between a speaker and an observer of that speech, starting from the assumption that 'an oral history narrative is first and foremost a performance of words, a way of speaking separated from ordinary speech, a speech act performed for an audience in particular context.'¹⁸² The construction of the narrative produced during the interview is therefore inextricably linked to the envisaged audience: 'the production of an oral history is an event which cannot be separated from the context in which it is performed. Storytelling of any kind, including oral history, is a social activity which cannot take place without an audience. Even if that audience consists only of the interviewer, the narrator is aware that he or she is communicating experience in a heightened encounter which requires a stylized mode of communication differing from everyday conversation.'¹⁸³ The theoretical and practical applications of this idea have been discussed by many scholars and is increasingly a part of the landscape of recontextualisation.¹⁸⁴

From the perspective of the interviewee in any given interview situation, the primary – or at least most immediate – audience to whom the interviewee performs is the interviewer. In addition to being the most immediate observer of and witness to the words being spoken, the interviewer is also an audience-by-proxy; essentially they are a representative of the parent project and are also responsible for ensuring the interviewee performs to the intended audience of the final interview, be that future researchers, students, or – as we have seen in the case of the performative oral histories discussed earlier – the general public. Portelli explains the potential impact of this dynamic on the interview content:

¹⁸² Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 1st ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 130.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁸⁴ Some examples include: Della Pollock, ed., *Remembering: Oral History Performance*, Palgrave Studies in Oral History (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); Martha Rose Beard, 'Re-Thinking Oral History – a Study of Narrative Performance', *Rethinking History* 21, no. 4 (2 October 2017): 529–48.

researchers [i.e. interviewers] often introduce specific distortions: informants tell them what they believe they want to be told (it is interesting to see what the informants think is wanted and expected, that is what the informants think the historian is). On the other hand, rigidly structured interviews exclude elements whose existence and relevance were previously unknown to the researcher and are not contemplated in the question schedule; therefore such interviews tend to confirm the historian's previous frame of reference.¹⁸⁵

Of all the interviews in the collections under investigation here, this dynamic is most perceptible in interviews with non-Jewish or non-survivor interviewees – i.e. liberators or aid givers – for, generally speaking, these individuals are recruited to Holocaust testimony projects to provide historical information regarding the persecution rather than invited to participate in a testimonial capacity. These interviews are consequently circumscribed by their relevance to the Holocaust, which is an expectation set by the interviewer that is in turn accepted by the interviewee, who also understands that their role is to provide specific information rather than give a life history. In these cases, interviewees tend to perceive the audience of their interview in a more direct rather than imagined sense. Canadian-Jewish social worker Lavy Becker was sent by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to Europe to assist in providing relief work to the displaced Jews of Europe in the aftermath of the war and his interview for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Museum, conducted by Gerry Singer in 1994, focuses exclusively on the events surrounding his aid-giving activities. Singer's introduction clearly outlines the thematic framework for the interview: 'Today is Monday the 19th of September, my name is Gerry Singer [...] and we are here today interviewing Mr Lavy Becker about his experiences during and after the Holocaust.' The opening question of the interview is as follows: 'Mr Becker what- what did you work at what were you doing during the time preceding the Holocaust, say in the '30s '35-'40?' There is no lead in to the Holocaust period, no biographical information (besides date of birth and current address, the latter of which is redacted from the publicly available

¹⁸⁵ Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', 103.

recording) or pre-war life history questioning. The questions that follow interrogate Becker's Holocaust-related memories: 'During that wartime period, given your duties in the broader Jewish community, do you recall what you were hearing and what you were being told about the situation of Jews, in Europe?'; 'you were sent over to Europe by the Joint Distributing Committee, in what capacity?'; 'when you came over to Europe and came to Munich in September of '45. Not really having an understanding of the concentration camps and the terrors the killing of World War II you are now housed in Munich which was close to Dachau and there were obviously survivors of Dachau who were in the area, what was your impression of what was going on, how believable was it to you?'. Becker participates obligingly in this interrogation of his memories; the interviewee clearly perceives the encounter in the same terms as the interviewer, as one of researcher to research subject. Becker, in fact, identifies the interviewer as his primary audience, on one occasion attributing ownership of the interview to the interviewer – that is to say he refers to 'your [Singer's] interview' – in contrast to survivor-interviews in which interviewees explicitly or implicitly claim ownership of the interview themselves by understanding them as personal 'testimonies'. Becker develops an idea of the interviewer's intended audience for the interview based on the types of questions put to him by the interviewer; he is then able to recognise and offer anecdotes of his own initiative that he identifies as relevant, stating, for example, '[...] in fact if there is time I ought to be telling you a little bit about the Berihah, if you have nothing recorded about the Berihah [...]' Throughout the interview, Becker defers to Singer for confirmation of the kind of material Singer is looking for ('I remembered another story I don't know if this is the kind of thing you want'), and winds up his recollections when he believes he has contributed a sufficient amount of information for the purpose ('I think maybe I've given you enough for the moment.')186

In almost all instances of liberators or aid givers being interviewed for Holocaust testimony projects, the interviewees are willing to subjugate themselves

¹⁸⁶ Lavy Becker, Interview for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, interview by Gerry Singer, 19 September 1994, 53908, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

to the project's definition of what is considered relevant information – that is to say, they are content to perform only that material which the project's nominated audience will be interested in, namely their wartime experiences – but in some instances the interviewer employs this definition so narrowly that the interview becomes the rigidly structured variety that Portelli warns against. As a result, the interviewee's ability to perform is constricted and valuable information is lost from the record. British-born liberator Alan Rose was interviewed for the CJC-HDP in 1982 about his experiences liberating Bergen-Belsen. Over the course of his interview, the pressure placed on Rose to focus on the moment of liberation becomes so intense that Rose is forced to acknowledge that he cannot provide the information being requested and to repeatedly qualify his performance:

'Remember I was only in the place for an hour, and I want to tell you something. Just as it is difficult for survivors to talk about this, it is very difficult for concentration camp liberators to talk about'; 'First of all, it was a long time ago. And then I was there for probably not more than an hour. And for the first half an hour, it was impossible to take in anything except sheer horror. And for the other half an hour, I think overwhelmed though we were, it's funny how practical considerations arose.' Questioning on the hour he spent in Bergen Belsen was relentless ('as you moved ahead in your tank turret, what was your very first, sniff I guess, of the approach to Bergen-Belsen?'; 'First you step into the camp, you see these bodies. What do you see next?'; 'what did people look like? How thin were they?'; 'as you stood in the middle of the camp and surveyed left to right, what did you see?') to the point that by the end of the interview the pressure placed on Rose to 'perform' as a liberator leads Rose to outright reject the liberator identity entirely:

By the way, I'm not one of those, who regard myself as a liberator. It just happened in the course of our advance that we came across it. I mean nobody set out you know to go and liberate a concentration camp. So the word 'liberator' is a misnomer, in a sense. Either we were all liberators or we were not liberators, but no one specifically spent his

or her time thinking how am I going to liberate a concentration camp.

First of all, we hardly knew they existed. At least I didn't.¹⁸⁷

Sydney Greenberg, interviewed in 1995 for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, was similarly discouraged by his interviewer from straying too far from his memories of the concentration camp: 'Can we perhaps go back to the concentration camp? Because we are moving towards an anecdotal history of everyone's life, and, as a young soldier you entered the camp, you stayed there a very short time. Looking back at it, what did you really see?' Seemingly frustrated with his inability to get Greenberg to perform in the manner he wishes him to, the interviewer ends the interview somewhat abruptly: 'Mr Greenberg I would like to thank you very much for an unusual experience that you have conveyed to us, I hope it will find its place in the oral history of the Holocaust.'¹⁸⁸ Neither Alan Rose nor Sydney Greenberg is able to perform in the way they are being asked to, nor are they permitted to perform in the manner they wish to. In both instances the actions of the primary audience – the interviewer – inadvertently prevents potentially valuable information from being included in the interview and thus from being available to the secondary audience – the researcher – despite the interviewees' desire to perform beyond their immediate audiences.

The issue of performance and the perception of audiences is complicated in the case of Holocaust survivors, for by nature the act of testifying requires listeners but often the audiences to whom a survivor is performing are not the audiences provided by the project. Henry Greenspan argues that the way in which the survivor perceives their audience influences the way they communicate their story: 'Survivors do not recount in a vacuum but always to an actual or imagined audience of listeners. What survivors say, how they say it, whether they say it at all, will depend, in part, on their perceptions of those listeners, as well as on the ways that listeners have made their own hopes, fears, and expectations known.'¹⁸⁹ Robert Krell identified two of the key audiences for both Holocaust survivors and oral

¹⁸⁷ Rose, Interview for CJC-HDP.

¹⁸⁸ Sydney Greenberg, Interview for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, interview by David Lissak, 17 July 1995, 54850, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

¹⁸⁹ Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors*, 30.

testimony projects when he outlined his recording intentions in the late 1970s: 'it was to capture the story and certainly for teaching in the future, but [...] one of the biggest things at the time, was to capture it for the second generation.'¹⁹⁰ A conversation caught on camera between Robert Krell and an unnamed individual – presumably a videographer or technical operator (identified as TO in the quote below) – at the beginning of Krell's interview with Vera Slymovics demonstrates how the educational audience was imagined into the interviewing setting by the project staff. Krell begins reading the introduction to the tape and the technical operator interjects to remind him of the audience to whom he is performing and to request that he adjust his speech accordingly:

RK: -Columbia, Vancouver BC Canada. Mrs Vera Slymovics gave her consent for this interview to be recorded for historical and educational purposes. Part 1 traces her story from childhood to liberation in 1945, and part 2 deals with events after the war. She is a survivor of Auschwitz concentration camp. This is tape no. 1 of 2, and deals with the historical factual account of events up to 1945.

TO: okay it's looking good erm, erm, er, how can I say this without making you nervous *laughs* er it often helps if you just visualise some certain person and tell them about it. I think you're just being a bit solemn a bit heavy, without wanting to be a you know do a song and dance just just er, say, I've got an interesting tape here I'd like to show you it's about a lady who is in, because you're you're just being a little bit like-

RK: Okay but I don't have to depart from the script particularly?

TO: no no same script just er, a little bit more, think in terms that this might be watched by some high school kids and if you come on really heavy they might say eh-h-h wait a minute, but if you just say there's something I'd like you to see here that has certain points of interest

¹⁹⁰ Robert Krell, quoted in KP, 'Holocaust Documentation Project/Audio-Visual Documentation Project of Holocaust Survivors: Robert Krell Years 1978-1993', March 2016, 2, Current Project Files File Name: 'Krell Timeline & Summary FINAL', Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

This 'off-camera' moment caught on tape illustrates how interviewees as much as interviewees are required to tailor their on-tape performances, in this case to communicate in a direct but age-appropriate register to capture the audience's attention. We can observe too how Vera Szymovics tailors her own performance to fit her understanding of the educational mandate of the project. Szymovics begins the interview by confidently responding to prompts from Krell to discuss her childhood and her father, but is unaware that this conversation was being captured on tape. Almost as soon as she realises she is being recorded she moves to talking about her Holocaust experiences and Krell follows her narrative there; within ten minutes, conversation has turned to the gas chambers of Auschwitz. When Szymovics was under the impression she was speaking only to Krell she freely engaged in conversation with him about her pre-war family life, but abruptly changed course once Krell revealed to her that the tape was already recording and it became clear she was in fact speaking to a wider audience.¹⁹¹ This example demonstrates how the narrative expectations are set by the interviewer and followed by the interviewee, as both shape their participation to meet the needs of the audience they believe they are speaking to – in this case, one interested in learning about the Holocaust.

In projects with an educational mandate, the interviewer calls on the speaker to communicate historical reality, both the objective facts of their experience and the moral messages they have derived from it. Often these projects are conceived of with an anti-denial or anti-antisemitism directive and the intended audience is implicit in their mission statement. A set of FAQs produced by the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre regarding its oral testimony program – known as *Witness-To-History* – described the purpose of the project thus:

The purpose is to record essential testimony from the eye-witnesses whose voices will soon be silenced through illness, aging, and death. Video-tape recording of eye-witness testimony of the Holocaust is urgently required. [...] Personal recollections of the events will provide

¹⁹¹ Vera Szymovics, Interview for Robert Krell, interview by Robert Krell, 26 April 1978, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

evidence required to counter revisionist history and Holocaust denial. The tapes will confirm personal experience when Holocaust witnesses can no longer speak for themselves. Audio-visual teaching and research tools provide a most effective means of providing required information and informing both novice and experienced audiences. [...] The videos accurately reflect the personal history of each of the interviewees, and become a priceless resource for further research and teaching related to Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust.¹⁹²

The MHMC envisaged that the tapes would be utilised in teaching and research in the future; effectively, the call is for survivors to speak to future audiences in an educational capacity. Indeed, the title of the project – *Witness-To-History* – underlines its educational objectives and the responsibility placed in the hands of survivors to communicate their story to their conceptualised audience. The Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project possessed similar educational aims, describing itself as ‘primarily an oral history project which is geared towards information, education, sensitisation.’ In this case too the ‘imagined audience’ is perceived to extend beyond the survivor community and into the public sphere, which the project made explicit when it stated that ‘This series of tapes is intended for use by Jews and non-Jews alike [...] This series will not be produced in such a manner as to have utility solely for the Jewish community [...] By using a variety of themes and touching on diverse aspects of the Holocaust and its ramifications for all mankind, we are confident that non-Jewish institutions, schools, etc. will find it a useful vehicle to explore this most sensitive subject.’¹⁹³ The audience is implicit in the interviews of both collections: the desire to record in video is often one underscored by a desire to reinforce the tangibility of the history to potential audiences by putting a face to the name and capturing emotional responses alongside the narrative. Particularly at the end of these kinds of interviews, questions put to interviewees invite survivors to address ‘future

¹⁹² ‘The Most Frequently Asked Questions about Witness-To-History’ (Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, n.d.), 1, File Name: Witness-To-History Public Relations and Media, Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

¹⁹³ Canadian Jewish Congress, ‘Historical Documentation Bank Proposal’, 10 March 1981, 8, CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 10, Canadian Jewish Archives.

generations' directly, to draw out the lasting impact of the event and 'teach' them the moral lessons of the Holocaust. In MHMC interviews this is often quite explicit, with interviewers asking interviewees to address their audiences directly: Rhona Vandelman asks Edgar Lion for example 'And again going forward is there any message you yourself would like the future generations to, when in looking at some of these documents or, using them, what would you like what message would you like to leave with them about this period?'¹⁹⁴ In the CJC-HDP the approach is less overt, but the human impact of the event is nonetheless a central theme, with pointed questions asked of interviewees to draw out the 'lessons' of the event. In the following exchange between survivor Matilda Radvanyi and Paula Draper on behalf of the CJC-HDP, Draper closes with two questions that prompt Radvanyi to reflect on the story she has just told, in the process of which Radvanyi identifies a desire to educate as her motivation for giving the interview:

PD: would you say the Holocaust has affected your life?

MR: very much. It's, we still, we never really recover from it. Never. We cannot forget this. I don't want to think about it, but we never will forget it. I cannot see the films.

PD: why have you come to talk to us today?

MR: well, well I know you needed, for, the next generation to, to know what's happened, they will never should forget this. Never. And let's hope this never will happen again.¹⁹⁵

Similar lines of questioning seek to drive home the impact of the event by asking survivors how many members of their family survived, what happened to those who did not, and what impact their experiences had on their personality.¹⁹⁶

On occasion however the audience to whom the interviewee is projecting conflicts with the audience the interviewer has in mind, as is evident in this 'off record' comment made by CJC interviewer Paula Draper to Rena Rosenberger

¹⁹⁴ Edgar Lion, Interview for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, interview by Rhona Vandelman, 23 January 2012, 54048, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

¹⁹⁵ Matilda Radvanyi, Interview for the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, interview by Paula Draper, 20 November 1981, 53601, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

¹⁹⁶ See, for example: *Ibid.*; Schiff, Interview for CJC-HDP.

caught on the recording, in which the interviewer tries to persuade the interviewee to switch to a more descriptive mode: '-describe it, what would it look like, that's better than saying it was, supposed to be a washroom but wasn't really, you know? Describe it, that's what, that's what people wanna understand you have to describe it. Okay?' Rosenberger's own narrativisation is heavily narrative-driven, to the frustration of her interviewer who struggles to elicit the kind of descriptive material she – on behalf of the project's intended audience – desires. The result is an interview that is somewhat stilted: the interviewee does not engage in extended reminiscing, answering the interviewer's questions with short, factual statements, largely resisting (perhaps unintentionally) the interviewer's attempts to encourage her to embellish her narrative:

PD: What did *you* think? Did *you* think of leaving Germany?

RR: No I didn't think. I didn't know where to go. First of all I would go there where my husband would go and he believed that it would be finished perhaps in one or two years well a lot of people thought. My late father died already a year before Hitler came and my late brother he left for Paris. My late moth- my sister left in '35-¹⁹⁷

A similar dynamic is present in the interview given by Fanni Bogdanow to *Refugee Voices* in 2003:

RL: Coming back to your life. Did your father belong to any clubs or societies?

FB: No, no.

RL: Was he active in any way at all?

FB: No, no, no.

RL: And did you belong to anything at all?

FB: No, nothing at all

RL: And did you used to go to a library and take books out?

FB: No. No. No. My father had a huge collection of books at home, because he was a very avid reader. And...Oh yes, I must tell you this. On

¹⁹⁷ Rosenberger, Interview for CJC-HDP.

9th November 1938 when the Germans broke into our flat, they stole all my father's books *except* the works of Heinrich Heine. Not the works of Heinrich Heine, because Heine was a Jewish author. So they didn't want those books. Now my father was a very avid reader. He had a whole lot of books. All the classics. So I didn't need to go to a library. The library was at home!

[...]

RL: What kind of books would you read as a child?

FB: Oh, whatever we had to read at school. I can't remember. I can't remember. My real life started when I came to England, because as you know, within 10 days of the events of the 9th November 1938 both houses of Parliament voted unanimously to bring 10,000 unaccompanied children to Great Britain. And wonderful British families, very, very many of them non Jewish, spontaneously opened their doors – their homes – to the Jewish children. And, as soon as my mother heard of that wonderful offer, she immediately put my name down. [...]

Bogdanow resists Livshin's attempts to elicit detail and description, instead pressing forward with the narrative of persecution. When asked if there was any message she would like to give, Bogdanow responds 'Yes, the world must never *ever* forget what those Germans did to the Jewish people. They must never ever forget how they exterminated young and old. What they did is unforgivable. The Holocaust must never, ever be forgotten. It's so important that the world must remember forever and ever what those German devils did to the Jewish people.'¹⁹⁸ This narrative-driven style with a heavy focus on what happened rather than on description or detail is a common characteristic of interviews in which the interviewee is motivated to testify primarily out of a desire to transmit their story

¹⁹⁸ Bogdanow, Interview for HSC.

to their family or loved ones or, in the words of Toronto interviewee Abby Becker, 'to leave a legacy.'¹⁹⁹

Robert Krell understood that the oral testimony format is often perceived by survivors as a useful tool through which to communicate their story to their family members and thus approach the interview with this audience at the forefront of their minds. Krell explains that in addition to providing access to a mode of transmission for those who will not or cannot write their stories, the recorded testimony format eases the burden of communication: 'I said then, and hold to it still, children and parents can't talk about the Holocaust without one of them beginning to cry and shutting down. So if you get the tape, and then both can watch and cry...but they don't need to stop the story. The story doesn't stop. It's the only way that they [sic] second generation can get some of that information.'²⁰⁰ Judith Hassan of the Holocaust Survivors' Centre also understood the value of oral testimony in similar terms, stating that 'the recording of those memories with a survivor becomes a tool through which they can pass on, not only their experiences, but a way of remembering those who perished [...] The testimonies are kept by the HSC as well as by the survivor and become the means through which communication can take place between the first and second generations.'²⁰¹ When asked what prompted them to participate in an oral testimony project, many survivors across the projects echo these motivations and in doing so identify their families as a primary audience of their testimony. Speaking to Yehudi Lindeman and Renata Zajdman²⁰² for the McGill *Living Testimonies* project, survivor Lee Lubin stated:

Personally I am very happy, because I hope to having a copy of this interview, to send it to my grandchildren and their mother so they will know me better because we usually speak about the present not the

¹⁹⁹ Abby Becker, Interview for the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, interview by Elly Gotz, 9 December 2009, No. 530, Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre.

²⁰⁰ Robert Krell, quoted in KP, 'Holocaust Documentation Project: Robert Krell Years', 2.

²⁰¹ Hassan, 'Memory and Remembrance', 105–6.

²⁰² This is the same person as the Renata Skotnicka-Zajdman mentioned above. Both names are used in reference to this interviewer by the McGill *Living Testimonies* project.

past, and it's necessary to know your roots, especially that they don't have an opportunity I don't have any relatives they should know or talk about it, but more even than that, I am proud that the world will know about us, will not forget it [...].

As well as identifying her family as the imagined audience of her testimony, Lubin hints at one of the key features of testimonies that – as in Becker's words – 'leave a legacy': they function not just as a means of communicating the experiences of the individual speaking, but of transmitting the memory of those who did not survive. As the interviewer guides Lubin through her biography in the opening stages of the interview, she consistently couples the names of her family members with their fates: her boyfriend, who she met before the war, was injured and his brother killed during the invasion of Poland by the Nazis; her father, stepmother and their two children were murdered; and all but one of her parents' siblings perished during the war. Even her husband and son subsequently died, and their fates are recorded in the early stages of her interview:

Nobody. Literally nobody [survived]. Not to my knowledge. When I read about all these, terrible news about denying there was no Holocaust Jews invented Holocaust, here in the West a teacher I think, does it, and it hurts me a lot because it's nonsense sheer nonsense, here I am proof of it. I have absolutely no family. I lost my own son, already four years ago, here. I mean in the States. He was if I may mention it now, he was director of Health Services at the University of Massachusetts. And er he died of cancer. His father also, at the age of 39, died of cancer.²⁰³

This need to document the fates of those who did not survive is not dissimilar to the testimony-by-proxy characteristic of many survivor testimonies described previously, in which survivors communicate the stories of those close to them who did not live to bear witness themselves. The pressing need to transmit these stories to their audience of loved ones results in testimonies that are often narrative-

²⁰³ Lee Lubin, Interview for Living Testimonies, interview by Yehudi Lindeman, 3 October 1996, 54769, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

driven; the interviewee wants to tell what happened, not necessarily to describe the details.

Sharon Kangisser Cohen identified a 'determination on the part of the survivor not to be influenced by the interviewer' that is common in Holocaust survivor accounts. Kangisser Cohen's analysis of survivor testimonies given by the same survivor over time led her to conclude that survivors reproduce a consistent core narrative of events, but differences in the manner of presentation emerge as a result of the audiences that survivors imagine they are giving their testimony to. For Barbara Stimler, a survivor who has given her testimony on multiple occasions, the imagined audience is largely the same in each of the interviews she gives to various projects: posterity, future generations, those who seek to learn lessons from the Holocaust. This abstract notion of an 'audience' lends a particular kind of consistency to the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, most of whom perceive their own audiences similarly. For Stimler, repeated giving of testimony – including to schoolchildren on a regular basis – results in a rehearsed narrative that she is able to 'perform' with fluency, which one can witness becoming gradually refined over time. The interview that Stimler gave to the National Life Story Collection in 1988 was the first time Stimler had spoken about her Holocaust experiences. She knows that she is being interviewed because she survived the Holocaust, and the drive to speak – to testify – about those experiences is evident in her rush to commence discussing the war. The following extract takes place just three minutes into the recording:

BS: In a town called Włocławek. I had to travel there ehm every day. I was [a] commuter. And ehm I had to get up very early, the journey took about an hour. And ehm for the winter my parents made arrangements for me to stay with a family because the winters were very bad in Poland. But I didn't like it and the following year I didn't want to stay any more. But then I become ill and I had to leave the school. Then the war broke out which was 1939. Am I going too fast with my childhood?

JW: Well shall I ask you a few questions?

BS: Yes, sure

JW: I'd love to know, how did you travel to the school and to home from school?

Clearly, Stimler is also aware of the narrative expectations of NLSC: she knows they are interested in recording her full life history; she knows that they are interested in her childhood; but she struggles to negotiate her impulse to testify within the life history framework of the National Life Story Collection. She continues to seek reassurance from the interviewer throughout that her content and the structure of her narration fits with what is expected of her, asking the interviewer for example 'should I talk about it now yes? Or later?' With guidance she speaks for a full hour about her childhood, family and cultural life before moving on to the outbreak of war. This in-depth exploration of Stimler's childhood and postwar life does not happen in her later interviews. Other collections express an interest in the interviewee's life before and after the Holocaust, but explore it only nominally; there is a narrative expectation on both sides that Stimler will talk predominantly about her Holocaust experiences, such that interviewers do not make an effort to explore 'unrelated' subjects in any significant detail. Only six minutes are spent on her pre-war experiences in both her IWM and HSC interviews. By the time Stimler comes to give her testimony to the Holocaust Survivors' Centre a decade later, she is used to delivering a rehearsed performance of her testimony to groups of students as well as to various testimony recording projects in a much more restrictive period of time, a far cry from the seven hour long interview she gave to the National Life Story Collection ten years prior. The opportunity afforded to her by the Holocaust Survivors' Centre is far less constrictive than the hour she has to convey her Holocaust story to schoolchildren, but Stimler continues to edit down her own narrative nonetheless. This plays out clearly in the following extract:

BS: Anyway, to cut this story short, we didn't have anything they were allowed to take whatever they could so they made themselves little carts, and they put-

BG: who is they?

BS: the rest of the Jewish people in Kutno, the rest, you know because they put them all in this, sugar factory. Anyway, so, to cut this story

short, to cut this story short how can you talk for one hour what's happened to you in one life-in six years lifetime

BG: there's no hurry

BS: yeah. Anyway.²⁰⁴

Despite the HSC not putting a time limit on the interview encounter, Stimler performs her narrative as if she only has an hour to communicate her story to her audience.

Ultimately, as Noah Shenker points out, survivors are there to testify – they do not always wish to subordinate their narratives to the requirements or demands of a particular project or institution.²⁰⁵ Quite often they resist attempts to contain their narrative within the archival expectations set by the project, which includes a reluctance or refusal to perform to the audience that the interviewer wants or needs them to engage. The conflict between Barbara Stimler and Annie Dodds in the interview conducted by October Films for the IWM Holocaust exhibition – in which Stimler is cut off and actively prevented from recalling anecdotes of personal importance because October Films deemed them extraneous to its purposes – is one such example of interviewer and interviewee imagining different and arguably incompatible audiences. The two testimonies of Fanni Bogdanow – one given to the Holocaust Survivors' Centre in 1996 and the other given to *Refugee Voices* in 2003 – provide another informative comparison. As mentioned previously, the methodological framework of the HSC testimony recording project gave interviewees free reign to reproduce their narratives in a format most befitting their needs. For Fanni Bogdanow this meant reading a pre-written testimony without any interjections, clarifying questions or prompts from an interviewer. When Bogdanow came to give her testimony to *Refugee Voices* seven years later, though she did participate in the interview dialogue she frequently deferred to the scripted version of her testimony; since *Refugee Voices* is a video project, we can observe Bogdanow take papers from her desk to reference – and on occasion read

²⁰⁴ Barbara Stimler, Interview for the Holocaust Survivors' Centre, interview by Barbara Goodman, 16 June 1998, C830/038, British Library Sounds.

²⁰⁵ Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, x–xi.

from – in order to respond to questions from the interviewer. The following extract illustrates the change in tone and structure of Bogdanow's speech as she switches from spontaneous to scripted narration:

I still remember, to this day, hearing on the radio, 'This country is now at war with Germany.' And my first thought was, 'My parents won't be able to get out now.' Because by that time my efforts to get visas for my parents had failed. And my father, and I can tell you the date if I look at this sheet, which date was he taken to...? I can find the date for you. Yes at first, I got letters through the Red Cross from my parents. And then on the middle of June 1941, letters from my father stopped coming, because he had been taken that month to the prison in Heilbronn. And for no other reason than that he was Jewish. And from there he was transferred to the concentration camp at Wülzburg near Weißenburg, in Bavaria in the 8th of October 1941. And he was to remain there until he was liberated by the Allied forces on the 26th of April, 1945. And what my father suffered both in Heilbronn and Wülzburg was comparable to what he had suffered previously in Dachau. He was beaten both in Heilbronn and Wülzburg so that, as he told us later, that his back and arms were black and blue. And not only that, but the eardrum of one of his ears burst, in being beaten. They suffered constant hunger, because what they had to eat there was no more than what they'd had in Dachau. And equal, dreadful was, my father said that on one occasion he had the indiscretion to tell a guard in the camp at Wülzburg summoned a dentist from Wülzburg to come up to the camp. And that dentist, either of his own accord or on the instruction from the guard drilled holes in every one of my father's teeth, and did not put any fillings in.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Fanni Bogdanow, Interview for Refugee Voices, interview by Rosalyn Livshin, 26 June 2003, #24, AJR Refugee Voices.

When compared with the same anecdote in her HSC interview, it is clear that in her AJR interview she is recounting from the same – or at least very similar – written document:

For a while we received every three months or so short twenty word letters through the Red Cross, but those from my father ceased by the middle of June 1941. On the 14th of that month he was taken to the prison in Heilbronn, for no other reason than that he was Jewish. And from there he was transferred on the 8th of October 1941 to the concentration camp Wülzburg near Weißenburg in Bavaria where he was to remain until liberated by the allied forces on the 26th April 1945. What my father suffered both in Heilbronn and Wülzburg was comparable to that which he had suffered previously in Dachau. He was beaten so much that not only, his back and arms were black and blue, but the ear drum of one of his ears burst. In addition to being beaten, he and the other inmates suffered constant hunger, as the food were the same starvation rations as in Dachau. And in winter it was cold, bitter cold. And this is not all. Once, while in the camp at Wülzburg, my father had the indiscretion to mention to a prison guard that he had toothache. That guard summoned a dentist from the town Weißenburg to come up to the camp. Whether it was on the guards instructions or the dentist or of the dentists own accord, my father did not know, but that monstrous dentist drilled holes in all my father's teeth, and left the holes without fillings.²⁰⁷

Rosalyn Livshin does not permit Bogdanow the same freedom to perform as the Holocaust Survivors' Centre does. Though not as harsh as the intervention of Annie Dodds in Barbara Stimler's interview, Livshin repeatedly brings the focus of the interview back to Bogdanow when she begins relating her parents' experiences as she is wont to do. On one occasion Livshin confronts Bogdanow on the origins of the written testimony (RL: 'Did your mother write this down?' FB: 'No she told me

²⁰⁷ Bogdanow, Interview for HSC.

all this after I saw her again'), and shortly thereafter actively discourages her from reading the testimony as it does not fit with Livshin's – or *Refugee Voices*' – conception of how the interview should be performed: 'I think, if we don't read too much because this is meant to be your personal recollection'. Bogdanow struggles to perform her narrative to the audience Livshin envisages, however, and indeed later repeats an anecdote that she has already recounted once in the recording, with strikingly similar wording that suggests she is still basing her interview on the written testimony before her:

First instance: 'His father and mother, they'd gone to France earlier on, and when the Germans occupied France, they went into hiding. And the aunt kept telling her husband, Samuel, not to go out in daylight. But, the aunt told us, that one day he did go out in daylight. He was denounced and deported, to where, she never knew, because he never came back alive.'

Second instance: 'But after the occupation of France they went into hiding and, as the aunt was to tell us later, she kept telling her husband not to go out in daylight. But one day he was careless and went out and he was denounced and deported to where, the aunt never knew, because he never came back alive.'²⁰⁸

For Holocaust survivors, the presence of an audience is fundamental to the existence of their testimony. In Greenspan's words: 'whatever the specific motives in retelling – to remember the dead, to warn the living, to indict the killers, to document the crime – every act of recounting, really by definition, is premised on the possibility of responsive listeners.'²⁰⁹ In every oral testimony encounter, the theoretical presence of an audience shapes the resulting narrative by giving the encounter meaning and by justifying the endeavour; it is sufficient for a researcher or a cultural institution to decide that the material needs to be created – that there is an audience for the material – for the interview to go ahead. For Holocaust

²⁰⁸ Bogdanow, Interview for *Refugee Voices*.

²⁰⁹ Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors*, 36.

survivors giving their testimony however, the endeavour is inherently justified, but relies on the presence of an audience for it to happen at all: ‘for survivors, finding listeners *is* the issue. That is, they do not search for form and meaning for the sake of form and meaning. They do so in the hope of being heard. And without some faith in that possibility, survivors do not recount at all.’ Intended or imagined audience therefore always bears an influence on the manner in which the testimony is constructed. (Re)contextualisation is crucial for re-use, however, as there is no template that can account for the influence exerted by interviewer and interviewee in all interviews. As Greenspan pointed out:

Of course, to say that survivors’ retelling is affected by survivors’ listeners—or by survivors’ perceptions of their listeners—may be a truism of only limited usefulness. Do survivors sometimes shape their recounting to meet what they perceive their listeners need or want to hear? Yes, sometimes they do. Do survivors sometimes retell with relative indifference to their listeners’ expectations? Yes, sometimes they do. Do survivors, at times, shape their retelling directly to challenge—indeed, to protest—their listeners’ presumptions? Yes, that is also sometimes true.²¹⁰

‘Insiders’ and ‘Outsiders’: Oral Testimony as Dialogue

The observations made by both Noah Shenker and Henry Greenspan regarding the survivors’ willingness – or unwillingness – to subordinate their narratives to the demands of an interviewer or project remit highlight one of the key features of oral testimonies that stand them apart from other types of historical source material: they are dialogical by nature, existing only when two (or sometimes more) people work together to bring them into being. Thus to interpret an oral source such as these demands that one accounts for the input of both interviewer(s) and interviewee(s), which involves an understanding of the agendas and backgrounds of all parties involved and an appreciation of how these factors bear upon the interactions between them. Alessandro Portelli elucidates:

²¹⁰ Ibid., 30–31.

oral sources are always the result of a relationship, a common project in which both the informant and the researcher are involved, together...Communication always works both ways, the interviewee is always – though perhaps quietly – studying the interviewer as well as being studied. The historian might as well recognise this fact and work with it, rather than try to eliminate it for the sake of an impossible (and perhaps undesirable) neutrality. Thus, the result is the product of both the informant and the researcher [...] ²¹¹

An increasingly understood and analysed dynamic of oral history interviews, the interaction between interviewer and interviewee in interviews with Holocaust survivors warrants closer analysis. In its simplest terms, this means understanding how the two parties work together to produce the witness' narrative; in Greenspan's words 'a good interview is a process in which two people work hard to understand the views and experiences of one person: the interviewee.'²¹² This relationship is inextricably linked to the multitude of contextual factors hitherto discussed: the aims of the project and the nature of the organisation or institution which sponsors it; the methodology employed to achieve those aims; and the literal or figurative audiences to whom both interviewer and interviewee perform are all factors which shape the emergence of the dialogue which forms the recorded interview. The analysis made thus far however has explored the extent to which institutional, interviewer and interviewee agendas influence what is discussed and how it is discussed, but has not necessarily accounted for how the selection of the interviewees is in itself a methodological imperative designed to influence the dialogue in a specific way. If we are to accept what Alessandro Portelli says is true, that 'the data extracted from the interviews will always be the result of a selection produced by the mutual relationship',²¹³ we must understand how that relationship has in itself been curated in service of particular aims, which has both intentional and unintentional consequences for the information that we have access to.

²¹¹ Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', 103.

²¹² Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors*, xvii.

²¹³ Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', 104.

Oral historian Mary Larson outlined some general criteria for the selection of interviewers in a chapter on oral history project research design and strategies:

The choice of interviewers will be guided partially by the theory informing the process and partially by more practical concerns, including whether or not interviewers should be topical or methodological specialists, insiders or outsiders. A topical specialist may be particularly appealing to those engaged in subject-oriented projects. An expert in the field under consideration brings to the research a level of background experience that time and resources probably would not permit someone unfamiliar with a topic to develop, so there is that advantage. The ideal situation would be to acquire someone with both subject knowledge and interviewing experience, but as that is not always possible, topical experts can be enlisted to do the work if properly trained in oral history methodology. Another option would be to find interviewers who are specialists in either interviewing or the historical method more generally. Just as inexperienced interviewers with topical knowledge need to hone interviewing skills, so do experienced interviewers need to acquire a good working knowledge of the subject involved.²¹⁴

Two key practical considerations emerge: individual expertise and the prospective interviewer's direct relationship to the community under investigation – in Larson's words, whether they are 'insiders or outsiders'.

In some collections – specifically those with academic origins but also those designed to produce a comprehensive historical record of the event – the relationship is one of researcher to research subject. Typically in these cases a small number of paid, professional interviewers conduct all the interviews in a collection. Of the AJR *Refugee Voices* archive, project directors Anthony Grenville and Bea Lewkowicz stated that 'the wealth of material that "Refugee Voices" contains and

²¹⁴ Mary A. Larson, 'Research Design and Strategies', in *History of Oral History: Foundations and Methodology*, ed. Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2007), 111.

the manner in which it has been conceived and brought into being should make it an indispensable tool for researchers in the field for many years to come.’ Quite explicitly, Grenville and Lewkowicz assert that the project was executed within a research framework, to which end the project employed ‘a very small number of experienced and knowledgeable interviewers’ which enabled the focus to remain on the content and scope of the interviewee’s memories, on eliciting detail, and on ensuring consistency between interviews in the collection in terms of content coverage and scope.²¹⁵ The Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project operated similarly: the project was keen not to disavow the testimonial component of the endeavour, but acknowledged from the outset that it operated in service of future research and educational efforts and consequently would encourage the survivor’s own narration in addition to pursuing direct lines of questioning on a series of set topics including family before the war and religious and political affiliations.²¹⁶ Explicitly, ‘the role of the interviewer will be to facilitate the discussion, to ensure clarity, highlight feelings, and elicit detail, and in effecting a smooth flow and historical accuracy.’²¹⁷ Thus the CJC-HDP likewise employed a small number of highly skilled individuals whose interviewing expertise was the key factor determining their appointment. The following extract from the project proposal illustrates how the skill of the interviewer was considered the ultimate priority when selecting interviewers:

The Committee of Consultants discussed the qualifications of the ‘Interviewer’ at length and two factors were seen as paramount: skills and techniques of conducting an interview; and the preference that the interviewer be either a survivor, or assisted by a survivor...This would ensure that the interviewer has a deep understanding of the nature of and scope of the Holocaust and would also exude a personal sensitivity and empathy with the interviewee, thereby alleviating some of the

²¹⁵ Anthony Grenville and Bea Lewkowicz, ‘Refugee Voices’, 180–83.

²¹⁶ Kathy Faludi, ‘Paper on Interview Methodology’ (Canadian Jewish Congress, 8 May 1981), 2, CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09, Canadian Jewish Archives.

²¹⁷ Canadian Jewish Congress, ‘Evaluation, Phase I - Holocaust Documentation Project’, Project Review (Canadian Jewish Congress, 29 June 1981), 10, CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09, Canadian Jewish Archives.

anxiety which will invariably surround the process...The Committee of Consultants while recognising and supporting this principle, were equally insistent that the interviewer possess the recognised skills and qualifications in the art of conducting an interview. Without a skilled interviewer, the outcome and impact of the entire project could be compromised. As such, it was recommend[sic] that the primary qualifications we seek in hiring the interviewer, would be proven skills in conducting an interview.²¹⁸

In these instances, the interviewers were 'outsiders': interview quality and consistency were the key priorities, setting the foundations for an interviewer/interviewee relationship based on the acquisition of information and the accuracy and comprehensiveness of that information. Two skilled interviewers were hired for the CJC-HDP, and ultimately neither were survivors themselves: Paula Draper, a student of educational theory with extensive interviewing experience with Jewish internees, and Josh Freed, a freelance radio broadcaster and journalist.²¹⁹ Three primary interviewers were employed on behalf of the AJR to conduct interviews for *Refugee Voices* in its first phase: project director Bea Lewkowicz, an oral historian and social anthropologist; project director Anthony Grenville, son of Jewish refugees and academic specialising in Jewish refugees from Nazism; and experienced oral historian Rosalyn Livshin.²²⁰ Utilising a small number of well qualified interviewers also enabled both projects to ensure a degree of consistency and uniformity in form and content across the entirety of the collection, a factor which Grenville and Lewkowicz argued facilitated comparisons between interviews conducted by different interviewers and in doing so provided a valuable opportunity for researchers.²²¹

²¹⁸ Canadian Jewish Congress, 'Historical Documentation Bank Proposal Mar 1981', 27–28.

