

**Ruptures in Remembrance: Trauma, Utterance and
Patterns in Survivor Testimony**

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Summary/Abstract

As eyewitnesses and victims of the Holocaust, survivors have been traumatised by their experiences; indeed, memories of this time continue to haunt them into the present day. But whilst a great deal of research has been conducted into the transferential and representational problems survivors encounter whilst giving voice to their experiences, fewer studies have questioned how the trauma of living through this genocide may have affected the ways in which eyewitnesses remember – and in turn relay - their turbulent pasts. Mark Roseman has recently examined how ‘interesting inaccuracies [often occur] in...[survivor] memory’ which seem to follow a recognizable ‘pattern’. However, no one has yet compared the different testimonies produced by a single survivor over time, in order to determine whether a ‘pattern’ occurs consistently in their Holocaust narrations. In this thesis, I compare the different oral and written testimonials that three survivors - Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, Trude Levi and Leon Greenman - have given since the end of the war. I have found that there are a series of interesting ‘variations’ and speech disturbances that can be tracked through these survivors’ utterances from their earliest accounts to their most recent depositions. I posit that these discrepancies are the result of the trauma of Lasker, Levi and Greenman’s Holocaust experiences, and have found ‘patterns’ in their testimonies which endorse the theory that whilst recounting certain memories these survivors are plagued by symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. In asserting this, I am not attempting to undermine or dispute the validity of these survivors’ memories. In fact, by focusing on how eyewitnesses re-configure their recollections in discourse, my findings support the veracity of their accounts - by showing that survivors sculpt their testimonies into a defensive framework that enables them to counteract ‘the pain of remembering’, by paradoxically giving voice to these very memories of distress.

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Leon Greenman, who passed away on 7th March, 2008.

Reference Table of Punctuation Usage in Testimonial Transcriptions

I include all of Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's pauses, hesitations, breaths and repetitions into my transcripts of their testimonies. I do this in order to produce a faithful rendering of these survivors' recountings, and to conduct an accurate analysis of their discourse. As such, these transcriptions often do not abide by conventional usages of grammar and punctuation. To enable the reader to negotiate my idiosyncratic transcripts, below is a table outlining the punctuation and grammar that I use, along with accompanying descriptions of what each form of punctuation entails in this study.

Mode of Punctuation	Description of Punctuation Usage
Full Stops	Full stops are <u>only</u> used when the interviewee makes a definite tonal indication that this point in his/her testimony is meant to mark the end of a sentence/train of thought. For instance, when the interviewee markedly pauses in his/her dialogue, but resumes the conversation soon afterwards with an alterative subject. This pause is not a long enough break to be considered an elliptical suspension, but is longer than a normal hiatus, thereby confirming that this marks the end of a particular line of discourse. As a result, a large amount of dialogue can occur between each full stop.
Commas	Commas are used when the interviewee takes a breath, before continuing on with the rest of his/her sentence. Commas are not used at any other time.
Dashes	Dashes are used when the interviewee takes a registered pause, but does not take a breath or pause long enough for this break to be classified as an end of sentence. The only exception to this rule, occurs when dashes are used by the transcriber to indicate a hyphenated name, such as in the case of Anita Lasker-Wallfisch.

Mode of Punctuation	Description of Punctuation Usage
Ellipses	Ellipses are used when the interviewee's voice trails off, either into a lasting silence or is afterwards followed by a marked change in tone, pace and/or rhythm.
Semicolons	Semicolons are used when the interviewee makes a break in his/her sentence, but continues on with that train of thought without consciously changing the subject of conversation. A semicolon is thus not as decisive a break as a full stop, and these pauses are also less pronounced than when the transcriber uses a hyphen.
Italics	Italics mark when an emphasis is used in an interviewee's speech. These stresses are only employed at this time.
Parenthesis and square brackets	If normal parentheses are used, these are to indicate where the interviewee is inserting a word or phrase into his/her dialogue, as an explanation, afterthought or aside. Square brackets are used by the transcriber in four instances: either to indicate where an interviewer/interviewee has interrupted another person's flow of dialogue; to accurately record the dialogic interjections when the interviewer/interviewee have moments of conflicting discourse, (i.e. when one or more people are talking at the same time). Otherwise, square brackets are used to signify a interviewee action or inflection, such as when he/she laughs, coughs, or lights a cigarette, or in order to explain the meanings of certain words or phrases, that if not included might render a section of dialogue perplexing and impenetrable to an external observer.
Colons	Colons are used to precede a list of items or a quotation, if the vocal intonation of the interviewee/interviewer intimates that its use is appropriate.