²¹⁹ Kathy Faludi to Committee of Consultants, 'Correspondence Re. Discussions in Forthcoming Meeting', 7 July 1981, 1, CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09, Canadian Jewish Archives.

²²⁰ 'The Team', *AJR Refugee Voices*, 2019, <https://www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk/the-team>.

²²¹ Anthony Grenville and Bea Lewkowicz, 'Refugee Voices', 180.

Mary Larson weighs up the benefits of this 'outsider' approach to that of an 'insider' one:

One of the most discussed issues regarding interviewer selection is whether interviewers should be insiders or outsiders relative to the group or individual under consideration. There are both advantages and disadvantages to either choice. The general sense, at least as reflected in the oral history literature, is that insiders have the benefit of an existing rapport with interviewees, they know much of the necessary background material (or at least where it is located), and they may have access to privileged information. However, there is also the perception that insiders are not seen as neutral...they may overlook obvious questions because they take certain things for granted; and, knowing the rules of engagement in a community, the insider may not want to ask the difficult question. An outsider, however, may be viewed by interviewees as being more objective, and since the interviewer will not be staying in the community, he or she may be given information that someone remaining in the community would not be able to elicit.²²²

There is, as Larson observes, no 'right' or 'wrong' approach. As we have seen in the case of the CJC-HDP, the decision was made ultimately to employ 'outsiders' on the strength of their skill set, for it was deemed that this would most appropriately serve the aims of the project. *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* however, made the opposite decision, choosing to select its interviewers on the basis of their personal connection to the event over and above their technical skill as interviewers. In May 1988 the project was announced in the *Jewish Chronicle*, accompanied by a call for volunteer interviewers.²²³ The 35 prospective interviewers who met for a training session in June 1988 'came from London and the provinces as well as from abroad; and they included Jews and non-Jews, refugees and survivors and representatives of the "second generation."' The training included workshops on interview technique lead by Bill Williams of the

²²² Larson, 'Research Design', 111–12.

²²³ Grant, 'Testimony of Survivors to Be Taped', 5.

Manchester Jewish Museum and Rosalyn Livshin, both of whom already had experience interviewing members of the Jewish community in Manchester, and Paul Thompson himself. Wingate stated that she felt reassured that ‘the workshop had shown that there was a pool of voluntary workers who were either already conversant with the necessary research techniques or willing to take up training. An important number of them had the linguistic attainments and cultural affinities necessary to evaluate with sympathy and understanding the nuances of events recalled either from childhood or from later life, in a social climate rather different from that of future historians.’²²⁴ The phrase ‘cultural affinities’ is key here. Recruiting interviewers from within the Jewish community was a conscious decision made in the interests of fostering the ‘sympathy and understanding’ to which Wingate refers. That is to say in stipulating that volunteer interviewers ‘have to have an understanding of the subject’ in an advertisement placed in a Jewish magazine,²²⁵ LMJC reasoned that familiarity with the Holocaust was sufficient to qualify members of the British Jewish community to conduct interviews with Holocaust survivors – a particular sub-group of the Jewish community – about their experiences as members of the British Jewish community. Interviewers came from a range of backgrounds – including a rabbi, doctoral students, refugees and the children of survivors – and brought with them a wide range of skills, interviewing experience, knowledge of the subject matter, and investment in the aims of the project. Thompson advised that the first step to be taken prior to conducting an oral history interview was to undertake sufficient preparation – including background research – in order for the interviewer to familiarise themselves with the subject matter at hand, on the basis that it is ‘generally true that the more one knows, the more likely one is to elicit significant historical information from an interview.’²²⁶ It is clear from the processes involved in the recruitment of interviewers that the directors of LMJC were conscious of the importance of this and, moreover, that LMJC sought to respond by recruiting interviewers who shared a similar background to the prospective interviewees. Indeed the fact that the initial

²²⁴ David Maier, ‘Recording the Refugee Experience’, *AJR Information*, August 1988, 8.

²²⁵ Grant, ‘Testimony of Survivors to Be Taped’, 5.

²²⁶ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 1988, 196–97.

call for interviewers was placed in the *Jewish Chronicle* indicates that there was an awareness that the 'right people' in this instance were most likely to be Jewish themselves, an inference which is corroborated in an interview with NLSC volunteer administrator Audrie Mundy who believes she was asked to conduct interviews for *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* specifically because she is Jewish.²²⁷ Jennifer Wingate was certainly of the opinion that the interviewers were sufficiently qualified in this respect, stating in a journal article about the project that although the interviewers came from a wide range of backgrounds, 'all had a deep knowledge of the subject.'²²⁸ In practice, the use of the 'insider' approach to interviewing had both positive and negative repercussions on the content and quality of individual interviews.

The most powerful benefit of this approach is visible in moments of clear association between interviewer and interviewee. In some cases the shared background is explicitly acknowledged, and it is possible to notice in the audio how the revelation of legitimate grounds for empathy both aids the interviewer in facilitating discussion and encourages the interviewee to respond. In one particular interview, interviewer Tony Grenville uses his own background to prompt an exploration of Eva Clarke's sense of identity as an individual caught between two religious and cultural worlds:

TG: You weren't particularly brought up to be Jewish though, in the full sense

EC: No, no

TG: But you were still proud of it?

EC: Oh yes I mean you know I, if anybody asks me what are you, and by way of religion or feelings or emotions I would say Jewish, erm but I also like to think that I am very ecumenical I mean I I'm born Jewish I went to a Roman Catholic convent school erm, I married an Anglican who is a staunch believer and, you know

²²⁷ Audrie Mundy, Interview for National Life Stories, interview by Cathy Courtney, 23 May 2012, C464/84, British Library Sounds.

²²⁸ Wingate, 'National Life Story Collection', 133.

TG: You're baptised, at least technically

EC: and I'm baptised as well that's right yes that's right

TG: But you don't consider yourself Christian, or?

EC: Well, I do and I don't I consider myself a mixture because I do go to Church with my husband erm, I'm very ambivalent about it all

TG: Do you, go to synagogue or anything like that?

EC: No, no, only on you know for weddings or Bar Mitzvahs that sort of thing

TG: Yes I mean I'm in a similar position, that I always I, I feel there's something about Jewish identity which if one's not religious at least one is sort of culturally Jewish

EC: Culturally that's right that's right and obviously I mean it would be something that I would never dream of ever denying²²⁹

In other instances, the Jewish background of the interviewer enables them to engage in an informed conversation with the interviewee about particular elements of the Jewish life experience in a way that both benefits the listener and the interviewer-interviewee relationship. Familiarity with many Jewish lexical terms enabled interviewers to not only understand the descriptions being given but to facilitate deeper conversation about the particular details of these aspects of the life story and, in some instances, to assist in clarifying references when they were made. The following extract demonstrates how Audrie Mundy was able to understand a vague reference made by her interviewee, confirm it and thus record it explicitly on the tape:

SF: They [the Poles] were telling us 'Oh but the Jews in England are not the same like you Jews, like the Jews in Poland. They're completely, they're different, they're not, they don't walk around with long, they're

²²⁹ Eva Clarke, Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community, interview by Tony Grenville, 21 August 1995, C410/160, British Library Sounds.

not that religious.’

AM: Paiyes, you mean?²³⁰

More commonly, the benefit of the mutual ground is perceptible in the delivery of the dialogue. For example, in the interview with Leslie Dent conducted by Ralph Emanuel, the interviewer makes statements or questions relating to specific details of Jewish religious practice, facilitating dialogue with the interviewee and prompting the exploration of elements of the individual’s upbringing and religious observances that may have otherwise been neglected by a less knowledgeable interviewer. For example:

RE: So, your father was a Talmudic scholar?

LD: Yes yes I think or educated in Yiddish Jew-yes

RE: Yes, and he talked to you a lot about his studies

LD: Yes well Friday evening was always the children got together and he’d been telling us all stories about the, about the bible and also things

RE: Yes about the sidra of the week?

LD: Yes that’s right²³¹

On other occasions however, the shared background hinders rather than helps the interview, typically in instances where the interviewer becomes more preoccupied with using the interview to satisfy their own interest in the subject than aiding the interviewee in furthering their own recollections. In the two examples that follow, it is clear that the interviewer has a vested interest in a particular topic that is then pursued in lines of questioning, even when it clearly conflicts with the interviewee’s personal interests. In the first extract, Kindertransportee Milenka Jackson is interviewing Nicholas Winton, the man responsible for organising the Kindertransports. Instead of following up on interesting leads regarding Winton’s movements in 1939 and the role of Rabbis in

²³⁰ Solomon Freiman, Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community, interview by Audrie Mundy, 13 October 1989, C410/052, British Library Sounds.

²³¹ Leslie Dent, Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community, interview by Ralph Emanuel, 18 July 1990, C410/096, British Library Sounds.

collecting Kindertransport children from Liverpool Street Station, Jackson uses the opportunity to authenticate her own memories of arrival:

MJ: So you didn't go to Prague again after that initial visit? You did the rest of it from London?

NW: I must have been the only person in England who, in August '39, had a visa to go to Prague, and I, I was practically going, and then there was so much to do here I couldn't get away, and I suppose it was quite lucky I didn't go, because I certainly would never have got back.

MJ: Do you remember what hall, or room you organised at Liverpool Street Station for the meeting of these children?

NW: It wasn't a room and it wasn't a hall, it was the platform, the arrival of the train they arrived in, which, you can imagine, with a couple of hundred children arriving, with tickets with their round their necks, and a couple of hundred people who were trying to find out which child they were, and getting them to get their luggage, and sign for the child, it was as near chaos as I think one should get. And one was always having added problems like the Rabbis who arrived to collect children on a Saturday, and refused either to carry the luggage, or to sign for the children. Mother dealt with them very effectively, but it all added to the strain.

MJ: The reason I asked you about a hall, is that I can remember a hall when I arrived, and waiting in this hall to be collected, and I wondered where that was?

NW: Well, I should think there may have been some people taken off if the parents, or the guarantors rather, weren't there immediately, I dare say they produced some kind of waiting room for the children.

MJ: Maybe it was just a waiting room?

NW: I really can't remember. I only remember the chaos on the main, on a platform.²³²

²³² Nicholas Winton, Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community, interview by Milenka Jackson, 14 August 1990, C410/094, British Library Sounds.

In the second example, interviewer Ilse Sinclair ignores interviewee Manfred Heyman's efforts to continue his own narrative, choosing instead to doggedly pursue a line of questioning about a person she once knew:

IS: You kept relatively healthy?

MH: Yes, well, whoever ended up with a doctor, I wouldn't have survived! Never went to a doctor in all those years.

IS: You didn't.

MH: That was terrible.

IS: Fantastic.

MH: In that camp, we knew the doctor, because he came from our town.

IS: Oh really? Could you give me his name, because I knew a doctor in Stettin?

MH: Mossbach.

IS: No.

MH: And he helped my father, I must say that, but still, they didn't have a lot of medicine. That, that hospital was more for show than anything else, because the Commander used to come in and look at the register, 'How long was this man here?' If he was over a week, and he asked the doctor, 'How long is he going to stay here?' If the doctor said, it was up to the doctor to say, if he would have said, 'Oh, he's here another week', he would've said, 'Out with him', and they would have shot him.

IS: And they would shoot him. There wasn't a doctor there called Kaspari? I knew a doctor in Stettin called Kaspari. You didn't know him?

MH: No. I told you, the transport were divided into three towns.

IS: Yes, yes, of course, it was very unlikely, it would have been a coincidence.

MH: People ask me nowadays, you know, sometimes, I meet some German Jew, he says, 'I had a relation there' or something, I say, 'I'm sorry.'

IS: Well, there could be a coincidence sometimes.

Ilse Sinclair's interview with Manfred Heyman is in fact far more revealing even than this. Wingate's confidence in the depth of knowledge allegedly possessed by her interviewers is called into question in this interview, when Sinclair's lack of knowledge is exposed in a way that is arguably detrimental to the interviewer-interviewee relationship and to the interview as a whole. In the following extract Sinclair asks Heyman to where he was deported after leaving a work camp near Krakow. Sinclair's response leaves Heyman disinterested in offering further details of that experience:

IS: Where were you sent to?

MH: Flossenbürg

IS: I see. Where on earth is that? Flossenbürg where is that

MH: Would you know if I tell you?

IS: Pardon?

MH: Have you ever heard of that?

IS: Never

MH: I always, I watched the Odessa File

IS: Oh yes, I think I've watched it too, but perhaps I didn't hear the names

MH: And that camp guard, who imitated a camp guard, he was at Flossenbürg

IS: I see. Whereabouts is that?

MH: Bavaria, near the Czech border

IS: Oh really

MH: Beautiful countryside

IS: Really. Oh that made a change!

MH: Yes. Forest.²³³

A similar situation occurs in the interview with Solomon Freiman conducted by Audrie Mundy, only in this instance the interviewee verbally expresses his disdain for her lack of knowledge:

²³³ Heyman, Interview for LMJC.

SF: They didn't know what to do with us, they started 'schlepping' us, so they started taking us to Theresienstadt

AM: To Resendstadt?

SF: You've never heard of Theresienstadt? No?

AM: No

SF: Oh, you don't know nothing! I can see that you're not very familiar with the whole thing

AM: Tell me about that

SF: This was the Camp, this was the Jewish, supposed to be the Jewish Model Camp, Theresienstadt, you've heard of the word

AM: Well, I've heard more of Auschwitz and Buchenwald and Treblinka²³⁴

The underlying impression is that in the case of *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* the Jewish background of the interviewers – which sometimes, but not always, included some direct personal or familial link to the Holocaust – was deemed sufficient background knowledge to qualify an individual for interviewing. By employing 'insiders' to conduct the interviews, LMJC intentionally and meaningfully shaped the narratives that it produced, sometimes for the better, but in some instances the benefit of the insider approach was overstated and the choice of interviewer ultimately had a detrimental impact on the interviews. Audrie Mundy for one decided after conducting two interviews that she did not feel sufficiently qualified to conduct 'good' interviews and did not conduct any further interviews for LMJC.²³⁵

This in-depth case study of the interviewer-interviewee dynamic in LMJC interviews clearly illustrates the need for an understanding and appreciation of the impact of interviewer background on the information contained within an oral interview. The interviewers in this instance however are only 'insiders' by virtue of their shared Jewish background; they are not, almost without exception, Holocaust

²³⁴ Solomon Freiman, Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community, interview by Audrie Mundy, 22 September 1989, C410/052, British Library Sounds.

²³⁵ Mundy, Interview for National Life Stories.

survivors themselves. An altogether different dynamic emerges when Holocaust survivors interview Holocaust survivors. Child Holocaust survivor and psychotherapist Robert Krell commenced his own programme of interviewing survivors of the Holocaust in Vancouver prior to the establishment of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre in the late 1970s, stating his intentions as follows:

My hope is to videotape a small number of survivors who are not patients and who have made a successful adaption to life even though they have been exposed to the extreme stresses of the Nazi oppression. I know most of these people personally and they have agreed (some call to volunteer) to tell their stories on videotape. These tapes have great potential value as:

1. A permanent record of an important event. The survivors are few in number and only recently have become able to talk of their experiences.

2. Educational material for courses related to the Holocaust.

3. A source of hypotheses for future investigations, e.g. transgenerational transmission of Holocaust-related symptoms. It is known that children of survivors assume certain specific characteristics of the parental experience.

To date, the emphasis has been on the negative characteristics. It is likely that for some it is a source of great personal strength. Perhaps the videotapes will reflect some of the latter.²³⁶

Three of Krell's early Holocaust interviews are currently available to view at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre: survivors George Diamant (1979) and Vera Slymovics (1981), and concentration camp liberator Halford Wilson (1982). In the case of the two interviews with Holocaust survivors, three important personal attributes defined the nature of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee in this instance, all of which can be read into the above statement of

²³⁶ Robert Krell to Louis Woolf, 'Letter Re. Donation: Evelyn & Leon Kahn (\$500) For Research', 20 August 1979, 1, Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 53 File 1, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

intent: the fact that both parties survived the Holocaust, Krell's professional position as a psychiatrist, and the fact that the interviewees were previously known to Krell and were personally invited by him to partake in the interview process. As a psychiatrist, Krell's interest in Holocaust survivor pathology and the transmission of trauma manifests in the kinds of questions he puts to his interviewees. Whereas some projects, such as the CJC-HDP, actively discourage interviewers from focusing too much on the emotional and personal component of the survivor's memories, Krell's approach demands explanations: 'We're talking about, the four days of watching, the Holocaust on TV. Did you er were you upset because of its portrayal or because of your own memories?'²³⁷ Krell also uses the interview as an opportunity to challenge the interviewee's own experiences against Holocaust survivor stereotypes or common collective characteristics: 'Some survivors prefer not to ever mention the camps again, not to ever tell their story. What do you think about that?'; 'There are people who have as you well know have written about survivors and some of the consequences of, of having been in a camp and one of the major features that survivors share are nightmares, er, it is said there is another major feature of survivors and that is that all of them have guilt about surviving, do you share that feeling?'²³⁸; 'George erm, how come you turned out okay? [...] Do you know what I'm asking? Is that, how come you are well, enough, as a person, people say that, survivors of concentration camps must be, forever sick in some way, that, pathology'²³⁹. It is Krell's status as a true 'insider' – as someone who shares the experience under investigation and as an individual is literally 'inside' the interviewee's personal social circle – that enables him to ask questions of his interviewees that an 'outsider' would struggle to, to challenge their answers, and on occasion – in his own words – to play 'devil's advocate'. In the following extract from his interview with Vera Slymovics, Krell enters into a gentle debate with Slymovics about the inevitability of the Holocaust:

²³⁷ Slymovics, Interview for Robert Krell.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ George Diamant, Interview for Robert Krell, interview by Robert Krell, 4 December 1979, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

RK: But it's inevitable that it will happen again don't you think?

VS: Not in this fashion, never again it can't

RK: Well, it happened to eleven million citizens with, six million specifically designated for extermination it is now known as as a war, a definitive war against the Jews because, because erm, even though the Germans were short on material and trains and everything they continued, that war, against the people but but er the fact is that all those who liberated the camps, and saw what had happened, they don't say anything today

VS: But we are going to make them say

RK: But they're not they are also heading into their fifties and sixties, they don't say anything they don't say anything about the Nazis wanting to march in Scogi Illinois

VS: Perhaps their children will

RK: How will they know? How will they know history is history is being not only rewritten and distorted but worse than that forgotten

VS: Er, do you believe in the power of man? Do you believe that that has to start somewhere, Rob you were watching us trying to put the Holocaust story a struggle we had in the beginning and it wasn't getting us nowhere but slowly we persevered, and today in the city of Vancouver, we have seminars [...]

Krell can only get away with challenging Slymovics' opinions because of their shared experience of the event, and far from this being a challenge of the legitimacy of her opinions, it is apparent that he employs this strategy as a way of encouraging Slymovics to expound upon her attitudes and beliefs, which she does. It is the relationship that Krell and Slymovics already have with one another that enables them to have this conversation, as one of intellectual debate rather than forced justification. In another example, Krell positions himself as 'the devil's advocate' and launches into a challenge of her attitudes towards Israel:

Well I'm going to ask you another question then about that, I'm being the devil's advocate I want to hear your thoughts, erm, the er, one

major accusation of peoples who who do become knowledgeable about the Holocaust is that the Jews offered no resistance which of course we know is not that is not true, and the fact that they did not offer resistance there are very very good reasons for it and you mentioned some of them, not knowing, totally, incredulous that such a thing could be happening and the hope that somehow or other people would come to your aid. Beside the fact that there were no arms and no organised resistance even even the armies of Europe could not withstand the German army for any longer than several days or several weeks, let alone an unarmed people, but, they are, the er, the er Jews of Europe are accused of passivity. You say there is a great deal of hope, in the state of Israel, the same people who accuse the Jews of Europe of passivity, accuse the state of Israel of being an aggressive war mongering oppressive nation that, usurps the rights of other peoples, how do you reconcile the, the accusation from basically the same people, of er, passivity on the one hand which led to peoples deaths, to their wish to be passive to their wish that they be passive in Israel as well although facing certain annihilation if they don't defend themselves

Exchanges such as these are the kinds of exchanges that could only occur between one survivor and another; there is almost an accusatory tone, which coming from a non-Jew or even a Jewish non-survivor would probably come across as offensive. The very opposite is true of Krell's interview with Vera Slymovics, as Slymovics herself later acknowledges:

When you said to me you were the devil's advocate you see you couldn't, because I know you, and I love you what you stand for and how you feel, and I always, I once asked you 'how do you feel as a psychiatrist seeing us not being able to get it off the ground' and you said when I am with my people I am not a psychiatrist and I treasure those words, these are my little presents that I carry with me, so when I

am talking to you I know I am talking to someone who is suffering with me and this is what keeps us going...²⁴⁰

While each project endeavoured to curate the narrative through the specific selection of certain kinds of interviewers or certain specific individuals, intention can only manage the output to a limited extent. Kathy Faludi of the CJC-HDP recognised that individual personalities would inevitably alter the way they executed the project methodology: 'Using a non-directive, non-investigative interview method resulted in a narrative style testimony. Although the same basic guidelines were used by both interviewers, it is natural that the personal style of each was different. That difference was reflected in the interview process, positively resulting in obtaining material which had differences in tone or emphasis.'²⁴¹ Ultimately, the individuality of interviewers – and indeed of interviewees – contributes an almost infinite number of variables to the dynamic between the two, which means interviews can only ever be fully interpreted on their own merits. As Ronald Grele summarises, 'the rhetorical necessity of the moment, the fancy of the memorist, the imaginations of both interviewer and interviewee will often determine what is and what is not discussed at any given moment, or the connections made between one event and another...Each interview situation is different, each interviewer's logic different.'²⁴²

Grele raises an interesting point: the individual personalities of interviewee and interviewer, combined with the almost infinite number of variables involved in any interview situation, means that in spite of a project's best efforts to select the right 'type' of interviewer for the job, interviewees do not always respond as expected. In many instances, the skill of an experienced interviewer results in good quality, content-focused interviews in which the interviewee is given space to narrate free from interruption, with the interviewer participating to elicit detail, to ask specific questions or to move the narrative along as necessary. The interview of

²⁴⁰ Szymovics, Interview for Robert Krell.

²⁴¹ Kathy Faludi, 'Holocaust Documentation Project Progress Report: Phase II, July 1 1981 - January 31 1982' (Holocaust Documentation Project, 24 February 1982), 4–5, CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 10, Canadian Jewish Archives.

²⁴² Ronald J. Grele, 'On Using Oral History Collections: An Introduction', *The Journal of American History* 74, no. 2 (1987): 571.

Judith Steinberg, conducted by Rosalyn Livshin for *Refugee Voices*, is one such example: listening to the audio of the interview reveals that Steinberg speaks very freely and confidently and requires very little prompting from the interviewer, but is amenable to the interviewer's questions, which are used to solicit additional information and prompt explorations that may not have come organically, or to gently guide the narrative ('What kind of food do you remember her [her mother] making?'; 'Just one thing that came to mind, was your father involved in the Jewish community in any kind of official capacity? You know, did he hold any positions or was he involved in any charitable work?'; 'So coming on to 1944 and the German occupation. What are your memories of that happening, what do you remember about that time?').²⁴³ However the conceptualised role of the interviewer in these examples conferred the interviewer a level of control over the interview that was often exerted whether or not the interviewee was receptive to this particular interviewing style. Rosalyn Livshin's attempts to dissuade Fanni Bogdanow from reading from her papers because 'this is meant to be your [her] personal recollection' is one such example. Bogdanow actively resists the format that Livshin is trying to execute because her impulse is to testify, not to consent to questioning or academic study. The result is an interview that is heavy in content but lacks particular emotional depth; by the reflective section at the end of the interview, Bogdanow is compliant in answering Livshin's questions but typically with short, closed answers that provide only a surface level insight into her memories. Bogdanow is far more comfortable giving her testimony to Linda Berman at the Holocaust Survivors' Centre with its open, passive collection policy; the real strength of her HSC interview is the window it offers into her memory and her own relationship with her experiences, by virtue of the open platform it offered her to recount as she wished.

The Concordia University Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) project *Life Stories of Montrealers* employed a different approach altogether: based on Michael Frisch's concept of 'shared authority', the structure of *Life Stories of Montrealers* was designed so that the interviewer and interviewee share control

²⁴³ Steinberg, Interview for *Refugee Voices*.

over the course of the interview and work together to construct the narrative on the basis of the needs, requirements and perspectives of both parties; essentially, they share authorship of the interview and responsibility for its production. The CURA training guide issued to interviewers explained:

This project is built on the framework [of] ‘shared authority’ (Frisch), and is a collaborative endeavour in every sense and all levels. At the research level, the project is built on the shared authority of the oral history narratives – a collaboration between researcher and researched). Communities are collaborators, and true partners in dialogue, as well as being subjects of the research (the project has [been] developed by a team of 37 participants in the Montreal-area, including 15 community partners representing the city’s diverse immigrant communities as well as a range of heritage, human rights, and education agencies). Furthermore, the project will devise strategies designed to share authority beyond the interview stage, enabling interviewees and community partners to help the project interpret interviews, and to participate in research production.²⁴⁴

Specifically, the project established itself on an interview ethic in which the interviewer ‘brings questions, training and some “distance”’ and the interviewee ‘brings life experience and storytelling’ to the interview setting to co-produce the narrative ‘in an egalitarian and non-hierarchical environment of mutual respect and trust’.²⁴⁵ The project aimed to strike a balance between the kind of active research-driven oral history format that characterised *Refugee Voices* and the passive testimony collection approach of projects such as the HSC testimony recording facility. A definition of oral history and the kind of interviewing the project hoped to engage in that was provided to prospective interviewers during one of the mandatory interviewer training sessions reads as follows:

²⁴⁴ Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, ‘CURA Training Guide’, 17.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

Interviews are so much more than oral history; it's a reflection on personal impact, faith, etc. that is intertwined with history. // Two persons working together hard, understanding the reflection of an experience and wondering what is 'tellable' or not, what can be said or not. // The goal of life stories is to have a collaborative, interactive and interpretative environment.²⁴⁶

This conceptualised relationship between interviewer and interviewee also sits in stark contrast to those of the research-driven and testimony-based approaches. All commence from the basic principle of historical documentation but vary in the specifics: in the CJC-HDP the interviewer took on an active role in exploring and documenting historical information; HSC project interviewers existed to facilitate the giving and receiving of personal memory, the accuracy of which was generally to be left unchallenged; and the CURA mandate was a collaborative enterprise between interviewer and interviewee to not only record the details of the event experienced, but to explore the impact of the event, to interpret its meanings and messages, and to produce a personalised illustrative account of the experience. In the words of the CURA training guide: 'the focus of this project is on the people involved in certain events, rather than on the events per se.'²⁴⁷ In order to embed the principle of shared authority into the very framework of the project, the project sourced volunteer interviewers from within the community and the academy, which resulted in interviewers from a wide variety of backgrounds conducting interviews for *Life Stories of Montrealers*, including museum docents, students, academics and social workers. Across the whole of the *Life Stories of Montrealers* project (i.e. including other working groups besides the Holocaust WG) the interviewer pool consisted of 50% university-based and 50% community-based individuals.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, 'General Training 2 - Ethics, Interviewing and Listening to Survivors', February 2011, 34, <http://lifestoriesmontreal.ca/en/oral-history-training.html>.

²⁴⁷ Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, 'CURA Training Guide', 13–14.

²⁴⁸ Afsaneh Hojabri, 'Occasional Paper #1: Methodology, Ethics and Training in the Montreal Life Stories CURA' (Concordia University COHDS, December 2008), 22, <http://lifestoriesmontreal.ca/en/resources/publications.html>.

Much has already been said on the manifestation of the research-based and testimony-based approaches in practice. The testimony-based approach of the Holocaust Survivors' Centre is characterised by a wide variety of different interviewing formats, ranging from a question-and-answer style to the reading of a pre-prepared 'scripted' testimony in which the 'interviewer' does not actively engage at all. Not dissimilarly, the interviewers for the McGill *Living Testimonies* project allowed interviewees to narrate events and anecdotes of personal interest and importance, interjecting primarily to ask clarifying questions rather than investigative ones or to move the narrative along: ('do you remember what time of year that was?'; 'how long did you stay there?'; 'how did you survive in the ghetto? Was there food? Were there means of support?'; 'why does the forester attack you, with the knife?'²⁴⁹) The shared authority approach of the CURA project generally produces interviews that strike a balance between the other two extremes – fact-based researcher-driven interviewing on the one hand and the offering of a platform for survivors to freely deliver individualised narratives on the other. In a number of interviews for this project, the interviewer launched the interview with an open invitation to the survivor to relate something of their background, then provided the interviewee with a platform to relate their narrative as they wish. Only later – after the interviewee finished freely narrating, or in a second tape and occasionally in a subsequent interviewing session – did the interviewer begin asking detailed questions or following up on events or anecdotes mentioned by the interviewee. Commitment to chronology and/or a chronological 'life history' is sacrificed in favour of allowing the interviewee to recall freely, meaning the natural associative processes of memory are captured in the recording – that is to say, the recording documents the interviewee's freely-given 'testimony', revealing what that individual considers the most important elements of their story and the links between memories that exist in their minds. Crucially, in this approach free 'testimony' is recorded not at the expense of detail, which is acquired in the latter stages of the interview when the interviewer takes their turn and asks the questions needed to elicit such detail. In this model, both parties are given the

²⁴⁹ Renata Zajdman, Interview for Living Testimonies, interview by Yehudi Lindeman and Sarah Leah Graftstein, 6 June 1989, 55228, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

opportunity to realise their agendas: this is what the CURA project refers to as 'sharing authority'.

Summary

When the utility of archival material is so patently clear and the moral value of it so self-evident, it is all too easy to overlook and take for granted the actions and processes that brought that material into existence. When we think about 'testimony' we think about hearing the voice of the survivor, but rarely do we consider what other voices we can hear in the narrative, be they individual or institutional. In distinguishing between archivalisation and archiving, Eric Ketelaar identifies and makes a useful distinction between two fundamental processes that shape any and all archival material: the ideas and circumstances that highlight the need for something to be archived and the actual processes by which an individual or organisation goes about collecting that material, respectively. When we study testimonies this way, we are able to better understand how all of these voices and processes come together to produce – to contextually construct – a survivor's narrative within the interview framework.

Whilst it is difficult to argue in the case of Holocaust oral testimony that anyone has more invested in the outcome of a testimony project than the survivors themselves, there is something to be said about the imbalance of authority in interviewing situations such as these and its impact on the resulting interview. Sharon Kangisser Cohen observed in her comparative analysis of early and later Holocaust testimonies that there is a remarkable degree of consistency in the core narratives of survivor accounts, though this does not mean that survivor testimonies are always the same: she argues that the stories that survivors tell tend to be recalled with accuracy and uniformity regardless of the time that has elapsed since the event or the setting in which the testimony is given, but that in spite of this consistency in memory there are notable differences between multiple interviews given by the same interviewee, framed by such conditions as the 'imagined audience', 'narrative expectations', and 'emotional context'.²⁵⁰ This assessment explains why an analysis of the interview framework based on

²⁵⁰ Cohen, *Testimony and Time*, chap. 5.

institutional mandates and project methodologies is so important: even when the testimonial imperative of the survivor lends itself to narrative consistency, the archiving process always circumscribes the way in which the narrative is reproduced and recorded. To be able to meaningfully appreciate what oral testimonies can tell us about the Holocaust, therefore, we must learn to hear how institutional and interviewer voices work alongside the voice of the survivor in the construction of a survivor testimony. The above analysis illustrates how such a process is possible without representing an assault on the integrity of a survivor's memory.

Part II – Analysing the Testimonial Landscape

If we accept that Ketelaar's theories of archivalisation and archiving provide an accurate and effective means of recontextualising archived oral testimonies – and recognise the process of recontextualisation to be meaningful and valuable – then we must acknowledge the fact that oral testimonies are not ahistorical sources, but rather that interviews and the archives that they form are contextually produced reflections of the time and place in which they were created. Writing on the cultural dimension of bearing witness, Jovan Byford makes the following observation:

The systematic collection of testimonies and survivors' increasing presence in public life have opened up a number of questions about how testimonies should be understood, used, and represented...An important motif in this scholarship is the acknowledgment that testimonies, while by nature personal, are also inherently *social*. How a specific account of a particular experience is configured and reconstituted in a personal narrative is not just a reflection of individual memory or a function of accuracy of recall. Testimonies, and the symbolic power associated with the practice of bearing witness, are both contingent upon and mediated by several factors. Among the most important is the institutional dynamic behind their collection...In addition, testimonies and witnessing are influenced by established cultural and storytelling practices, and by broader discourses of collective memory – all of which inevitably determine the parameters of Holocaust representation in any given culture or historical period.²⁵¹

The impact of the institutional dynamic on the content of Holocaust testimonies is the argument that has underpinned the analysis made in this thesis thus far, but in addition to asserting the importance of contextualising Holocaust oral testimonies prior to using them from the archive this carries with it an additional implication: that collections of Holocaust oral testimony reflect a particular commemorative culture to which the oral recording of survivors was perceived to be a valuable and

²⁵¹ Jovan Byford, 'Remembering Jasenovac: Survivor Testimonies and the Cultural Dimension of Bearing Witness', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 28, no. 1 (2014): 59.

meaningful response, and therefore the collections are themselves an historiographical response to the Holocaust. This section of the thesis examines how Holocaust oral testimonies are both products of – and in turn produce – contemporary Holocaust consciousness. Ketelaar commented on this process when he reflected on Jacques Derrida’s theory that archives not only preserve the past but determine the relationship between the past, present and the future: ‘The archiving produces as much as it records the event.’²⁵²

The role of testimony in memorialising, commemorating and recording the genocide has undergone significant changes since the end of the war and many scholars have sought to identify and interpret these changes, with a view to understanding precisely how the event has been produced by survivors and contemporary scholars over time. One of the leading scholars in this area is Annette Wieviorka, whose book *The Era of the Witness* seeks to illustrate how testifying is not just an individual act, but an act which is imbued with the political concerns and moral urgencies of the society which initiates and facilitates its collection. In her book she summarises the constructed nature of testimonies that I explored in Part I of this thesis:

Testimonies, particularly when they are produced as part of a larger cultural movement, express the discourse or discourses valued by society at the moment the witnesses tell their stories as much as they render an individual experience. In principle, testimonies demonstrate that every individual, every life, every experience of the Holocaust is irreducibly unique. But they demonstrate this uniqueness using the language of the time in which they are delivered and in response to questions and expectations motivated by political and ideological concerns. Consequently, despite their uniqueness, testimonies come to participate in a collective memory – or collective memories – that vary

²⁵² Ketelaar, ‘Tacit Narratives’, 134.

in their form, function, and in the implicit or explicit aims they set for themselves.²⁵³

The 'era of the witness' to which Wieviorka alludes comprises the systematic collection of audiovisual testimonies of Holocaust survivors from the late 1970s onwards, which Wieviorka argues was not just the result of the increasing willingness of survivors to speak but was the manifestation of the potential and real value that testimony is perceived to have for any given society at any point in time. The political and ideological contexts in which testimony is produced therefore instrumentalise testimony in a way that most befits the people it intends to reach which rarely, if ever, are the survivors themselves.²⁵⁴ Wieviorka is one of a few scholars who have sought to outline a testimonial chronology from the end of the war to the present, but for various reasons – not least of scope and practicality – almost all have focused primarily on the US context and/or position oral testimony as one type of testimony within a wider testimonial tradition, taking as their primary case studies the large-scale US enterprises such as the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum collection and the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive and extrapolating this data to make generalised arguments about the international trajectory of testimony collection.²⁵⁵ Jessica Wiederhorn for example, in her chapter on the oral testimony of Holocaust survivors in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, uses US-based cultural events and testimony collections as benchmarks for the development of testimony culture and characterises the process as culminating in the establishment of the USC VHA with its global ambition to interview as many survivors as possible. The British and Canadian projects that I reference in this thesis are wholly incomparable to the mass archival collections of the US in terms of scale – and arguably global influence – but the role they play in developing and reflecting their respective national commemorative cultures is of utmost

²⁵³ Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, xii.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 137.

²⁵⁵ See, for example: Wiederhorn, 'The Oral History of Holocaust Survivors'; Kushner, 'Holocaust Testimony'; Geoffrey Hartman, *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996).

significance and cannot be ignored if the contribution that oral testimony has played internationally is to be fully accounted for in Holocaust historiography.

The argument I posit is not that the trajectorial analysis of Wiederhorn, Wieviorka and others is an inaccurate reflection of the British and Canadian contexts, but rather that there are specificities in each national context that are not mirrored or do not similarly dominate in the US, which are crucial to understanding how and why testimony projects emerged as they did in these contexts. Undertaking a contextual analysis for these projects will enhance our understanding of the material in question and the testimonial traditions from which they emerged, with the corollary that differentiating this material from the large archival projects of the US enhances understanding of the US context too, by establishing a hitherto unprecedented comparative perspective. The first part of this section of the thesis will therefore historicise the case study projects, to account for their origins in the cultural, political and intellectual environments that engendered them, utilising comparisons with each other and with US projects where appropriate to make its arguments. This historicisation will then be used to characterise the testimonial landscapes of Britain and Canada, in order to demonstrate how oral testimony projects are both integral to and indicative of national²⁵⁶ commemorative and historiographic engagement with the Holocaust.

Oral History: The Elite, the Academic, and the Archival
Accepting that Holocaust oral testimony collections do not and did not emerge in a vacuum includes acknowledging that there is an established theoretical and methodological precedent for interviewing within or against which individuals and institutions have commenced recording Holocaust survivors. In some cases an institution has a pre-established interviewing or recording programme of which Holocaust survivors are one but not the only subject of interest. Others are independent oral history projects run by oral historians dedicated solely to conducting Holocaust-related interviews. Others still are initiated by survivor communities or organisations with no prior form for interviewing. Virtually all

²⁵⁶ The term 'national' here should be taken to mean 'how it occurs within a nation' rather than in the political sense of the word.

however – committed to producing an accurate and irrefutable body of testimonial evidence to the genocide – engage either oral historians as interviewers or consultants, or reference oral history and interviewing literature in their methodologies. Reading Holocaust oral testimony collections against their national oral history landscapes enables us to understand the origin of their methodologies and identify reasons why Holocaust projects developed different approaches to interviewing in different countries. Much has been written on the global oral history movement: Alastair Thomson’s article ‘Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History’ for example summarises the key international events and movements that have impacted the scholarly direction of oral history and is a widely regarded piece of scholarship on the history of oral history. According to Thomson the first paradigm shift occurred in the wake of the Second World War, an event which prompted scholars to turn to memory as a source for historical research, which incentivised interviewing and was underpinned by the increased availability of portable tape recorders at that time. Thomson acknowledged, however, that ‘the timing and pattern of this emergence differed markedly around the world.’²⁵⁷

There is moreover a precedent and a solid theoretical foundation for a comparison of the origins of oral history in Britain, Canada and the US: in 1990, Wilma MacDonald published an article in the Canadian oral history journal *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* entitled ‘Origins: Oral History Programmes in Canada, Britain and the United States’ in which she compared the intellectual and cultural foundations of the oral history movements in each of the three countries and the practical methods and approaches that underscored them. MacDonald’s analysis focuses on three key areas: the academic and professional fields to which the origins of the respective oral history movement have been ascribed; the professions and topical interests of the individuals credited with driving the movement; and the practical understanding of the value of the oral history recording. In summary, MacDonald makes the following generalised distinctions between the three:

²⁵⁷ Alastair Thomson, ‘Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History’, *The Oral History Review* 34, no. 1 (2007): 51.

Oral history was created, as well as preserved, by universities and state historical societies in the United States, and the subjects of early programmes were living Americans who had 'led significant lives' in the political, economic, and cultural life of the nation...Oral history in Great Britain came from the folklore tradition, and while early broadcast interviews usually focused on the elite in society, the main impetus for an oral history movement was carried on by social historians who interviewed 'ordinary' English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh people about their lives. In Canada, the strongest push for an oral history movement came from archivists working in provincial and federal archives, and early programmes focused on the pioneers who opened up the country, usually immigrants from other lands, and their contributions to the settling of the new country.²⁵⁸

Simultaneously in the three countries, oral history was being employed by individuals from various fields to different ends. Allan Nevins, a journalist and historian, is widely credited with launching the oral history movement in the US, where he recognised its potential as a means of supplementing the existing written historical record. Nevins observed a decrease in the quantity of written communication being preserved as modern technology rendered it increasingly obsolete and sought to interview members of the American elite and those who knew them, believing that valuable information would be lost when those individuals died. To ensure a comprehensive approach to preserving this information, Nevis proposed the establishment of 'some organisation which made a systematic attempt to obtain, from the lips and papers of living Americans who have led significant lives, a fuller record of their participation in the political, economic, and cultural life of the last sixty years.'²⁵⁹ Three of the earliest and most influential efforts at oral history in the United States – led by Nevins at Columbia University, Willa Baum at the University of California Berkeley, and William M. Moss

²⁵⁸ Wilma MacDonald, 'Origins: Oral History Programmes in Canada, Britain and the United States', *Oral History Forum d'histoire Orale* 10 (1990): 13.

²⁵⁹ Allan Nevins, quoted in introduction to Allan Nevins, 'Oral History: How and Why It Was Born', in *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, ed. David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996), 29.

at The John F. Kennedy Library – were university-based and journalistic efforts at documenting the lives of leading American figures for the benefit of historians and researchers. Thus the US Oral History Association (OHA) was founded in 1967, largely on the understanding that the role of oral history was to add to collections rather than as an historical practice in its own right.²⁶⁰

In almost direct contrast with the US was the British approach to oral history, which from its earliest days was driven by an interest in utilising the interview as a means of recording and writing the histories of groups who were largely omitted from the written record, for reasons of (ill)literacy, economic inequality, or political or social ostracisation. In the first chapter of the first edition of *The Voice of the Past*, Paul Thompson made the following observation:

Until the present century, the focus of history was essentially political...This was partly because historians, who themselves then belonged to the administering and governing classes, thought that this was what mattered most...But even if they had wished to write a different kind of history it would have been far from easy, for the raw material from which history was written, the documents, had been kept or destroyed by people with the same priorities. The more personal, local, and unofficial a document, the less likely it was to survive.²⁶¹

Thompson's comment shows how oral history in Britain has, from its earliest days, been underscored by a commitment to democratising history and 'filling in the gaps' in a historical corpus dominated by the agendas of the ruling classes. It was with this understanding that the Oral History Society (OHS) was established in September 1973. The announcement regarding the establishment of the OHS that was published in the *Oral History* journal stated the following:

Oral history, which can be broadly defined as the collection and preservation of first-hand historical evidence, generally by means of tape-recorded interviews, is a field which has only recently been

²⁶⁰ Ellen D. Swain, 'Oral History in the Archives', 140.

²⁶¹ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 1978, 2–3.

exploited by serious academic researchers in the United Kingdom, although it has long been established in the United States. It is now recognised both as a method of obtaining hitherto unavailable source material for the study of history and as a medium by which the experience of those now living may be transmitted to our successors. We are especially concerned with those sections of society who are unlikely to leave behind them any quantity of written memoirs, diaries or correspondence from which history can subsequently be written.²⁶²

Comparing the motivations underscoring the establishment of the OHA and the OHS reveals a clear difference in the culture of oral history that prevailed in the US and the UK in the early days of the movement: though both recognised the value of oral recording in a world that was relying less and less on the handwritten word, the OHA championed its use to document elite lives and the OHS saw its value in writing the history of the undocumented classes.

Oral history in Canada, too, emerged from a growing concern with documenting the lives of non-elite and minority groups rather than leading figures. In 1973, Leo LaClare wrote an article for the American journal *The Oral History Review* presenting an overview of developments in Canadian oral history, in which he noted extensive usage of the medium to ‘document non-elite groups such as labor, cultural or ethnic communities, and pioneers’, not least because the medium was more accessible to middle- and lower-class Canadians than written documentation. The difference, LaClare explains, is that it was largely non-academics – those who were already familiar with oral communication as a medium – that took up the torch: radio, television and film producers, local historians, community activists and undergraduate students, amongst others.²⁶³ As a result, oral history in Canada was driven largely by archivists, many of whom worked in provincial and federal archives, who initiated oral history projects to record the memories of many of Canada’s minority groups, including native peoples, ethnic

²⁶² ‘Important Announcement: The Oral History Society’, *Oral History* 2, no. 1 (1974): 2.

²⁶³ Léo LaClare, ‘Oral History in Canada: An Overview’, *The Oral History Review* 1 (1973): 88–89.

cultural communities, pioneers and immigrants.²⁶⁴ It was these individuals, led by LaClare, who came together to establish the Canadian Oral History Association (COHA) in 1974.²⁶⁵ Early Canadian oral history was, therefore, typically North American in that it was driven by an archival, documentary agenda, a desire to utilise interviewing as a means of capturing historical data from living witnesses. But it was also a far more democratic enterprise: it was designed to pre-empt historical need rather than support it, and as an employable methodology it was considered the purview not only of those in the academy but also of anyone with the ability to interview and record who could perceive a need and opportunity to do so. This approach was summarised by Canadian historian Irving Abella – who later co-authored with Harold Troper the ground-breaking monograph *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948* on the hostile Canadian wartime and postwar refugee policy – in an article on the Canadian labour movement about the perceived value of oral history in Canada:

In the hands of the skilled and serious professional, oral history can not only help fill some of the enormous gaps afflicting our documentary archives, but also can add new dimensions to our investigation and representation of the past. Oral history is not so much history in itself as it is the raw material for the study of our past. Treated critically and knowledgably as any other historical source – which it is, no better and no worse – oral history can provide, as indeed it has already, a much more profound understanding of the lives, feelings, ideas, and activities of the men and women we never read about in our history books.²⁶⁶

The theories which drove the development of the discipline in the three countries were reflected in the methodologies employed to execute interview projects. In the early days of oral history in the United States, interviews were transcribed and – often – the recorded tapes were discarded or written over; prioritising the written

²⁶⁴ MacDonald, 'Origins', 12–13.

²⁶⁵ Alexander Freund, Kristina R. Llewellyn, and Nolan Reilly, 'Introduction', in *The Canadian Oral History Reader*, ed. Kristina R. Llewellyn, Alexander Freund, and Nolan Reilly (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 6.

²⁶⁶ Irving Abella, 'Oral History and the Canadian Labour Movement', *Archivaria* 4 (1977): 120.

word over the oral reflected a concern with the objective, documentary value of eyewitness accounts, and the selection of 'leading' figures in American life as the subject of recording efforts situates this concern in the elite, biographical realm of history. British oral history, conversely, focused on the everyman and the minority, with oral historians – often historians and sociologists by training – conducting community histories designed to be self-fulfilling history endeavours which held the oral recording as the primary document, for the oral traditions of communities – their speech patterns, accents, and storytelling techniques – were perceived to be as much valuable historical evidence as the stories they told. Canadian oral historians too held the tape to be the primary document, but interviews were conducted and recorded for their archival value and did not always function as part of predetermined historical research. Wilma MacDonald argues that the limits that an archival approach may have inadvertently placed on the historical component of the enterprise may, in the long run, have had negative implications for the Canadian oral history landscape:

But, while public institutions have been the initial keepers of oral history in Canada, since the mid-1980s they have been reminded of the official mandate of their archives and have begun to abstain from any involvement in the preservation of records which lie outside the official definition of archives. The archival embrace of oral history may have, in the end, not been a good one for oral history in Canada.²⁶⁷

Whether or not early Holocaust oral testimony projects were conducted by active participants in the new oral history movements, the oral history traditions of the respective countries are reflected in their earliest efforts to interview Holocaust survivors. It was clear from the outset that insofar as British oral historians were concerned oral history had a substantial role to play in the study of minority groups. In his own assessment of the contemporary state of oral history Paul Thompson observed a number of examples in which oral history projects had formed the basis of the study of minority groups worldwide, noting specifically a growing interest in

²⁶⁷ MacDonald, 'Origins', 21–22.

the use of oral history to study immigration, both ‘as a form of social pathology’ and increasingly in ‘examining the ordinary experience of immigration, the process of finding work, the assistance of kin and neighbours, the building of minority community institutions, and the continuance of previous cultural customs as well as problems of racial tension and discrimination’. In particular, Thompson identified studies of Chinese and Japanese immigrant communities in North America, and, crucially, acknowledged that the possibilities of oral history ‘have been recognised for Jewish history.’²⁶⁸ Thompson’s observations are corroborated by the national output of oral history projects at the time. The journal of the Oral History Society has since it was first published in 1972 included a segment entitled ‘Current British Work in Oral History’, which records details of oral history projects underway in academic and cultural institutions and amongst community groups nationwide. Between 1972 and 1988 *Oral History* makes mention in this segment of nine different oral history projects which to a lesser or greater extent concern themselves with Jewish communities in Britain, backed by various institutions – many of them Jewish in origin – including Corpus Christi College Oxford, the Birmingham Jewish History Research Group, the West Midlands Oral History Group and the Irish-Jewish Museum, Dublin.²⁶⁹ Of these nine projects, six refer to Jewish immigrant populations in their descriptions and one refers explicitly to Jewish refugees, focusing on the experiences of female German-Jewish refugees settled in Britain. Oral history in the 1970s and 1980s was not, it appears, concerned with the experiences of Holocaust survivors beyond what they could contribute to more generic projects about the experience of Jewish and refugee communities in Britain. In 1978, two projects emerged simultaneously in Britain which can reasonably be considered the earliest examples of Holocaust oral testimony projects in the UK: the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive started interviewing for its archival collection *Britain and the Refugee Crisis*, and *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* was launched by the National Life Story Collection. LMJC, as I explained in Part I, was the third project launched by NLSC, an effort by oral historians led by

²⁶⁸ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 1978, 88–89.

²⁶⁹ See the following editions of *Oral History*: 1, no. 2 (1972); 5, no. 1 (1977); 8, no. 2 (1980); 9, no. 2 (1981); 11, no. 1 (1983); 12, no. 2 (1984); 15, no. 1 (1987); 15, no. 2 (1987).

Paul Thompson to produce a 'National Biography in Sound' which recorded the lives of elite members of society as well as minority groups; the decision to concentrate specifically on Holocaust survivors came about when Jennifer Wingate's initial idea to focus on the refugee community was realised to be too unwieldy and difficult to manage. Thus LMJC can be seen to fit neatly into an already established tradition of interviewing immigrants – and Jewish immigrants at that – in British oral history at the time.

The Imperial War Museum project too was evidently immigrant-centred and, at first glance, appears also to corroborate the trend: *Britain and the Refugee Crisis* concerned itself with refugees to Britain during the twentieth century, some from the First World War but 'the...main bulk of the refugee project was with people who had been either children or adults at the time in the 1930s, fleeing the rise of fascism in Europe.' This was not a project about the Holocaust: the specific remit of the project dealt with the period before Nazi anti-Jewish policy turned genocidal, and Margaret Brooks – who would later become Keeper of the Sound Archive – makes it clear that though many of the interviewees for the project were Jews it also included political and artistic refugees and people of significance such as scientists, as well as others.²⁷⁰ In the proposal that David Lance made to the Deputy Director of the Imperial War Museum regarding the establishment of the Department of Sound Records, in which he argued that 'the basis for the creation of new sound recordings should be the recorded interview', Lance outlined what he considered to be the recording priorities of the department, which were in order: to prioritise first and foremost those with personal experience of the First World War, as those memories were at the greatest risk of being lost; to interview 'outstanding figures in the Museum's field who are of national and international importance'; to solicit personal memories of the inter-war period to expand the Museum's record in this area; and finally to begin chronologically covering the whole of the Second World War.²⁷¹ For Lance the recorded interview was a means of extending and

²⁷⁰ Margaret Brooks, Interview for Oral History of Oral History in the UK, interview by Robert Wilkinson, 15 May 2013, C1149/30, British Library Sounds.

²⁷¹ David Lance to The Deputy Director, 'Imperial War Museum Internal Memorandum', 29 March 1972, 6, ROADS/DD6/03/013, Imperial War Museum.

expanding the IWM's archival holdings, thus his recording priorities were motivated first and foremost by the passage of time, but also by the Imperial War Museum's subject remit which at that time was largely militaristic and did not include the Holocaust. Graham Smith points out that David Lance was something of an anomaly on the British oral history scene, in that he did not adhere to the 'social history approach' to oral history and rejected the direction of the Oral History Society, instead tending towards the archival, elite style of oral history dominant in the United States, taking particular inspiration from Allan Nevins. According to Smith, 'Lance's own approach tended to be light on theory, lacked consideration of the significance of memory and power relations, and focused instead on oral history as a relatively simple "research method and an archival collecting technique".'²⁷² That said, it was under Margaret Brooks – who took over the running of the department from David Lance in 1983 – that the sound archive began to expand its remit to include the Holocaust. Lance's resignation enabled Brooks to drop his limiting approach to interviewing and to allow interviewees to talk beyond their direct experience of seeking refuge in Britain, and as a result IWM interviews began to explore refugees' wider experience of the Second World War for the first time, including – but not limited to – the Holocaust.²⁷³ Brooks, who received an MA in Folklife Studies in 1972, understood the value of oral history in much the same way as the sociologists and social historians who made up the OHS and recognised that an individual interviewee had more to contribute than their memories of a singular historical event. In Brooks' words 'there were lots of things it made sense to me to continue with talking about, [including] the Holocaust'.²⁷⁴ Both the IWM project and *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* thus focused on Holocaust survivors as potential subjects for an oral history project initially because they belonged to a refugee and/or immigrant minority, not because they were Jewish or specifically because they survived the Holocaust. They were collective history

²⁷² Graham Smith, 'A Short History of the Oral History Society c.1973-2013', *Wrocław Yearbook of Oral History (Wrocławski Rocznik Historii Mówionej)* 3 (2013): 108.

²⁷³ Imperial War Museum Department of Sound Records, *Britain and the Refugee Crisis 1933-1947* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1982).

²⁷⁴ Brooks, Interview for Oral History of Oral History, 15 May 2013.

enterprises designed to situate personal stories in group narratives as much as they were about producing individual Holocaust testimonies.

The most significant difference between oral history in Canada and the UK was that whereas in the UK it was considered a professional discipline, in Canada oral history was a community enterprise from the very earliest stages. It is unsurprising therefore that the earliest Holocaust recording project in Canada came from within the Holocaust survivor community itself, when Robert Krell – a child survivor, and a psychiatrist by training – initiated his own recording project in 1979. Utilising the resources available to him as a faculty member at the University of British Columbia and his network of contacts within the Canadian Jewish Congress, Krell commenced interviewing a small number of survivors and witnesses to the Holocaust in an effort to document their experiences whilst the opportunity to do so was still available. The following extract, taken from a letter Krell wrote to the Executive Director of the CJC Pacific Region requesting funding to support his efforts, illustrates Krell's intentions:

Dear Morrie [Morris Saltzman],

I am writing to you with a specific request for funding assistance. I am sure there is no need to apprise you of my interest in the various aspects of commemorating and remembering the Holocaust. What you may not know is that I have begun to interview some of the survivors on videotape. I am sure that there are other institutions who are doing the same thing, but that does not matter. We too must tape as many of our survivors as possible so that their stories will not be forgotten and, even more importantly, can be retold for the countless young persons who will need to be educated in the future.²⁷⁵

As was true of practitioners of oral history across Canada, Robert Krell perceived oral history as an opportunity for the preservation of stories, as a learning opportunity and to create a record of an event that he did not wish to pass from living memory. Jennifer Wingate by contrast wrote of LMJC that the 'main purpose

²⁷⁵ Krell to Saltzman, 'Letter Re. Funding', 1.

in establishing a project to interview survivors of the Holocaust and record their life stories was to add to the existing body of historical material on the subject...it was our intention to add an entirely new and vital dimension to the existing historical data.²⁷⁶ Though Krell stated his intention to record interviewee memories of before, during and after the war, his approach to interviewing was far from the in-depth life history model that characterised LMJC.²⁷⁷ With the idea to preserve the living memory of the Holocaust at the centre of his recording project, it is perhaps unsurprising that Krell did not linger for long on his interviewees' memories of the time before the persecution. In his 1979 interview with George Diamant, Krell prompts Diamant to describe in brief his current profession, then establishes Diamant was born in Czechoslovakia in 1930 and commences the interview proper with the question: 'Can you remember anything, about that time? Anything that stood out for you about the beginnings of the difficulties that were ahead.'²⁷⁸ Krell's phrasing leads the narrative straight into the period of the Holocaust.

Krell only conducted a small number of interviews himself in the early days, but his attitude and approach ultimately served as a model for Holocaust oral testimony projects right across Canada. The Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project was an attempt to unite and consolidate the people and the projects that were at that time already expressing an interest in interviewing Holocaust survivors and preserving their stories for the benefit of future generations. A draft of the proposal for the CJC-HDP indicates that the project came about after Aba Beer – then National Chairman of the Holocaust Remembrance Committee – expressed his concern with preserving the accounts of survivors as spoken in their own words and Robert Krell proposed a concerted programme of audio-visual interviews at a National Holocaust Remembrance Committee working meeting during the 1980 CJC Plenary Assembly.²⁷⁹ The recordings that were made

²⁷⁶ Wingate, 'National Life Story Collection', 129.

²⁷⁷ Robert Krell, 'UBC Request for Ethical Review for Project Entitled "Audio and Audiovisual Taping of Child Survivors of the Holocaust"' (University of British Columbia, 1983), 2, Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 53 File 2, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

²⁷⁸ Diamant, Interview for Robert Krell.

²⁷⁹ 'Holocaust Documentation Project Draft of Intro', n.d., 1, CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09, Canadian Jewish Archives.

by Robert Krell prior to 1981 were listened to as sample tapes for the CJC-HDP and Krell himself served in an advisory capacity throughout the development and execution of the project.²⁸⁰ The CJC-HDP employed an interviewing approach designed to comprehensively collect Holocaust material – personal recollections and testimony from survivors about their experiences and sufferings during that time – but was not intended as an interrogation or an opportunity to collect a full life history from them: ‘A free flow narrative-style is deemed to be most appropriate for this project. The interviewer will be non-directive as the focus will be on the survivor’s own story. The role of the interviewer will be to facilitate the discussion, to ensure clarity, highlight feelings, and elicit detail, and in effecting a smooth flow and historical accuracy. The interviewer will not be on camera; nor will his/her voice.’²⁸¹ Though in these projects the survivor was revered for their unique contribution to historical knowledge and the inimitable perspective they could provide future generations in an educational capacity, the focus ultimately was on the event rather than on the individual; a fact which is corroborated by the inclusion of liberators and aid-givers in the collection of interviews made by both Krell and the CJC-HDP.

Even before one considers the actual motivations for recording Holocaust survivor testimony it is clear that contextually speaking, the oral history projects of Britain and Canada take on distinct characteristics that are shaped by both the theory and the applied methodologies of the practice upon which it draws. The earliest Holocaust oral testimony projects established in both countries are characteristic of their respective oral history trends. In Britain the Imperial War Museum appropriated the oral history methodology as a means of researching the lives of the individuals and communities that their written archival records could not account for, followed closely by *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* which used the British life history approach to oral history to produce a community biography, which like the IWM projects spotlighted the British immigrant

²⁸⁰ Esti Jedeikin to Aba Beer, ‘Memorandum Re. Video Tape of Interview with Vera Slymovicz’, 22 April 1981, 3, CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09, Canadian Jewish Archives.

²⁸¹ Canadian Jewish Congress, ‘Evaluation, Phase I’, 10.

community in keeping with academic and intellectual trends of the time. In Canada, where oral history was widely perceived as a tool for individuals, communities and archives to produce records of their own histories and to collect and preserve historical data, the Holocaust survivor community asserted its own right to utilise the methodology to record its own history of the Holocaust. The precedent set by wider practitioners of oral history effectively laid the foundations for very particular approaches to commemorating and memorialising the Holocaust; in many ways the recorded interview was a window of opportunity that was seized by individuals looking to instrumentalise the lessons of survivor testimony for a wider purpose. How and why those individuals made the decision to seize that opportunity is another question, the answer to which is found in an understanding of the new expediency of the Holocaust as subject matter and is thus located in the local and national commemorative activity of the respective nations. It is insufficient therefore to look only to the history of oral history in the respective countries to understand why the Holocaust projects emerged as they did. We must also consider the memorial cultures that prompted survivor communities and scholars to turn to oral history as a means of achieving their commemorative needs to understand what is distinctive about oral testimony as a commemorative activity in Britain and Canada.

Locating Oral Testimony as a Commemorative Activity

There is insufficient scope in this thesis to account for all acts of commemoration by and on behalf of Holocaust survivors and victims through the medium of interviewing; I acknowledge that such acts occurred everywhere, even during so-called periods of survivor 'silence'.²⁸² Here I reference the act of oral or audio-visual recording within an archival framework and seek to uncover some of the practical and moral impulses which prompted the creation of these dedicated archives and the development of oral testimony as a cultural response to the Holocaust in Britain and Canada. The ability for projects of this kind to not only be initiated but also to become a standard practice is, for one, a funding issue: projects can only

²⁸² For a defence of the 'myth' of silence, see David Cesarani and Eric J. Sundquist, eds., *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

commence where the money and resources exist to make them happen. As a result, they tend to emerge where there is a social or political situation that prospective interviewers can appeal to in order to justify the merits of the activity. However well-intentioned the idea to record, with the success of large-scale projects such as oral testimony archives contingent upon the availability of resources – and moreover the willingness of those in control of those resources to commit them to the study of the Holocaust – the phenomenon of Holocaust oral testimony is clearly linked to the changing demands of contemporary memorial culture.

Writing in 1978, Paul Thompson analysed the funding patterns of oral history projects in the US and the UK and noted one key difference: that whilst public funding underpinned the majority of British oral history, in the US state-sponsored projects tended to have a military focus and thus the dominant source of funding for oral history projects came from the private sector. He explains the implications:

The system of private funding in America has had, in this respect, the happy consequence of allowing oral historians to go their own way, loosely attached to local universities, colleges, and libraries; although less fortunately it has led to the typical American oral historian being primarily an archivist and collector rather than an historian as such. In Britain, by contrast, a sharper struggle for resources and recognition was inevitable. With the economic recession and public spending cuts of the mid-1970s, any new claimant for scarce public funds was bound to meet opposition.²⁸³

Thus insofar as Holocaust oral testimony in the US is concerned, the availability of private funding has historically made it easier successfully to establish private collections and archives, hence the majority of the largest collections of Holocaust survivor testimony in the US can trace their origins back to private institutions or individuals. The Fortunoff Archive, for example, was the output of the Holocaust Survivors Film Project, a grassroots organisation launched by members of the Holocaust survivor community in 1979 that was funded initially by a grant from the

²⁸³ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 1978, 59–60.

New Haven Foundation – a philanthropic community organisation – and a public appeal for donations;²⁸⁴ and the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive was famously sponsored by film producer Steven Spielberg as a commitment to Holocaust memorialisation in the wake of his critically-acclaimed work directing *Schindler's List*. Such a model was difficult – if not impossible – to emulate in the UK. The British Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (BVAHT), being an affiliate project of the Fortunoff Archive, was an attempt to create an American-style archive of Holocaust testimonies in Britain. The project launched in the early 1990s but struggled to sustain itself in part due to an inability to source sufficient funds from the private sector to maintain its activity.²⁸⁵ By 1999, BVAHT conceded that in part due to the dominating influence of the Shoah Foundation and their unwillingness to collaborate with BVAHT, and in part due to an inability to raise more funds, it could no longer continue interviewing survivors and it effectively folded, integrating its educational component into the Holocaust Educational Trust and leaving its interviews archived at the British Library.²⁸⁶ There is, to the best of my knowledge, no lasting legacy of this project under the BVAHT name: the British Library references the collection under the heading 'Testimony: Video Interviews with British Holocaust Survivors', describing it as 'a collection of more than 170 video interviews with Holocaust survivors recorded in collaboration with Yale University's Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies,'²⁸⁷ whilst the Fortunoff Archive acknowledges its existence in name only, providing no further information about the project.²⁸⁸ BVAHT is an example of how the private funding

²⁸⁴ 'HSFP Newsletter', April 1980, http://fortunoff.library.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/April_1980.pdf.

²⁸⁵ Alberta Gotthardt Strage, 'Statement of the Quantitative and Qualitative Reports about the Interviews Produced since the First International Meeting (September 1994)', *From the Audiovisual Testimony* Second International Audiovisual Meeting on the Testimony of Survivors of the Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps (1996): 115.

²⁸⁶ Alberta Strage, 'Opportunities Lost and Found: A Review of the British Experience', *Cahier International Sur Le Témoignage Audiovisuel/International Journal On The Audio-Visual Testimony* Third International Meeting on the Audiovisual Testimony of Survivors from Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps (1999): 129.

²⁸⁷ 'Oral Histories of Jewish Experience and Holocaust Testimonies', *The British Library*, accessed 2 March 2020, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/oral-histories-of-jewish-experience-and-holocaust-testimonies>.

²⁸⁸ 'Affiliate Projects', *Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies*, accessed 2 March 2020, <http://fortunoff.library.yale.edu/about-us/affiliate-projects/>.

model did not work in a British context; funding is a key reason why the leading British Holocaust oral testimony archives are research-driven, public or charitably funded enterprises. Whereas US projects could emerge out of desire, British projects tended to be launched when there was an historical interest in the Holocaust or the experiences of Holocaust survivors in Britain, for which the use of limited funds could justifiably be applied.

For the Imperial War Museum, then, it was not as simple as recording Holocaust testimonies because they were interesting or valuable; Sound Archive funds could only be utilised to undertake recording activity that was seen to directly enhance the Museum's historical collections, and for a long time the Holocaust was considered outside the Museum's remit as a national commemorative institution documenting the history of Britain's involvement in modern warfare. Margaret Brooks noted that even when she began to extend the *Britain and the Refugee Crisis* interviews to include reference to the Holocaust, some people questioned the inclusion of the Holocaust in the IWM's remit on the basis that it is 'not primarily a "so-called" British thing'. Even though Brooks insisted that it *was* relevant, that in fact the Holocaust had global relevance and that Britain was very much involved,²⁸⁹ it was some years after that before the Imperial War Museum more widely began to accept the Holocaust was a fundamental part of the history it was supposed to document and the Sound Archive could make it a specific focal point of its activities. It is now widely accepted that the TV miniseries *Holocaust*, first broadcast in 1978, played a significant role in bringing the Holocaust into the homes and consciousnesses of the global public; this coincides with a rise in increased lobbying for Holocaust commemoration and national Holocaust education in the UK. That said, it was a further twelve years before the then director of the Imperial War Museum, Alan Borg, formally recognised the lack of Holocaust material held by the Museum and agreed to actively attempt to rectify it. This was followed a year later by the first Holocaust-related exhibition at IWM London, 'Belsen 1945', which retained the British-centrism of the Museum's remit by relating the experiences of

²⁸⁹ Margaret Brooks, Interview for Oral History of Oral History in the UK, interview by Robert Wilkinson, 16 July 2013, C1149/30, British Library Sounds.

the British liberators of Bergen-Belsen. It was not until the mid-90s that the IWM was pushed to globalise its approach to representing the Holocaust, prompted in no small part by the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993 which 'further exposed the absence of a national place of commemoration in Britain'.²⁹⁰ In 1996 the IWM London was selected as the location for a proposed new national Holocaust exhibition with Lord Bramall, chair of the IWM's Board of Trustees, stating that 'the Imperial War Museum, a national, civilian, historical and educational museum whose remit embraced all aspects of war in the 20th century, was the right institution to undertake the responsibility.'²⁹¹ The absence of Holocaust-related audio material from the inception of the IWM archive is not specifically due to a lack of interest in or refusal to admit the reality of the Holocaust; it is, more accurately, due to the fact that the genocide of the Jews of Europe was not considered relevant at that time to a museum whose remit was the British and Commonwealth experiences of 20th Century warfare.²⁹²

As was the case with the IWM, the impetus for most UK projects was rarely Holocaust memorialisation itself: projects were typically launched when it was politically, culturally or intellectually expedient to do so. There are two key reasons for this. In part it was a case of individuals and organisations accessing the Holocaust where funding opportunities made such an enterprise possible, as was the case with *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community*, which was a Holocaust oral testimony project that grew out of a charitably funded social history endeavour. The National Life Story Collection sponsored projects which reflected the social and cultural landscape of Britain with a particular focus on undocumented or minority populations as per the oral history tradition in the UK. In the case of LMJC it was the group's refugee status rather than their Holocaust survivor identity which provided this link, as was reflected in the activity of contemporaries at that time. In 1962 Saul Esh and Geoffrey Wigoder presented a

²⁹⁰ Kushner, 'Oral History at the Extremes', 89.

²⁹¹ 'Imperial War Museum Report: Imperial War Museum Holocaust Exhibition', Periodical (London: Imperial War Museum, Winter 1996), Wiener Holocaust Library.

²⁹² For a more detailed account of the relationship between the Imperial War Museum and the Holocaust, and of Holocaust Consciousness in Britain more generally, see Andy Pearce, *Holocaust Consciousness in Contemporary Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).

paper entitled 'Oral History and its Potential Application' to a conference on Jewish life in modern Britain. Whilst brief mention was made in their paper of 'the tragic years of persecution and extermination', they did not recognise then that oral history would find a niche in Holocaust survivor testimony. There was yet to be a cohesive and shared concept of the Holocaust at this time and though Esh and Wigoder recognised the efforts of Emmanuel Ringelblum, the Jewish Historical Commissions across Europe and the Wiener Library in utilising interviewing to collect testimonies from witnesses to this period, they pointed out that there was no global systematic attempt to collect this documentation.²⁹³ And yet, this was not one of their recommendations for the application of the oral history method to the study of the Anglo-Jewish community. Of the three recommendations Esh and Wigoder made, only one accounted for Holocaust survivors: 'Another very important aspect of Jewish community activity in Britain that has been inadequately documented is the tremendous response of Britain and British Jewry to the challenge posed in the 1930s by the Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany.'²⁹⁴ Holocaust survivors were identified by their refugee status, and the recommendation was that oral history projects were used to record the positive British response to the issues that their arrival brought to Britain's door. This was also a reflection of a longstanding and widespread British refusal to engage directly with the Holocaust that was driven by a fear – or an avoidance – of recognising its own complicity in the fate of the Jews. Making refugees the centre of recording projects provided an entry point into the narrative that centrepointed British heroism: focusing on the tragedy represented by the Holocaust would be to acknowledge the failures of Britain during the war, but focusing on refugees was a tacit acknowledgement of the role Britain played in saving potential victims. This attitude is endemic in British memory of the war: Linda Asquith points out that the Kindertransport, for example, has taken on the role of a salvation narrative in British Holocaust consciousness, highlighting as it does the efforts Britain went to to save Jewish children from persecution and deportation. The legitimacy of this

²⁹³ Saul Esh and Geoffrey Wigoder, 'Oral History and Its Potential Application', in *Jewish Life in Modern Britain*, ed. Julius Gould and Saul Esh (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), 158.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 163.

narrative is questionable, given the parents and family that were left behind and essentially ignored by the British government in the process of rescuing their children, but the observation is striking.²⁹⁵

The Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project is nowadays one of the smaller Holocaust testimony projects in Canada, containing only 64 interviews to the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre's 415 interviews or the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre's 573 interviews. It is however one of Canada's most significant collections; its small size belies its scope as a national combined effort of the Canadian Jewish Congress and local and national Holocaust Remembrance Committees to produce a national documentary archive of Holocaust testimonies that would serve as an educational resource and an indisputable corpus of evidence, standing in opposition to the antisemitism and Holocaust denial that was widespread across Canada at the time. Most significantly, the project was funded by a government grant from the Ministry of Multiculturalism, an unprecedented use of public money to fund a project of this kind in Canada. The following extract from a press release issued by the Canadian Jewish Congress regarding the project outlines the impetuses which drove the creation of the project and succeeded in securing government support for its efforts:

At a time when the historical facts pertaining to the Holocaust are systematically distorted, and the horrendous reality of the murder of millions is being denied, the Canadian Jewish Congress maintains that the time is propitious for the survivors of the Holocaust to come forward and record the facts for posterity.

At a time when racists are once again glorifying Hitlerism and claiming that the Holocaust never took place, we must seek to deny such people an opportunity of defaming the victims of Hitlerism and those who laid down their lives in World War II to ensure its defeat.

²⁹⁵ Linda Asquith, 'Talking Officially: The Impact of Social, Cultural and Political Forces Upon Genocide Testimony' (British Association for Holocaust Studies Conference, UCL Institute for Education, London, 2016).

The Canadian Jewish Congress and the Ministry of Multiculturalism maintain that it is a moral imperative to document the facts and lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that Canadians are sensitised to the enormity of the crimes committed in those camps against the human race. The Holocaust Documentation Project will, therefore, serve the purpose of equipping young Canadians and future generations to withstand the assaults of racism and neo-Nazism.²⁹⁶

A far cry from the independent projects taking off in the UK which sought to interview Holocaust survivors when the collection of their memories was perceived to have some benefit for the research agenda of the institution doing the collection, the CJC-HDP was driven by a sense of moral urgency and an anxiousness from within the Jewish community to preserve and protect the Jewish community in Canada at large, through the use of recorded testimonies in educational initiatives.

Three contextual factors were largely responsible for the turn to Holocaust memory that took place in Canada in the 1980s. The first was a sudden and widespread increase in public displays of antisemitism and Holocaust denial across Canada from the early 1960s onwards. Having experienced a decade of relative calm, the wider Canadian Jewish community had grown unaccustomed to violent and targeted acts of racism and pursued a policy of restraint, trusting in the legal system to deal with perpetrators and quietly lobbying politicians for fear that public outcry would be perceived as an attempt to interfere with public freedom of expression. The survivor community however was not placated by what they perceived to be a passive attempt to deal with the threat and rallied to launch a more active, outspoken lobby, succeeding in bringing the issue of antisemitism and Holocaust denial to public and political attention and to the forefront of the Canadian Jewish community's concerns.²⁹⁷ Franklin Bialystok places a heavy emphasis on the role that the survivor community's fight against antisemitism played in driving Holocaust commemoration efforts to the forefront of the

²⁹⁶ Kathy Faludi, 'Press Release: The Holocaust Documentation Project - Countering Distortions' (Canadian Jewish Congress, 4 August 1981), CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09, Canadian Jewish Archives.

²⁹⁷ Bialystok, *Delayed Impact*, 96–97.

community's concerns: 'That the community was able to withstand these tensions and to mobilise its efforts to meet these challenges was testament to its resolve that the memory of the Holocaust would not be stained and to its determination to pass on the legacy to the next generation.'²⁹⁸ Community-wide concern about the severe consequences of allowing antisemitism to go unchecked was cemented by the publication of *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933–1948* in 1982. The book, authored by Irving Abella and Harold Troper, was a damning exposé of Canada's restrictive immigration policies and provided a wake-up call for the wider Canadian Jewish community by confronting them with the instability of their position in Canadian society.²⁹⁹

The second factor was a crisis of identity taking place within the generation of Canadian Jews born in the aftermath of the war. These individuals, reaching middle age in the 1980s, were well assimilated into society and thus had shed the label of 'immigrant' in favour of a 'Canadian' identity; they were also Jewish, but had no memory of the institutions and cultural practices that had underpinned their parents' Jewish upbringings and struggled to inherit that memory from their parents, who were keener to forget the past than they were to celebrate it. Bialystok acknowledges that it is difficult to concretely define the movement and the shift towards an affinity with the Holocaust, but suggests that a combination of contention over Israel, political opposition to anti-Jewish activities in the Soviet Union and renewed antisemitism at home prompted a small group of young Canadian Jews to turn to the Holocaust as an example of how the vulnerability of Jews had the potential to lead to extermination. Their efforts to inspire the Canadian Jewish community to take up the cause of Holocaust commemoration, in combination with the call to action in the fight against antisemitism, resulted in antisemitism and Holocaust denial becoming the uniting factor that gave Canadian Jews a sense of shared identity by the mid-1980s.³⁰⁰ From there, the importance of Holocaust education was almost self-evident.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 222.

²⁹⁹ Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

³⁰⁰ Bialystok, *Delayed Impact*, 180.

The third factor was Canada's policy of federal multiculturalism, adopted in the 1970s. For the first decade of this new outlook the Canadian government prioritised the acknowledgement of the accomplishments and contributions of the various ethnic and racial groups that comprised Canada to its patchwork society; the early 1980s however marked a shift towards empowerment, supported in part by government provision of financial support which offered groups such as the CJC the opportunity to use public funds to back their efforts to combat antisemitism and Holocaust denial.³⁰¹ The CJC recognised the immense value of this contribution, both logistically and politically: 'This is the first time the Multiculturalism Program has funded a project of this magnitude – an eloquent testimony to the importance the Canadian government places on documenting this era. As the most ambitious and professional project of its kind ever undertaken in Canada, the project promises to be a milestone in the history of Holocaust Remembrance.'³⁰²

The well organised network of local and national Jewish communities and associated Holocaust remembrance activities were the outcome of the adoption of the Holocaust as a uniting factor of Jewish ethnic identity in Canada in the face of widespread and increasing postwar antisemitism, but required a particular political landscape to be granted the legitimacy and influence that the CJC and the HRCs possessed in this period. The Holocaust Documentation Project was the product of a lengthy process of HRC's imploring the CJC to take action in promoting Holocaust education in schools and petitioning the Canadian Government to establish a commemorative project that acknowledged the relevance of the Holocaust to Canadian society and the role that the government could play in combatting antisemitism.³⁰³ It was envisaged that collecting videotaped reminiscences of Holocaust survivors speaking their stories would be tantamount to producing indisputable evidence of the actuality and the lasting trauma of the event, and would also provide a medium for the transmission of the history and lessons of the Holocaust to future generations of Jews and non-Jews in Canada. By April 1985

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² 'Holocaust Documentation Project Draft of Intro', 1.