Mode of Punctuation	Description of Punctuation Usage
Repetition	Repetitions appear in my transcriptions, either to indicate when an interviewee repeats a certain word e.g. 'no no no' or when they reiterate a single letter such as 'n n never'. These hesitations are faithful records of the original oral accounts.
Inverted Commas	Single inverted commas are used to show where an interviewee/interviewer is quoting someone else. This tends to be illustrated graphically in oral history accounts, as interviewees often change the intonation of their voices when they are using another person's words to emulate that individual's speech.
Foreign Language Vocabulary	When an interviewee uses a word or sentence in their native language rather than in English this is included in my transcription, although it is usually accompanied by a square bracketed parenthesis containing an English translation/explanation. Any English translations that do not appear in square brackets are the interviewees own.
Question Marks	Question marks are not necessarily used at the end of sentences that are constructed as questions. Only when a query is accompanied by an inquiring intonation indicating definite authorial intention, is a question mark used.
Capital Directives	Directives in capital letters are used by the transcriber to indicate a break in the interview, or to demarcate where a tape begins or ends. These directions are used independently from the interview dialogue and are clearly separated from the main text.
Onomatopoeic Words	When a survivor is beginning to say a word, or makes a series of sounds such as false starts and hesitations, I will depict these sounds phonically in my transcription. Hence there are words and half-words strewn throughout each survivor's transcribed dialogue, just as there are in their spoken testimonies.

Anita Lasker-Wallfisch Time Line

- 12th April 1925** Anita Lasker is born in Breslau (then Germany), now Wroclaw in Poland.
- 1933** Lasker-Wallfisch's first encounter with anti-Semitism and Nazi policies of discrimination.
- 9th November 1938** Krystallnacht. Lasker-Wallfisch is in Berlin studying the cello. Her father was nearly deported. The next day she returns to Breslau.
- Early 1939** Lasker-Wallfisch's sister leaves Germany to go to Palestine. She is prevented from getting there as war begins and is stopped en-route in England, where she remains for the duration of WWII.
- June – August 1939** Lasker-Wallfisch's parents make desperate attempts to emigrate with their children.
- 1st September 1939** War breaks out in Germany. The Lasker family are prevented from emigrating from Breslau, and plans they had made to send their children out of the country are also dashed.
- April – May 1940** Lasker-Wallfisch's parents last attempts at emigration to Italy are foiled.
- January 1941** The Lasker sisters are forced into 'war work' in a paper factory. They begin clandestine activities, helping the French resistance to smuggle French prisoners of war across the German borders.
- 9th April 1942** Lasker-Wallfisch's parents are deported and murdered.
- Mid 1942** Lasker-Wallfisch's grandmother is deported and murdered.
- 7th September 1942** The Lasker sisters are moved to an orphanage in Breslau.
- Late 1942/Early 1943** The Lasker sisters are arrested by the Gestapo for their illegal activities. They are taken into custody. They also attempt to commit suicide, but fail.

Late 1942/Early 1943	The Lasker girls are put on trial and convicted of a number of indictments. Lasker-Wallfisch's sister is sent to a penitentiary and Lasker remains in Breslau prison.
November 1943	Lasker-Wallfisch is deported to Auschwitz. Lasker joins the camp orchestra.
November/December 1943	Lasker-Wallfisch's sister Renate arrives in Auschwitz and the girls are reunited.
End of October/ Early November 1944	The Lasker sisters are deported to Belsen.
15th April 1945	The Lasker sisters are liberated by the British Army.
	Lasker-Wallfisch gives her first interview to Patrick Gordon-Walker for the BBC European Service. Her two recorded appeals are broadcast in England in April 1945.
Sometime between September – November 1945	Lasker-Wallfisch gives evidence at the Lüneburg Trial (Belsen Trial) at the British Military Court, Lüneberg, Germany.
August 1957	Lasker-Wallfisch gives an interview to the Wiener Library, London, for their archives. The interview is not tape recorded, but transcribed.
1988	Lasker-Wallfisch compiles her war-time memories into an unpublished autobiography entitled 'Inherit the Truth'.
March 1991	Lasker-Wallfisch gives her first recorded interview for 34 years to the Imperial War Museum Sound Archives.
1993	Lasker-Wallfisch gives a series of monologues collectively entitled 'Inherit the Truth', and individually entitled: 'Breslau', 'The Graupe', 'Auschwitz', 'Belsen' and 'England – Eventually' on Radio 3. The series is met with critical acclaim and receives a massive public response.

- April 1996** On the back of the success of her Radio 3 monologues, Lasker-Wallfisch publishes her memoir under the title 'Inherit the Truth: 1939 – 1945: The Documented Experiences of a Survivor of Auschwitz and Belsen'. The book is a well received and is translated into a number of languages, including German, French and Japanese.
- August 1996** Lasker-Wallfisch gives an interview to Radio 4's 'Desert Island Discs' programme. Lasker is interviewed by Sue Lawley .
- 1999** Lasker-Wallfisch gives a second interview to Radio 4, for their 'My Century' series commemorating the important events of the twentieth century. This interview is broadcast in a heavily edited format.
- 1999** Lasker-Wallfisch gives a third interview to Radio 4 for the 'Archive Hour' programme. A recording of the pre-broadcast (preparatory) interview for this programme is stored in the BBC Sound Archives. It has not been possible to locate a recording of the actual broadcast.
- May-October 2000** Lasker-Wallfisch gives a non-media interview to the British Library Sound Archives for their 'Living Memory of the Jewish Community' Collection (later to become the 'National Life Story' Collection).
- 27th October 2004** Lasker-Wallfisch gives a testimonial interviewer to Jennifer Maiden.

Leon Greenman Time Line

- 18th December 1910** Leon Greenman is born in West London, England.
- 1913** Greenman's mother dies.
- 1915** Greenman's family move to Holland to live with his paternal grandparents.
- 1925** Greenman leaves school. He has an array of jobs for short periods of time. Greenman then moves to London with his brothers, and becomes an apprentice barber. Six months later, Greenman returns to Rotterdam to continue his training.
- 1930** Greenman moves to Golders Greer, London, to be near his girlfriend, Esther 'Else' Van Dam.
- He owns his own salon for a short time, then begins antiquarian book trading.
- 9th June 1935** Greenman marries Esther Van Dam.
- Esther moves to Holland to care for her grandmother after their honeymoon, and Greenman divides his time trading books between England and Holland.
- September 1938** Greenman sees people digging trenches and queuing for gas masks in London. He returns to Holland with the intention of moving his wife and grandmother-in-law back to England. Reassured by Neville Chamberlain's 'Peace for our time' speech, Greenman decides to delay the relocation to England, but contacts the British Consulate to set up evacuation procedures in the event of invasion. This agreement was not honoured by the consulate, which evacuated Rotterdam without informing the Greenman family.
- 17th March 1940** Greenman's son, Barnett 'Barney' Greenman is born in Rotterdam.
- 10th May 1940** Nazi invasion of Rotterdam. Soon afterwards, the centre of Rotterdam is obliterated by German bombing raids.

July 1941	Dinah, Greenman's sister, is deported and killed.
8th October 1942	Greenman along with his wife, son and grandmother-in-law are deported to Westerbork Concentration Camp. Esther's grandmother is later deported and killed, whilst Greenman's father joins them in the camp. Greenman petitions against further transport, on the grounds of his family's English nationality.
January 1943	Greenman and his wife and son are deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. His wife and child are selected for the gas chambers and killed. Greenman is chosen to work. During his time at Birkenau, Greenman is in and out of hospital - mainly due to problems with his feet. He is subjected to medical experimentation by Horst Schumann.
15th September 1943	Greenman is transferred to Monowitz industrial complex, where he works as a hard labourer. He remains at Monowitz for one and a half years.
January 1945	Greenman is forced on a 90km death march to Gleiwitz. He is then taken on a five day cattle truck transport to Buchenwald. Greenman's feet are gangrenous, and he nearly collapsed during the walk. He is supported by a fellow prisoner, who effectively saves Greenman's life.
11th April 1945	SS guards desert Buchenwald camp. Later that day, the American 3 rd Army liberate the camp.
April 1945	Greenman gives his first interview to a journalist from the 'Evening Standard'. This interview is published in a highly condensed form in the newspaper during the same month.
Between 25th April – 26th May 1945	Greenman gives his first tape recorded testimony to the BBC European Service.
1962	Greenman begins the compilation of his memoir, 'An Englishman in Auschwitz'.

22nd April 1986

Greenman gives a non-media interview to the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive. This interview was conducted over a number of sittings, however, and was not started and finished on 22nd April (though this is the only date provided by the Archive).

16th September 1992

Greenman gives testimony to the British Video Archive, as part of their 'Holocaust Survivors' collection.

1995

Greenman takes part in a media interview with David J.

2001

Greenman's memoir is published.

10th, 15th July 2007

Greenman gives testimonial interviews to Jennifer Maiden.

Trude Levi Time Line

- 23rd April 1924** Gertrud Mosonyi is born in Szombathely, Hungary.
- 1929** Levi's first experiences of anti-Semitism, when she is stoned and called racist names. This led to Levi's initial awareness of her Jewish heritage, and set the foundations for her future Zionist beliefs.
- 12th March 1938** Annexation of Austria.
- Levi's paternal grandmother is deported to Theresienstadt. Her maternal grandmother goes into hiding.
- Levi goes to Vienna to smuggle her maternal grandmother's possessions to a friend who lived on the Austro-Hungarian border for safekeeping.
- Levi leaves school to learn a trade, and becomes a milliner's apprentice.
- 1942** Lasker gives up work as a milliner and enrolls on a course to train as a nursery school teacher. Levi moves to Budapest, against her father's wishes, to complete her training. Levi finishes the course and begins work as a nursery school teacher.
- January 1944** Levi is appointed assistant to the professor of the college's model nursery.
- 19th March 1944** Nazi occupation of Hungary.
- Levi develops a perforated colon and is rushed into hospital. Four days after her operation, all Jewish patients are thrown out of Hungarian hospitals.
- March - April 1944** Levi applies for permission to return to Szombathely, at her parents' request. Permission is granted and Levi leaves Budapest. Levi arrives home to find that her father has been arrested as a political prisoner and her mother has had a breakdown.