³⁰³ 'Holocaust Documentation Project', n.d., 2, CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09, Canadian Jewish Archives.

when the Canadian Gathering of Holocaust Survivors and Their Children was held – the gathering that would later provide the seed money for local HRCs to commence local interviewing projects – much had changed in the Canadian memorial landscape to result in this unified Canadian Jewish community which was committed to local and national Holocaust education and memorialisation efforts, as Bialystok summarises:

the gathering was held during several heady months of anxiety and celebration by the Jewish community. In February the Canadian government had ended forty years of silence and obfuscation about the presence of Nazi war criminals in the country. A few weeks later a jury convicted Ernst Zundel of knowingly disseminating false news about the Holocaust. While the gathering was taking place, a jury was hearing evidence against James Keegstra for promoting racism. Several weeks after the gathering the Toronto community celebrated the opening of the Holocaust Education and Memorial Centre. During these months the legacy of the Holocaust was the focal issue in the Jewish community. It had become part of the community's collective memory by various routes – commemoration of the victims, remembrance of Liberation, education, the conviction of Holocaust deniers, and the investigation of war criminals...That such an outcome had been achieved was possible primarily because Canadian Jews had embraced the legacy of the Holocaust as one defining pillar of their identity.³⁰⁴

The role that oral testimony assumes in commemorative cultures is dependent on two primary factors: the existence of a demand within a society or a community for Holocaust commemoration in which the survivor and their testimony plays a key role; and the availability of financial and structural resources to facilitate the interviewing process and support the storage and preservation of recorded testimonies. The latter of these explains why the dominant producers of oral testimony projects in Canada and Britain are in the private and public sectors

³⁰⁴ Bialystok, *Delayed Impact*, 242.

respectively, with the British Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies representing the unsustainability of the North American, private funding model in the UK. Far from survivor silence, the lack of organised and sustained interviewing projects with Holocaust survivors and witnesses in Britain and Canada prior to the late-1970s and 1980s was indicative of societies that were unable or unwilling to listen. Holocaust oral testimony was mobilised by the Canadian Jewish community in response to new waves of antisemitism as a means of delivering Holocaust education to a public who were finally willing to hear from its marginalised populations, receiving the full support of a government acknowledging the political pertinency of amplifying Jewish voices in the latter part of the 20th century. In Britain, despite oral history emerging as a tool for the study of minority groups and undocumented classes, oral historians skated around the Holocaust for a number of years. In this academic environment oral history projects with refugees to Britain proliferated, including a number of projects focusing specifically on Jewish refugees, but the lack of projects dedicated to documenting the genocide reflected the obfuscation of the Holocaust from British narratives of the Second World War. The emergence of such projects in Britain coincided with a shift in public and political attitudes towards acknowledging and commemorating the Holocaust as a central part of the conflict, which in turn was reflected in a move by institutions such as the Imperial War Museum and research organisations such as the National Life Story Collection to turn their attention towards utilising oral history to collect narratives from Holocaust survivors in British society.

Establishing a National Testimonial Landscape

In his book *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, Noah Shenker conducts an analysis of testimony archives in the US with a view to identifying the role that audiovisual testimonies have played in the so-called 'Americanisation of the Holocaust', which, as seen in the literature review, Shenker defines as 'a process by which the events of a defining European event have been imported by, and adapted to, the cultural narratives, institutions, and political contexts of the United States.'³⁰⁵ But what of the 'Britishisation' of the Holocaust? Or the 'Canadianisation' of the Holocaust? If –

³⁰⁵ Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, xi.

as I have demonstrated – there is a fundamental difference between the way these projects emerged in Britain, Canada and the US then it is also worth exploring the role that audio and audiovisual testimonies have played in influencing national and international Holocaust commemoration culture in Britain and Canada too. In contribution to this inquiry I will make my analysis on two levels: first, in terms of how early developments in practice and theory set the standard for the future production of testimonies in each country, accounting for the ways in which later projects drew on what came before; and second, examining how projects have fulfilled – or perhaps failed to fulfil – a role in commemorative culture, for example through their use in educational initiatives, museums, media and other cultural productions. In the process I will explore the ways in which national developments in Britain and Canada have supported or contradicted the international standardisation of Holocaust oral testimony theory and production, with a view to developing a more nuanced understanding of the role of oral testimony in Holocaust historiography.

The recurrence of personnel in the testimonial landscape – by which I mean the appearance of the same individuals across multiple projects, or the same ‘types’ of personnel across projects – marks a consistency in approach that can shed some light on national approaches to collecting Holocaust oral testimony. We can ask the following questions: where the same names appear across projects, who are the individuals that are taken from project to project, and why are they the ones being taken? What expertise is being shared between projects and what does this say about the testimonial landscape in each country? In the UK, with the exception of the Imperial War Museum which I have demonstrated operated in a slightly different intellectual and methodological sphere to other projects of its kind, the same names crop up frequently between UK collections. The majority of UK Holocaust oral testimony projects have strong links to two individuals: Paul Thompson, oral historian and creator of the National Life Story Collection, and Bill Williams, oral historian and founder of the Manchester Jewish Museum. The link between Paul Thompson and *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* has been referenced multiple times already in this thesis and hardly needs repeating; as one

of Britain's leading oral historians and the co-creator of NLSC his influence on the project is quite evident. Bill Williams had a long career in oral history, with a particular focus on the Manchester Jewish community: in the 1970s and 80s, together with oral historian Rosalyn Livshin, Williams interviewed hundreds of Jewish immigrants and their children and oversaw the creation of the Manchester Studies Unit at Manchester Polytechnic (now Manchester Metropolitan University) which focused particularly on Jewish lives and working class history, conducting research in and amongst the community through a number of associated oral history projects. Although his work did not focus specifically on the Holocaust survivor community, it was nonetheless notable and his interviewing efforts predate the establishment of NLSC by more than a decade. For his expertise in interviewing and in the field of Jewish studies, Williams was brought on board with NLSC as an advisor.³⁰⁶ One of his most significant contributions to LMJC was the preparation of a comprehensive list of questions, designed to be used as a checklist, that covered all aspects of a prospective interviewee's life including childhood and family life, a range of Holocaust experiences, emigration and life in Britain.³⁰⁷ The third key individual involved in LMJC was Jennifer Wingate whose contribution to the project has already been discussed in some detail in this thesis. The contribution of these three individuals to LMJC resulted in a sizable collection of national significance, thus when the Holocaust Survivors' Centre sought to launch their own testimony recording facility in the early 1990s, they called upon Wingate and Williams to conduct interviewer training 'so that the interviews will be conducted in a professional and sensitive way.'³⁰⁸ LMJC was launched in the early days of the British oral history movement but such was the subsequent influence of Paul Thompson in the field that when the Association of Jewish Refugees' launched *Refugee Voices* in 2003 – two years after LMJC wound up its recording efforts after more than 12 years of interviewing – Thompson provided a key inspiration for its operational methodology: 'The development of oral history in the UK is clearly

³⁰⁶ Ernie Hunter, 'Obituary: Bill Williams', *The Jewish Chronicle*, 20 April 2018, <https://www.thejc.com/news/obituaries/obituary-bill-williams-1.462821>.

³⁰⁷ For the full questionnaire, see Wingate, 'National Life Story Collection', 138–54.

³⁰⁸ *Holocaust Survivors' Centre Newsletter*, July 1993, HOL, Wiener Holocaust Library.

linked to the development of Alltagsgeschichte³⁰⁹ and “history from below” which attempted to give voice to marginalised groups, to “give history back to the people in their own words” (Thompson 2000: 308).³¹⁰ Beyond theory, the crucial personnel link between the early Holocaust oral testimony projects of the late 1980s and 1990s and this project for the new millennium was Rosalyn Livshin, who was one of three principle interviewers for *Refugee Voices* and conducted 71 of its initial 150 interviews. Livshin cites Bill Williams as the source of her interest in and introduction to oral history, and utilised the contacts she made while interviewing with Williams in the orthodox Jewish community in the north of England to extend the geographical and demographical reach of *Refugee Voices* during her involvement in the project.³¹¹ Each of these projects – including the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive, if only by dissent (David Lance for all intents and purposes considered himself an oral historian, though methodologically in opposition to the direction of the main movement in Britain at that time) – can trace its ideological and methodological influence to the fledgling discipline of British oral history and its key players: most significantly Paul Thompson and his social history, life history approach to interviewing, but also to the ideas and attitudes which underpinned the Oral History Society at large. Bill Williams’ Manchester Studies Unit attributed as much of its philosophy to the History Workshop Movement as the Oral History Society, a movement which championed the democratisation of history by bringing the study of history to communities outside of the academic sphere, both as subjects of research and audiences to it.³¹² Williams and Thompson both published articles in the *History Workshop Journal*, the same journal which published the English translation of Alessandro Portelli’s field-defining article ‘The Peculiarities of Oral History’ in 1981.³¹³ The expertise that was sought in Britain for Holocaust oral

³⁰⁹ For an overview of the development of Alltagsgeschichte as an historical approach, see David F. Crew, ‘Alltagsgeschichte: A New Social History “From Below”’, *Central European History* 22, no. 3/4 (1989): 394–407.

³¹⁰ ‘About Refugee Voices’.

³¹¹ Rosalyn Livshin, in conversation with the author, 20 November 2018.

³¹² Tony Kushner, ‘Bill Williams and Jewish Historiography: Past, Present and Future’, *Melilah* 3 (2006): 3.

³¹³ Bill Williams and Audrey Linkman, ‘Recovering the People’s Past: The Archive Rescue Programme of Manchester Studies’, *History Workshop Journal* 8, no. 1 (1979): 111–28; Paul Thompson’s publications in this journal are numerous, but include: Paul Thompson, ‘Life Histories in Poland and

testimony projects was that of oral historians, not experts in Judaism and the Holocaust or even Holocaust survivors themselves. Experts were sought for their interviewing prowess and as well as their application of oral history as a research method, the assumption being that they would be proficient in using oral history to run structured research projects regardless of subject matter and as such would know how to extract the most historically useful and 'authentic' information from the survivors being interviewed.

In contrast, the consistent thread in Canadian collections is not the oral historian but the Holocaust survivor. The 'experts' who were called upon to contribute to Canadian oral testimony projects were those with direct personal experience of the event; this was not necessarily the same survivor(s) in all projects, not least because geographically inter-regional collaboration was more complicated and significantly more expensive than in the UK, but almost all key Canadian Holocaust oral testimony projects have a Holocaust survivor at the helm. Having emerged from the National Holocaust Remembrance Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress, the CJC-HDP had a number of Holocaust survivors in its leadership, many of whom had already achieved significant renown in the Canadian Jewish community including Aba Beer, Emil Fackenheim and Robert Krell, the latter of whom provides a crucial link in the case of Canada, connecting the Vancouver testimonial practice to the national standard and then into the various regional splinter projects that emerged subsequently.³¹⁴ Child survivor Yehudi Lindeman was involved in early discussions in Montreal regarding the establishment of a Holocaust oral testimony project for the Montreal community in the late 1980s, though his involvement with the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre project ended when he received a small grant from McGill University – where he was a professor at the time – to undertake his own project under the auspices of the university. It was the belief of the MHMC that 'there [were] sufficient numbers of survivors in the community to allow the Centre and McGill to go about collecting

Scandinavia', *History Workshop Journal* 6, no. 1 (1978): 208–10; Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History'.

³¹⁴ Canadian Jewish Congress, 'Holocaust Documentation Project Outline', n.d., 4, CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09, Canadian Jewish Archives.

the histories independent of one another and without running into interference with [sic] each others subjects,'³¹⁵ thus in 1989 Lindeman launched the McGill *Living Testimonies* project in collaboration with Rabbi Ayla Grafstein. Lindeman conducted many of the interviews himself alongside a team of volunteer interviewers, several of whom were survivors themselves.³¹⁶ One survivor-interviewer, Renata Skotnicka-Zajdman, also gave an interview herself to *Living Testimonies*, interviewed by Lindeman and Grafstein.³¹⁷ Similarly the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre project *Witness-to-History* had a number of survivors on board: Musia Schwartz served on the organisational committee for the project and was herself interviewed for the project in 1994 about her experiences surviving the war in hiding, and other survivors who also served as interviewers for the project include Yvonne Bensimon, Marcel Braitstein, David Lissak, Irene Romer and Renata Zajdman. In addition, members of the Second Generation – children of survivors – were also on the interviewing team for *Witness-to-History*: Susan Date, Anna Kaufer, Elsa Kisber, John Margolis and Marla Reinitz are among them. And the MHMC's ties to the Second Generation extend further than this: an important precursor to *Witness-to-History* was a Holocaust oral testimony project initiated by the Montreal Second Generation of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Montreal Second Generation joined forces with the MHMC after the establishment of the latter in 1979 and the project subsequently became a joint enterprise. It is unclear what happened to the interviews from this early venture, but correspondence between offices of the Quebec Region of the CJC indicate that the Montreal Second Generation were early adopters of the interviewing movement.³¹⁸ A similar situation underpinned the establishment of an oral testimony project in Toronto by the Toronto Holocaust Remembrance Committee, who were among the first to take

³¹⁵ 'Witness to Holocaust Proposal (Oral History Project)', n.d., 1, File Name: Oral History Projects - the MHMC 1993, Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

³¹⁶ 'Living Testimonies Leaflet' (McGill University, n.d.), Living Testimonies File, McGill University Library.

³¹⁷ Zajdman, Interview for Living Testimonies.

³¹⁸ Sara Rosenfeld to Quebec Region Officers, 'Email Re. Montreal Second Generation Holocaust Oral History Project', 12 December 1988, 1, File Name: Oral History Projects - the MHMC, Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

up the call to interview issued by the CJC-HDP to local HRCs by utilising their Children of Survivors Committee to do the interviewing.³¹⁹

It is clear therefore that the expertise in demand in Canadian Holocaust oral testimony projects was first-hand Holocaust experience. The definition of a 'good' interview by these standards was one which was as empathetic and sensitive to its subject matter as it was historically accurate, thus deferred to the Holocaust survivor as the ultimate authority and the individual best placed to lead projects of this nature. It is significant, moreover, that Canadian projects often drew advice and inspiration from US projects. References to the Fortunoff Archive can be found in the project paperwork of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre and the McGill *Living Testimonies* files, and an appendix to the CJC-HDP project proposal contains the contact details of 30 individuals and organisations – including the New Haven Film project, the original name for the Fortunoff Archive – based in the United States with whom the CJC-HDP corresponded in preparation for their project, plus sample lists of interview questions from a number of established testimony projects.³²⁰ UK projects do not have the same precedent for collaboration with the US as Canadian projects do, largely because they did not deem it necessary; there was little need for practitioners of Holocaust oral testimony in the UK to seek external advice on interviewing, given the dominant presence of oral historians in the ranks of interviewers and project leads. It was sufficient to assume that they already possessed the necessary expertise to successfully execute the project (whether this was a justified assumption or not can be debated – see the section on 'Insiders' and 'Outsiders' in Part I of this thesis for more information). This collaboration has led to a greater commonality in interviewing methodology and project design between the US and Canada than between either and the UK – a 'North American' style of Holocaust oral testimony, in many ways.

In Canada, Holocaust testimony production was the realm of the Jewish, survivor community. The response from the community to the national project –

³¹⁹ Aba Beer, 'Correspondence Re. Holocaust Documentation Project', 9 December 1981, 2, CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09, Canadian Jewish Archives.

³²⁰ Annex X and Annex XI, Canadian Jewish Congress, 'Evaluation, Phase I', 47–77.

the CJC-HDP – was overwhelmingly positive, but the project was not sufficiently resourced to interview all who volunteered. The project directors recognised the value of every survivor’s testimony however and were keen to ensure that all who wished to record their testimony could do so, so the CJC-HDP encouraged the development of regional projects to follow in its footsteps. Funding for these regional projects was raised in a variety of ways, but a primary funding stream came from another project spearheaded by Robert Krell and delivered by the CJC: the Canadian Gathering of Holocaust Survivors. In April 1983, on the back of the successful participation of a Canadian contingent in the 1983 American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors and their Descendants in Washington D.C., Robert Krell wrote to Professor Irwin Cotler and Aba Beer regarding plans to host a similar gathering for Canadian Holocaust survivors. Krell’s vision was to provide an opportunity for survivors to ‘relate the experience [of the Holocaust] and express our political will’; essentially, to provide a social gathering opportunity for the community that would also function as an educational forum and an opportunity to lobby for Holocaust education and commemoration in the political arena.³²¹ The event, which took place in Ottawa from 28 – 30 April 1985, included film screenings, commemorative events, and seminars on oral documentation, antisemitism in Canada and the contribution of Holocaust survivors to the ‘Canadian Mosaic’.³²² When the event had an unexpected surplus of funds, a debate ensued about how the money should be spent. Both Krell and Nathan Leipziger, chair of the Toronto Holocaust Remembrance Committee and executive member of the Canadian Jewish Congress National Holocaust Remembrance Committee, advocated for distribution to local Holocaust documentation centres to fund regional audiovisual documentation projects.³²³ The money was divided between Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver, and Toronto set aside \$35,000 of its allocation to launch its audiovisual

³²¹ Robert Krell to Irwin Cotler, ‘Letter Re. Canadian Gathering of Holocaust Survivors’, 19 April 1983, Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 54 File 54.2, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre; Robert Krell to Aba Beer, ‘Letter Re. Canadian Gathering of Holocaust Survivors’, 19 April 1983, Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 54 File 54.2, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

³²² Mony Frojmovic and Danielle Pollack, eds., ‘Newsletter of the Canadian Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Their Children’ (Canadian Jewish Congress, December 1984), 2, Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 54 File 54.2, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

³²³ Nathan Leipziger to Steering Committee of the Canadian Gathering, n.d., Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 54 File 54.2, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

documentation project.³²⁴ The association of the CJC and its Holocaust Remembrance Committees thus provided a network of contacts that not only unified the Canadian Jewish and Holocaust survivor community's ideological response to antisemitism and Holocaust denial, but also created a tiered system through which centralised funds could be disseminated. This made audiovisual interviewing not only a priority in survivor communities across Canada, but also an accessible reality. Moreover, in empowering communities to create their own testimony projects Holocaust survivors ultimately retained control over the archival production of their own histories and were able to directly influence the ways in which oral testimonies were integrated into subsequent education and commemoration initiatives. Indeed so prevalent was the community-ownership structure that projects developed and held outside the community were regarded with suspicion by some within the community. The MHMC, for one, expressed concern about projects such as Yehudi Lindeman's *Living Testimonies* which were to be held in a public rather than private institutions: 'Despite the fact that the manuscripts, videos etc would be kept in the rare book collection with limited access, the general concern that they would be outside of "Jewish" hands remained a problem.'³²⁵ This anxiety was felt acutely by a community that had created and collected its own history in the face of increased denial; the material was in almost all instances across Canada collected with the principal aim of combatting that denial. It follows that the community would wish to safeguard that material too.

The UK, by contrast, did not have a large, interconnected community of Holocaust survivors controlling the production of Holocaust testimony. The reasons for this are complex and could easily constitute a thesis on their own, but it is worth identifying in brief some of the contributing factors in order to understand why the production of oral testimony in Britain followed a different trajectory – and thus emerged in a different form with a different set of priorities – to that of Canada. There are two key questions prompted by this comparison: why wasn't (and to some degree still isn't) the British Holocaust survivor community as visible and

³²⁴ Esme Gotz, 'Notes on Meeting', 4.

³²⁵ 'Witness to Holocaust Proposal (Oral History Project)', 1.

influential in its national memorial landscape as the Canadian survivor community is in Canada? And why was Britain more interested in studying its refugee community than its Holocaust survivor community specifically? Understanding the nature of the Holocaust survivor communities involves an understanding of the immigration trajectories that brought the survivors into Britain and Canada in the immediate postwar period. Both Britain and Canada were notoriously hostile to Jewish immigrants immediately after the war; Irving Abella and Harold Troper argue that Canada had the worst record of all refugee-receiving states during that period, admitting fewer than 5,000 Jews during the war and only 8,000 more between the end of the war and 1948.³²⁶ Britain admitted significantly more Jews during the war, but the most visible victims – those who survived the war on the continent in camps, ghettos or in hiding – found significantly greater obstacles to entry, since postwar immigration to Britain was dictated by an individual's ability to work which excluded most Jews who had survived the war who were thus too sick or incapacitated. 2,000 Jews came to Britain under a distressed relatives scheme by the end of 1949, but represented less than half of those admitted under the scheme and a pitiful number of the total immigrants from Europe to Britain in the same period, which included more than 200,000 Eastern Europeans.³²⁷ Tony Kushner puts his estimate of survivor immigrants to Britain in the postwar period at only 2-3,000.³²⁸ With 1948 national population estimates at 12.8 million and 49.4 million for Canada and Britain respectively, despite high levels of antisemitism in Canada and restrictive immigration policies the proportion of Holocaust survivors to Jewish and non-Jewish residents was significantly greater in Canada than in Britain from the late 1940s onwards. Moreover, a relaxing of immigration rules by the Canadian Prime Minister William Mackenzie King in 1947 designed to increase immigration to meet the needs of a country booming rather than recessing in the postwar period saw a significant number of Jews immigrate to Canada: one estimate suggests 11,000 Jews emigrated to Canada directly from Displaced

³²⁶ Abella and Troper, *None Is Too Many*, xx.

³²⁷ David Cesarani, 'Great Britain', in *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, ed. David S. Wyman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 615.

³²⁸ Kushner, 'Bill Williams', 11.

Persons (DP) camps between 1947 and 1951, for a total of between 15,000-18,000 survivors – meaning those who survived the war in Europe – in the country by 1951, some seven to nine percent of the total Jewish population in Canada at that time.³²⁹

Britain, however, had different political priorities in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1948 Britain was simultaneously engaged in the occupation of postwar Germany and the conflict that surrounded the termination of British Mandatory Palestine, which further complicated and politicised Britain's treatment of displaced Holocaust survivors in Europe. David Cesarani outlines how British interests in the Palestinian conflict gave the nation a reason to minimise Jewish victimisation in the immediate postwar period: 'If outrage against the Nazis was tempered by time and circumstances, so was sympathy for the Jews. The British occupation forces in Europe were reluctant to recognise Jews as a distinct group with special needs for fear of appearing to accept the Zionist case that there was a Jewish nationality. Thus they treated Jews as members of the nationality to which they technically belonged.' As a result many Jews in the British occupation zone found themselves placed in refugee camps alongside non-Jews of the same nationality, many of whom were Nazis or Nazi collaborators, and German Jews were furthermore denied DP status since this privilege was not granted to Germans and *Volksdeutsche*; consequently many thousands of Jews moved from the British zone to the US zone where they were accorded DP status and housed separately.³³⁰ This may account in part for the much larger Holocaust survivor population in the United States which in turn has enabled the US to dominate in the field of Holocaust oral testimony. For fear of exacerbating already swelling tensions at home and aggravating already high levels of domestic antisemitism fuelled by the Palestine emergency, the British government – in contrast to the Canadian – persisted with an immigration policy that deliberately and consciously obstructed Jewish immigration that persisted throughout the 1950s.³³¹ The British survivor community was therefore not only small, but fractured; as a consequence of the varied schemes through which Jewish

³²⁹ Irving Abella and Franklin Bialystok, 'Canada', in *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, ed. David S. Wyman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 759.

³³⁰ Cesarani, 'Great Britain', 614–15.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 617.

refugees entered Britain – including the distressed relatives scheme, which saw survivors absorbed into individual families rather than Jewish communities – and a concerted effort by the British government to obstruct the immigration not only of Jews in general but of those who suffered the most in particular, the specificity of the survivor experience and their victimhood was largely suppressed and denied for decades.

As a result, the centrally Jewish nature of the Nazi persecution was largely omitted from early British memory of the war. A fear of fuelling the case for Zionism and exacerbating tensions in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict contributed significantly to this repression, but the motivations were far reaching. Cesarani points out that liberating the Jews of Europe had never been a war aim for Britain; Britain had been fighting a war against fascism and was keen to characterise the liberation of the camps as a victory against fascism rather than a humanitarian effort on behalf of the Jewish people. This attitude spared the British public from questioning why more hadn't been done to help the Jews sooner for almost thirty years.³³² Moreover, the British public at large were preoccupied with their own suffering. Britain experienced the conflict in Europe in a more direct manner than their North American allies thus during the war was reluctant to expend concern for others when its own security was at such great risk, and in its aftermath was preoccupied with its own recovery and nursing its own sense of victimhood. Even the Anglo-Jewish community recognised the political necessity for avoiding overt expressions of concern for the fate of its coreligionists abroad and ceased to sustain efforts to petition the government to take intervening action beyond the end of 1942.³³³ Cesarani summarises these factors in the following:

The United Kingdom was spared occupation by the Nazis. Outside the Channel Islands, a peculiar case, no British subjects were involved in either deportations or instances of collaboration. British troops were among the liberators of Europe and felt little cause for introspection. As we have seen, their entry into the concentration camps in the spring of

³³² *Ibid.*, 611.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 607.

1945 actually acted as a barrier to comprehending the full scale and horror of the Final Solution. The unique configuration of events in 1945-48 certainly provides an explanation for why Britain failed to reckon with anti-Semitism and its legacy. News of the events in Palestine overwhelmed the revelations at Nuremberg and even caused an anti-Jewish backlash. This hardening of the heart was compounded by the parochialism that distinguished much of British postwar culture. As a victor nation, Britain felt that it had little to learn from prostrate Europe. Furthermore, it had its own preoccupations arising from the winding down of the empire.³³⁴

The British Jewish and survivor communities therefore had little influence when it came to determining the nature and focus of British war memory. Tony Kushner outlines the development of Holocaust memory amongst the British Jewish community, but points out that the wider British community continued to perceive the Holocaust as 'irrelevant to the country's memory work' throughout the 1970s, despite the Jewish community adopting the Holocaust as a focal point and campaigning for a national memorial by that time.³³⁵ As a national institution dedicated to the preservation of war memory, the history of the Imperial War Museum and its relationship to the Holocaust as subject matter is symptomatic of this process. Holocaust memory in Britain therefore emerged when British national war memory permitted it to: this occurred as part of a wider process of re-evaluation of the history of the Second World War and of modern Germany that recognised the role of political antisemitism in Nazi ideology and the policy of the Final Solution as a product of that ideology. Prior to this the genocide was largely absent from British narratives of the Second World War; school curricula and textbooks from the 1950s and 60s contained almost nothing on Jews or antisemitism in reference to modern European history. Unlike in Canada, where the Jewish community succeeded in developing community-led education initiatives and petitioning for the inclusion of the Holocaust as a discrete subject of study in

³³⁴ Ibid., 634.

³³⁵ Kushner, 'Bill Williams', 12.

secondary school curricula as early as 1976, the Holocaust made its way into British curricula through a wider case study of Germany as a single-party state and in the context of modern European politics. David Cesarani draws a distinction between this widening of interest in the Holocaust in Britain and that of the United States, which by contrast was the result of a 'concerted attempt to foster Holocaust Studies'.³³⁶

Since oral history in Britain was at that time considered a research tool, Holocaust oral testimony projects consequently emerged when the Holocaust became an area of interest for researchers, primarily historians. There was a demand from Holocaust survivors for a recording service – reflected by the Holocaust Survivors' Centre project which was created in response to requests from Centre members for such a service, and by the large numbers of volunteers who came forward when *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* made its call for contributors at the 'Remembering for the Future' conference – but by and large Holocaust survivors in Britain relied on researchers and their academic networks and resources to conduct the interviews and produce the collections. The community simply did not have the means to do it alone. Consequently there were restrictions on UK projects that did not exist in Canada. Whereas the majority of Canadian projects were keen to interview anyone and everyone who wished to contribute, including non-Jewish witnesses, liberators and aid-givers, limited resources and research mandates necessitated restrictions on who could be interviewed by any given British project. LMJC managed the scope of its interviewing efforts by first defining 'the Holocaust'; second, defining 'a survivor'; and third, turning away anyone who had previously been interviewed by another project, namely the Imperial War Museum's Sound Archive. The following extract – though lengthy – illustrates the discussions that took place between project staff at LMJC when determining who to interview:

There has been much academic, practical, and semantic discussion about the key question, 'who is a "survivor" of the Holocaust?', a

³³⁶ Cesarani, 'Great Britain', 626–28.

statement which really contains two key concepts. Many historians prefer to use the term 'Shoah' to describe the Nazi attempt to exterminate the whole of European Jewry during the Second World War. We felt that 'Holocaust' was more universally known and used in this connection and for most people, therefore, it has a more direct meaning. At the same time, it is important to note that we are deeply aware of the impact of Nazi persecution and exterminatory policies on other minorities, for example, the Gypsies, Homosexuals, and the mentally and physically disabled. We attempted to discover if survivors from such groups were alive in the United Kingdom, but without success.

Beyond this first question of definition, we also had to consider whom we perceived to be a 'survivor' for the purposes of our interviews. Is a 'survivor' someone who has lived through the experience of incarceration in an extermination camp, where there was constant danger of losing one's life, virtually without notice? Such a person could be described as a survivor of the expectation of death. Or should 'survival' be taken to mean 'remaining alive after the occurrence of an event'? If 'an event' is taken to mean the Second World War itself, the project would have been required to include all those alive after the war. That was obviously too broad a definition for our purposes especially given the limitations of funding and time within which we had to work. On the other hand, we tried not to restrict ourselves too much in this respect. We therefore decided to interpret 'event' as meaning the experiences of several European Jewish Communities in the Nazi Holocaust in Europe, and a 'survivor' as being an individual belonging to one of those communities who remained alive after the defeat of the Third Reich in 1945.³³⁷

Of the 90 survivors who initially volunteered to be interviewed at the 'Remembering for the Future' conference, 20 were rendered ineligible because

³³⁷ Wingate, 'National Life Story Collection', 128.

they were not resident in the United Kingdom, had previously been interviewed by the IWM, or withdrew their initial consent to participate.³³⁸ LMJC, the Holocaust Survivors' Centre and *Refugee Voices* all purport to interview 'Holocaust survivors' but each has a different classification for what merited any particular individual being included in the collection. The identity of the 'Holocaust survivor' remains contested in the UK even today: in 2010 a heated debate played out in the 'Letters to the Editor' column of the *AJR Journal*, the publication of the Association of Jewish Refugees, between survivors of the concentration camps and ghettos in Europe, Kindertransportees, and those who otherwise found refuge in Britain, over the definition of the words 'survivor' and 'refugee' and which particular wartime experiences entitled one to lay claim to such identities. The Association of Jewish Refugees itself, who sponsored and produced the *Refugee Voices* project, had particular criteria for membership especially in its early days: the aims of the organisation, outlined at its establishment in 1941, included the proclamation that 'This Association aims at representing all those Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria for whom Judaism is a determining factor in their outlook on life.'³³⁹ The *Refugee Voices* project, in addition to focusing on 'refugee' status as a key determinant of participation, consequently also had a Germanic-focus: 'to gather evidence of historical experiences not widely recorded (of the emigration and settlement of German-speaking refugees in the UK in general and specific experiences in particular, for example, women as domestic servants, accounts of internment, refugees as POWs in Germany etc.)'³⁴⁰ Refugees from Germany and Austria account for more than half of the interviewees for the *Refugee Voices* project as a result. The Holocaust Survivors' Centre, so one letter-writer in the *AJR Journal* stated, defined a 'Holocaust survivor' as anyone who was living in Nazi-occupied territory at the time of Kristallnacht and subsequently survived the war,³⁴¹ which does not account for the 10,000 children who entered the UK prior to Kristallnacht under the Kindertransport scheme. At some point between the

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 131.

³³⁹ M.N., 'Gems from the Archives', *AJR Information*, July 1991, 12.

³⁴⁰ 'About Refugee Voices'.

³⁴¹ A. Saville, 'Letters to the Editor', *AJR Journal*, August 2010, 6.

establishment of the HSC and the winding down of its interviewing efforts the rules regarding membership appear to have been relaxed because the HSC collection does now include a small number of interviews with Kindertransportees, but this fact does nonetheless reflect a degree of gatekeeping within the British Holocaust survivor community that unintentionally framed the testimony collections that they produced. The debate about who can consider themselves a Holocaust survivor does not appear in the project paperwork for any of the Canadian collections studied here. This does appear to be a particularly British problem, which in part reflects the more diverse nature of the British survivor community – including as it did a large proportion of individuals who emigrated to Britain before and during the war and did not therefore experience the extremes of persecution, which in turn fuelled attempts within the community to establish a ‘hierarchy’ of suffering – but is also a problem which manifests in oral testimony projects as a result of a cultural distinction in the perceived function of recording Holocaust survivors in the respective countries. In the UK, oral testimony projects engaged with Holocaust survivors as research subjects, thus projects were able and often required to impose strict eligibility criteria which dictated participation; in Canada, oral testimony projects were generally speaking a service that was provided to the survivor community which was partaken in voluntarily, by any and all who wished to fulfil a cultural and/or moral obligation to bear witness and contribute to the production of an extensive record reflecting the survivor experience.

The biggest difference between the Canadian and the British contexts is the primary motivation driving the creation of oral testimony projects in the respective countries. In Canada, the primary motivation was combatting the rise of antisemitism and Holocaust denial: the impetus for recording projects came from within the Holocaust survivor community in response to the social conditions in which it found itself, and as I have shown the methodological approach of the majority of these projects was designed to produce material that would simultaneously serve as a documentary proof of the Holocaust and could also be used in educational efforts in schools and cultural institutions. The cohesiveness and interconnectedness of all the Canadian projects in spite of the geographical

distance between them – stemming as the majority of them do from Robert Krell and the CJC-HDP – is evidence of how the Canadian testimonial landscape was to a certain degree a united effort in the face of contemporary political and social circumstances. British projects, on the other hand, are far more disparate: they are produced by oral historians, museums, survivor organisations and television production companies amongst others and are more methodologically diverse as a result. This reflects how Holocaust oral testimony projects emerged in the UK to fill a research lacuna, as research into the Second World War developed to include different aspects of the Holocaust survivor experience over time and various organisations and institutions acquired an interest in and the means to undertake this type of work. In summary, Canadian Holocaust oral testimony was a united community response to Holocaust denial and a solution to the intergenerational transferal of Holocaust memories. It was ‘testimony’ in a very literal sense of the word, but also marked a community capitalising on a technological opportunity to further its educational agenda. In the UK, the testimonial impulse may have been very real for the survivor, but those initiating recording projects did not always perceive the testimonial impulse to be the primary motivation for making the recordings. There oral history was considered a research tool, thus testimonies were collected with a view to servicing future studies of the past and to this day have been preserved and made available with this idea in mind.

The significance of these distinctions is all the more clear when compared with the trends in US Holocaust oral testimony which tend to dominate literature on audiovisual Holocaust testimonies. The ‘Americanisation’ of the Holocaust is a phenomenon which has preoccupied many scholars who seek to explain by what processes the US has come to dominate the field of Holocaust studies and Holocaust commemoration despite the Holocaust being a distinctly European event. In an edited volume entitled *The Americanisation of the Holocaust*, Henry Greenspan summarises the factors that led to the ascendance of Holocaust memory in the United States. Though the combination of social, cultural and political influences was complex, Greenspan points to a widespread preoccupation with disaster, victimisation, and survivalism that prevailed in 1970s America. Drawing on

the work of Christopher Lasch, Greenspan stated that ‘everyday persistence and coping as much as actual life-and-death struggle were suddenly portrayed in survival terms. Applied so broadly, the rhetoric of extremity served both to express a persistent sense of crisis and, by overstatement, to dilute it. But whether invoked with irony or with dead seriousness, being “a survivor” – more specifically, being known as “a survivor” – became a kind of fashion.’ As survivors of the ultimate ‘disaster’, American culture turned to the Holocaust survivor as an icon of the new rhetoric. This was more than a renewed readiness on the part of survivors to talk or of the public to listen; it was a cultural shift that was embodied by the survivor and the survivor narrative.³⁴² It seems no coincidence therefore that US Holocaust oral testimony projects spotlight the Holocaust survivor as phenomenon, motivated by a desire to explore the psychology of the survivor and to drive home its moral messages and lessons to the US’s – and ultimately the world’s – non-survivor population. Greenspan identifies two rhetorics that emerge within contemporary discourses about Holocaust survivors and efforts to collect their testimony: ‘a ceremonial rhetoric in which we honor survivors as celebrants and heroes and a psychiatric rhetoric in which the same survivors are depicted as ghosts and wrecks.’ Greenspan criticises this development however on the basis that our fixation with collecting and honouring the ‘tales’, ‘stories’ and ‘legacies’ of survivors has led to a preoccupation with celebrating the act of giving testimony, at the expense of recognising or appreciating the value of the content of that testimony. In his words, ‘survivors’ speech tends to be esteemed in the abstract – as the *idea* of testimony rather than the reality. At times, it seems specifically to be acclaimed instead of being listened to.’³⁴³

This is evident in the earliest ‘archive’ of Holocaust testimonies in the US, the Fortunoff Video archive for Holocaust Testimonies, which began as a grassroots documentation effort in the Jewish survivor community in New Haven, Connecticut, spearheaded by filmmaker Laurel Vlock and psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Dori

³⁴² Henry Greenspan, ‘Imagining Survivors: Testimony and the Rise of Holocaust Consciousness’, in *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, ed. Hilene Flanzbaum (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 57–58.

³⁴³ Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors*, 48.

Laub in the late 1970s. The production of the archive was closely linked to a contemporaneous effort by the same community to erect a monument to the Holocaust, with both efforts driven by an increasing anxiety about the passing of the survivor generation. In contrast to early British and Canadian efforts – both underway at a similar time – Laub and his New Haven colleagues were motivated almost exclusively by a need to preserve survivor testimonies rather than leverage their educational or historical potential. Video testimony presented the community with the means by which to document their stories and communicate the harsh reality of their lived experience to the world. Geoffrey Hartman – a Kindertransportee who emigrated to the US and trained as a literary theorist – directed the Fortunoff video archive project, summarising its objectives thus: ‘It is our wish to document the tragedy and to show it in its full human detail. But we do not try to make historians of the survivors. We listen to them, try to free their memories, and see each person as more than a victim: as someone who faces those traumas again, an eyewitness who testifies in public.’³⁴⁴ Concern for the survivor and their freedom to articulate their experiences on their own terms was consequently at the heart of the project, not the comprehensive collection of historical data or furnishing of the historical record. Laub saw the function of the interview as a means of rendering trauma visible: ‘Via the interview (i.e. interpersonal encounter) format, oral history projects help synthesise a wordless, psychotic experience, making it a human one.’³⁴⁵ This was instrumentalised in Fortunoff interviewing methodology which stipulated that interviewers were to take a passive role in the encounter, practicing the art of ‘empathic listening’: interviewers were not to take notes, break eye contact or look at their watches, questions should be kept to a minimum and the interviewer should behave as if a student, receiving an education from the expert.³⁴⁶ Noah Shenker summarised the Fortunoff approach to Holocaust oral testimony when he stated that it ‘emphasised

³⁴⁴ Geoffrey Hartman, ‘About the Yale Archive’, in *Witness: Voices from the Holocaust*, ed. Joshua M. Greene and Shiva Kumar (New York: Touchstone, 2000), 252–53.

³⁴⁵ Nanette C. Auerhahn and Dori Laub, ‘Holocaust Testimony’, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 5, no. 4 (1990): 451.

³⁴⁶ Stephen Naron, ‘Archives, Ethics and Influence’, 46–47.

the human dimension of suffering at the heart of the Holocaust, rather than the broader historical picture.³⁴⁷

Arguably the pinnacle of American national Holocaust memory was the establishment of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, chartered by US Congress in 1980 and opened just off the Washington Mall in Washington D.C. in 1993. The idea for the museum was one of three recommendations made to President Jimmy Carter by the President's Commission on the Holocaust, convened in 1978 to assess the nature and viability of a national monument and memorial to those who perished in the Holocaust. In the report, chairman to the commission Elie Wiesel wrote that:

Our central focus was memory – our own and that of the victims during a time of unprecedented evil and suffering. That was the Holocaust, an era we must remember not only because of the dead; it is too late for them. Not only because of the survivors; it may even be late for them. Our remembering is an act of generosity, aimed at saving men and women from apathy to evil, if not from evil itself. We wish, through the work of this Commission, to reach and transform as many human beings as possible. We hope to share our conviction that when war and genocide unleash hatred against any one people or peoples, all are ultimately engulfed in the fire.³⁴⁸

The idea for the museum was driven by a commitment to education, but an altogether different kind of education to the historical, factual education being campaigned for in Canada. Holocaust commemoration in the US was to be a lesson in morality, a schooling in human depravity and a cautionary tale to the American population. Edward Linenthal highlights how this philosophy was carried through to the exhibition design process of the USHMM:

The council often emphasised that the museum would have a therapeutic value. Lessons learned would inculcate civic virtue in

³⁴⁷ Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, 21.