7th May 1944

Levi and her mother are moved into the Jewish ghetto in Szombathely.

June 1944

Levi and her mother are sent to the deportation/concentration camp in Szombathely. Levi and her mother join a volunteer group for transfer to a nearby concentration camp. Levi is reunited with her father.

The Mosonyi family are deported by cattle truck to Auschwitz.

7th July 1944

The Mosonyi family arrive at Auschwitz. Levi's father is separated into a male group. She never sees him again. Levi's mother is selected for the gas chamber and murdered. Levi is selected as forced labour. She remains in the quarantine block for some days.

2nd - 3rd August 1944

Levi survives a selection by Dr. Mengele.

Levi is put onto another cattle truck transport, and sent to Hessisch-Lichtenau. She begins working in a munitions factory.

October 1944

Levi volunteers to bury the commandant's dog. He thanks her in person.

Levi is assigned to a deportation transport of sick women when SS guards find out she overheard them talking about illegally selling the camp's bread supply. The commandant of the camp removes her from the deportation list, when he finds he has too many women assembled. The remainder of the transport are murdered.

Levi begins sabotage work at the munitions factory.

March 1945

Hessisch-Lichtenau is liquidated. Levi is put on a transport out of the camp. American bombers destroy the train lines, and Levi remains in a stationary train for three days. The train continues to Leipzig.

Levi stays in an ex-SS camp at Leipzig for one night. The camp is razed to the ground by allied bombers the next morning. Levi's best friend is killed by flying shrapnel. Levi holds her hand as she dies and carries her body to the hospital where she is pronounced dead.

Levi is marched to Tekla camp.

April 1945

Levi stays at Tekla.

On 12th April, she is forced on a death march. Guards weave the 15,000 prisoners around the River Elbe for 10 days. Levi collapses on 23rd April on a bridge crossing the River Elbe. She is left to die. Levi hides in a nearby hay barn, until she meets with a group of French prisoners of war. One prisoner of war remains with her until she is strong enough to walk.

Levi gets a lift on an open top lorry, and is taken to a French liberation centre in Metz.

March 1958

Levi gives testimony at the Wiener Library in London. This is not an interview - Levi records this testimony by hand.

1985

Levi participates in a radio programme entitled 'Repressed Trauma Syndrome' about her Holocaust experiences.

April 1989

Levi is interviewed by the British Library Sound Archive, for the National Life Story Collection. This is a non-media interview.

1994

Levi gives a short interview to Radio 4 for use during their 'Woman's Hour' programme. This interview focuses on Levi's thoughts about her war-time trauma, and her approach to communicating her experiences to an audience.

1995

Levi's first memoir 'A Cat Called Adolf' is published.

February or March 1996

Levi is interviewed by the 'Jewish Chronicle'. The interview focuses on her time as a slave labourer whilst at Hessisch-Lichtenau.

October 1997

Levi is interviewed by the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive.

2003

Levi's second question-and-answer memoir 'Did you ever meet Hitler, Miss?' is published.

**16th August, 1st October,
25th October 2007**

Levi's gives testimonial interviews to Jennifer Maiden

Introduction

Ruptures in Remembrance: Trauma, Utterance and Patterns in Survivor Testimony

If someone else could have written my stories, I would not have written them. I have written them in order to testify. My role is the role of the witness...Not to tell, or to tell another story is...to commit perjury.¹

The Paradox of Testimony²

The starting point for this thesis was a seemingly commonsensical observation. Many survivors have spoken about the distress evoked in recalling their Holocaust experiences. Yet many survivors have still decided to give voice to their memories of the genocide. Indeed, the survivor and author Jorge Semprun has stated that ‘the best recourse against the pain of remembering, against the dereliction, against the unspoken, familiar madness...the criminal madness of living the life of a dead man’³ is to testify. But what meanings can be determined by sifting through an assembly of recollections that have been expressed specifically in order to counteract ‘the pain of remembering’ and

¹ Elie Wiesel, quoted in Shoshana Felman’s ‘The Return of the Voice: Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah*’ in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, ed. by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (Routledge: New York and London, 1992), p.204.

² During the course of this investigation, I will be referring to ‘testimony’, ‘narrative’, ‘life-story’ and ‘oral history’ and I am using these words according to the definitions supplied by the oral historian Alessandro Portelli in *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1997) in which he states that: ‘...according to where the scales tip between the *life* and the *times*, oral history shifts between performance-orientated *narrative* and context-orientated *document*, between subject-orientated *life story* and theme-orientated *testimony*.’ [sic] p.6 However, the word ‘testimony’ will also be used as an all-inclusive term, when referring to the subject’s memories of his or her past as well as to the themes inherent to his/her memories. Narrative will also be used according to the Oxford English Dictionary’s definition of the word, as ‘a spoken or written account of connected events; a story’, but always in conjunction with its role as the performance of memory. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, p.948.

³ Jorge Semprun, *What a Beautiful Sunday!* trans. by Alan Sheridan (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York: 1982) pp. 61, 105.

as a defence ‘against the unspoken, familiar madness’ of a disturbing and harrowing past? Though questions of this nature are so pertinent to the subject of survivor memory, scholars have understandably shied away from such queries for fear of undermining the veracity of eyewitness testimony, and further exacerbating Holocaust denial. Yet regardless of our reluctance to reflect on this issue, the fact remains that the trauma⁴ suffered by Holocaust survivors, both during the event itself and afterwards in recalling it, has to have some bearing on the testimonies that eyewitnesses produce. Indeed, such questions must be taken into consideration if we are to begin to understand – and interpret – the memories narrated in eyewitness testimony. To this end, I became interested in exploring what effects living through such a traumatic epoch could have had on Holocaust survivors, effects which must have left a residue in their testimonial recountings. For whilst there may be a case to suggest that - as some scholars maintain - testimonies should be dealt with as objective, unadulterated ‘factual’ accounts of the past,⁵ it seems logical that as a result of living through such horrific events, the recountings that witnesses give of their Holocaust experiences may also be shaped so as to avoid the evocation of certain memories. In fact, survivors’ accounts of the genocide

⁴ The mental and physical anguish endured by survivors of the Holocaust is widely documented. As early as 1947, psychologists, sociologists and psychoanalysts were studying survivors to monitor the extent to which the Holocaust had affected them, identifying a wide spectrum of somatic and psychic disorders that were found to be far-reaching, with consequences lasting for many years by the early fifties. These disorders were combined under the title ‘post traumatic stress disorder’ in 1980. For a detailed analysis of the sociological and psychological effects of living through the Holocaust, see Barbara Engelking’s *Holocaust and Memory: The Experience of the Holocaust and Its Consequences: An Investigation Based on Personal Narratives*, ed. by Gunnar S. Paulsson, trans. by Emma Harris (Leicester University Press: London and New York, 2001), pp..244-245.

⁵ Critics such as Menachem Rosensaft and Lawrence Langer have expressly stated that they do not feel it is appropriate to question the reliability of the memories of survivors of the Holocaust (See for instance, Lawrence L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (Yale University Press, 1991) p. xv) whilst survivors such as Primo Levi have expressed great alarm at what Levi himself termed the potential ‘War on Memory’ which he saw as threatening to engulf, degrade and undermine the veracity of Holocaust witnesses statements. Primo Levi quoted in Geoffrey H. Hartman’s ‘Introduction: Darkness Visible’, in *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, ed. by Geoffrey H. Hartman. (Blackwell: Oxford & Cambridge U.S.A, 1994), p.4.

may not always be completely 'accurate' *per se*, but may in fact be structured as a defence against the very reality of certain remembered events.

Trauma and Irregularity in Survivor Utterance

My hypothesis for this project therefore centred on the idea that as a result of living through the genocide, witnesses were likely to be plagued by a chronic and deep-rooted mental disturbance, and that fragments of this anguish may be evident in different aspects of their testimonial rememberings⁶ - in the form of psychologically grounded 'signifiers'.⁷ Indeed, it has long been established that living through a traumatic event can have consequences that reverberate in the psyche for many years following the initial experience. In 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', Sigmund Freud defines trauma as 'any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield [*Reizschutz*].' He continues by stating that:

⁶ Sometimes I will use phrases such as 'testimonial rememberings' instead of simply 'testimony' in order to emphasise the fact that I am exploring the relationship occurring between *memory* and the *recounting* of remembered experience, as well as the differences occurring between different testimonies themselves. This is because 'narrative testimony' as the *performance* of memory, is not the same as memories of the past remembered by the individual in his/her own head, in a (relatively) unmediated way - although the two states are symbiotic. As Alessandro Portelli asserts in *The Battle of Valle Giulia*: '[there is an] interplay of the structure of memory and the dialogue situation.' Portelli, p.32.

⁷ Here, I am using the term 'signifier' to denote a signification or indicator of mental trauma, rather than in terms of the linguistic definition of the word as 'a sign's physical form (such as a sound, printed word, or image) as distinct from its meaning.' Definition of 'Signifier' taken from the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Indeed, when I refer to 'signifiers' throughout this study I will be using the term to define indicators of trauma in this manner.