³⁴⁸ Elie Wiesel, 'Report to the President: President's Commission on the Holocaust', 27 September 1979, 4, <https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum/presidents-commission>.

museum visitors. Ideally, they would emerge from their museum encounter with the Holocaust having a greater appreciation of democracy and a more profound sense of personal commitment to the virtues of pluralism, tolerance, and compromise, and a more sober appreciation of the continuing dangers of anti-Semitism and racism. The implicit message was that the Holocaust clarified the importance of adhering to democratic values, and offered a stark historical example of what happened when such values failed.³⁴⁹

The USHMM was acutely aware from the outset that in order to deliver this mandate, it would need to lean heavily on the survivor community as the key link between the event and the unknowing public. Though the museum would ultimately choose not to centralise testimony in the way it had first envisaged – opting instead to ground the content of the main exhibition in official documents and academically verified accounts to give a solid historical reference point for survivor and witness testimony³⁵⁰ – it did not downplay the power and irreplaceable value of the recorded testimony and incorporated the recording of survivors into its operation from the outset of the collection and curation stage of exhibition development.³⁵¹ Though the USHMM Department of Oral History would later conflict with Fortunoff in an effort to assert itself as the US’s national repository of Holocaust testimony, the oral history department drew heavily on Fortunoff methodology, invoking the ‘empathic listening’ model for interviewers, advocating the virtual silence of the interviewer and a preference for personal rather than historical narrativisation.³⁵² Testimony was collected to function in an illustrative capacity and intended to communicate human impact; historical information could be gathered elsewhere and communicated elsewhere, but the museum believed that it could not deliver its core moral message without testimony.

³⁴⁹ Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America’s Holocaust Museum* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1995), 67.

³⁵⁰ Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, 61–62.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 72–73.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 76.

The Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, the third key project developed in the United States to have a national – and in this case global – outlook, emerged from the same principled tradition which held that survivors were uniquely placed to deliver moral education and thus must be recorded at all costs, but possessed a very different set of priorities. Intended to become *the* international repository of Holocaust testimonies and the first port of call for all wishing to engage with or utilise survivor testimony, the Shoah Foundation had to negotiate its commitment to the survivors with its appeal to users: essentially, it wished to do a service to survivors by encouraging them to speak their own truths, but also collect the kind of material that would be useful to researchers and to present it in a user-friendly, accessible format. With a target of 50,000 interviews to be collected globally, the Shoah Foundation developed an extensive interviewing methodology designed to standardise interviewing practices in order to produce a consistent style of testimony. Negotiating these aims proved to be difficult however, and several scholars have pointed out the ambiguity in a protocol which advised that ‘preparation and research are vital’ and instructed interviewers to begin and end with set questions and follow a strict chronology, whilst simultaneously directing them to avoid turning the interview into a “question and answer” session’ and that an ‘ideal interview consists of open-ended questions that allow the interviewees’ testimony to flow.’³⁵³ The success of the consistent execution of Shoah Foundation methodology across 52,000 interviews collected in 56 different countries, by 2300 interviewers in 32 languages is up for debate, but it is not within the remit of this thesis to give a comprehensive analysis of the Shoah Foundation’s history and methodological practices, or an in-depth analysis of its testimonial output – a number of scholars have already commenced this important and valuable work, and the VHA today is the subject of articles, monographs and even dedicated academic conferences exploring its historical and pedagogical value – so here it is sufficient to situate its origins in a tradition of survivor-led, passive style of interviewing that was characteristic of a society which leaned on its survivor population to deliver moral edification rather than historical education. Courtesy of

³⁵³ Shandler, *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age*, 12.

the indexing function built in to the VHA interface, it is possible to identify that more than half of the Shoah Foundation's original interviews – 29,163 of the 52,000 – have a section tagged under the indexing code 'feelings and thoughts > reflections > future message', indicating that the survivor has either voluntarily or under prompting – most likely the latter, given these numbers – been directed to address 'future generations' through the delivery of a moralistic coda to their testimony. An illustration of how this plays out in a testimony is shown in the following extract from the Shoah Foundation interview with Helen Colin, conducted by Pamela Lane:

PL: Do you have any message for the people that will see this, from what you've learned from your life?

HC: I beg everybody that listens to this message to please, be polite. Be gracious to another human being regardless, regardless of colour, race, because we're all born to live and enjoy life, and we're all entitled to the freedom of life. And unless and until we're going to respect one another, that's the greatest love you could give is respect.³⁵⁴

The final questions of the Shoah Foundation interviews are designed to offer messages of hope and moral lessons derived from Holocaust experiences; essentially, they are an explicit attempt to solicit through interview methodology the redemptive, cautionary, and inspirational messages that American society revered the survivor testimony for.

The contrasting approaches between American, British and Canadian approaches to testimony reflect differing interpretations of the value of Holocaust testimony as a tool for the instrumentalisation of Holocaust memory in contemporary society. In America, testimony had a moral value and its collection was engineered to drive the 'lessons' of the Holocaust home. In Canada, by contrast, the emphasis in the archiving was firmly on factual accuracy – after all, how effective could a factually inaccurate testimony be in the fight against Holocaust denial? In the planning stages of the CJC-HDP, the idea was floated and

³⁵⁴ Helen Colin, Interview for USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, interview by Pamela Lane, 24 August 1996, 18906, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

agreed by the planning committee to have all the information in the final transcripts fact checked by Yad Vashem to ensure that the veracity of the final historical record would not be weakened by the fallibility of memory.³⁵⁵ This ultimately did not happen, possibly due to the temporary suspension of the project due to lack of funds, but the intention reflects a preoccupation with historical accuracy in the drive to collect the material. A project summary created in 1987 highlights the intention: 'Although it was intended to have the data in the transcripts verified by either Yad Vashem or YIVO, this was not done. (The dilemma facing the committee in 1984 was whether to use only that information known to be true, or to accept as valid individual experiences expressed through oral testimony.)'³⁵⁶ Moreover, the concern with potentially inaccurate information in survivor interviews was one key reason why the CJC-HDP's initial attempt at producing an educational resource stalled. In 1983 a meeting was held at which key individuals in the project's development viewed rough edits of 20 tapes to assess them for historical accuracy and effectiveness. One of the criticisms levied at the tapes was given as follows: 'Unsubstantiated incidents were reported from hearsay anecdotes, e.g. cannibalism, Jewish women were raped by Germans, <<Jews worse than Nazis>>, soap made from Jews...[and] some tapes contain historical inaccuracies.'³⁵⁷ Though the idea of having each and every interview fact-checked is an unachievable ambition for projects containing a significant quantity of interviews or which have insufficient funding to resource such an enterprise, there is strong evidence that a concern with the factual accuracy of testimonies prevailed in testimony projects across Canada. The use of pre-interview questionnaires was employed not only to ensure comprehensive coverage of a survivor's experiences during the interview, but also to enable an interviewer to conduct research into the relevant historical background to aid them in producing an accurate and historically

³⁵⁵ 'Minutes of a Meeting of Committee of Consultants of the Holocaust Documentation Project - May 30, 1984' (Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, 30 May 1984), 4, CJC Collection Holocaust Documentation Project (HDP) 1981-1987 DA 16 Box 1 File 19, Canadian Jewish Archives.

³⁵⁶ Canadian Jewish Congress, 'Holocaust Documentation Project Summary', 5 April 1987, 1, CJC Collection Holocaust Documentation Project (HDP) 1981-1987 DA 16 Box 1 File 11, Canadian Jewish Archives.

³⁵⁷ 'Minutes of Meeting of Committee of Consultants May 1984', 1-2.

robust source material. Esme Gotz – wife of Holocaust survivor Elly Gotz who initiated the recovery of the Toronto interviews from gathering dust untouched in storage – together with her husband took it upon themselves to listen to and transcribe to text close to 400 testimonies from the Toronto collection. Whilst these are not verbatim transcriptions, the Gotzes put significant effort into ensuring the accuracy of their narrative texts, fact checking place names, people, and names of concentration and work camps to ensure they were documented in print correctly.³⁵⁸

The British approach was something of a fusion of the Canadian and American approaches. The British approach to oral history saw its value as a complementary type of historical source that is characteristically different from the traditional, written record but still contains information of use and value to those interested studying and learning about the past. Paul Thompson posited in his 1988 edition of *The Voice of the Past* that the recorded spoken word was arguably more accurate than a written record of a conversation, for it documented the words exactly as they were spoken, and recorded ‘social clues, the nuances of uncertainty, humour, or pretence, as well as the texture of dialect.’³⁵⁹ In many senses, oral history was an opportunity to record and examine dimensions of history that would otherwise go ignored. The application of this approach to interviewing in *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* was outlined by Jennifer Wingate, who wrote that the main purpose of the project was to ‘add to the existing body of historical material on the subject’ through engaging the spoken word testimony, which would add a ‘new and vital dimension’ to the extant historical record.³⁶⁰ This attitude was also reflected by both David Lance and Margaret Brooks of the Department of Sound Records at the Imperial War Museum, who recognised that oral history offered archives something they could not get from the written documents and could therefore be used to both document and preserve the past.³⁶¹ British oral

³⁵⁸ Esme and Elly Gotz, in conversation with the author, 2 April 2019.

³⁵⁹ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 1988, 108.

³⁶⁰ Wingate, ‘National Life Story Collection’, 129.

³⁶¹ See David Lance, ‘Oral History’, in *Sound Archives: A Guide to Their Establishment and Development*, ed. David Lance, IASA Special Publication 4 (International Association of Sound

historians interviewing Holocaust survivors recognised that the perspective of the Holocaust survivor was unique and therefore of irrefutable value – that Holocaust survivors could communicate through the spoken word something that could not be found in the written record – but that value was calculated in terms of the potential use of the material for historical research. Survivors were considered communicators of historical truth, but that truth was to be found in the narrative structure and in the mindful articulation of personal memories, as much as in the objective detail. Bea Lewkowicz for example specifically stated that *Refugee Voices* attempted to ‘gather evidence of historical events and at the same time [give] space to individual memory and the creation of narratives.’³⁶² This was reflected in the dominance of a life story approach in British Holocaust oral testimony interviews, which was intended to be chronological and to account for an interviewee’s pre- and post-war life in as much detail as their wartime experiences, but which also permitted the interviewee freedom to construct their own narrative and take initiative in the storytelling. The extensive list of potential questions created by Bill Williams for LMJC is set out in chronological order under headings reflecting various life stages – starting with ‘Family Background’ and ‘Early Life’ and ending with ‘The Post-War Years’ – but Jennifer Wingate expressly states that although the interviewer would guide the interviewee to relate their memories in a chronological sequence, ‘this was never a rigid rule.’³⁶³

There are three primary conclusions to be drawn here. The first is the development of a particularly ‘North American’ Holocaust oral testimony from which the UK stands distinct, a consequence of differences in British and North American experiences of the war and thus postwar engagement with the Holocaust as part of national war memory, combined with stylistically and theoretically different approaches to instrumentalising oral history methodology between the

Archives, 1983); and Margaret Brooks, ‘Methodology for Oral Archives’, in *By Word of Mouth: Élite Oral History*, by Anthony Seldon and Joanna Papworth (London: Methuen, 1983), 89–113.

³⁶² Bea Lewkowicz, ‘Does Gender Matter? Reflections on the Role of Gender in Women’s Oral History Narratives’, in *Exile and Gender II: Politics, Education and the Arts*, ed. Charmian Brinson, Jana Barbora Buresova, and Andrea Hammel, vol. 18, *The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies* (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2017), 233.

³⁶³ Wingate, ‘National Life Story Collection’, 135.

two continents. This approach to Holocaust oral testimony is characterised by the audiovisual recording of a Holocaust-centric testimonial narrative which prioritises the survivor's need to speak over the institution or organisation's need to collect certain kinds of material. The second is a significant difference between Holocaust oral testimony in the US when compared with British and Canadian projects, a result of the so-called 'Americanisation' of the Holocaust which has furnished the United States with a logistical as well as emotional ability to respond to the Holocaust in a way that is neither possible nor necessarily desirable amongst Jewish and Holocaust survivor communities in Britain and Canada. The third is a clear distinction between British and Canadian Holocaust oral testimony – one which prioritises education, one which prioritises research – both products of their respective historical context, characteristically different, emerging not only to serve their survivor communities but also to alleviate contemporary anxieties surrounding commemoration and memorialisation.

The value of conducting this comparison is to challenge the histories which make chronologies based on the largest and most visible – i.e. American – collections of testimony. When Annette Wieviorka discusses the proliferation of oral testimony archives that occurred in the late 1970s – the period she terms 'The Era of the Witness' – she references French, Israeli and German settings but largely in the context of the global influence of US projects, specifically the Fortunoff Archive and the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.³⁶⁴ Jessica Wiederhorn also chronologises the history of Holocaust oral testimony but similarly finds the Fortunoff Archive at the forefront of the new testimonial era, describing it as 'groundbreaking' before moving rapidly to the establishment of the USC VHA, positing it in many ways as the pinnacle of the new testimonial movement.³⁶⁵ On its website the UK National Holocaust Centre in Nottinghamshire credits only the Fortunoff Archive, the USHMM and the USC VHA with pioneering the Holocaust testimony project as a concept, only mentioning UK testimony collections in passing – and even then referring only to the Wiener Holocaust Library and the British

³⁶⁴ Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*.

³⁶⁵ Wiederhorn, 'The Oral History of Holocaust Survivors'.

Library – as a link at the bottom of the page.³⁶⁶ These analyses are fair and it is indeed hard to deny the international dominance of the Fortunoff Archive and the USC VHA, but what if on a more localised scale these archives had less of an impact on the development of Holocaust testimony archives than we might at first think? Robert Krell began conducting his own interviews in Vancouver in 1978, a year before the grassroots interviewing efforts of the New Haven, Connecticut community commenced and four years before it opened its doors to the public as the Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (later renamed the Fortunoff Archive) and expanded its recording efforts.³⁶⁷ *Britain and the Refugee Crisis*, the first project of the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive to interview refugees from Nazism, was also launched in 1978, with Margaret Brooks assuming leadership of the archive in 1982 and including Holocaust survivors in the archive's recording activities thenceforth. *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* began interviewing survivors in Britain in 1988, with the Holocaust Survivors' Centre following suit five years later. The Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project was initiated and concluded in two years, 1981-1982, with the Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal Holocaust communities and education centres launching their own projects in 1983, 1985 and 1994 respectively, and the McGill *Living Testimonies* project commencing interviewing in 1989. All of these projects were established prior to the launch of the USC VHA in the mid-1990s. Though these US-based projects have, ultimately, come to bear an influence on the global direction of Holocaust oral testimony – and I will discuss this in more detail in the next section – they do not tell the only story. In Britain and Canada interviewing projects emerged under a not dissimilar but far from identical political and cultural framework, and yet because they are not as grand in scale – or perhaps because they are not American – they rarely, if ever, feature in the discourse.

³⁶⁶ 'Testimony', *The National Holocaust Centre and Museum*, accessed 17 April 2020, <https://www.holocaust.org.uk/testimony>.

³⁶⁷ Joanne Wiener Rudof, 'A Yale University and New Haven Community Project: From Local to Global', 2012, http://fortunoff.library.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/local_to_global.pdf.

Towards a Standardised Holocaust Oral Testimony, and the Future of Holocaust Oral Testimony in Britain and Canada

Despite the very apparent national trends that distinguish ‘British’ from ‘Canadian’ from ‘American’ Holocaust oral testimony, there are exceptions to the rules. Of the two countries that form the case study for this thesis, the most obvious anomaly is the Concordia University project *Life Stories of Montrealers*, which is stylistically closer to the more academic, research-driven oral history projects of the UK than the testimony archives of the Canadian Holocaust centres. The Association of Jewish Refugees’ *Refugee Voices* project – although run by oral historians and self-proclaiming its origins to be in the social history, history-from-below approach characteristic of British oral history – is the only of the British archives covered in this thesis to be video rather than audio based.³⁶⁸ This is atypical of British oral history projects which, largely due to limited resources, tend to employ primarily audio-only recordings, thus in this respect it bears greater similarity to the ‘North-American’ approach to interviewing Holocaust survivors in which video is seen as an expected standard. *Life Stories of Montrealers* and *Refugee Voices* were both established in the 2000s, in a culture of Holocaust memory somewhat different to that of the late 1970s and 1980s in which the majority of British and Canadian projects were launched, and post the conclusion of the USC Shoah Foundation interviewing enterprise. Both projects bear the marks of their national testimonial trends, but equally reflect a trend towards a standardisation in Holocaust testimony caused by technological advancements that have increased the ease of international communication and changed the way testimony is collected, stored and used. In this respect, these projects are reflective of an increasingly globalised approach to memorialising the Holocaust. The rapid development of technology has not only made the recording and preservation of oral testimony cheaper and easier but has expanded national and international communication channels, making it cheaper and easier for projects and practitioners to share ideas and approaches. The corollary of this increased accessibility of information has been a sense of

³⁶⁸ The October Films collection of interviews produced by the Imperial War Museum for its Holocaust exhibition is also a video-based collection but was produced specifically for the exhibition and not as a usable testimonial archive. Its accessibility to the public is an incidental benefit rather than an integrated one.

expectation generated by audiences – both the general public and participants in projects themselves – about what a Holocaust oral testimony project should look like. Projects with a long pedigree such as the recordings made by the Vancouver community enable us to observe how these changes have played out on a local level, but it is also possible to observe from projects such as *Refugee Voices* and *Life Stories of Montrealers* – which in many ways reflect the testimonial tradition of the other's nation – how this sharing of ideas has diversified the projects being produced regionally. Activity in Britain and Canada in the last decade, moreover, reflects an increasing democratisation and universalised engagement with Holocaust oral testimony and concern for its use and preservation in the future.

The use of video is perhaps the clearest outcome of this process. In Canada, video has since the origins of the recording phenomenon been seen as a vital tool for preserving survivor testimony. Robert Krell recognised early on that it was a necessary medium if producers of testimony had any hope of capturing the attention of younger generations in what he called the 'visual age'. He dismissed outright the argument that video recording would somehow distract a survivor and in doing so distort their testimony, even going as far as to argue it was the responsibility of the survivor to participate in the public recounting of their stories.³⁶⁹ The CJC-HDP launched with a passionate and convincing argument for video, reasoning that society was accustomed to high quality audio-visual production which the Holocaust Documentation Project would need to match in order to 'capture and maintain student interest; to compete effectively in today's communication market; [and] to strive for maximum impact on viewers'. In addition to having the greatest impact on students, the CJC-HDP believed that video would increase the future potential utility of the project, since it could be incorporated more effectively into educational forums, seminars, conferences and television broadcasts than audio could.³⁷⁰ Early British projects, by contrast, did not employ video except where interviews were conducted specifically as media for integration into television, film or museum productions, in no small part due to the significant

³⁶⁹ Robert Krell, 'The Audio Visual Taping of Survivor Accounts' May 1987, Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 53 File 9, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

³⁷⁰ Canadian Jewish Congress, 'Historical Documentation Bank Proposal Mar 1981', 15–16.

cost of audiovisual recording at this time. While the cost of video in the 1970s and 80s was considerable, by the 2000s the base costs of the technology required for recording and storing video interviews had reduced sufficiently that the practice was adopted widely by those wishing to record Holocaust survivors, which accounts for the use of video in the British *Refugee Voices* project, launched in 2003. Project director Bea Lewkowicz explains the decision to use video in the project, citing a number of American video oral testimony projects as inspiration:

The advantage of video testimony, as suggested by James Young, is that unlike literary testimony (which is edited), silences are part of the image and unlike audio interviews, gestures, movements, and expressions provide an additional layer of interpretation. Inspired by other video history projects, such as the Fortunoff Video Archive of Yale University (4,300 interviews), the USC Shoah Foundation, (52,000 interviews), and the Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivors Oral History Archive at the University of Michigan-Dearborn (300 interviews), *Refugee Voices* is the first dedicated video archive of life histories by refugees from Germany and Austria in the UK.³⁷¹

Essentially there is now a consensus that Holocaust survivors need to be seen as much as they are heard; video embodies the narrative, granting it a tangibility that is otherwise left up to the imagination as well as the ability to convey emotion, movement, personality and individuality. So influential was the USC Shoah Foundation in consolidating the use of video that it is now cited by leading oral historians in theoretical and methodological debates about the use of audio vs. video in oral history.³⁷² Indeed, such is the prevalence of videos of Holocaust survivors and the presence of survivor speakers in schools that it is now virtually an expectation that survivor testimonies will be recorded in audiovisual format. Finding no. 4 of the British Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission – launched by Prime Minister David Cameron in 2014 to evaluate the British memorial landscape

³⁷¹ Bea Lewkowicz, 'The AJR Refugee Voices Archive', 72.

³⁷² See for example Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, 2003, 134–35; and Thompson and Bornat, *The Voice of the Past*, 122.

and assess its suitability for a new national Holocaust memorial – recognises the need for survivor and liberator testimony to be urgently recorded and preserved, citing the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education’s survey of secondary school children in England which found that ‘90% of young people who heard a survivor give their testimony, reported that the experience deepened their knowledge and made the Holocaust seem “more real” to them.’³⁷³ Thus despite the trend in the UK for audio rather than video testimony collection, the associated recommendations of the Commission stated that any future recordings to be made should be ‘filmed in the highest definition available, in the purest form and with the greatest possible versatility to be adaptable for continued use as technology evolves.’³⁷⁴

The recommendations of the PM’s Holocaust Commission are also symptomatic of the way individuals and institutions relate to Holocaust testimony in the 21st Century, when the loss of the survivor generation has been felt in real terms and the anxiety that accompanies the ‘rescue archaeology’ phenomenon is concentrated acutely on the remainder, now predominantly child survivors. In coining the term ‘rescue archaeology’ to refer to the surge of recording in the 1980s and 1990s, Tony Kushner refers to a process which he argues has rightly prioritised collection in the face of dwindling numbers of survivors but at the expense of any significant or meaningful debate about the use to which the material should be put, or any discussion about whether the methods used were appropriate to the needs of the survivors being interviewed.³⁷⁵ The USC VHA is perhaps the pinnacle of this process. But though virtually all projects studied make some reference to the race against time being a motivating factor for their operations, Kushner’s claim does not seem fully pertinent to the collections of Britain or Canada. Unlike in the US, where new institutions and organisations were created specifically to collect and house survivor testimonies, in the UK and Canada these institutions pre-existed the projects they keep. As such, from the earliest days of Holocaust oral testimony in both countries the intended use of the interviews has been integrated into the

³⁷³ Prime Minister’s Office, ‘Britain’s Promise to Remember: The Prime Minister’s Holocaust Commission Report’, 27 January 2015, 38, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prime-ministers-holocaust-commission-report>.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁷⁵ Kushner, ‘Holocaust Testimony’, 275–76.

project design, reflecting the agendas of the institutions that launched them. Whereas in the US testimony institutions are now turning their attention to the processing and use of the material they have been collecting en masse for the last three or four decades, British and Canadian institutions find themselves instead in the position of launching new projects to meet the needs of 21st century Holocaust commemoration.

For Canada, the primary purpose of recording testimony was education. I have already shown how the educational mandate upon which the Canadian Holocaust oral testimony landscape was built influenced the methodologies which governed the actual interview process, but for many Canadian projects educational output was also built into the project from the outset. In Vancouver as early as the mid-1970s, Holocaust testimony was an ingrained part of the school curriculum and local Holocaust education through the Holocaust Education Symposium that Robert Krell and colleagues launched in 1976. The Symposium was aimed at high school students and members of the public and included lectures from scholars on Holocaust history and contemporary political issues stemming from the Holocaust, but centred around live testimonies delivered by survivors from the Vancouver community. The clear impact that listening to a survivor had on students alerted Krell to the reality that testimonies need preserving and prompted his own efforts to record interviews with survivors, and other attendees at the Vancouver symposia recognised the benefit of the model and began emulating the setup elsewhere in Canada including in Toronto, Victoria and Calgary.³⁷⁶ The Canadian survivor community was therefore well versed in the educational capacity of survivor testimony well before recording efforts really commenced in earnest. This is illustrated in the CJC-HDP, a project which described itself as geared towards ‘information, education and sensitisation’ and which had an inbuilt educational component from its inception.³⁷⁷ Proposals for the project indicate plans to use edited clips from the interviews to produce a set of between 20 and 30 education tapes covering themes such as life in the ghetto, the experiences of children,

³⁷⁶ Robert Krell, *Memoiries: Sounds From Silence* (Vancouver: Robert Krell, 2016), 145–46.

³⁷⁷ Canadian Jewish Congress, ‘Historical Documentation Bank Proposal Mar 1981’, 8.

resistance, humour and identity.³⁷⁸ A committee of educators was convened to undertake the educational work, although this part of the project stalled in part due to lack of funding and in part due to a concern that the project output was of too poor quality to produce the educational tapes effectively.³⁷⁹ Nonetheless an educational initiative was ultimately completed using material from the CJC-HDP, in the form of a fifty-five minute edited film broadcast on educational television services across Canada and abroad and repackaged into a videotape with accompanying teaching guide for educational institutions.³⁸⁰ Other institutions in Canada have engaged in the production of educational resources utilising their own audiovisual testimony collections including the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, often backed by government grants designed to promote the use of audiovisual testimony for Holocaust education.³⁸¹

In the UK it was a research mandate which dominated the production of Holocaust oral testimony projects and was integrated into the project output. The use of audio rather than video, in addition to being a cheaper method of recording, is indicative of an approach to oral history which prioritises the researcher rather than the student. Research institutions often do not have the funds or the technology to store and preserve large quantities of video material, which is still significantly more expensive and demanding in terms of storage capacity to archive than audio. Researchers – in particular historians – wishing to use audio recordings as source material for historical research often do not require a visual accompaniment to an interview; Christopher Browning utilised interviews with survivors in his ground-breaking research on the Starachowice factory slave labour camps, but claims that although video gives a viewer a sense of personality, he cannot think of any instance in which seeing the person on video changed the way

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁷⁹ Rabbi Meyer Krentzman to Kathy Faludi, 'Correspondence Re. Educational Material', 2 June 1982, 1, CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09, Canadian Jewish Archives.

³⁸⁰ Bialystok, *Delayed Impact*, 183.

³⁸¹ Graham Forst, 'Correspondence Re. Production of Teaching Aids' (The Standing Committee on the Holocaust, Vancouver, 11 December 1990), Current Project Files File Name: 'VHEC School Testimony Tapes', Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

he understood the words that they said.³⁸² In terms of output, British oral testimony projects therefore tended to focus their efforts on increasing accessibility for a research audience rather than, as in Canada, integrating recordings into educational programmes. *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* opted to fund the transcription of all of its almost 200 interviews, a move which directly benefits researchers by enabling quick searching and increasing the ease of data retrieval from within audio recordings. However, critics of the full transcription of oral history interviews argue that providing full transcripts reduces the likelihood that someone will listen to all or even any of the audio recording, an act which would be condemned by those who argue the value of recording Holocaust testimony is in the act of witnessing a survivor speak. This was a key concern underlying the decision made by the Fortunoff Archive not to produce transcripts of its testimonies.³⁸³ *Refugee Voices* likewise transcribed all of its interviews, and designed its database interface with the needs of researchers in mind:

All 150 interviews have now been fully transcribed, time-coded, and catalogued, enabling a researcher to view an interview and then to read a transcript of the words spoken in it, or vice versa. The time code in the transcripts makes it possible for a researcher to locate specific passages within an interview in a short amount of time. Accompanying the collection is a comprehensive database of the interviewees with 47 separate categories, including place and date of birth, parents' details, manner of emigration, prisons/camps and war experiences, as well as information about the interviewees' post-war lives, careers, families etc. The database makes a treasure trove of information easily available to researchers.³⁸⁴

Refugee Voices can also only be accessed on site at a dedicated research institution such as the Wiener Holocaust Library in London. Though publicly accessible, the

³⁸² Christopher R. Browning, 'Holocaust History and Survivor Testimony: The Case of the Starachowice Factory Slave Labour Camps' (The Visual History Archive: Research Experience Conference, The American University of Paris, 2017).

³⁸³ Stephen Naron, 'Archives, Ethics and Influence', 48.

³⁸⁴ Anthony Grenville and Bea Lewkowicz, 'Refugee Voices', 180–81.

presentation of LMJC and Holocaust Survivors' Centre interviews on the British Library Sounds public webpage is also geared towards research enquiries: in addition to listing interviews by interviewee name, visitors can view interviews categorised by topic (according to the following categories: camp experiences; ghetto experiences; in hiding; Kindertransport; refugee from Nazi Europe; resident in Britain prior to 1939; resistance; or second generation of Holocaust survivors), or geographically via an interactive 'sound map' which plots interviews based on the birth locations of interviewees.³⁸⁵

All this said, Kushner was writing in 2006. If 'rescue archaeology' is Kushner's way of referring to the process of collection without foresight to use, then arguably that lack of foresight has simultaneously been exacerbated – as the concern with collection 'before it is too late' grows ever greater, a matter of months or years rather than decades – and mollified as society becomes more attuned to its own needs in a post-survivor world and the material being collected can be produced in accordance with those needs. The collection of Holocaust oral testimony from first-generation Holocaust survivors is increasingly passive: fewer survivors means there is no longer a need for new or sustained oral testimony projects with Holocaust survivors, though many existing projects or institutions will consent to conduct an interview should they be approached. The result is that these interviews are often conducted beyond the scope of any particular framework, in the absence of any defined interviewing method or plan for later use. On the other hand, a small number of projects have been established in recent years which focus on a smaller number of survivors and seek to instrumentalise the testimony of those who do remain to pre-emptively solve future problems of Holocaust testimony and education.

The increased use of the life history – or biographical – model of interviewing is in many ways a response to the former: it does not necessarily or particularly show increased concern for the survivor, because quite often survivors want to get straight to talking about their Holocaust experiences rather than their

³⁸⁵ 'Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust', *British Library Sounds*, accessed 24 March 2018, <https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Jewish-Holocaust-survivors>.

childhoods, nor does it necessarily signify a recognition that information about an individual's pre- or post-war life is especially or uniquely desirable for education or commemoration efforts, but rather it speaks to an increased awareness of the *potential* value of the material, particularly for researchers, and the recognition that this is our very last chance to collect it. Essentially as more survivors pass away the more acutely we feel their absence, so conducting full life histories is perceived as an appropriate response to the very last chance we have to hear them speak. A particular feature of this later kind of testimony is the emphasis on biographical detail, perceptible in later interviews of Canadian collections and *Refugee Voices*. Comparing the interview given by Muguette Myers to the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre in 2017 to interviews given to the Centre in earlier years reveals a significant difference particularly in the opening stages of the interview. Myers' interviewer, Yvonne Bensimon, questions Myers on her background and family history for twenty minutes – a full quarter of the total interview – covering all manner of biographical topics including the names and dates of birth of her parents, grandparents and siblings, their education and employment history, the families of her aunts and uncles, her religious heritage, the history of family names and the descendants of her siblings. Earlier interviews do not go into nearly as much detail as this and other contemporaneous interviews from the MHMC.³⁸⁶ Similarly, of the three interviews Louise Sorensen gave in Vancouver at various stages of the interviewing process there – to Robert Krell in 1984, and to the VHEC in 1996 and again in 2014 – the latest interview also contains the most extensive biographical detail. Whilst Robert Krell did express an interest in the pre-war lives of his interviewees, his questioning elicits merely an outline of the circumstances of Sorensen's birth, the name and profession only of her father, and a brief overview of her memories of growing up in Rotterdam.³⁸⁷ The latter interview draws far greater detail through specific and direct lines of questioning: 'And that suburb [where you lived] was called?'; 'Was that her middle name or just the name they picked for her?'; 'Do you know your grandparents, and did you ever know your

³⁸⁶ Myers, Interview for MHMC.

³⁸⁷ Louise Sorensen, Interview for Robert Krell, interview by Robert Krell, 20 June 1984, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

grandparents and what were their names?'; 'Did your mother work?'. Such is the biographical detail sought by interviewer Debby Freiman in 2014 that she succeeds in noting that Sorensen's maternal grandparents were first cousins, a fact not mentioned in either of Sorensen's previous two interviews.³⁸⁸ The concerted acquisition of biographical information from interviewees is also particularly noticeable in the interviews conducted by Rosalyn Livshin for *Refugee Voices* between 2003 and 2006; Livshin admitted that her approach was to use the interview as an opportunity to elicit as much information from an interviewee as possible, while the opportunity to do so is there.³⁸⁹

This is rescue archaeology in the extreme and the USC VHA is both symptomatic of and partially responsible for this trend. The biographical ambitions of the VHA are reflected in the pre-interview questionnaire, designed to be completed by the interviewer in conjunction with the interviewee a week before the recorded interview takes place. The questionnaire – now a 40 page document – records biographical information about the interviewee and their family members and includes detail of their movements and experiences throughout the war, to ensure place names and locations are recorded accurately and names are spelt correctly, and to enable the interviewer to conduct relevant background historical research prior to the interview. The 'Survivor Information' section of the form contains fields to record the interviewee's names (including Hebrew names, Yiddish names, diminutives and nicknames), the origin of their family name, languages spoken by the interviewee, full educational and occupational histories, their academic and professional goals, political affiliations and religious identities, pre-war addresses, and names of synagogues or churches patronised by the interviewee. The form also includes pages to record similar in depth information concerning the interviewee's mother, father, each of the individual's siblings, spouses and children, as well as a section to list the names, birthdates and places and genders of each of the interviewee's grandchildren. The final section of the form for recording interviewee's personal details is a page on 'Family Identity',

³⁸⁸ Louise Sorensen, Interview for the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre Survivor Testimony Project, interview by Debby Freiman, 27 June 2014, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

³⁸⁹ Rosalyn Livshin, in conversation with the author.

which presents an opportunity for the interviewee to record the identities of themselves, their spouses, parents and grandparents: that is, whether they were Jewish or not Jewish and their citizenship before and after the war.³⁹⁰ With so many Holocaust oral testimony projects now modelling themselves on the USC VHA, in addition to reflecting widespread anxiety that this is our last opportunity to record survivor histories, the trend towards recording extensive biographical information of interviewees can be linked to the ambitions of this one particular project.

The second of these trends, the trend towards small, concentrated projects aiming to use testimony to counter specific issues in Holocaust studies, is present in the UK and Canada, and also bears the hallmarks of either a US influence, or similarities akin to a western standardisation of approaches. *New Dimensions in Testimony* (renamed *Dimensions in Testimony* in 2018) was the name given to the USC Shoah Foundation's interactive survivor testimony project, launched in 2012, which describes itself as 'an initiative to record and display testimony in a way that will continue the dialogue between Holocaust survivors and learners far into the future.' Often mistakenly referred to as a 'hologram' project, *Dimensions in Testimony* utilises innovative recording technology to capture survivor responses to an extensive list of questions, which are then indexed and processed using natural language technology to enable the recorded survivor to 'respond' to audience questions, thereby 'replicating' the experience of interacting with a Holocaust survivor without the need for a survivor to actually be present. The technology has been subject to much commendation and criticism and though a critical analysis of the project's strengths and weaknesses is also beyond the scope of this thesis, it is mentioned here as indicative of the type of project I refer to when I speak of oral increasingly being used to pre-emptively solve problems of the future. The desire to preserve the experience of speaking with a survivor is the direct manifestation of an anxiety about how to continue Holocaust education in a post-survivor world, from a society which has come to rely heavily on the survivor for education in the present. *Dimensions in Testimony* states outright that this is its motivation:

³⁹⁰ 'USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive Pre-Interview Questionnaire' (USC Shoah Foundation, October 2012), <https://sfi.usc.edu/collecting>.

The goal is to develop interactive 3-D exhibits in which learners can have simulated, educational conversations with survivors though[sic] the fourth dimension of time. Years from now, long after the last survivor has passed on, the New Dimensions in Testimony project can provide a path to enable young people to listen to a survivor and ask their own questions directly, encouraging them, each in their own way, to reflect on the deep and meaningful consequences of the Holocaust.³⁹¹

The impact of this project on the UK testimonial landscape is evidenced by the direct reference made to the USC VHA in recommendation no. 4 of the PM's Holocaust Commission, which credits the Shoah Foundation with pioneering efforts to 'future-proof' survivor testimony. The report advocates 'the use of advanced filming techniques to capture the experience of interacting with a survivor' and references collaborative efforts between USC and the UK National Holocaust Centre that were already underway.³⁹² The product of this collaboration was *The Forever Project*, which emulates *Dimensions in Testimony* in providing British audiences the opportunity to watch and interact with a survivor giving their testimony in the absence of an actual survivor. At the heart of the project was a commitment to instrumentalising the educational capacity of survivor testimony: on its website, *The Forever Project* states that 'The educational benefit of The Forever Project is priceless. It preserves the experience schoolchildren currently have: interacting with a survivor. More than textbooks and videos, these interactions maximise children's understanding of the Holocaust — and crucially, their ability to relate it to contemporary issues of hate and prejudice.'³⁹³

Dimensions in Testimony, *The Forever Project* and similar projects of that ilk are expensive and difficult to resource, so whilst their ambition is laudable and their displays of futuristic technology mean they dominate discourse about the 'future'

³⁹¹ USC Shoah Foundation, 'New Dimensions in Testimony: Overview' (USC Institute for Creative Technologies, 2013), <https://ict.usc.edu/prototypes/new-dimensions-in-testimony/>.

³⁹² Prime Minister's Office, 'Holocaust Commission Report', 51.

³⁹³ 'The Forever Project', *The National Holocaust Centre and Museum*, accessed 1 May 2020, <https://www.holocaust.org.uk/foreverproject1>.

of Holocaust testimony, they are but a small part of the present testimonial landscape. In Canada a number of innovative projects are underway involving Holocaust survivors, with Concordia University's Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS) leading many of these efforts. A key component of the *Life Stories of Montrealers* oral testimony project, launched by COHDS in 2008, was a working group entitled 'Life Stories in Education,' which sought to explore the pedagogical role that individual storytellers have played in the Montreal community and identify ways to integrate life histories into educational initiatives in the future. A sub-project of this working group led by Stacey Zembrzycki and Steven High by the name of 'Holocaust Testimonials: Bearing Witness in Holocaust Education' placed specific emphasis on the role of the survivor-educator in Montreal and the ways in which survivors' testimonies have been shaped by their life experiences and how they present and re-present their testimonies to meet educational objectives. In the words of Zembrzycki and High:

Concerned with the narrative structure, form, and content of survivors' statements, these interviews seek to understand how survivors construct, tell, and retell their stories when bearing witness. What can they say in 10-15 minutes? What do they include and exclude? Have their stories evolved over time? Do they change depending on the audiences that they are told to or the places that they are told in? In what ways do audience expectations and places shape or structure what is said?³⁹⁴

For this project, two interviews were conducted with each survivor-interviewee, the first a standard life history interview and the second focusing on the survivor's experience of giving their testimony and their personal relationship to the Holocaust. This almost meta-oral testimony project departs from the same understanding as *Dimensions in Testimony* and *The Forever Project* – that the survivor speaker occupies a central and irreplaceable site in modern Holocaust

³⁹⁴ Stacey Zembrzycki and Steven High, "'Holocaust Testimonials: Bearing Witness in Holocaust Education' A Life Stories in Education Working Group Project' (Concordia University COHDS), 1, accessed 25 October 2019, <http://storytelling.concordia.ca/toolbox/ethics>.

education – but unlike other projects does not seek to replace them or mitigate the loss but to understand the role that they play and have played in local and national commemorative culture. In addition to preserving survivor testimony, this reflexive approach to interviewing helps us to understand the process itself.