It seems to me that the concept of trauma necessarily implies a connection of this kind with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli. *Such an event as an external trauma is bound to provoke a disturbance on a large scale in the functioning of an organism's energy and to set in motion every possible defence measure.* At the same time, the pleasure principle is for the moment put out of action. *There is no longer any possibility of preventing the mental apparatus from being flooded with large amounts of stimulus, and another problem arises instead – the problem of mastering the amounts of stimulus which have broken in and in binding them, in the psychical sense, so that they can be disposed of.*⁸

Freud's research shows that when a person suffers a massive trauma,⁹ this sets in motion various defence mechanisms which are used to cope with the intrusion of 'excitations from outside'. The person in question will then attempt to protect themselves from the psychological damage suffered by 'mastering the amounts of stimulus which have broken in and...bind...them, in the psychical sense, so that they can be disposed of', in a way that will allow the subject to survive the event and, to a certain extent, to recover. The after-effects of the trauma experienced by survivors of the Holocaust must therefore be present in the very foundations of witness testimony, and must thus also have some bearing on the nature, form and style of expression that survivors' recollections take.

In 'Uchronic Dreams: Working Class Memory and Possible Worlds', the oral historian Alessandro Portelli develops Freud's theory, discussing the effects that trauma has on the remembered experiences of the Italian working classes. In this text, Portelli identifies the fact that in certain instances witnesses to traumatic events 'imagine' a past occurrence, not as it actually happened, but as they feel it *could* or *should* have transpired. This state

⁸ Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* ed. by James Strachey (Hogarth Press: London, 1953 – 1974), pp. 29-30. My emphasis.

⁹ Although Freud is talking about trauma in the context of specifically shocking events here, such as being shot at during the First World War, this theory could equally be applied to the massive trauma endured by an individual who had been sent to a concentration camp.

of 'uchronia' or 'uchronic dreaming' is a situation '...in which the author imagines what would have happened if a certain historical event had not taken place' or as the representation of 'an alternative present, a sort of parallel universe in which the different unfolding of a historical event had radically altered the universe as we know it.'¹⁰ The point that Portelli is making here is a vital one: for rather than assuming that eyewitness testimonies are objective and unchanging historical accounts,¹¹ Portelli is asserting that testimonies are in fact in a state of flux, 'floating...between the present and an ever-changing past.'¹² Portelli is thus suggesting that people's memories of traumatic events change according to each person's need to speak about the past whilst 'set[ting] in motion every possible defence measure' to allow for their mental self-preservation – in this instance, perhaps by concentrating on a more positive sequence of events than those that occurred in reality. Moreover, Portelli's findings divert the emphasis of traditional historical questioning – moving from a concern with 'black and white' concepts (for instance, accuracy versus inaccuracy) to asking 'is this a true account of the past?' and enquiring 'what *kind* of truth do we find when looking at the testimonies of traumatised individuals?'

Other scholars have also proposed theories to explain how and why 'misrememberings' - such as the ones proposed by Portelli - occur in the testimonies of Holocaust survivors.¹³ For instance, the child psychiatrist Bruno Bettelheim (himself a former concentration camp prisoner) has proposed a theory of 'extreme situations' specifically relevant to

¹⁰ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* ed. and trans. by Michael Frisch (State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 99-100.

¹¹ See the conclusion to this thesis.

¹² Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, p.vii.

¹³ To use Mark Roseman's term. Roseman, *The Past in Hiding* (Penguin Books, 2000), p.459.

Holocaust eyewitnesses. Bettelheim's suppositions revolve around the idea that particularly traumatic incidents can have a devastating influence on the individuals concerned, who are, of course, totally unprepared for them. Situations such as these 'at the limits', as Bettelheim puts it, of human endurance, continue to preoccupy the individual to the end of his or her life, the person involved feeling under threat after the initial event, and defenceless against a repeat attack at any time.¹⁴ Not only could such a fixation on the past be discernable in survivor testimony, but, Bettelheim posits, as a result of what Holocaust eyewitnesses perceive as this omnipresent threat and fear of death, survivors may 'forget' all or part of their past lives; they may, in short, repress certain memories so that they do not have to deal with the terrifying spectre of their Holocaust experiences.¹⁵

¹⁴ Bruno Bettelheim, quoted in Barbara Engelking's *Holocaust and Memory*, p.244. See also Bruno Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart: Autonomy in a Mass Age* (Harper Mass Market Paperbacks, 1985) and Paul Marcus, *Autonomy in the Extreme Situation: Bruno Bettelheim, the Nazi Concentration Camps and the Mass Society* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999).

¹⁵ 'One of the [most] basic building blocks in every defense', asserts Joseph Sandler, '[is] repression'. Joseph Sandler, quoted in Joseph Sandler and Anna Freud's *The Analysis of Defense*, p. 123. Indeed, though one may suppose that the 'forgetting' of certain memories may be a conscious operation - that is, a form of suppression - psychological studies instead suggest that traumatised individuals more frequently implement repressive techniques whilst giving testimony. Indeed, suppression, as a *consciously* implemented procedure, is used to cover over symptoms of trauma - thereby allowing the traumatised subject to avoid certain memories that they find disturbing. Repression on the other hand, is an *unconscious* technique. When repressing memories from the past, traumatised individuals instinctively bury certain recollections, or isolate themselves from the emotional content of these incidents through the implementation of techniques such as 'psychic closing-off'. (See Chapter 1). According to psychologists, repression allows people to establish a 'dissociation of affect and the memories connected with that affect', (Ibid, p.123) so that Holocaust survivors can effectively divorce the feelings they associate with the trauma of witnessing an event from their memory of the event itself - thereby keeping the reality of their memories at a confined and safe distance. These practices are all methods of psychological defence I have discovered in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's testimonies, and since the speech disturbances I have unearthed in these survivors' accounts also appear to be evidence of *instinctive* rather than *voluntary* reactions, I will be referring to the 'variations' identified in my research as examples of repressed rather than suppressed memories through the course of this study. For a more detailed analysis of the differences between suppressive and repressive techniques, see Joseph Sandler and Anna Freud, *The Analysis of Defense: The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense Revisited* (International Universities Press: New York, 1985).

Comparing and Contrasting Testimony: Research Methodology and Case Studies

Yet though there is much published research on Holocaust trauma, before this study no other research has looked for patterns of disturbance in the actual *fabric* of survivor testimony – analysing the linguistic and grammatical patterns present in eyewitnesses’ accounts whilst systematically examining the speech disturbances (unfilled pauses, unusual shifts in tense, consistent vocal falterings) that occur in a survivor’s discourse whilst he or she is reflecting on particularly harrowing events. Therefore, in order to investigate – and quantify – the extent of such trauma-based ‘inconsistencies’, I have decided to look at a variety of testimonies produced by the same survivors over time. The aim of my thesis is to explore where - and offer theories as to why - such variations have occurred in Holocaust survivors’ recountings, with a view to determining what relationships, if any, are discernable between the irregularities present in eyewitnesses’ assorted testimonies. By listening to, reading and comparing several accounts given by the *same* survivors at different times and in varying situations, I have found that extremely interesting discrepancies, linguistic fluctuations and selective omissions are uncovered. More fascinating still, is the fact that these variations seem to reflect, as Mark Roseman has put it: ‘interesting inaccuracies in...memory. The kinds of discrep[anc]ies that...do not seem to be attributable to the random deterioration or fluctuation of memory in an older person. There *were* such slips of course; but in the examples under

consideration here, there seemed to be too much of a pattern'¹⁶ for such irregularities to be simply coincidental.

In order to gauge where and why variations such as this occur in survivor testimony, I decided to analyse a selection of testimonial material – taken from both oral and written sources. These have been in the form of tape-recorded testimonies conducted for library archives; broadcast interviews; interviews recorded in preparation for a live broadcast; and published and unpublished memoirs. In the absence of other data, I have out of necessity examined the taped dialogue taken from videotestimony interviews - though a visual analysis of the actions and body language exhibited by survivors whilst speaking about the past is material for a future project. To enable me to scrutinise survivor utterance in the selected testimonies, I have opted to use discourse analysis methodology. This is because, in contrast to many traditional linguistic techniques, discourse analysis not only enables me to study the language survivors use 'above the sentence',¹⁷ but also to systematically analyse the linguistic structures and idiosyncratic discourse used by Holocaust eyewitnesses - rather than being restricted to a standardised analysis of survivor conversation, which would reduce and obscure the subtle indicators of trauma present in Holocaust eyewitness utterance.¹⁸ Discourse analysis also complements an

¹⁶ Mark Roseman, 'Surviving Memory: Truth and Inaccuracy in Holocaust Testimony', *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, 8 (1) (Summer, 1999), p.11.

¹⁷ Deborah Schiffrin, *Approaches to Discourse* (Blackwell Publishing, 1994), p.23. This is a linguistic term, and what Schiffrin means by this is that discourse analysis allows the scholar to scrutinise survivor language on various different levels, so that it is 'possible to substantiate, explain [and] understand [the meanings inherent in survivor dialogue, thus allowing me to]...establish causal relations between specific [linguistic] phenomena.' Gilbert Weiss and Ruth Wodak 'Introduction' to *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity*, ed. by Gilbert Weiss and Ruth Wodak (Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2003), p.1-2.

¹⁸ A detailed explanation of the conventional ways of analysing discourse can be found in the conclusion to this thesis.

exploration of oral as well as written texts, on top of the conversational interactions between interviewers and their interviewees - such as interviewer interjections - which form the greater part of the primary source material used in this thesis. Put simply, this methodology enables me to look at the composition of testimony itself in more detail, and to measure:

- what words and tenses are used by survivors and when;
- where pauses and gaps are present in an interviewee's recollections;
- whether the survivor choose to call upon different recollections in different interviews;
- if there are differences in the way that survivors told the same story in various interview situations.

Finally, this approach has enabled me to remain as faithful as was possible to each interviewee's original testimonies. This is because I have listened to and transcribed each of the testimonies examined in this thesis in minute detail. In so doing, I have noted every pause, hesitation and repetition that each survivor made during the course of their oral interviews - the punctuation I use in my transcriptions mirroring the natural speech patterns of the people talking rather than following conventional grammatical principles.