One of the fundamental operational principles of *Life Stories of Montrealers* was that of ‘shared authority’. The term, coined by Michael Frisch, denotes a relationship between interviewer and interviewee – between project staff and participants – in which all parties are equally involved in the project from inception through to use. For *Life Stories of Montrealers* this meant a collaboration between university staff and community members, with all parties having a say in the design of the project and in any use made of the material created in the process.³⁹⁵ The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre served as a community partner for *Life Stories of Montrealers*, connecting the survivor community with university researchers at Concordia, and in return the project developed a three-part collaborative workshop series for survivor-educators to gather to discuss their experiences of giving testimony as well as a bilingual educational resource on human rights violations and a number of academic publications. Despite these outputs the project did not feel it had sufficiently succeeded in making accessible the stories of survivors, so in 2018 Stacey Zembrzycki and colleagues initiated a new project entitled ‘Survivors on the Main: Making Postwar Montreal Home’. The project saw the creation of five new interviews conducted on location in and around St Laurent Boulevard, also known as the Main, a neighbourhood which received a large number of immigrants to Montreal after the war. The interviews were then edited alongside clips from the *Life Stories of Montrealers* collection and turned into a downloadable audio walk that enabled members of the public to listen to survivors recount their memories in situ at key locations in the city. In a description of the project, Zembrzycki and colleagues outlined how the project fitted in to the MHMC’s ambition as a commemorative institution and, as such, reflected the contemporary priorities of those engaged in commemoration and education:

³⁹⁵ Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, ‘CURA Training Guide’.

Developed in collaboration with the MHM [Montreal Holocaust Museum], this project speaks directly to the immediate goals outlined in its 2017-2020 Action Plan...In particular, it will expand the MHM's oral history collection, adding five new interviews that will enable remaining child Holocaust survivors to build on their existing interviews by recounting their postwar experiences. By drawing upon survivors' stories about life before, during, and after the Holocaust to create an innovative, digitally accessible educational activity, this project will allow the MHM to begin to transition from live survivor testimony to recorded testimonies and related activities, a pressing issue given the reduced availability of survivors who can still bear witness in live settings. And, lastly, this project will enable the MHM to reach broader audiences both within and beyond its physical space. By renewing the postwar section of the permanent exhibition and making new and archived oral histories accessible, it will draw new audiences to the MHM. Situating survivors' stories in the community by 'placing' their memories in the neighbourhood in which they were created will also expand the museum's reach.³⁹⁶

I speak of standardisation not in the sense that all countries are engaged in identical activity in the present day, but in the sense that unlike in the 80s and 90s when oral testimony was employed by various institutions and individuals for a multitude of reasons, oral testimony is now almost universally seen as the solution to Holocaust education in the post-survivor era, with projects being created that specifically attempt to pre-emptively fill the gap the survivors will leave behind. This is not simply a case of collecting survivor stories before it is too late – this was already a concern in the 1970s after all – but a very specific response to a society which unlike in the 70s and 80s now relies heavily on the survivor, and the increased anxiety that consequently accompanies their very imminent passing. Ironically this trend towards standardisation has come at a time when it is

³⁹⁶ Stacey Zembrzycki, 'SSHRC Goal & Project Description, Feb22', 2018, Current Files>14 Remembrance>Oral History>Development_and_Current_Projects>Survivors on the Main audio walk, Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

increasingly difficult to produce Holocaust oral testimony, as the number of survivors dwindles rapidly. So what can we expect from the future of Holocaust oral testimony, in Britain and Canada in particular? Is there a consensus now in global approaches in which we can expect Britain and Canada to partake, or does there remain something uniquely national about the way these countries engage with Holocaust oral testimony? Of course, we can only speculate as to what the future might hold, but the recent activities of British and Canadian governments and Jewish communities give us some idea of current national concerns and interests. The idea of inventorising and increasing the accessibility of existing collections of testimony is a clear priority for both. The UK Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission references the lack of a central database of testimony collections as an issue and cites a source from the Holocaust Research Centre at Royal Holloway University of London who points out that even archives such as the USC VHA remain inaccessible to those who cannot travel to specific institutions to use them.³⁹⁷ The proposed new Learning Centre which is poised to form an integral part of the new UK National Holocaust Memorial – planned to be erected in the Victoria Gardens adjacent to the Houses of Parliament in the near future – is identified in the report as the institution who will bear the responsibility of carrying out this work.³⁹⁸ In a similar vein, in 2013 Inter-Action – Canada's multiculturalism grants and contributions program administered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada – issued grants totalling CAD\$800,000 to Canadian Jewish organisations for the collection and digitisation of Holocaust survivor testimony. The grant was issued in support of Canada's efforts to promote Holocaust education, research and remembrance in line with its role as chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) that same year.³⁹⁹ The most prominent output from this grant was the integration of more than 1,250 audiovisual testimonies collected by Canadian institutions into the USC VHA as part of the Shoah Foundation's Preserving the Legacy initiative. The project was spearheaded by MHMC and the

³⁹⁷ Prime Minister's Office, 'Holocaust Commission Report', 38–39.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁹⁹ C.J.N. Staff, 'Canada Allocates \$800,000 for Holocaust Survivor Testimony', *The Canadian Jewish News*, 15 October 2013, <https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/canada-allocates-800000-holocaust-survivor-testimony>.

Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre in Toronto, but additionally included testimonies from McGill University (*Living Testimonies*), the Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives (the CJC-HDP), Concordia University Centre for Oral History (*Life Stories of Montrealers*), and a small number of interviews from the Ottawa Jewish Archives, the Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre, the Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta, and the Calgary Jewish Federation. Together, this material represents an historic donation that remains the largest external contribution to the VHA to date and a significant move which reflects the commitment of the community and the Canadian government to preserving its collection of testimony for the future.⁴⁰⁰

Though both the British and Canadian governments have expressed a willingness to promote and financially support the ongoing preservation of Holocaust testimonies, the manner in which they have done so is a telling reflection of national attitudes towards Holocaust commemoration, specifically over the ownership of responsibility for conducting commemorative work. The UK PM's Holocaust Commission is the work of a government which – albeit belatedly – recognises the importance and value of commemorating the Holocaust, but in many ways also appropriates its moral messages in pursuit of a particular political agenda. Historian Tom Lawson was one of a number of scholars who gave evidence to the Commission and was particularly critical of the final report, arguing that the recommendations it set out proposed to set the Holocaust within the context of Britain's 'illustrious' past; his concern was that the monument as proposed would risk falsely portraying Britain as a safe haven for Jewish children, and as a country that stood up against fascism and was fighting for the freedom of people.⁴⁰¹ The report does state explicitly that 'In commemorating the Holocaust, Britain remembers the way it proudly stood up to Hitler and provided a home to tens of

⁴⁰⁰ Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre and Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, 'Historic Partnership to Preserve and Provide Access to Canadian Collections of Holocaust Survivor Oral History Announced' (USC Shoah Foundation, 23 March 2015), <https://sfi.usc.edu/pressroom/releases/historic-partnership-preserve-and-provide-access-canadian-collections-holocaust>.

⁴⁰¹ Tom Lawson, 'Britain and Genocide' (British Association for Holocaust Studies Conference, University of Leeds, 2018).

thousands of survivors and refugees, including almost 10,000 children who came on the Kindertransports.⁴⁰² The plans as they stand do indeed propagate a particular historical narrative: the Government ran a public consultation on the direction of British Holocaust commemoration, but effectively moved to retain control over the national narrative when it commissioned a publicly funded memorial and a new learning centre next door to the parliamentary building, in a garden which is already the site of a number of memorials and monuments to Britain's moral 'achievements' including the Buxton Memorial Fountain commemorating the abolition of slavery and a statue of suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst. Why was the educational component of the project not ceded to the Imperial War Museum, which already houses a national Holocaust exhibition, is already in the midst of an ambitious redesign of its Holocaust galleries, and which was explicitly identified by the Commission as a possible site for a new Holocaust learning centre? Why not the privately run National Holocaust Centre, which has been delivering Holocaust education to the British public for more than two decades? Why not the Wiener Holocaust Library, which has been at the centre of Holocaust research and documentation in Britain since before the end of the war? All of these are plausible – and arguably more efficient – alternatives to constructing a new educational and commemorative framework from scratch; that the government chose to act independently from these already well-established institutions is telling of its unwillingness to cede control over British national Holocaust memory.

In Canada by contrast, whilst Holocaust commemoration is often sponsored by the government it is very much led by the community: three of the most significant acts of national commemoration in Canada – the CJC-HDP, the donation of Canadian testimonies to the USC VHA, and the National Holocaust Monument inaugurated in Ottawa in September 2017 – were all underwritten by grants from the Canadian government, but were conceived, designed and executed by survivors and the wider Jewish community. So much is this the case that far from a singular national response, the Canadian government has in some instances financed aggregate activity, as was the case with the CAD\$800,000 grant issued to the

⁴⁰² Prime Minister's Office, 'Holocaust Commission Report', 9.

community in 2013. The decision to have Canadian testimony collections copied, indexed and hosted by the USC VHA was not a unanimous one: the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre interviews for example are notably absent from the Canadian Collections of the VHA. Whilst many other organisations in Canada were keen to have their testimony collections included in the VHA in the belief that it would be a decisive move towards preserving and increasing the accessibility of their collections, the VHEC had a number of reservations: the Centre was not adequately satisfied that using the grant provided by Citizenship and Immigration Services Canada to host the interviews in an American institution met the requirements of preserving testimony in a specifically Canadian context; centre staff and members of the community expressed concern that hosting interviews via the VHA would actually be an obstacle to access, in that the VHA is a paid subscription service accessible at only a few – usually big – institutions around the world; and that the VHA interface actually decontextualises testimonies by obscuring their institutional and methodological backgrounds. The VHEC perceived their oral testimonies as an integral part of their whole historical collection and concluded that keeping them in house was practically and ethically preferable. Moreover the funding provided by the Canadian government would not cover the full cost of indexing and digitisation through the Shoah Foundation, and whilst the communities of Toronto and Montreal were able to raise supplementary funds the VHEC did not have the means to achieve this, thus opted to digitise and index in house for significantly less and to set aside the remainder of their funding share to create a new digital education resource.⁴⁰³ The result is *Primary Voices*, a testimony-centred pedagogical resource that integrates testimony excerpts with teaching and learning materials designed to complement various aspects of the British Columbia school curriculum.⁴⁰⁴

In taking its lead from the communities upon which it is founded and from which it is comprised, Canada's response to events such as the Holocaust is as multiplicitous as it is multicultural. Canada's official policy of multiculturalism –

⁴⁰³ Nina Krieger, in conversation with the author.

⁴⁰⁴ Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 'Primary Voices: Teaching Through Holocaust Survivor Testimony', accessed 30 April 2020, <https://vhec.org/primaryvoices/>.

adopted in 1971 by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau – reflects its history as an immigrant nation and is a statement of recognition of, in Trudeau’s words, ‘the contention of other cultural communities that they, too, are essential elements in Canada’.⁴⁰⁵ Discussion of the relevance of the Holocaust to Canadian historical memory in many ways came to a head in the debate over the proposed presence of a dedicated Holocaust gallery in the plans for a Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR), the idea for which was conceived in the late 1990s. The CMHR was a controversial project with a history that spans more than a decade – the museum eventually opened in Winnipeg in 2014 – much of which centred around the belief that separating out the Holocaust from other human rights violations in the galleries of the museum validated a narrative of uniqueness regarding the Holocaust that was contested by other minority groups in Canada. This counterargument was led particularly by the Ukrainian-Canadian community, who argued that spotlighting the Holocaust was akin to denying the victimhood of other groups targeted by the Nazis, as well as deliberately overlooking other human rights violations in favour of propagating a Holocaust uniqueness narrative, citing the Ukrainian Holodomor as evidence of their own suffering.⁴⁰⁶ The history of the Canadian Museum of Human Rights stands as an example of what happens when the government of a self-professed multicultural nation tries to intervene in constructing a narrative that, by necessity, requires it to be selective in who it features. By making available funds to communities to undertake their own commemorative work, Canada avoids imposing a singular political narrative in favour of amplifying heterogeneity. Whilst not an approach free from critique, Catherine Chatterley summarises the intention when she writes of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the National Monument in Ottawa that ‘as one might have expected, both Canadian memorials are designed to serve the larger

⁴⁰⁵ ‘Canadian Multiculturalism Policy, 1971’, *Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21*, accessed 30 April 2020, <https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/canadian-multiculturalism-policy-1971>.

⁴⁰⁶ A. Dirk Moses, ‘The Canadian Museum for Human Rights: The “Uniqueness of the Holocaust” and the Question of Genocide’, *Journal of Genocide Research* 14, no. 2 (2012): 215–38.

national narrative of inclusive multiculturalism and to promote the values of tolerance and diversity.⁴⁰⁷

Summary

The application of oral history to a subject matter – especially on such a scale as has been the case with the Holocaust – is never a given. Society and individuals have to be motivated to commit time, resources and finances to its production for it to exist at all, and to make an ongoing commitment to resourcing its storage and presentation for it to be of any tangible use or benefit. As apparent as the inherent value of survivor testimonies may be, they therefore exist only in this format where the expenditure of these resources can be justified. In Britain and Canada as elsewhere, this justification is derived from contemporary research interests and political circumstances: in both countries, the need for justification is particularly acute in the case of projects led by Holocaust survivors themselves, who more often than not need (and almost certainly want) the investment of non-Jews to make their projects possible and worthwhile. Consequently, oral history projects not only provide a window onto an historical event but are also a reflection of a contemporary memory culture, the product of a need or desire to engage with the past at a particular moment in time. Holocaust oral testimony projects, therefore, are as much an historiographical response to the Holocaust as they are a documented history of the Holocaust.

Many scholars have sought to characterise changes in the way various forms of testimony have been mobilised by communities and societies over time as a way of responding to the Holocaust, but the vast majority have relied on the large-scale, influential US oral testimony projects to make generalised arguments about testimonial trends over time. Since the US is not the only place where Holocaust survivors are, it is also not the only place where oral testimony has been used to respond to the event, and as this analysis has shown the use of oral testimony to document survivor stories in Britain and Canada emerged and developed differently

⁴⁰⁷ Catherine D. Chatterley, 'Canada's Struggle with Holocaust Memorialization: The War Museum Controversy, Ethnic Identity Politics, and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 29, no. 2 (2015): 204.

to both each other and to the US. In Canada, the nature of Canadian society and the historical and political contexts within which it operated meant that the impetus for recording came from within a well-organised, influential Jewish community, who appealed to the Canadian government's efforts to endorse cultural plurality in Canada in order to combat a rising tide of antisemitism. The nature of British society on the other hand, and in particular the position of the Jewish community within it, meant that the survivors had far less influence on the memorial landscape than their Canadian and American counterparts. Instead, the opportunity to have their stories recorded via the medium of oral testimony was contingent upon external validation, with projects established when it was politically or academically expedient to call upon the community to participate. Interestingly, the agency with which survivors were able to instigate their own recording projects is reflected in the origins of the respective British and Canadian national Holocaust monuments: the UK monument, currently under development, was instigated by Prime Minister David Cameron and is to be financed by the British government on the condition that match funding is obtained from the private sector; the Canadian monument in comparison was a community initiative for which private funding was raised, with the Canadian government subsequently providing match funding.⁴⁰⁸ Even with the degree of standardisation now underway in global approaches to Holocaust memorialisation, particularly with regards to oral testimony as a commemorative and educational tool, it is clear that there are noticeable differences in attitudes and approaches that will continue to shape the respective landscapes differently for some time to come.

⁴⁰⁸ 'Prime Minister Leads Unprecedented Support for Holocaust Memorial as Further £25m Committed', *gov.uk*, 7 May 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-leads-unprecedented-support-for-holocaust-memorial-as-further-25m-committed>; 'The National Holocaust Monument Development Council', *National Holocaust Monument/Le Monument National de Holocauste*, accessed 30 July 2020, <https://www.holocaustmonument.ca/#council>.

Part III – Problematizing Holocaust Oral Testimony

In a somewhat scientific and technical rendering of the potentiality of oral history, Michael Frisch argues that improving access to oral history – by which he means not just the interviews themselves, but the content of those interviews, through digitisation, cataloguing, indexing, mapping, increased searchability and even artificial intelligence – will exponentially increase the potential value of these sources by effectively lifting the limits on interpretation and analysis. Using documentary as an example, Frisch illustrates how mediation through use equals a transmutation of meaning, but one which augments our understanding of the original source material rather than undermines it. He explains:

Such modalities suggest something even more significant and potentially transformative in our relationship to audio and video documentation itself, a deeply and essentially nonlinear orientation that I term a *postdocumentary sensibility*. With accessible, meaningful, fluid and nonprivileged access to the content of oral history, the authority of the mediating intelligence or documentary authorship is displaced by a sharable, dialogic capacity to explore, select, order, and interpret. In this mode, the privilege of a fixed documentary version that necessarily marginalises other meanings or stories in the material – the very notion of document as a starting point and documentary as product – is displaced by a notion of documentation and documentary as process, an ongoing, contextually contingent, fluid construction of meaning.⁴⁰⁹

The crucial message here is that the construction of meaning does not end when the tape recorder or video camera is shut off. When we (re)use oral history or oral testimony from the archive, our actions are not inconsequential: we participate actively in that construction of meaning and we must be mindful of the implications of our activity, first on the original material as we sift through and edit it for our own purposes, and second in how we represent that material to our audiences in

⁴⁰⁹ Michael Frisch, 'Three Dimensions and More: Oral History Beyond the Paradoxes of Method', in *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, ed. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy (New York: The Guilford Press, 2010), 237–38.

whatever output we create from it. In this section, I draw upon my experiences conducting research for this thesis to problematise engagement with Holocaust oral testimony, identifying some of the practical issues that one encounters when attempting to use archived Holocaust oral testimonies and the impact that these issues – and our attempts to negotiate them – have on the conclusions we draw and the ways in which we, in turn, represent the Holocaust in the process.

The Limitations of Oral Testimony

It is important to note that despite the seemingly infinite potential applications of oral history implied by Frisch's fluid mode of analysis, the value of oral history itself is not wholly unlimited. This issue is particularly acute in the case of genocide, in which we are attempting to use living voices to study the history of mass murder. Analysing various sources of information for Holocaust research in 2001, Raul Hilberg identified three ways in which Holocaust oral testimony was 'inherently limited': '(1) The survivors as a whole are not a random sample of the Jewish community that was destroyed. (2) Those who testified are not a random sample of the survivors. (3) Their testimony does not contain a random sample of their experiences.'⁴¹⁰ The first of these limitations is undoubtedly crucial and has been widely recognised as a drawback to utilising post-war – and therefore oral – testimony to write histories of the Holocaust. Primo Levi acknowledged as much when he wrote that:

we, the survivors, are not the true witnesses...We survivors are only an exiguous but also an anomalous minority: we are those who by their prevarications or abilities or good luck did not touch bottom. Those who did so...have not returned to tell about it or have returned mute...the submerged, the complete witnesses, the ones whose deposition would have a general significance. They are the rule, we are the exception.⁴¹¹

Moreover whilst there was a certain degree of luck and circumstantial fortuity governing who survived and who died, there is also substantial evidence suggesting that factors such as possessing certain nationality or citizenship, having pre-existing

⁴¹⁰ Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research*, 48.

⁴¹¹ Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (London: Abacus, 2013), 89.

relationships with non-Jews, being multilingual or coming from a higher socio-economic background could tip the odds in favour of survival.⁴¹² Individual agency was also a factor, though it is important to remember as Ronald J. Berger points out that ‘successful agency, however, was in large part a collective accomplishment and dependent on factors beyond individuals’ control.’⁴¹³

Hilberg’s second observation – that those interviewed do not constitute a random sample of the survivors – also circumscribes the potentiality of oral testimony as a source material. This thesis refers throughout to the practical and theoretical imperatives that underpin oral testimony projects which in turn have influenced the methodological decisions taken about who to interview and how to interview them. A number of variable factors on both the project and participant sides of the interviewer-interviewee relationship influence participation: project selection criteria – including decisions made about the life experiences of interest and considerations such as whether or not someone has been interviewed before – may exclude a number of interested individuals; one cannot reasonably assume that all survivors in all locations wish to give testimony on record, therefore survivor willingness is also a factor; language barriers preclude participation for those who do not speak or do not feel comfortable conversing in the language of a particular project;⁴¹⁴ and the geographical distribution of survivors vs. oral testimony projects also affects access, with the ability to record testimony being more accessible to those who live near or are able to travel to the location of a

⁴¹² There is a substantial sociological literature examining reasons for survival. See for example Peter Tammes, ‘Surviving the Holocaust: Socio-Demographic Differences Among Amsterdam Jews’, *European Journal of Population* 33, no. 3 (2017): 293–318; Carolyn Ellis and Jerry Rawicki, ‘More Than Mazel? Luck and Agency in Surviving the Holocaust’, *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 19, no. 2 (2014): 99–120; Yoav Ben-Shlomo and Zeev Ben-Shlomo, ‘Commentary: From Links to Bonds—What Factors Determined the Survival of Jews during the Holocaust?’, *International Journal of Epidemiology* 36, no. 2 (2007): 335–37.

⁴¹³ Ronald J. Berger, ‘Agency, Structure, and Jewish Survival of the Holocaust: A Life History Study’, *The Sociological Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1996): 15.

⁴¹⁴ Jeffrey Shandler observed that very few Jewish people interviewed for the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive learnt to speak English before the war, but half of the interviews for the project were conducted in English. This reflects a conscious decision by survivors to speak in a language they deemed would give their testimony more utility, but that in itself is symptomatic of a trend towards English becoming the primary language of Holocaust studies, the corollary of which is a proliferation of projects which interview only in English. Jeffrey Shandler, ‘“And Now I Have to Read in Jewish Something”: Yiddish Performances by Holocaust Survivors’ (The Visual History Archive: Research Experience Conference, The American University of Paris, 2017).

recording project, typically larger cities.⁴¹⁵ We must be conscious to recognise who of the survivors may have had the opportunity to record at any given project at any given point in time, as well as to recognise which survivors a project may have selected to interview through its interviewee selection process, when establishing what information we might be able to avail of a project.

The third factor identified by Hilberg – that testimony does not contain a random sample of the interviewee’s experiences – is also closely tied to project methodology. Hilberg himself summarised the limitations that project methodology places on content, which combined with the survivor’s innate right to select what information is brought forth in an interview situation irrefutably limits what is recorded by an oral testimony: ‘The choice of topics, whether in a statement prepared by the survivor or in an interview, was determined not only by readiness or reluctance to delve into particular episodes but by a perception of what was or was not pertinent information.’⁴¹⁶ In contention are the survivor’s agency and the interviewer’s interests: when reusing material from an archive we are no longer able to influence what is said, we only have access to the outcome of that interaction, and whilst the interview method is a useful means of extracting and documenting information that is otherwise absent from the historical record, we must acknowledge that as a tool it is inherently limited by those agendas. In her article on recontextualising archived interviews, Malin Thor Tureby quotes historian Kevin Blackburn on this issue, who argues that interview methodologies which use standardised interview guides in particular constrain the interviewees from ‘giving voice to the full complexity of their lives’.⁴¹⁷ Our responsibility then is to work with the strengths of this material rather than discredit it for its weaknesses.

There is no doubt that Holocaust oral testimonies are an invaluable source of information about the Holocaust, but it is clear that they provide one particular

⁴¹⁵ The *Refugee Voices* project made a conscious effort to record survivors in the north of England after identifying that the majority of survivors interviewed in the UK up to that point had been based in or near London. It should be noted however that there are small collections of oral history interviews with local Holocaust survivors held at the Manchester Jewish Museum and by the Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association in Leeds.

⁴¹⁶ Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research*, 48–49.

⁴¹⁷ Thor Tureby, ‘To Hear with the Collection’, 72.

lens through which the experience can be viewed. Effective (re)contextualisation enables us to better identify appropriate sources to fulfil particular research inquiries, in addition to dynamising Holocaust studies by revealing where oral testimony has been deployed as a response to the Holocaust, for what purposes, and by whom. In *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* for example, one can examine the life histories of European Jews who fled fascism in Europe and found refuge in the UK, though one *cannot* find sufficient information to generalise about the European refugee experience, or the European Jewish Holocaust experience, or the experiences of those who were persecuted and suffered in Europe during the War for reasons besides being Jewish. Nor will one find a balanced picture of the way in which Britain treated the Jews of Europe and conducted itself with respect to their fate. Each interview in this collection is an exploration of the ways in which the Holocaust as a lived experience was reconciled with an individual's Jewish identity as much as it is a record – or a testimony – of the events that that individual lived through, and collectively they form a project which embodies the contemporary British research environment and efforts to initiate national engagement with the Holocaust and Britain's role in its history. The Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, by contrast, presents a broad spectrum of the experiences of Canadians who encountered the Holocaust, either as victims of the persecution or as liberators or aid givers; by design it illustrates the varied nature of the Holocaust experiences endured by those who later made Canada their home, accounting for the geographical origins of the individuals in Europe and their subsequent dispersal across Canada, and the wide range of ordeals suffered by its victims. But arguably in the process it becomes *less* representative of the collective Canadian experience, choosing to account for diversity of experience rather than a true statistical cross-section of experiences. It is not therefore a reliable source of information on the routes through the Holocaust that made one more or less likely to immigrate to Canada after the war, nor of their trajectories out of Europe and into Canada. Both projects also speak to a fundamental deficiency of the national (or local, regional) projects that are so much – and perhaps unavoidably so – the norm: they are inherently positivistic in the way they represent their national histories vis-à-vis the Holocaust, because they

ultimately only account for the stories of those who were allowed in, not the many more survivors or victims who were turned away.

Accessing Holocaust Oral Testimony

In 1965, in an article reflecting on the then-fledgling discipline of 'oral history', Saul Benison made a profound observation about the nature of his medium:

The autobiography gathered by oral history methods is not merely an addition or a supplement to other extant documents; actually it stands as an attempt at a first interpretation of a series of given events...Because of this, the historian-interviewer is under special obligation to be meticulous in his research and to make clear, to those who in future will use the memoir, the materials he worked with in preparing his interviews and his philosophical and historical preconceptions.⁴¹⁸

Benison recognised early on that oral history is not merely a method of documentation but a process of interpretation, and that if oral history is to be archived for future use, then for that interpretation to be of value to other researchers information regarding the frame conditions that shaped that interpretation must be archived along with it. When I analyse the accessibility of oral testimonies therefore, I refer to access on two levels: access to the recorded testimonies themselves, and additionally access to the materials and information required for (re)contextualisation and for an informed listening to take place. These two issues are linked and are bound up in the fallacy of archival neutrality. This thesis has sought to demonstrate at length that archives are not merely passive repositories of information but actively curate their collections via their collection policies and that this curation is compounded where oral history is involved, since in launching oral history projects archives and institutions become creators as well as curators of source material. Inasmuch as their collection policies are not neutral, access to archives – and to information about them – is also carefully controlled and therefore not neutral. Archives make active and intentional decisions about

⁴¹⁸ Saul Benison, 'Reflections on Oral History', *The American Archivist* 28, no. 1 (1965): 73.

how to store, present and offer access to their material that determine who is able to use their material and to some extent what use they can make of it.

An additional consideration that is – or at least ought to be – at the forefront of conversations regarding access is the ethical responsibility that an archive has towards its informants. Peter Jackson and Polly Russell point out that ‘While researchers may wish to negotiate maximum public access to the interview material...with as few restrictions as possible, they must also be mindful of the moral and ethical responsibility they have to their interviewees.’⁴¹⁹ It is now an industry standard for oral history projects to consider issues of copyright and access as part of the project design, with organisations such as the Oral History Society imploring both professionals and amateurs to maintain high ethical and legal standards when conducting oral history interviews,⁴²⁰ but this issue is heightened with subjects such as the Holocaust in which traumatic and potentially sensitive material is being considered for release into the public domain. Archives can choose conditions of access, and the spectrum of accessibility options across my case studies reflects variations in priorities and different interpretations of ethical responsibility towards Holocaust survivors: some interpret their ethical responsibility to survivors as meaning making their stories as widely known as possible, whilst others restrict access to protect survivors from future misuse of their material. Though it is no longer true that interested parties must travel to Yale to use Fortunoff Archive materials – the collection is now accessible to view at a number of research and memorial institutions globally – it is nonetheless still on the conservative end of an access spectrum. Steven Naron identifies some of the lengths that the archive has gone to to protect its interviewees:

The concern for the survivor that permeates so many aspects of the archive’s methodology even extends to how the materials are catalogued and made accessible. Cataloguing, by its nature, is a standards-driven exercise. All libraries apply some standard rules of

⁴¹⁹ Jackson and Russell, ‘Life History Interviewing’, 179.

⁴²⁰ ‘Is Your Oral History Legal and Ethical?’, *Oral History Society*, accessed 2 June 2020, <https://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/ethical-and-legal/>.

organisation, description and controlled vocabularies. How could ethical considerations affect that? Just one example: no public-facing information containing references to our collection contains the surname of the survivor. Before the testimonies came to Yale, one of the survivors received threatening phone calls following a local broadcast of an HSFP [Holocaust Survivors Film Project] documentary. That experience informed a decision to protect survivor anonymity by truncating the last name of any appearance of a survivor's name, in print or on screen...When researchers want to cite or screen testimony excerpts, they are required to request authorisation to publish in advance. This provides the archive with the opportunity to contact the survivor, if they are still living, about the imminent appearance of a citation in print. This insures that a survivor will not open a book, enter a museum, or see a documentary that cites or uses images from their testimony without being informed in advance.⁴²¹

There is widespread concern with safeguarding Holocaust testimonial material in Canada, perhaps unsurprisingly given the culture of antisemitism and Holocaust denial which in large part gave rise to the oral testimony phenomenon in the country. Project director Kathy Faludi expressed concerns in this vein about the CJC-HDP in correspondence to the Committee of Consultants, writing that:

Many survivors are seriously concerned about free public access to the video-taped interviews they will be doing. These concerns centre around the possible misrepresentation of certain material in the tapes by Nazi and revisionist groups in Canada, the general right to edit out statements made under anxiety-provoking circumstances, the fear of overt government control over the context of the interviews and the need for historical accuracy to preserve the truth about the Holocaust. Survivors are seeking guarantees that the material in the tapes will be protected from possible abuse, before many will consent to being

⁴²¹ Stephen Naron, 'Archives, Ethics and Influence', 49.

interviewed...A recommendation should be made regarding a mechanism to be built into the project which would ensure the right of all survivors' stories to be protected from misuse and a further guarantee sought from the federal government to protect the tapes deposited in the archives.⁴²²

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre is not as strict as the Fortunoff Archive in anonymising its interviews – interviewee surnames are initialised on the front-end of the online catalogue but are given on individual records and on site at the VHEC – but users are required to visit the VHEC in person to listen to testimonies and to sign access and use agreements before consulting any of the material. The clearest Canadian response to protecting its testimonies was to insist on them being held – and thus accessed – by and within the Jewish community. The distrust with which some viewed Yehudi Lindeman's *Living Testimonies* collection, given that it was to be housed at McGill University rather than a community-based institution, is reflective of this. It is also noteworthy that with the exception of *Living Testimonies* and *Life Stories of Montrealers* the vast majority of Canadian collections are still held by community institutions today, unlike in Britain where many projects rely on public institutions to archive and host their material. The agreement between the majority of the Canadian testimony-holding institutions and the USC Shoah Foundation to copy and host their interviews in the Visual History Archive marked a conscious decision to increase access to their collections and a commitment to their digitisation and preservation. The intention – and to some extent the outcome – was that access was in effect globalised, although still restricted to institutions or individuals with the means to pay for access to the archive. Though not housed in a Jewish institution as such, the USC Shoah Foundation is an organisation with an explicit and exclusive commitment to preserving Holocaust (and increasingly genocide) memory, thus can in theory retain a sense of community-ownership in the face of the fear of government intervention and control expressed by Kathy Faludi. That said, the user subscription model which grants access to the USC VHA – in which either an individual must pay for access or

⁴²² Kathy Faludi to Committee of Consultants, 'Correspondence Re. Discussions', 2.

travel to an institution which has paid for access – does limit use to those with the physical and/or financial ability to travel or self-fund access which by some arguments is restrictive, although it does mandate active engagement with survivor testimonies – in that viewers must expend physical effort to listen to or watch the recordings – rather than passive consumption. In a not dissimilar setup, the *Refugee Voices* archive is also a free-to-use resource, provided one has the means to visit a research institution that provides access.⁴²³

On the other end of the scale are those institutions and archives which make their material accessible to anyone. Free, global access is available to the Holocaust Survivors' Centre interviews and *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* through the British Library Sounds website, made available as part of a digitisation project run by the British Library, where all interviews from these collections are now archived.⁴²⁴ In contrast to dedicated Holocaust archives such as *Refugee Voices* and the USC VHA, Holocaust survivor interviews on the British Library Sounds website are presented as one sub-section of the Library's complete sound archive holdings. To find the Holocaust survivor interviews amongst the selection of recordings made available for public access, one must negotiate two menus, the first of which requires a user to select 'oral history' from a list of types of sound material which includes 'accents and dialects', 'classical music' and 'environment and nature'; the second menu requires a user to select 'Jewish survivors of the Holocaust' from a subject list of oral history projects which includes topics such as 'banking and finance', 'disability voices' and 'oral history of recorded sound.' Beyond the consent obtained at the point of interview, there are no special ethical considerations applied to Holocaust survivor interviews in this context. Thus it seems that the Library's priority vis-à-vis these recordings is promoting access as widely as possible, in line with its objective to promote the wider use of sound

⁴²³ At the time of writing, I am unable to find information on the *Refugee Voices* website indicating exactly where the archive can be accessed. I accessed the collection from the Wiener Holocaust Library in London.

⁴²⁴ 'Sounds', *British Library Sounds*, accessed 3 June 2020, <https://sounds.bl.uk/>.

material by both scholars and the general public.⁴²⁵ The Imperial War Museum operates with a similar philosophy: a large number of the Museum's Holocaust testimonies are available to listen to remotely online, accessible from the Sound Archive page of the IWM website. Its intentions are quite apparent from the statement of acknowledgement on the Sound Archive webpage, which references its First World War collection specifically but nonetheless illustrates its concerns: 'We are extremely grateful to the Western Front Association, who funded digitisation of the majority of IWM's First World War sound recordings, thereby widening public access to this important historical resource.'⁴²⁶ In line with their remit as state-funded cultural institutions as well as loci of academic study, both the British Library and the Imperial War Museum interpret their ethical responsibility to Holocaust survivors – albeit tacitly – as in fulfilling an obligation to make their testimonies as widely accessible as possible.

But it seems to me that the issue of increasing or restricting access – of fulfilling an ethical obligation to promote and/or protect Holocaust survivor testimony – has dominated at the expense of ensuring and facilitating *meaningful* access to those testimonies in either circumstance. James Fogerty provides a useful analogy for archivists negotiating the relatively new challenges presented by oral history, in which he highlights a particular responsibility borne but often neglected by archivists when dealing with this material:

Insofar as possible, for instance, an art curator will want to document where, how, with what materials, and by whom a work of art was created, as well as the record of its ownership through the years. Other information will be sought as well, such as the inspiration for the work, the setting in which it was created, and the identity of the subject.

Such information is equally important for oral history interviews, for it establishes the context within which each interview was conceived and

⁴²⁵ According to their website, British Library Sounds plans to launch a completely redesigned website later in 2020. It is unclear at the time of writing exactly what format this will take or how Holocaust interviews will be presented on the new website.

⁴²⁶ 'Sound Archive', *Imperial War Museums*, accessed 3 June 2020, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/sound>.

created, thus establishing an important frame of reference...This information is critical to a user's ability to interpret the information contained in each oral history interview.⁴²⁷

According to Fogerty it is imperative for archives to hold and, crucially, make available contextual information related to oral histories in order for any user to fully understand the material they are confronted with. Margaret Brooks, Keeper of the Department of Sound Records at the Imperial War Museum, made a similar plea very explicitly in a chapter on methodology for oral archives published in 1983:

Despite the paperwork involved, it is essential that oral history archives keep methodological records both of their own interviewing procedure and of the contents of their collections. The purpose of the archive in acquiring, commissioning or conducting the interviews may be different from that of the historian, teacher, broadcaster or biographer who eventually seeks access to the collection. Future users will best be able to assess the nature and relevance of the oral history material if they are able to study the framework of the appropriate part of the collection – such features as the criteria for selecting informants, and the topical project papers used by the interviewers.⁴²⁸

And yet, despite this recommendation from the former Keeper of the Sound Archive, the archive today admits that very little 'extraneous' documentation relating to sound archive activities is kept, not least because of lack of space.⁴²⁹ Moreover, what little information does exist is not always easy to access: many of the sources I used to write my MA thesis on the Holocaust oral testimony collections of the Imperial War Museum were obtained from academic sources that may be inaccessible to or difficult to access for members of the public who are able to listen to the interviews easily and freely online. The problematic nature of this inaccessibility of information is apparent when one closely examines how

⁴²⁷ James E. Fogerty, 'Oral History and Archives: Documenting Context', in *History of Oral History: Foundations and Methodology*, ed. Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2007), 198–99.

⁴²⁸ Brooks, 'Methodology for Oral Archives', 107–8.

⁴²⁹ Richard McDonough, in conversation with the author, 7 July 2016.

interviews are presented on the Imperial War Museum sound archive interface. In part I of this thesis I highlighted differences between multiple interviews given by Barbara Stimler, including one to the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive in 1997 and another to October Films on behalf of the IWM for use in its Holocaust Exhibition in 2000. The latter interview, I indicated, contained multiple leading questions, instructions rather than prompts, and moments in which the interviewer interrupts, interjects or directly cuts off Stimler as they seek to mould her narrative to produce 'exhibition quality' material. Without the knowledge that this interview was conducted for a very specific purpose and was deliberately a re-interview of an individual who had already given an interview on a separate occasion to the archive to avoid narrative erasure, this interviewing technique appears crass, insensitive, and at times wholly inappropriate for any interview, least of all one which deals with such sensitive and traumatic subject matter. Viewing these two testimonies in the sound archive catalogue on the IWM website shows a difference in the 'creator' field – with the IWM listed as the production company for the sound archive interview and October Films for the exhibition interview – but without accompanying information about who October Films were, their professional relationship with the IWM, or the methodological principles by which October Films operated, this particular interview remains decontextualised and difficult to interpret.

The British Library Sounds website similarly presents interviews from two collections side by side with little to distinguish between them. Holocaust testimonies from the Holocaust Survivors' Centre and *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* are presented together under the topic heading 'Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust', and though the webpage acknowledges that the interviews come from both collections they are collectively ordered by interviewee name or subject matter and are not sortable by collection, nor is there any additional information about the history of either project. As with the IWM interviews the only distinction made is in the metadata given underneath each audio file, which identifies which of the two projects the interview has come from. One implication of this lack of clear distinction is that the source of information is

obfuscated, which is problematic both in that it hinders researchers in knowing where best to search for certain kinds of information and also makes it harder for them to credit the source of information properly. Angela Davis' article 'Belonging and "Unbelonging": Jewish Refugee and Survivor Women in 1950s Britain' states that it uses interviews 'with twenty-one Jewish women as part of the British Library's Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust collection...[to] explore Webster's notion of belonging and 'unbelonging' for Jewish refugee women.'⁴³⁰ Davis acknowledges that the 'Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust' collection contains testimonies from both *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* and the Holocaust Survivors' Centre but, perhaps inadvertently because of the way they are presented online, only uses LMJC interviews to make her analysis. Given that Davis' analysis is largely one about identity this is unsurprising, since the methodology and format of LMJC interviews lend themselves to more explicit discussions of interviewee identity than HSC recordings do. Greater transparency surrounding interview provenance would enable researchers like Davis to more accurately target relevant sources of information from the outset, which would benefit not only scholarship but also the collections themselves, who arguably stand to benefit from more widespread understanding of their particular latent potential.

The Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive is perhaps most guilty of withholding contextual information. Whilst there is a moderate amount of information on its website about the Shoah Foundation's own interview methodology, including downloadable copies of the current pre-interview questionnaire and interviewer and videographer guidelines, plus a growing secondary literature and resources on Holocaust and genocide education, there is virtually no information available about the collections it hosts from elsewhere. With the exception of a handful of press releases relating to the Shoah Foundation's *Preserving the Legacy* initiative – the programme through which the Canadian collections came to be integrated into the USC VHA – the Shoah Foundation offers very little information at all about the provenance of these

⁴³⁰ Angela Davis, 'Belonging and "Unbelonging": Jewish Refugee and Survivor Women in 1950s Britain', *Women's History Review* 26, no. 1 (2017): 130.

projects and collections. The disservice this does to the value and importance of the testimony collections concerned is particularly acute in the case of the 64 'Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives' testimonies hosted by the VHA. It was not until I made an in-person visit to the Canadian Jewish Archives and requested information about what I perceived at the time to be a fairly minor Canadian collection that I became aware of the fundamental importance of this collection to the Canadian Holocaust testimonial landscape. I had no idea that this collection was in fact the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project; in fact, I had until that point not even heard of the CJC-HDP, let alone identified it as a pioneering act of national Holocaust commemoration that laid the foundations for the much larger collections that would follow. The wealth of material that the Canadian Jewish Archives holds on the CJC-HDP is immense, and having allocated only one day of my time in Montreal to visit the archives I suddenly found myself rearranging all plans for my two week research trip to take in as much of it as possible. That the USC VHA identifies these interviews as belonging to the Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives rather than by the actual title of the project is not only a misnomer but fundamentally misleading, misrepresenting and obscuring as it does the value, importance and significance of this particular collection of interviews, an issue which could easily be resolved by providing users with access to vital contextualising information within the interface of the VHA.

In this respect, the fears of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre that its testimonies would be removed from their vitally important community context if they were hosted by the VHA has been entirely vindicated. The testimony sections of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre website are replete with information and resources, including an in-depth history and interactive timeline of testimony collection in the Vancouver community from Robert Krell's solo work in the 1970s to the present day and detailed information about the use of Holocaust testimony in education, as well as a fully searchable catalogue of the testimony collections held by the Centre. This information is presented alongside the details of how to contact the archivists to arrange an in-person viewing of the actual testimonies – which remains the only way to view VHEC testimonies – making the information

almost unavoidable for anyone seeking to use these interviews from the archive. That is not to say that there is not still work to be done on the VHEC interviews, however: well researched as the history of Holocaust oral testimony in Vancouver is, once on site and listening to these interviews the links between particular interviews and their place in this history is not always clear. Holocaust survivor Louise Sorensen gave three interviews to the VHEC: in 1984 to interviewer Robert Krell, in 1996 to Erin Soriano and in 2014 to Debby Freiman. I listened to all three of these interviews whilst at the VHEC and the latter of these contained a number of incidents similar to those in Barbara Stimler's October Films interview in which the interviewer or videographer interrupts or stops Sorensen to ask her to repeat her responses in a particular way. The following extract is one such example:

DF: Did you ever feel threatened?

LS: No, not at all, not then anyway

VG [Videographer]: could she answer that, in a full sentence? We're losing a bit of the full sentence answers

DF: Er, could could you answer the question again saying 'I didn't feel threatened' or, did you ever feel threatened at that time before the war?

LS: Not that I remember at all no

DF: You never- ah yeah okay

VG: in full full sentences

DF: So ca- so Toni-Lynn wants you to say it in a full sentence 'No I never felt threatened', I'll ask you- so before the war did you ever feel threatened?

LS: No I can't remember ever feeling threatened, threatened by people I mean of course I did feel threatened⁴³¹

These instances puzzled me as I could find no information about this particular interview which would explain why the interviewer and videographer would interject in this manner. It was only in conversation with Nina Krieger, Executive

⁴³¹ Louise Sorensen, Interview for VHEC.

Director of the VHEC, that I discovered that this interview and a handful of others were conducted for an exhibition on the Vancouver survivor community that was ultimately never produced.

James Fogerty points out that there is ultimately no excuse for this absence of contextual material: 'Since oral histories do not exist until created by an interviewer, the opportunity to create a record of provenance is clearly there. An interview should never be a "found object," stripped of the story of its creation and without any record of its context except that intuited by an eventual cataloguer or user.'⁴³² And yet even where this is explicitly mandated in advance this does not always happen, as the example of the Imperial War Museum archive illustrates. Fogerty recommends that oral history projects store all of the following supporting information: research files, project files, narrator files, correspondence and communication, donor contracts, photographs, interview transcripts, video logs, funding proposal text and budgets, project introduction, and publicity material. UK collections are particularly guilty of failing to preserve much if any of this material, which may be explained in part due to the same financial and storage issues that limit the scope of the oral history projects in the first place; it may also be that the archival heritage of Canadian oral history goes some way to explaining why there is more contextual information kept about Canadian collections than UK ones. Whatever the reason, and irrespective of the decisions individual collections make about appropriate access, all collections could do more to ensure that relevant contextual material is made available alongside the interviews themselves, in whatever format that may be.

The absence of contextual information about a collection not only makes us less able to interpret the narratives of individual interviews and whole collections, but it also makes it harder for us to spot errors or omissions in the material we are consulting, be it audio or written transcription. Two examples from Canadian interviews hosted by the VHA illustrate this aspect of the problematic nature of decontextualised viewing. The first is the interview of Joseph and Sue Kohn, given

⁴³² Fogerty, 'Oral History and Archives', 199.

jointly to the CJC-HDP in August 1981. This interview – as with others from the same collection – is accessible via the USC VHA. The opening statement from interviewer Josh Freed on the first ‘tape’ on the VHA is as follows: ‘can you tell me a little bit, to go back on the Jewish star, you said that, how did you react to wearing the Jewish star the first time?’⁴³³ The statement is fairly odd and abrupt for an opening question and appears to refer back to an earlier conversation, yet there is no previous conversation available on the VHA. Having made an in-person visit to the Canadian Jewish Archives and obtained a copy of the transcript of this interview it became apparent to me that a not insignificant portion of this interview is missing from the VHA, including an opening and closing section in which the interviewees relate information about their early life experiences and Jewish suicide during the war respectively. Without obtaining the transcript this information would have remained unknown to me. Crucially, there is no indication that these tapes are missing from the VHA, let alone an explanation of their absence. Interestingly, the transcript also contains a number of omissions and deficiencies: for one it makes no distinction between parts of the interview that were conducted with Mr Kohn and parts which were conducted with Mrs Kohn, which given that the interview switches frequently between the two is vital information for tying the narratives of one individual or the other together. Moreover it is possible that part of the interview is also missing from the transcript. Despite the audio on the VHA implying missing conversation about the Jewish star, there is no mention of the star in the additional transcript portions, which may indicate further missing sections of interview that are not recorded by either the audio or the transcript. It is strikingly apparent from this example that neither the video nor the transcript can provide a complete, uncomplicated narrative on its own.

The second example is that of the interview given by Max Fronenberg to *Life Stories of Montrealers* in 2009, also hosted by the VHA. Selecting this testimony on the VHA gives a user access to one hour-long taped interview that starts with an introduction by interviewer Frank Chalk and some questions about Fronenberg’s

⁴³³ Kohn and Kohn, Interview for CJC-HDP.

childhood and upbringing and ends with the following exchange, midway through discussion of his military training in 1939:

Videographer: sorry Frank, sorry to interrupt I'll just change the tape now if you don't mind, it's going to run out in a few seconds

FC: Okay yeah, okay so you'd like us to pause a minute so you get everything?

Videographer: if you don't mind

FC: okay we'll take a we'll take a breath⁴³⁴

There is no further content available on the VHA for this interview. In line with the methodology of *Life Stories of Montrealers* – which mandated the collection of contextual information for each interview and required interviewers and videographers to write reflective journals on the interviewing experience for each interview conducted – the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia holds additional paperwork for this interview, including lengthy reflective blogs from both Frank Chalk and videographer Matthew MacDonald. During a research visit to Concordia in spring 2019 I was able to access this material and became aware that there is as much as six hours missing footage, taken during a second interview session with this interviewee, which completes this individual's life story.⁴³⁵ But again, the VHA entry for this interview gives no indication that this may be the case, nor any explanation for the footage not having been uploaded to the VHA. It is not so much the absence of these parts of the material that is problematic: there are a number of plausible and entirely acceptable explanations for a discrepancy between what is available on the VHA and what is held in the original archives, including the degeneration of the original tape or an interviewee requesting that part of their interview is withheld from this public interface. It is the lack of easy access to this information that hampers researchers, confounds our

⁴³⁴ Max Fronenberg, Interview for Life Stories of Montrealers, Holocaust Working Group, interview by Frank Chalk, 2 November 2009, 55540, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

⁴³⁵ Frank Chalk, 'Interviewer Blog: Second Interview with Max Fronenberg', 25 November 2009, 2014-01-02-019.D02, Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, Concordia University.

understanding of the material and ultimately does a disservice to the integrity of survivor narratives.

Transcript methodology is also an access issue, particularly when one considers that as documents their primary function is to increase access to oral histories. As a finding aid they undoubtedly increase access and thus use: Fogerty argued somewhat controversially that it is imperative that every interview is transcribed, stating that 'while transcription is a labor intensive and protracted process, it is necessary to a main goal of creating oral history – its use. In this day of declining consumer patience and an Internet-fueled demand for instant gratification, production of interviews that cannot be accessed without listening to an audiotape is a waste of resources.'⁴³⁶ However it is vital to bear in mind that translating the spoken word to the written word is an act of editing that adds another level of authorship to a testimony, and one must consider how the voice of an interviewee is mutated when it is transcribed and the potential ethical implications that an inaccurate or inappropriate transcription may have. Many collections offer disclaimers alongside their transcripts, reminding users that transcripts are not the primary documents of oral history and that there may be discrepancies between the content of a transcript and the audio on which they are based. Transcripts of interviews for *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* are prefaced by a statement which reads:

IMPORTANT: Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it.

The narrative texts prepared by Esme and Elly Gotz for the Toronto collection of interviews contain the following disclaimer:

Please note that these texts have been edited and are not verbatim transcripts. Additionally, they do not contain time codes that correspond to the DVD recorded version. Narrative texts were

⁴³⁶ Fogerty, 'Oral History and Archives', 206.

generated only for the recordings in English. Should discrepancies exist between the two versions, please refer to the DVD recorded version.

And project director Bea Lewkowicz noted of the *Refugee Voices* collection that:

One should note here that while transcriptions are very useful in terms of access to the material, they should not be treated as a primary source. Due to the nature of the many languages involved (German, English, Yiddish, Hebrew etc.) and the sheer volume of transcripts (more than 7,500 pages of transcripts), mistakes in transforming the spoken words to written words are unavoidable, despite our editorial efforts.⁴³⁷

Despite this, it is important to note that whilst the notion of researchers using transcripts without consulting the associated audio may be undesirable, it is unpreventable; the accuracy of a transcript is thus an ethical issue that ought to be accounted for when transcripts are made available to archive users. I highlight the following examples of inaccurate or misleading transcription both as a warning to archive users who tend or intend to rely solely on transcripts rather than audio to read the material critically, but also as a reminder to transcriptionists and those producing alternative written forms about the responsibilities and risks incurred when attempting to translate spoken word to written text. The following two examples are taken from *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* transcripts and interviews and demonstrate how relying solely on a transcription of an interview can lead to a loss of information or a fundamental misunderstanding of the spoken word. The first is from an interview with Harvey Stimler, son of Barbara Stimler whose testimonies have been referenced multiple times in this thesis. The transcript of Harvey Stimler's interview states that tape 'Side B is Blank' but it is not, it actually contains a lengthy discussion of Harvey's own health issues and two particularly poignant questions put to him as the child of Holocaust survivors: 'How do you think it [the Holocaust] affected your parents' and your own feeling about human beings?' and 'What about yourself do you have any fear about being Jewish,

⁴³⁷ Bea Lewkowicz, 'The AJR Refugee Voices Archive', 72–73.

do you feel as if it could happen to your generation, or any generation?’⁴³⁸ Whilst he recognises that for his parents their Jewishness was central to their victimisation and thus they consider it a unique feature of the Nazi persecution, Harvey interprets the event in broader terms: ‘I suppose, I can understand that my parents feel that it's just the Jews that were, being subjected to this, but, there were also Gypsies and *laughs* that were also being subjected to it as well so it wasn't just the Jews I don't think they should feel quite that it was just Jews that had this *laughs*’. Not only is this extract an insightful glance into shifting attitudes between the survivors and subsequent generations, but arguably this attitude reframes Harvey Stimler’s entire interview, in which much time is spent reflecting on his knowledge of his parents’ experiences and their own reconciliation with trauma, as individuals and as a family. Without this extract – and indeed this whole tape – the transcript is missing vital information that may be of particular interest to researchers with certain enquiries, but also information that frames the whole narrative for anyone interested in learning from it. The second example demonstrates how a small misapplication of grammar in the transcript can fundamentally change the meaning of the words spoken. When listening to the audio of Bernard Rand discussing the preparations he made to flee the invading German army, his vocal inflexion indicates that he states the following: ‘For some people it was easy – for me it was very difficult, because I left a young wife.’ The transcript however reads ‘For some people – it was easy for me – it was very difficult, because I left a young wife’ which carries diametrically opposed meaning to that actually conveyed by Rand.⁴³⁹

The Living Memory of the Jewish Community and Refugee Voices do at least attempt verbatim transcription; something else is happening in *Life Stories of Montrealers* and in the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre interviews however, where ‘chronologies’ and ‘narrative texts’ are produced respectively. That Esme Gotz should refer to the written documents she and her

⁴³⁸ Harvey Jacob Stimler, Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community, interview by Milenka Jackson, 13 May 1991, C410/113, British Library Sounds.

⁴³⁹ Bernard Rand, Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community, interview by Milenka Jackson, 22 April 1989, C410/015, British Library Sounds.

husband Elly Gotz produced as ‘narrative texts’ reveals her understanding of what the documents were intended to achieve: these documents are not so much transcriptions as oral testimony recast in written format, and as such they were designed to increase access to the *testimony*, but not necessarily to increase access to the *oral* testimony. According to Gotz, in the process of transcribing to text she was aware that ‘a certain flow had to be maintained without losing the idiom and style of the speaker’; Gotz also indicates a heavy concern with fact-checking to ensure that people and place names were documented accurately, but these documents do not record the foibles of spontaneous speech nor are they time-coded to correspond with their associated audio files. Indeed, Gotz acknowledges the existence of the audiovisual form of the testimonies but points people to use them ‘for academic purposes...to confirm the information [in the narrative texts].’⁴⁴⁰ The following example illustrates how certain moments of expression during the interview are omitted in an effort to ‘tidy up’ the narrative text version of the testimony. In the audio of the interview given by Pinchas Gutter to Paula Draper in 1985, Gutter makes the following statement:

But what I do remember quite clearly, is the level of anxiety. What I remember is a pit. I remember being like there was like a wall in front of me. It’s something which I almost find difficult to put into words. **But, I know I I used some words when I spoke to you in the fir- in the previous interview I had an e- I had some expression which I remembered. Do you- have you- did you make a note of it – you didn’t. And I but I-** basically, what it was is, it was a feeling of it was the first time that I felt threatened as a human being, quite naturally in the animal sense you know and I was feeling, erm, **in French they say coincer, it means cornered.** I really did.⁴⁴¹

The sections in bold above reflect the most notable omissions from the narrative text version, which reads as follows:

⁴⁴⁰ Esme Gotz, ‘Article First Draft’, 2.

⁴⁴¹ Pinchas Gutter, Interview for the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, interview by Paula Draper, March 1993, 54192, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

What I do remember quite clearly, is the level of anxiety. What I remember is a pit. I remember feeling that there was a wall in front of me. It's something which I find difficult to put into words. Basically, it was a feeling of feeling threatened as a human being, in the animal sense I felt cornered, I really did.⁴⁴²

In the narrative text version his struggle to find the right words is conveyed definitively – 'I find [it] difficult to put into words' – yet in the audio Gutter states it is something he *almost* finds difficult to put into words, before referencing an exchange between interviewer and interviewee which most likely took place in a pre-interview conversation, in which Gutter had been able to use the phrase he needed but that he subsequently could not recall. Not only does this incident illustrate the potentially negative impact of a pre-interview conversation on the recorded interview – by illustrating the difficulty of reproducing narrative identically for a second time – but removing Gutter's struggle to find the right words in his preferred language also misrepresents his attempt at self-expression in this particular moment. There are a number of instances in which prioritising narrative clarity in the narrative texts comes at the expense of or the deliberate removal of moments of vagueness or incoherence, which are in themselves telling of the impact that the event being recalled had on an interviewee. In the narrative text of Vera Schiff the following exchange is omitted, likely because of its lack of coherence:

PD: the instructions came from the Judenrat in Theresienstadt?

VS: well partially prior the Jewish come back- that was all grapevine there was never a official, the Germans would have of course execute anybody who would have er you see the Germans were forever nursing in us the hope that there is a tomorrow, because we were then easily manipulated, that's why also in Theresienstadt there were many

⁴⁴² Esme Gotz, 'Pinchas Gutter Survivor Testimony Narrative Text', 2009, 18, Testimony No. 161, Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre.

possibilities to pursue other things, there were le- if I were to describe to you the day in Theresienstadt they-⁴⁴³

Lack of coherence or an apparent struggle to express oneself are as much a part of the survivor's narrative as moments of clarity and intelligibility, and to remove them is to a certain degree to sanitise the story of moments of incomprehensibility, or to unfairly impose meaning on an individual communicating in a second or even third language.

Life Stories of Montrealers also employs an alternative approach to transcribing interviews, electing to produce full transcriptions in English translation of interviews in languages other than French or English, and 'chronologies' for all other interviews.⁴⁴⁴ In contrast to the approach of Esme Gotz in Toronto, the underling logic here is to increase access to audio files by providing time-stamped summaries of interviews to enable researchers to search and locate specific moments of interest to refer to in the audio. Unusually, these chronologies record interviewer questions in the second person – for example, 'Can you tell us about yourself, including your name and address?' – but interviewee responses in condensed, third person form – for example, 'Interviewee gives his name and address, and birthday' – in doing so portraying the interviewer actively and the interviewee passively in the documented exchange. Moreover, in an attempt to concisely outline the interview in these chronologies a large number of interviewer questions are omitted and occasionally new ones are invented to increase the functionality of the document as a finding aid. In the chronology of Edgar Lion for example, which is based on an interview given to Leah Jacob in 2009, a total of 21 questions are omitted from the chronology, amongst them the following:

- 'so were you considered intelligence risks because you were, you had German nationality or do you know why you were there?'
- 'how did you get along with the guys how did you manage to survive the, the presence of the guys who hated you who were Nazis?'

⁴⁴³ Vera Schiff, Interview for the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, interview by Paula Draper, 17 August 1993, 54301, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

⁴⁴⁴ Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, 'CURA Training Guide', 10.

- Videographer: 'what were your perceptions of the war that was going on in Europe at the time?'
- 'did you have some concerns while you were in camp about what your future would be like?'
- 'and were you involved with any regrouping or gathering of these men afterwards?'
- 'and what about food, how did people organise that?'
- 'so how long did your, your parents stay in Montreal before they moved to California?'

These omissions may not make much of a difference to someone searching for factual detail in an interview, but it does for someone wanting to study the ways in which survivors construct or reproduce their memories. The omission and insertion of questions along with the varying use of active and passive voices effectively reassigns agency in the construction of the dialogue, and omitting those questions from the chronology forestalls the ability to search these particular questions in the finding aid. Whilst we may hope or even expect that researchers will consult the audio rather than relying on transcripts – more so given that I have identified that these two types of document are not transcriptions at all – it is impossible to guarantee, and moreover, both the archive catalogue of the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre and the finding aids of the Concordia University Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling refer to these documents as transcripts despite their creators identifying them otherwise. It is entirely possible therefore that these documents may be misused as such if insufficient research is conducted into the provenance of the written documents before they are used. Francis Good provides perhaps the most useful assessment of heavily mediated outputs such as the Concordia University chronologies and Toronto narrative texts, whether or not these can be considered a type of transcript at all. Good writes:

My view is that editorial intervention, at any level, only becomes problematic when the reader is not given information that explains the process and the source of changes...Clearly the issue is more critical the

greater the level and kind of intervention. I acknowledge the right of presenters to make their own way through the ethical landscape, but users have a right to as much information as may be feasible in order to be able to appreciate, even if they may not fully understand, what the process entailed. And this holds not just for published material, whether intensely or only marginally editorialised, but also for material that is purely archival in purpose, since the methods here can vary widely from mere 'tidying' to substantial 'expert' mediation. Reference numbers, date and place of interview, who recorded it and so on, are common elements of data provided. But what was the context of the recording? What kind of process did the transcript go through? Is it a first draft, who checked it and what did they do to it? Is there enough information for readers with an interest in language aspects to detect how far they can rely on what they see? What is the system, if any, employed to indicate outright changes in the text from what is heard on the tape? Can users identify what was added by compilers?⁴⁴⁵

Archives that hold this kind of material would do well to heed these words.

Perspectives of Re-Use

Writing on the genre of videotaped testimony, Thomas Trezise has the following to say:

the major features accounting for both the specificity and the hybridity of videotaped testimony as a genre are plain to see. Although the audiovisual recording of thousands of survivors and the creation of a permanent archive to house their testimony attest in themselves to a sense of historical mission, the very sense of history operative in this mission is inextricably bound to a certain understanding of memory. If the Archive serves to 'document' the Holocaust, it is not primarily by corroborating and extending what is or can be known from other sources about the collective cataclysm of 1933-1945. Nor does its

⁴⁴⁵ Francis Good, 'Voice, Ear and Text: Words, Meaning and Transcription', in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, 3rd ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 466.

principal documentary value derive solely from preserving the stories of individual lives as they were lived during this cataclysm. Memory here surpasses the mere recollection of events circumscribed by the commonly dated period of the Shoah. For at stake in the stories told by survivors is not only what happened but *how* it is remembered, and the ‘how’ of memory in turn not only has itself a history but suggests accordingly that, as an event, a traumatic historical event whose repercussions have far from diminished with time, the Holocaust must be understood to include its own aftermath.⁴⁴⁶

Treize’s words are a pertinent reminder that archives are not passive collectors of material but are active producers of memory, and moreover that testimony is an act of memory as well as a transmitter of it; it is an act of memory for – as Treize says – it tells us not just what was remembered but *how* it was remembered, and that ‘how’ takes place in a specific location, for a specific reason, at a specific moment in time. If in this sense testimony is a dialogue between a past event and a present moment (as well as a dialogue between two (or more) people), then we must also recognise that in the process of re-using testimony from the archive we approach it from a new present: the dialogue in effect becomes a triologue as we attempt to access the past from our present, as it was conveyed to us at an interim moment in time. Amelia Klein explains how the discourse between past and present is what gives the act of remembering an historical event such as the Holocaust significance: ‘An ongoing interaction between the past and present will influence the way the Holocaust is remembered. The significance of remembering is located “not in the past events themselves, but in the past events as they exist in relation to our contemporary and future concerns.” ...But such relationships will always depend, of course, on the “discourse community” in which viewers are situated.’⁴⁴⁷ In effect, remembering occurs when there is a contemporary concern necessitating an interaction with the past. As much as this accurately describes what takes place when an individual or organisation acts to produce an audio record of the

⁴⁴⁶ Treize, *Witnessing Witnessing*, 33.

⁴⁴⁷ Amelia Klein, ‘Memory-Work: Video Testimony, Holocaust Remembrance and the Third Generation’, *Holocaust Studies* 13, no. 2–3 (2007): 142.

experiences of Holocaust survivors, it also occurs when a researcher or interested person of the future opts to listen to or watch one of those recordings. It follows therefore that in much the same way as an interviewer should seek to reconcile their vantage point with that of the survivor-interviewee, a user of testimony should account for their own perspective in relation to the material they are viewing – and on to the historic event they represent.

Unlike the majority of sources an historian uses for their craft, oral history is rarely produced contemporaneously to the event it references. The onus is therefore on the user of oral testimony to recognise the contextual specificity of the oral source as it represents the event it records, but also to negotiate their own contextual position vis-à-vis the oral history. (Re)contextualisation is necessary to do this effectively, but so is a degree of self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher or consumer that is conspicuously absent in many outputs that utilise Holocaust oral testimony.⁴⁴⁸ There is no sense, for example, in looking to the October Films collection for an unfiltered testimonial account because the methodology employed in the production of those recordings impedes the interviewee's own narrativization, in favour of eliciting detailed and descriptive anecdotal recountings of particular events. One might have better luck looking for such an unfiltered testimonial in the collections of the Holocaust Survivors' Centre, but is much less likely to find there the detailed factual eyewitness record of the deportation of young men from Britain to Canada as 'enemy aliens' that the special collections of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre contain, or an in-depth life history of Jewish refugees from Nazism living in the UK such as is characteristic of LMJC and *Refugee Voices* interviews. This comparison tells us as much about the 'how' of memory – about the contemporary culture of memory production – as the sources can tell us about the event itself.

And indeed the fact that I should even pose the question of looking for unfiltered testimonial accounts says a great deal about our contemporary 'discourse community', which is concerned much less with discerning the facts of

⁴⁴⁸ Matthäus, 'Conclusion', 121.

the event than it is with searching for meaning and extracting moral messages from it. We are (or at least very soon will be) leaning on oral testimony to take the place of the survivor speaker, who has become a central figure in Holocaust education in particular but also in the memorial landscape more widely, but the methodological process employed in making the majority of these recordings – i.e. the interview – is a filter through which the survivor’s testimony is processed. To use it in this way then, it will need to be searched for, selected, and likely also edited, but as Jürgen Matthäus points out this is rarely done with any conscious acknowledgement of the impact of that process: ‘Scholars can detect and explain the inherent evolution of survivor accounts, but do they...reflect sufficiently on the effects of their own transforming (by way of translating, editing, or annotating) of these very accounts?’⁴⁴⁹ This hypothetical example demonstrates the need for reflexive thinking at all stages of the testimony process, but particularly at the (re)use stage. Consider for example the collections of ‘performative testimony’ that I identified earlier in this thesis, namely the October Films interviews for the Imperial War Museum Holocaust exhibition and interviews conducted for public exhibitions at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. I demonstrated how the interviewing style in each of these cases deliberately and intentionally attempted to craft survivor narratives in an appropriate style for the exhibition – that is, to prompt survivors to recount in such a way that the voice of the interviewer can be edited out to leave soundbites that are independently coherent and appear to be given freely – but the exhibitions themselves did not present the recorded interviews in a complete, unedited format. What are the implications of these interviews being cut up, edited, and inserted in segments into various stages of an historical exhibition narrative? And moreover, what does it do to a personal anecdote to remove it from the context of that individual’s own story and present it in a montage alongside similar anecdotal experiences of a number of other individuals from a wide range of different backgrounds? Whatever the answers to these questions, these outcomes are not incidental, they are conscious choices made by design. We can ask similar questions of published collections of testimony extracts such as Lyn Smith’s

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust, which convert the spoken word to written and selectively edit and cut down narratives in the process, or of educational resources such as the output of the CJC-HDP or the VHEC, which compile thematically similar extracts to draw out particular ‘themes’ and ‘lessons’ from the Holocaust which are then used to educate children about the Holocaust. We can and should ask those questions, but as a rule it seems we do not. As Noah Shenker also points out, ‘moments that capture a sense of the mutual labor involved in testimony are often consigned to the periphery rather than the center of the archival process. And in relegating them to the margins, archives often obscure the preferences and approaches that interviewers and archivists bring to the work of testimony.’⁴⁵⁰ Having recognised the extent to which archives conceal – intentionally or not – their involvement in the creation and curation of oral testimony and the features that emerge as a result, it is only responsible that as scholars, researchers and educators we also recognise the extent to which we consign our own labour to the periphery in the process of using oral testimony from the archive, and consider what we can do to mitigate the impact of our choices.

(Re)contextualisation is, in my opinion, the best if not the only method of negotiating this dialogue. We must first have a full understanding of the material we are consulting and then, and only then, can we reconcile what we want to get from it with what it actually tells us. Making the most of these sources requires what Shenker terms ‘testimonial literacy’, because we cannot expect to make the most of that source material unless we understand both what it communicates and how it communicates the past to us. An in-depth contextual analysis that accounts for social, political, cultural and temporal influences as well as the archival and institutional structures that govern the production of oral material is the surest way of establishing this information, but there are a few other clues we can look for. Henry Greenspan, for example, points out that ‘the very terms that are most typically associated with survivors and their retelling – “testimony,” “stories,” “legacies,” “survivor guilt,” and more – reflect the public discourse within which

⁴⁵⁰ Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, 2.

recounting takes place.⁴⁵¹ Recognising this is an invitation to be mindful of terminology which denotes processual relationships (e.g. 'interviewee', 'narrator', 'informant') and processual activities (e.g. 'recounting', 'testimony', 'interviewing'), which often expose the terms on which the individuals responsible for making and editing these recordings based their activity. Peter Jackson and Polly Russell explain:

Interviewees are sometimes described as informants, narrators, or interview partners. The terms are significant as 'narrator' emphasises the agency of the person telling the story (compared to the more passive role of 'interviewee'); 'informant' implies a degree of duplicity on the part of the narrator, providing the interviewer with privileged access to confidential material; and 'partner' emphasises the relational nature of the life history, produced in dialogue with the interviewer (though the 'partnership' may be far from equal).⁴⁵²

Especially in cases where little background paperwork exists, this can be a useful indicator of the dynamics at work in the recording. Henry Greenspan and Alessandro Portelli both draw a useful distinction between 'testimony' and other forms of oral narration that illustrates how terminology reflects the nature of the material to which it refers. Greenspan, for example, chooses to speak of 'recounting' rather than 'testimony' when referring to interviews with Holocaust survivors:

Perhaps reflecting its use in judicial and religious contexts – declarations of witness or of faith – 'testimony' suggests a formal, finished quality that almost never characterises survivors' remembrance. 'Recounting,' it has seemed to me, better connotes the provisional and processual nature of retelling [...] 'Recounting' may also better suggest the emergence of retelling within conversation, in contrast with testimonies as one-way transmissions that listeners simply 'get' or 'gather'.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors*, xx.

⁴⁵² Jackson and Russell, 'Life History Interviewing', 181.

⁴⁵³ Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors*, xvii.

Portelli echoes the idea that ‘testimony’ implies a passive process that does not sufficiently describe the interactivity of an interview scenario: ‘Another implication of testimony is that it exists somewhere *before* the act of testifying, to be “released” by the narrator and “collected” by the historian. However, all oral narrative is a dialogue with a specific “audience,” in search of attention, belief, and resonance.’⁴⁵⁴ Of course by nature all these sources ‘testify’ to the reality of the Holocaust, but the word ‘testimony’ carries with it connotations of single-person authorship: it is ‘given’ and ‘heard’, and suggests something that is owned by the witness, not co-authored by an interviewer. By this definition, very few of the recordings in the collections referenced in this thesis constitute actual ‘testimony’, since almost all – with the notable exception of some recordings in the Holocaust Survivors’ Centre collection – are dialogically constructed. But the term ‘testimony’ is frequently used in reference to these recordings to invoke the moral weight of the witnesses’ words as a means of asserting their importance and value in recalling and recording the Holocaust. It is equally striking that the Holocaust Survivors’ Centre recordings should be called ‘oral histories’ when many contain no interviewer questions at all, or that the IWM and VHEC exhibition recordings should be referred to as either ‘testimony’ or ‘oral history’ when they are perhaps more like curated narrative performances. The terminology used in the present to refer to material created in the past characterises the relationship between past and present as much as – if not sometimes more so – it characterises the actual material in question. That the British Library should refer to the Holocaust Survivors’ Centre recordings as ‘oral history’, for example, underscores the fact that the British Library has archived this material along with its extensive collection of oral histories on other subjects and, as such, treats it primarily as potential research material; that the VHEC holds all of its audio-visual recordings – from Robert Krell’s original interviews through to the Centre’s own interviewing project and the *Shanghai* and *Enemy Aliens* exhibition interviews – under the category of ‘Holocaust Testimonies’ conversely reflects the persisting hope that all of these recordings – irrespective of the particular manner of their creation – will support the VHEC in its

⁴⁵⁴ Alessandro Portelli, ‘Oral Memoir and the Shoah’, in *Literature of the Holocaust*, ed. Alan Rosen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 196.

enduring mission to counter antisemitism and Holocaust denial in Canada and beyond.

In many ways, this argument is more simplistic than the reality. When discussing the relationship between the past and the present moment in which it is recounted specifically in the context of the Holocaust, Portelli made the following observation: 'Not only were the experiences different, but so were the survivors' later life trajectories. Oral sources are *about* the past but *of* the present; [therefore] we are inevitably faced with a mutable range of possible relationships between the narrated and the narrating self.'⁴⁵⁵ His comment is a reminder of the dialogical nature of oral history, as well as a warning and a call to heed the contextual specificities of the oral genre when we engage with oral testimonies, be it as researchers, educators, or simply an interested public. But indeed it is also true that we are faced with a mutable range of possible relationships between the researcher or public and the narrating self; inasmuch as the oral testimonies capture survivor stories as they were told at one specific moment in time, there are an almost infinite number of ways in which we can relate to those encapsulated moments in the present, determined not only by how they are presented to us but also how we approach them, how we treat them, and how we dare to understand them. In failing to be critical of own relationship to the sources we use, we do a disservice to the inherent values of oral testimony and, more importantly, to those whose stories it contains.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., 207.

Conclusion

Without wishing to state the obvious, Holocaust oral testimony is many things to many people. For survivors it is their testament, a public recounting of their witness to one of the darkest periods of human history, an enduring record that will outlast their time on earth, and for many it is also an outspoken commitment to remember the dead. For historians it is a source of information about the past, a means of studying a largely undocumented tragedy from the perspective of those who suffered it and, for those who conduct interviews themselves, a chance to interrogate it. For psychologists it is key to observing and understanding the lived experience of trauma. For the descendants of the survivors it is family history; for the Jewish people it is a community history. For both it is a traumatic legacy, but also a legacy of survival. The survivors and witnesses have done their part by leaving it to us, but on its own, hidden away in archives and libraries and ‘education centres’, it is effectively useless. For it to have meaning it has to be used, to be seen and heard and engaged with, and there is so much more to be said about how we might best go about doing that in a way that does justice to the commitment and the sacrifices of those who have left it to us, and to the victims who never had the chance to.

This thesis is my contribution to that conversation. I argue that since the transdisciplinary and humanitarian application of the moral lessons and messages of the Holocaust has given rise to an interdisciplinary field of ‘Holocaust studies’ – in which the event is discussed, debated and theorised by historians, literary critics, psychologists, social scientists, politicians, filmmakers and many more besides – it is only logical that the theory we apply to studying its testimonies be equally interdisciplinary. Combining oral history theory with archival theory is, in my view, one way of approaching Holocaust oral testimonies that enhances our understanding of these sources as *Holocaust* oral testimony, as Holocaust *oral* testimony, and as Holocaust oral *testimony*, by highlighting the unique characteristics and features of oral sources – as material that is deliberately *constructed* rather than incidentally *given* – as fundamental strengths of the medium rather than impenetrable weaknesses. Applying the principles of oral

history to sources which are oral in nature should not be 'creative' or controversial, or considered a purely academic approach to studying the Holocaust, but rather a natural and instinctive way of encountering Holocaust oral testimonies for all who wish to engage with them. We should remember in the process that we cannot and should not take this material for granted. It is not just the desire to testify that has made it possible for us to hear survivor stories now and to be able to continue doing so in the future when the survivors themselves are long gone, although we should recognise with gratitude the dedication of the survivors who have elected to record their stories for us in this way. It is also a long and involved process of historical and cultural reckoning that has brought those of us who were not there and who did not experience it first-hand to recognise that it is worthy of being documented. It is this process which has been under scrutiny in this thesis. My intention was never to make value judgements about society's engagement – or failure to engage – with the Holocaust or its survivors, nor to criticise the quality of the output. To do so would be counterproductive: we have what we have, and whilst there is absolutely a space for historical appraisal, in the absence of the ability to continue producing it it is incumbent upon us to learn how to use this trove of invaluable documentation in full awareness of its historical, social and cultural origins.

This thesis has outlined a number of ways we can meaningfully engage with Holocaust oral testimony in all its contextual specificity. The first is in advocating for a greater understanding and appreciation of archival narratives. Collections of oral testimony can tell us as much about the historical context in which they were created as the narratives they contain tell us about the past they recount. There are many questions we can ask of these collections to this end. Why was the collection created? Who launched it? What was the project or collection intended to achieve? Who was interviewed? What questions were asked? Who were the interviewers and what backgrounds did they come from? How did the interviewers and interviewees feel about the process afterwards? How have the interviews been processed and archived? What outputs have been created from the collection since? All of these questions and more can be used to study oral testimony as

historical process. If we ask these questions of collections of Holocaust oral testimony, we can learn a great deal about historical memory of the Holocaust. From collections launched by survivor communities in Canada desperate to combat the rising tide of antisemitism in the place they had taken refuge, to social historians in Britain studying communities of Jewish refugees from Nazism, and from museums using oral testimony as a means of illustrating their exhibitions to survivor organisations simply offering their members the opportunity to create a permanent record of their stories for whatever reason they so wished, oral testimony projects have made history as well as recorded them.

I have also demonstrated how the intentions and approaches of oral testimony projects and their sponsoring institutions come to bear on the content of the interviews themselves. As true as it may be that there is a core narrative to survivor accounts which remains unchanged in whatever circumstances they give their testimony, it is also true that the nature of the oral history process means that survivors are always recounting into particular, predetermined frameworks that come to bear an inexorable influence on the end product. For one, the agendas of both the interviewee – the testifier – and interviewer – who represents the project requirements – are operating at the same time in the dialogical exchange, usually working together but sometimes in contention. When the interviewee is allowed to speak freely, we hear what is important to them; when the interviewer takes control, we hear what they want to know. I noted that when Fanni Bogdanow made a recording with the Holocaust Survivors' Centre in 1996 she read her prewritten testimony, a monologue she wrote herself that describes many more of her parents' memories than her own. In an interview given to *Refugee Voices* in 2003 she tried to do the same, but the interviewer was tasked with eliciting first-hand memories only and Bogdanow struggled to respond to the interviewer's questions, resisting the interviewer's attempts to stop her from reading and persuade her to personalise her narrative. I showed how the scope and structure of the testimonies of Rena Rosenberger and Vera Schiff were delineated by the CJC-HDP's event-centric methodology, but also how in some instances interviewees actively resisted

subordinating their narratives to the requirements of the parent project, as did Barbara Stimler when she was interviewed by production company October Films.

So what does all this mean for Holocaust historiography? For one thing it is clear that Britain and Canada have had different national responses to the Holocaust, which has manifest as different collective approaches to documenting Holocaust testimonies through the medium of oral history. We can learn more about oral testimonies from studying the national contexts in which they were produced, but the reverse is also true: if oral testimony projects are products of time and place, then studying them can tell us an equal amount about how a society has engaged with the past. The CJC-HDP, which birthed many of the local and regional oral testimony projects that subsequently sprung up across Canada, is testament to an organised, well-funded and well-connected survivor community that drove national Holocaust remembrance and memorialisation efforts. This, in turn, is symptomatic of a nation that has simultaneously embraced its multicultural heritage and ostracised its minority populations, the upshot of which is wholly visible in the CJC-HDP as a community-driven enterprise to combat endemic antisemitism that was funded in no small part by government grants from a so-called 'Ministry of Multiculturalism'. The more fractured, sporadic and independent testimonial landscape of Britain tells a different story, one of a much smaller Jewish survivor community with seemingly much less influence on national Holocaust memory. That the majority of British Holocaust oral testimony projects access the subject from alternative angles such as refugee history or British social history – as is true of *Refugee Voices* and *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community* – or on the initiative of individuals or organisations with some kind of vested interest in the subject – such as the Holocaust Survivors' Centre wishing to provide a therapeutic service to its members through oral history – is no coincidence, but indicative of a national sidelining of Holocaust memory by a nation preoccupied with its own memory of the Second World War. One only has to look to the trajectory of the activities of the Imperial War Museum's Sound Archive to see how this has played out.

It is clear that oral history is not just a research method or a documentation process but, certainly in the case of the Holocaust, it is also a commemorative activity. Given the central space that Holocaust survivors now occupy in Holocaust commemoration in Britain and Canada and all over the world it is likely, if not inevitable, that the almost immeasurable corpus of oral testimony material on the subject will move to fill that space once the survivors are no longer with us; in fact numerous individuals and organisations are now moving to pre-empt this process by recording testimonies in formats that they hope will act as direct substitutes for survivor speakers or educators when the time comes. But I also wish to reiterate the fear that I expressed in the introduction to this thesis: I worry that smaller oral testimony projects, or projects that do not have the production values of the incredibly well-funded Shoah Foundation, or projects which cannot or have not utilised the most modern recording technologies, will be overlooked in the new memorial space. Indeed I worry that they are *already* being overlooked: there are many studies of the Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, and of the Fortunoff Archive, and of the USHMM, but if this is the first comprehensive study of British and Canadian Holocaust oral testimony collections then we have already committed an injustice to the wealth of material that has existed in archives in Britain and Canada for four decades or more. I certainly hope it won't be the last.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Audio and Audiovisual Testimonies

- Bamber, Rudi. Interview for October Films. Interview by Annie Dodds, 22 September 1999. 19779. Imperial War Museum.
- Becker, Abby. Interview for the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre. Interview by Elly Gotz, 9 December 2009. No. 530. Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre.
- Becker, Lavy. Interview for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. Interview by Gerry Singer, 19 September 1994. 53908. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.
- Bogdanow, Fanni. Interview for the Holocaust Survivors' Centre. Interview by Linda Berman, 4 April 1996. C830/019. British Library Sounds.
- . Interview for Refugee Voices. Interview by Rosalyn Livshin, 26 June 2003. #24. AJR Refugee Voices.
- Brooks, Margaret. Interview for Oral History of Oral History in the UK. Interview by Robert Wilkinson, 15 May 2013. C1149/30. British Library Sounds.
- . Interview for Oral History of Oral History in the UK. Interview by Robert Wilkinson, 16 July 2013. C1149/30. British Library Sounds.
- Chandler, Howard. Interview for the Holocaust Centre of Toronto. Interview by Paula Draper, 1989. No. 524. Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre.
- Clarke, Eva. Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community. Interview by Tony Grenville, 21 August 1995. C410/160. British Library Sounds.
- Colin, Helen. Interview for USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive. Interview by Pamela Lane, 24 August 1996. 18906. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.
- David, Nicole. Interview for the Holocaust Survivors' Centre. Interview by Brendan Beder, 1 June 1993. C830/060. British Library Sounds.
- Dent, Leslie. Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community. Interview by Ralph Emanuel, 18 July 1990. C410/096. British Library Sounds.

Diamant, George. Interview for Robert Krell. Interview by Robert Krell, 4 December 1979. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

Freiman, Solomon. Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community. Interview by Audrie Mundy, 22 September 1989. C410/052. British Library Sounds.

— — —. Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community. Interview by Audrie Mundy, 13 October 1989. C410/052. British Library Sounds.

Friend, Pola. Interview for the Holocaust Survivors' Centre. Interview by Rosalind Monnickendam, 13 October 1994. C830/005. British Library Sounds.

Fronenberg, Max. Interview for Life Stories of Montrealers, Holocaust Working Group. Interview by Frank Chalk, 2 November 2009. 55540. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Gold, David. Interview for the Holocaust Centre of Toronto. Interview by Roz Lofsky, 10 June 1992. 54101. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Greenberg, Sydney. Interview for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. Interview by David Lissak, 17 July 1995. 54850. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Gutman, Chaim. Interview for the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre Survivor Testimony Project. Interview by Hodie Kahn, 11 September 2016. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

Gutter, Pinchas. Interview for the Holocaust Centre of Toronto. Interview by Paula Draper, March 1993. 54192. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Heyman, Manfred. Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community. Interview by Ilse Sinclair, 29 December 1989. C410/064. British Library Sounds.

Kagan, Paul. Interview for the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project. Interview by Josh Freed, 17 January 1982. 53610. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Kemnitz, Edward. Interview for Living Testimonies. Interview by Renata Skotnicka-Zajdman, 26 October 1995. 54766. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Klipstein, Berta. Interview for Refugee Voices. Interview by Rosalyn Livshin, 11 January 2004. #46. AJR Refugee Voices.

Kohn, Joseph, and Sue Kohn. Interview for the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project. Interview by Josh Freed, 7 August 1981. 53560. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Lion, Eddie. Interview for 'Enemy Aliens'. Interview by Vera Rosenbluth, 27 March 2011. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

———. Interview for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. Interview by Rhona Vandelman, 23 January 2012. 54048. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Lubin, Lee. Interview for Living Testimonies. Interview by Yehudi Lindeman, 3 October 1996. 54769. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Maltz, Rachel. Interview for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. Interview by Sara Tauben, 3 July 1996. 54696. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Mundy, Audrie. Interview for National Life Stories. Interview by Cathy Courtney, 23 May 2012. C464/84. British Library Sounds.

Myers, Muguette. Interview for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. Interview by Yvonne Bensimon, 17 January 2017. 57131. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Perl, Ivor. Interview for the Holocaust Survivors' Centre. Interview by Linda Glancy, 25 September 2013. C830/154. British Library Sounds.

Radvanyi, Matilda. Interview for the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project. Interview by Paula Draper, 20 November 1981. 53601. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Rand, Bernard. Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community. Interview by Milenka Jackson, 22 April 1989. C410/015. British Library Sounds.

Rose, Alan. Interview for the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project. Interview by Josh Freed, 17 March 1982. 53619. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

- Rosenberger, Rena. Interview for the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project. Interview by Paula Draper, 16 November 1981. 53581. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.
- Schiff, Vera. Interview for the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project. Interview by Paula Draper, 22 November 1981. 53591. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.
- . Interview for the Holocaust Centre of Toronto. Interview by Paula Draper, 17 August 1993. 54301. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.
- Slymovics, Vera. Interview for Robert Krell. Interview by Robert Krell, 26 April 1978. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- Sorensen, Louise. Interview for Robert Krell. Interview by Robert Krell, 20 June 1984. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- . Interview for the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre Survivor Testimony Project. Interview by Debby Freiman, 27 June 2014. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- Steinberg, Judith. Interview for Refugee Voices. Interview by Rosalyn Livshin, 2 August 2005. #100. AJR Refugee Voices.
- Stimler, Barbara. Interview for the Holocaust Survivors' Centre. Interview by Barbara Goodman, 16 June 1998. C830/038. British Library Sounds.
- . Interview for the Imperial War Museum. Interview by Lyn Smith, 28 May 1997. 17475. Imperial War Museum.
- . Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community. Interview by Jennifer Wingate, 17 November 1988. C410/004. British Library Sounds.
- . Interview for October Films. Interview by Annie Dodds, 14 August 1998. 19787. Imperial War Museum.
- Stimler, Harvey Jacob. Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community. Interview by Milenka Jackson, 13 May 1991. C410/113. British Library Sounds.
- Thompson, Paul, and Jennifer Wingate. Interview for Oral History of Oral History in the UK, 17 January 2008. C1149/04. British Library Sounds.

Winton, Nicholas. Interview for The Living Memory of the Jewish Community. Interview by Milenka Jackson, 14 August 1990. C410/094. British Library Sounds.

Zajdman, Renata. Interview for Living Testimonies. Interview by Yehudi Lindeman and Sarah Leah Graftstein, 6 June 1989. 55228. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Written Testimonies

Krell, Robert. *Memoiries: Sounds From Silence*. Vancouver: Robert Krell, 2016.

Levi, Primo. *The Drowned and the Saved*. Translated by Raymond Rosenthal. London: Abacus, 2013.

Archival Sources

Abley, Mark. 'Survivors: First-Hand Accounts Could Be Used to Refute Holocaust Deniers, Videographer Says'. *Montreal Gazette*. 11 December 1994. File Name: Witness-To-History Public Relations and Media. Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

Beer, Aba. 'Correspondence Re. Holocaust Documentation Project', 9 December 1981. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09. Canadian Jewish Archives.

Canadian Jewish Congress. 'Evaluation, Phase I - Holocaust Documentation Project'. Project Review. Canadian Jewish Congress, 29 June 1981. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09. Canadian Jewish Archives.

— — —. 'Historical Documentation Bank Proposal', 10 March 1981. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 10. Canadian Jewish Archives.

— — —. 'Holocaust Documentation Project Outline', n.d. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09. Canadian Jewish Archives.

- . 'Holocaust Documentation Project Summary', 5 April 1987. CJC Collection Holocaust Documentation Project (HDP) 1981-1987 DA 16 Box 1 File 11. Canadian Jewish Archives.
- Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling. '2011 September - CURA General Training Guide'. Concordia University COHDS, 2011.
<http://storytelling.concordia.ca/toolbox/ethics>.
- . 'CURA General Interview Guide'. Concordia University COHDS. Accessed 25 October 2019. <http://storytelling.concordia.ca/toolbox/ethics>.
- . 'General Training 2 - Ethics, Interviewing and Listening to Survivors'. February 2011.
- . *Holocaust Related Workshop*. DVD. Concordia University, Montreal, 2009.
- . *Holocaust WG Training Session*. DVD. Concordia University, Montreal, 2008.
- Chalk, Frank. 'Interviewer Blog: Second Interview with Max Fronenberg', 25 November 2009. 2014-01-02-019.D02. Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, Concordia University.
- Faludi, Kathy. 'Paper on Interview Methodology'. Canadian Jewish Congress, 8 May 1981. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09. Canadian Jewish Archives.
- Forst, Graham. 'Correspondence Re. Production of Teaching Aids'. The Standing Committee on the Holocaust, Vancouver, 11 December 1990. Current Project Files File Name: 'VHEC School Testimony Tapes'. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- Frojmovic, Mony, and Danielle Pollack, eds. 'Newsletter of the Canadian Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Their Children'. Canadian Jewish Congress, December 1984. Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 54 File 54.2. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- Gotz, Esme. 'Article First Draft', n.d. From the personal collection of Esme Gotz.
- . 'Notes on a Meeting with Nate [Leipciger] Re. Holocaust Survivor Toronto Testimony Project', 12 October 2013. From the personal collection of Esme Gotz.
- . 'Pinchas Gutter Survivor Testimony Narrative Text', 2009. Testimony No. 161. Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre.

- Hojabri, Afsaneh. 'Occasional Paper #1: Methodology, Ethics and Training in the Montreal Life Stories CURA'. Concordia University COHDS, December 2008. <http://lifestoriesmontreal.ca/en/resources/publications.html>.
- 'Holocaust Documentation [in Toronto]'. *Unknown Publication*, n.d. Current Project Files File Name: 'Potential Interviewees & Survivor Lists'. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- 'Holocaust Documentation Project', n.d. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09. Canadian Jewish Archives.
- 'Holocaust Documentation Project Draft of Intro', n.d. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09. Canadian Jewish Archives.
- 'Holocaust Documentation Project Interview Guidelines', n.d. CJC Collection Holocaust Documentation Project (HDP) 1981-1987 DA 16 Box 1 File 15. Canadian Jewish Archives.
- 'Holocaust Survivors' Centre Newsletter', July 1993. HOL. Wiener Holocaust Library
- 'HSFP Newsletter'. April 1980. http://fortunoff.library.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/April_1980.pdf.
- Imperial War Museum Department of Sound Records. *Britain and the Refugee Crisis 1933-1947*. London: Imperial War Museum, 1982.
- . 'Imperial War Museum Report: Imperial War Museum Holocaust Exhibition'. Periodical. London: Imperial War Museum, Winter 1996. Wiener Holocaust Library.
- Jedeikin, Esti. Letter to Aba Beer. 'Memorandum Re. Video Tape of Interview with Vera Slymovicz', 22 April 1981. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09. Canadian Jewish Archives.
- Kathy Faludi. 'Holocaust Documentation Project Progress Report: Phase II, July 1 1981 - January 31 1982'. Holocaust Documentation Project, 24 February 1982. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 10. Canadian Jewish Archives.
- . Letter to Committee of Consultants. 'Correspondence Re. Discussions in Forthcoming Meeting', 7 July 1981. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09. Canadian Jewish Archives.

- . 'Minutes of a Meeting of Committee of Consultants to the Holocaust Documentation Project - November 1981'. Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, 11 November 1981. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 10. Canadian Jewish Archives.
- . 'Press Release: The Holocaust Documentation Project - Countering Distortions'. Canadian Jewish Congress, 4 August 1981. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09. Canadian Jewish Archives.
- KP. 'Holocaust Documentation Project/Audio-Visual Documentation Project of Holocaust Survivors: Robert Krell Years 1978-1993', March 2016. Current Project Files File Name: 'Krell Timeline & Summary FINAL'. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- Krell, Robert. 'The Audio Visual Taping of Survivor Accounts', May 1987. Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 53 File 9. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- . Letter to Aba Beer. 'Letter Re. Canadian Gathering of Holocaust Survivors', 19 April 1983. Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 54 File 54.2. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- . Letter to Irwin Cotler. 'Letter Re. Canadian Gathering of Holocaust Survivors', 19 April 1983. Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 54 File 54.2. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- . Letter to Louis Woolf. 'Letter Re. Donation: Evelyn & Leon Kahn (\$500) For Research', 20 August 1979. Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 53 File 1. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- . Letter to Morris Saltzman. 'Letter Re. Funding for the Videotaping of Survivors', 18 May 1979. Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 52 File 2. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- . 'UBC Request for Ethical Review for Project Entitled "Audio and Audiovisual Taping of Child Survivors of the Holocaust"'. University of British Columbia, 1983. Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 53 File 2. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

Krentzman, Rabbi Meyer. Letter to Kathy Faludi. 'Correspondence Re. Educational Material', 2 June 1982. CJC Collection Holocaust Remembrance Committee DA 17.1 Box 14 File 09. Canadian Jewish Archives.

Lance, David. Letter to The Deputy Director. 'Imperial War Museum Internal Memorandum', 29 March 1972. ROADS/DD6/03/013. Imperial War Museum.

Langer, Lawrence. 'Interpreting Written Memoirs and Video Testimony'. *Facing History and Ourselves News*. 1987, Fall edition. CJC Collection Holocaust Documentation Project DA 16 Box 1 File 11. Canadian Jewish Archives.

Leipciger, Nathan. Letter to Steering Committee of the Canadian Gathering, n.d. Robert Krell Fonds RA030 Box 54 File 54.2. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

'Living Testimonies Leaflet'. McGill University, n.d. Living Testimonies File. McGill University Library.

Maier, David. 'Recording the Refugee Experience'. *AJR Information*, August 1988.

'Minutes of a Meeting of Committee of Consultants of the Holocaust Documentation Project - May 30, 1984'. Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, 30 May 1984. CJC Collection Holocaust Documentation Project (HDP) 1981-1987 DA 16 Box 1 File 19. Canadian Jewish Archives.

MS. 'Timeline Project Testimony-Related Content: "Shanghai"'. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 13 August 2015. Current Project Files File Name: 'Testimony Timeline Project: Shanghai Exhibit'. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

National Sound Archive. 'The National Life Story Collection'. National Sound Archive, 1988. R2 013. Wiener Holocaust Library.

Prime Minister's Office. 'Britain's Promise to Remember: The Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission Report', 27 January 2015.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prime-ministers-holocaust-commission-report>.

'Report to the Multiculturalism Directorate on the Holocaust Documentation Project'. Canadian Jewish Congress, 10 November 1982. CJC Collection

- Holocaust Documentation Project (HDP) 1981-1987 DA 16 Box 1 File 15.
Canadian Jewish Archives.
- Rosenfeld, Sara. Letter to Quebec Region Officers. 'Email Re. Montreal Second Generation Holocaust Oral History Project', 12 December 1988. File Name: Oral History Projects - the MHMC. Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.
- 'The Exhibit: Shanghai - A Refuge During the Holocaust', n.d. Current Project Files
File Name: 'Testimony Timeline Project: Shanghai Exhibit'. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.
- 'The Most Frequently Asked Questions about Witness-To-History'. Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, n.d. File Name: Witness-To-History Public Relations and Media. Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.
- 'USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive Pre-Interview Questionnaire'. USC Shoah Foundation, October 2012. <https://sfi.usc.edu/collecting>.
- War, Patricia. 'Letter from Patricia War, Co-Ordinator for the Holocaust Survivors' Centre, to the Membership and Interested Parties.', December 1992. HOL. Wiener Holocaust Library.
- Weiss, Avraham, ed. 'A Guide for Oral History on the Holocaust'. National Holocaust Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress, January 1978. File Name: Oral History Projects - Canadian Jewish Congress MTL. Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.
- Wiesel, Elie. 'Report to the President: President's Commission on the Holocaust', 27 September 1979. <https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum/presidents-commission>.
- 'Witness to Holocaust Proposal (Oral History Project)', n.d. File Name: Oral History Projects - the MHMC 1993. Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre
- Zembrzycki, Stacey. 'SSHRC Goal & Project Description, Feb22', 2018. Current Files>14 Remembrance>Oral History>Development_and_Current_Projects>Survivors on the Main audio walk. Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.
- Zembrzycki, Stacey, and Steven High. "'Holocaust Testimonials: Bearing Witness in Holocaust Education" A Life Stories in Education Working Group Project'.

Concordia University COHDS. Accessed 25 October 2019.

<http://storytelling.concordia.ca/toolbox/ethics>.

Secondary Sources

Abella, Irving. 'Oral History and the Canadian Labour Movement'. *Archivaria* 4 (1977): 115–21.

Abella, Irving, and Franklin Bialystok. 'Canada'. In *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, edited by David S. Wyman, 749–81. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Abella, Irving, and Harold Troper. *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948*. 3rd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012.

Abrams, Lynn. *Oral History Theory*. 1st ed. Abingdon: Routledge, 2010.

———. *Oral History Theory*. 2nd ed. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.

Asquith, Linda. 'Talking Officially: The Impact of Social, Cultural and Political Forces Upon Genocide Testimony'. Paper given at the British Association for Holocaust Studies Conference, UCL Institute for Education, London, 2016.

Assmann, Aleida. 'History, Memory, and the Genre of Testimony'. *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (2006): 261–73.

Auerhahn, Nanette C., and Dori Laub. 'Holocaust Testimony'. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 5, no. 4 (1990): 447–62.

Bard, Mitchell G. *48 Hours of Kristallnacht: Night of Destruction/Dawn of the Holocaust: An Oral History*. Guilford: The Lyons Press, 2008.

Bardgett, Suzanne. 'The Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum: Challenges of Representation'. In *Representing the Unrepresentable: Putting the Holocaust into Public Museums*, edited by Rainer Schulze, 1:27–40. *The Holocaust in History and Memory*. Colchester: University of Essex, 2008.

———. 'Witness Statements: Testimonies at the Holocaust Exhibition'. *Museum Practice*, no. 25 (2004): 54–56.

Baum, Willa K. 'Oral History in the United States'. *Oral History* 1, no. 3 (1972): 15–29.

- Beard, Martha Rose. 'Re-Thinking Oral History – a Study of Narrative Performance'. *Rethinking History* 21, no. 4 (2 October 2017): 529–48.
- Benison, Saul. 'Reflections on Oral History'. *The American Archivist* 28, no. 1 (1965).
- Ben-Shlomo, Yoav, and Zeev Ben-Shlomo. 'Commentary: From Links to Bonds—
What Factors Determined the Survival of Jews during the Holocaust?' *International Journal of Epidemiology* 36, no. 2 (2007): 335–37.
- Berger, Ronald J. 'Agency, Structure, and Jewish Survival of the Holocaust: A Life History Study'. *The Sociological Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1996): 15–36.
- Bialystok, Franklin. *Delayed Impact: The Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000.
- Boder, David. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949.
- Brooks, Margaret. 'Methodology for Oral Archives'. In *By Word of Mouth: Élite Oral History*, by Anthony Seldon and Joanna Papworth, 89–113. London: Methuen, 1983.
- Browning, Christopher R. *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.
- . 'Holocaust History and Survivor Testimony: The Case of the Starachowice Factory Slave Labour Camps'. Paper given at The Visual History Archive: Research Experience Conference, The American University of Paris, 2017.
- . *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1993.
- Byford, Jovan. 'Remembering Jasenovac: Survivor Testimonies and the Cultural Dimension of Bearing Witness'. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 28, no. 1 (2014): 58–84.
- Cesarani, David. 'Great Britain'. In *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, edited by David S. Wyman, 599–641. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Cesarani, David, and Eric J. Sundquist, eds. *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012.
- Chatterley, Catherine D. 'Canada's Struggle with Holocaust Memorialization: The War Museum Controversy, Ethnic Identity Politics, and the Canadian

- Museum for Human Rights'. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 29, no. 2 (2015): 189–211.
- C.J.N. Staff. 'Canada Allocates \$800,000 for Holocaust Survivor Testimony'. *The Canadian Jewish News*, 15 October 2013.
<https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/canada-allocates-800000-holocaust-survivor-testimony>.
- Cohen, Sharon Kangisser. *Testimony and Time: Holocaust Survivors Remember*. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2014.
- Crew, David F. 'Alltagsgeschichte: A New Social History "From Below"?' *Central European History* 22, no. 3/4 (1989): 394–407.
- Davis, Angela. 'Belonging and "Unbelonging": Jewish Refugee and Survivor Women in 1950s Britain'. *Women's History Review* 26, no. 1 (2017): 130–46.
- Dix, Martin. 'Jewish Care's Holocaust Survivor Centre's Testimony Project'. *Reform Judaism*, 19 April 2018. <https://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/jewish-cares-holocaust-survivor-centres-testimony-project/>.
- Eliach, Yaffa, and Brana Gurewitsch, eds. *The Liberators: Eyewitness Accounts of the Liberation of Concentration Camps. Liberation Day: Oral History Testimony of American Liberators from the Archives for the Center for Holocaust Studies*. Vol. 1. New York: Center for Holocaust Studies, Documentation and Research, 1981.
- Ellis, Carolyn, and Jerry Rawicki. 'More Than Mazel? Luck and Agency in Surviving the Holocaust'. *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 19, no. 2 (2014): 99–120.
- Esh, Saul, and Geoffrey Wigoder. 'Oral History and Its Potential Application'. In *Jewish Life in Modern Britain*, edited by Julius Gould and Saul Esh, 155–64. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964.
- Flanzbaum, Hilene, ed. *The Americanization of the Holocaust*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
- Fogerty, James E. 'Oral History and Archives: Documenting Context'. In *History of Oral History: Foundations and Methodology*, edited by Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless, 197–226. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2007.

- Freund, Alexander. 'Oral History as Process-Generated Data'. *Historical Social Research* 34, no. 1 (2009): 22–48.
- Freund, Alexander, Kristina R. Llewellyn, and Nolan Reilly. 'Introduction'. In *The Canadian Oral History Reader*, edited by Kristina R. Llewellyn, Alexander Freund, and Nolan Reilly, 3–21. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015.
- Friedlander, Peter. 'Theory, Method, and Oral History'. In *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, edited by David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum, 2nd ed., 150–60. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996.
- Frisch, Michael. *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.
- . 'Three Dimensions and More: Oral History Beyond the Paradoxes of Method'. In *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy, 221–38. New York: The Guilford Press, 2010.
- Gallwey, April. 'The Rewards of Using Archived Oral Histories in Research: The Case of the Millennium Memory Bank'. *Oral History* 41, no. 1 (2013): 37–50.
- Good, Francis. 'Voice, Ear and Text: Words, Meaning and Transcription'. In *The Oral History Reader*, edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, 3rd ed., 458–69. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.
- Gotthardt Strage, Alberta. 'Statement of the Quantitative and Qualitative Reports about the Interviews Produced since the First International Meeting (September 1994)'. *From the Audiovisual Testimony Second International Audiovisual Meeting on the Testimony of Survivors of the Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps* (1996): 114–18.
- Grant, Brigit. 'Testimony of Survivors to Be Taped'. *Jewish Chronicle*, 6 May 1988. *Jewish Chronicle*.
- Greenspan, Henry. 'Imagining Survivors: Testimony and the Rise of Holocaust Consciousness'. In *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, edited by Hilene Flanzbaum, 45–67. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
- . *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History*. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998.

- Greenspan, Henry, and Sidney Bolkosky. 'When Is an Interview an Interview? Notes from Listening to Holocaust Survivors'. *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (2006): 431–49.
- Grele, Ronald J. 'On Using Oral History Collections: An Introduction'. *The Journal of American History* 74, no. 2 (1987): 570–78.
- Grenville, Anthony. 'Refugee Voices: AJR Oral History Collection Launched in the North'. *AJR Journal*, January 2003.
- Grenville, Anthony, and Bea Lewkowicz. 'Special Announcement: Refugee Voices, the Association of Jewish Refugees Audio-Visual Testimony Archive'. *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 31, no. 2 (June 2009): 178–83.
- Hartman, Geoffrey. 'About the Yale Archive'. In *Witness: Voices from the Holocaust*, edited by Joshua M. Greene and Shiva Kumar, 251–56. New York: Touchstone, 2000.
- . *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- Hassan, Judith. *A House Next Door to Trauma: Learning from the Holocaust*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003.
- . 'Memory and Remembrance: The Survivor of the Holocaust 50 Years after Liberation'. *Cahier International #1/International Journal on the Audio-Visual Testimony* 1 (1998): 103–9.
- . 'To AJR Members: A Letter from Jewish Care'. *AJR Journal*, June 2008.
- Hilberg, Raul. 'German Railroads/Jewish Souls'. *Society* 14, no. 1 (1976): 60–74.
- . *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001.
- Hunter, Ernie. 'Obituary: Bill Williams'. *The Jewish Chronicle*, 20 April 2018. <https://www.thejc.com/news/obituaries/obituary-bill-williams-1.462821>.
- 'Important Announcement: The Oral History Society'. *Oral History* 2, no. 1 (1974): 2–3.
- Jackson, Peter, and Polly Russell. 'Life History Interviewing'. In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*, edited by Dydia DeLyser, Steve Herbert, Stuart Aitken, Mike Crang, and Linda McDowell, 172–92. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010.

- Jockusch, Laura. *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Ketelaar, Eric. 'Tacit Narratives: The Meaning of Archives'. *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 131–41.
- Klein, Amelia. 'Memory-Work: Video Testimony, Holocaust Remembrance and the Third Generation'. *Holocaust Studies* 13, no. 2–3 (2007): 129–50.
- Krieger, Nina. 'Internment Remembered, Internment Exhibited: "Enemy Aliens" Recalls a Historical Moment as It Recedes from Living Memory'. *Zachor: 'Enemy Aliens' The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-1943*, May 2012.
- Kushner, Tony. 'Bill Williams and Jewish Historiography: Past, Present and Future'. *Melilah* 3 (2006): 1–14.
- . 'Holocaust Testimony, Ethics, and the Problem of Representation'. *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (2006): 275–93.
- . 'Oral History at the Extremes of Human Experience: Holocaust Testimony in a Museum Setting'. *Oral History* 29, no. 2 (2001): 83–94.
- LaClare, Léo. 'Oral History in Canada: An Overview'. *The Oral History Review* 1 (1973): 87–91.
- Lance, David. 'Oral History'. In *Sound Archives: A Guide to Their Establishment and Development*, edited by David Lance. IASA Special Publication 4. International Association of Sound Archives, 1983.
- . 'Oral History Criteria for Selection in the Field'. In *Selection in Sound Archives: Collected Papers from IASA Conference Sessions*, edited by Helen P. Harrison. IASA Special Publication 5. International Association of Sound Archives, 1984. <https://www.iasa-web.org/selection/oral-history-criteria-selection-field-david-g-lance>.
- . 'Oral History Project Design'. In *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, edited by David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum, 2nd ed., 135–42. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996.
- Langer, Lawrence. *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

- Larson, Mary A. 'Research Design and Strategies'. In *History of Oral History: Foundations and Methodology*, edited by Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless, 95–124. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2007.
- Laub, Dori. 'Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening'. In *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, 57–74. London: Routledge, 1992.
- . 'Breaking the Silence of the Muted Witnesses: Video Testimonies of Psychiatrically Hospitalized Holocaust Survivors in Israel'. In *Lessons and Legacies Volume VIII: From Generation to Generation*, edited by Doris L. Bergen, 175–87. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008.
- Lawson, Tom. 'Britain and Genocide'. Paper given at the British Association for Holocaust Studies Conference, University of Leeds, 2018.
- Leuchter, Sara. 'Oral History with Holocaust Survivors'. In *The Holocaust: An Annotated Bibliography and Resource Guide*, edited by David M. Szonyi, 371–84. New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., 1985.
- Lewkowicz, Bea. 'The AJR Refugee Voices Archive: A Resource for Scholarship and Learning'. Edited by Nicolas Apostolopoulos, Michele Barricelli, and Gertrud Koch. *Preserving Survivors' Memories - Digital Testimony Collections about Nazi Persecution: History, Education and Media*, Education with Testimonies, 3 (2016): 69–86.
- . 'Does Gender Matter? Reflections on the Role of Gender in Women's Oral History Narratives'. In *Exile and Gender II: Politics, Education and the Arts*, edited by Charmian Brinson, Jana Barbora Buresova, and Andrea Hammel, 18:231–46. The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies. Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2017.
- . 'Refugee Voices (The AJR Audio-Visual Testimony Archive): A New Resource for the Study of the Kindertransport'. In *The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies*, edited by Andrea Hammel and Bea Lewkowicz, 13:239–46. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012.
- Linenthal, Edward T. *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1995.

- Lohead, Richard. 'Three Approaches to Oral History: The Journalistic, the Academic and the Archival'. *Canadian Oral History Association Journal* 1 (1976): 5–12
- MacDonald, Wilma. 'Origins: Oral History Programmes in Canada, Britain and the United States'. *Oral History Forum d'histoire Orale* 10 (1990): 12–24.
- Maechler, Stefan. *The Wilkomirski Affair: A Study in Biographical Truth*. Translated by John E. Woods. New York: Schocken Books Inc, 2001.
- Matthäus, Jürgen. 'Conclusion: What Have We Learned?' In *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor: Holocaust Testimony and Its Transformations*, edited by Jürgen Matthäus, 119–22. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- M.N. 'Gems from the Archives'. *AJR Information*, July 1991.
- Moses, A. Dirk. 'The Canadian Museum for Human Rights: The "Uniqueness of the Holocaust" and the Question of Genocide'. *Journal of Genocide Research* 14, no. 2 (2012): 215–38.
- Naron, Stephen. 'Archives, Ethics and Influence: How the Fortunoff Video Archive's Methodology Shapes Its Collection's Content'. Edited by Werner Dreier, Angelika Laumer, and Moritz Wein. *Interactions: Explorations of Good Practice in Educational Work with Video Testimonies of Victims of National Socialism, Education with Testimonies*, 4 (2018): 41–51.
- Nevins, Allan. 'Oral History: How and Why It Was Born'. In *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, edited by David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum, 2nd ed., 29–38. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996.
- Nieuwsma, Milton J., ed. *Kinderlager: An Oral History of Young Holocaust Survivors*. New York: Holiday House, 1998.
- Novick, Peter. *The Holocaust and Collective Memory: The American Experience*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000.
- Pearce, Andy. *Holocaust Consciousness in Contemporary Britain*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2014.
- Pollin-Galay, Hannah. *Ecologies of Witnessing: Language, Place, and Holocaust Testimony*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2018.
- Pollock, Della, ed. *Remembering: Oral History Performance*. Palgrave Studies in Oral History. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

- Portelli, Alessandro. 'A Dialogical Relationship: An Approach to Oral History'. *Expressions Annual*, 2005, 1–8.
- . 'Oral Memoir and the Shoah'. In *Literature of the Holocaust*, edited by Alan Rosen, 193–210. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- . 'The Peculiarities of Oral History'. *History Workshop Journal* 12, no. 1 (1981): 96–107.
- Ritchie, Donald A. *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- . *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Rosenbluth, Vera. 'Interviewing the Internees'. *Zachor: 'Enemy Aliens' The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-1943*, May 2012.
- Rothchild, Sylvia. *Voices from the Holocaust*. New York: New American Library, 1981.
- Sarkar, Bhaskar, and Janet Walker. 'Introduction: Moving Testimonies'. In *Documentary Testimonies: Global Archives of Suffering*, edited by Bhaskar Sarkar and Janet Walker, 1–34. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Saville, A. 'Letters to the Editor'. *AJR Journal*, August 2010.
- Shandler, Jeffrey. "'And Now I Have to Read in Jewish Something": Yiddish Performances by Holocaust Survivors'. Paper given at The Visual History Archive: Research Experience Conference, The American University of Paris, 2017.
- . *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age: Survivors' Stories and New Media Practices*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017.
- Shenker, Noah. *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.
- Smith, Graham. 'A Short History of the Oral History Society c.1973-2013'. *Wrocław Yearbook of Oral History (Wrocławski Rocznik Historii Mówionej)* 3 (2013): 93–129.
- . *Oral History*. Historical Insights: Focus on Research. University of Warwick: History at the HEA, 2010.

https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/heahistory/resources/rg_smith_oralhistory_20111015.pdf.

- Smith, Lyn. *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust: True Stories of Survival - From Men, Women and Children Who Were There*. London: Ebury Press, 2006.
- Strage, Alberta. 'Opportunities Lost and Found: A Review of the British Experience'. *Cahier International Sur Le Témoignage Audiovisuel/International Journal On The Audio-Visual Testimony* Third International Meeting on the Audiovisual Testimony of Survivors from Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps (1999): 127–29.
- Swain, Ellen D. 'Oral History in the Archives: Its Documentary Role in the Twenty-First Century'. *The American Archivist* 66, no. 1 (2003): 139–58.
- Tammes, Peter. 'Surviving the Holocaust: Socio-Demographic Differences Among Amsterdam Jews'. *European Journal of Population* 33, no. 3 (2017): 293–318.
- Taubitz, Jan. *Holocaust Oral History und das lange Ende der Zeitzeugenschaft*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2016.
- Thompson, Paul. 'Life Histories in Poland and Scandinavia'. *History Workshop Journal* 6, no. 1 (1978): 208–10.
- . *The Voice of the Past*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- . *The Voice of the Past*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Thompson, Paul, and Joanna Bornat. *The Voice of the Past*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Thomson, Alistair. 'Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History'. *The Oral History Review* 34, no. 1 (2007): 49–70.
- Thor Tureby, Malin. 'To Hear with the Collection: The Contextualisation and Recontextualisation of Archived Interviews'. *Oral History* 41, no. 2 (2013): 63–74.
- Treize, Thomas. *Witnessing Witnessing: On the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013.
- Waxman, Zoë. 'Testimonies as Sacred Texts: The Sanctification of Holocaust Writing'. *Past & Present* 206, Supplement 5 (2010): 321–41.

- . ‘Transcending History? Methodological Problems in Holocaust Testimony’. In *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology*, edited by Dan Stone, 143–57. New York: Berghahn Books, 2012.
- White, Madeline. ‘A Museological Approach to Collecting Oral Histories: A Case Study of the Holocaust Collections at the Imperial War Museum’. *The Journal of Holocaust Research* 33, no. 2 (2019): 138–56.
- Wiederhorn, Jessica. ‘Case Study: “Above All, We Need the Witness”: The Oral History of Holocaust Survivors’. In *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, edited by Donald A. Ritchie, 244–54. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Wiener Rudof, Joanne. ‘A Yale University and New Haven Community Project: From Local to Global’, 2012. http://fortunoff.library.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/local_to_global.pdf.
- Wieviorka, Annette. *The Era of the Witness*. Translated by Jared Stark. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Williams, Bill, and Audrey Linkman. ‘Recovering the People’s Past: The Archive Rescue Programme of Manchester Studies’. *History Workshop Journal* 8, no. 1 (1979): 111–28.
- Williams, Brien R. ‘Doing Video Oral History’. In *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, edited by Donald A. Ritchie, 267–76. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Wingate, Jennifer. ‘The National Life Story Collection (London)’. *The British Journal of Holocaust Education* 1, no. 2 (1992): 127–55.
- Wolfson, Leah. *Jewish Responses to Persecution Volume V: 1944-1946*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.
- Yow, Valerie. *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*. 3rd ed. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

Website Content

- ‘About Refugee Voices’. *AJR Refugee Voices*, 2019.
<https://www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk/refugee-voices>.

- 'Affiliate Projects'. *Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies*. Accessed 2 March 2020. <http://fortunoff.library.yale.edu/about-us/affiliate-projects/>.
- 'Canadian Multiculturalism Policy, 1971'. *Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21*. Accessed 30 April 2020. <https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/canadian-multiculturalism-policy-1971>.
- 'History of the Holocaust Testimony Collection'. *Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre*. Accessed 15 November 2019. <https://collections.vhec.org/Testimonies/history>.
- 'Is Your Oral History Legal and Ethical?' *Oral History Society*. Accessed 2 June 2020. <https://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/ethical-and-legal/>.
- 'Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust'. *British Library Sounds*. Accessed 24 March 2018. <https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Jewish-Holocaust-survivors>.
- Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, and Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre. 'Historic Partnership to Preserve and Provide Access to Canadian Collections of Holocaust Survivor Oral History Announced'. USC Shoah Foundation, 23 March 2015. <https://sfi.usc.edu/pressroom/releases/historic-partnership-preserve-and-provide-access-canadian-collections-holocaust>.
- 'Oral Histories of Jewish Experience and Holocaust Testimonies'. *The British Library*. Accessed 2 March 2020. <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/oral-histories-of-jewish-experience-and-holocaust-testimonies>.
- 'Prime Minister Leads Unprecedented Support for Holocaust Memorial as Further £25m Committed'. *gov.uk*, 7 May 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-leads-unprecedented-support-for-holocaust-memorial-as-further-25m-committed>.
- 'Sound Archive'. *Imperial War Museums*. Accessed 3 June 2020. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/sound>.
- 'Sounds'. *British Library Sounds*. Accessed 3 June 2020. <https://sounds.bl.uk/>.
- 'Testimony'. *The National Holocaust Centre and Museum*. Accessed 17 April 2020. <https://www.holocaust.org.uk/testimony>.

'The Forever Project'. *The National Holocaust Centre and Museum*. Accessed 1 May 2020. <https://www.holocaust.org.uk/foreverproject1>.

'The National Holocaust Monument Development Council'. *National Holocaust Monument/Le Monument National de Holocauste*. Accessed 30 July 2020. <https://www.holocaustmonument.ca/#council>.

'The Team'. *AJR Refugee Voices*, 2019. <https://www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk/the-team>.

USC Shoah Foundation. 'New Dimensions in Testimony: Overview'. USC Institute for Creative Technologies, 2013. <https://ict.usc.edu/prototypes/new-dimensions-in-testimony/>.

Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. 'Primary Voices: Teaching Through Holocaust Survivor Testimony'. Accessed 30 April 2020. <https://vhec.org/primaryvoices/>.

'Who We Are'. *Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre*, 2019. <https://www.holocaustcentre.com/about-us/who-we-are>.