¹⁹ I have also interviewed each Holocaust survivor in person, recording their responses and taking note of their intentions in as authentic a manner as was achievable.

¹⁹ For instance, I use square brackets to indicate the transcriber's punctuation – such as ellipses – so that I can visually separate my commentary and standardised punctuation from Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's own speech patterns. See Punctuation Sheet.

After I had established how I was going to examine the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, I next had to decide which witness statements to scrutinise and why. I decided to look at the testimonies given by three Holocaust survivors since the end of the war, whose only common characteristics are that they are all British citizens and have all given multiple recorded²⁰ accounts of their memories since being liberated from concentration camps. This was done for two reasons. On the one hand, by looking at a small group of survivors this gave me the ability to probe their testimonies more thoroughly and in much greater depth than would have been possible if I had examined a larger group. This allowed me to look at a much wider spectrum of testimonies, given to a broader range of audiences. In fact, there are relatively few survivors who have recorded many accounts of their Holocaust experiences over time, and in a number of different media. As the subjects chosen for study have all given numerous media and non-media interviews²¹ – all three having also written memoirs - this actually affords me a greater breadth and scope for my investigation. On the other hand, I wanted the people I looked at as case studies to form a relatively representative sample of the survivor community. By this, I mean that I have chosen to look at the testimonies of witnesses who come from assorted age ranges; different cultures; nationalities; classes and backgrounds; and who inevitably have very different personalities. These survivors are

²⁰ By 'recorded' I am referring equally to oral testimonies taped by cassette recorders, broadcast interviews, as well as written memoirs. I will not be looking at other people's recollections of what survivors have said or done in order to identify irregularities in survivor memory or to check the accuracy of the victim's statements.

²¹ By media interviews, I mean those testimonies that survivors have given to broadcasters and newspapers, which were intended to be widely disseminated to a large public audience. I use the term non-media interviews to define those testimonies that survivors have given to archives and libraries often with a specialist interest in Holocaust eyewitness accounts. These interviews were designed for consumption by a limited and knowledgeable audience of special interest groups and scholars.

also different genders – two being female, and one male – and have various levels of ‘fame’ or public recognition. The survivors I have selected are as follows:

Case Study 1: Anita Lasker-Wallfisch

Background

Anita Lasker-Wallfisch (née Lasker) is a Holocaust survivor who is also famous as a cellist, and as a founder member of the English Chamber Orchestra. Lasker-Wallfisch was born in 1925 in Breslau (now Wrocław in Poland) to a middle-class assimilated Jewish family.²² Her father was a lawyer, her mother a violinist and Lasker-Wallfisch herself was the youngest of three sisters, all of whom were talented musicians. When the full implications of the Nazi regime of terror began to become apparent, Lasker-Wallfisch’s father, Alfons, started to make plans to leave Germany. However, the Lasker family did not manage to emigrate before the outbreak of war in September 1939 (except for Lasker-Wallfisch’s eldest sister Marianne who, whilst on course to Palestine, was forced to stay in England once war began where she remained for the duration). In 1942 - after Lasker-Wallfisch’s grandmother and another elderly couple they had been living with had been deported - her parents were also taken, and Lasker-Wallfisch and her sister Renate were sent to an orphanage. Subsequent to this, as both sisters could write in German Gothic script they began to forge official documents to aid escapees, as Lasker-Wallfisch had decided that: ‘If the Nazis were going to kill me, I wanted to die for what I

²² This information has been taken from Lasker-Wallfisch’s own accounts of her past (both in oral and written form) as well as from the ‘BBC Online – The Works’ website, which has a webpage about her life and work: <www.bbc.co.uk/works/s2/Lasker-Wallfisch/index.shtml> [Accessed 12/03/05].

had done, not for what I was'.²³ Following an attempt to escape from Germany, the Lasker girls were caught by the Gestapo and imprisoned separately for crimes against the state. After nearly a year in prison, Lasker-Wallfisch was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1943 and it was here that her musical talent effectively saved her life as she became one of the first members of the Auschwitz women's orchestra - and the only cellist. By chance, Lasker-Wallfisch was reunited with her sister in Auschwitz and the two girls lived there for a year until they were transferred to Bergen-Belsen in November 1944. The Lasker sisters were liberated by the British Army on the 15th April 1945 and, after a suspended period living in Belsen, they emigrated to England where Lasker-Wallfisch has lived since 1946. Both of Lasker-Wallfisch's parents and her grandmother were murdered during the Holocaust.

Testimonial Information

Lasker-Wallfisch gave her first testimonies to the BBC European Service on the day she was liberated in April 1945. These interviews with Patrick Gordon-Walker were intended as appeals to family and friends living in England, and were designed to help displaced people such as Lasker-Wallfisch to begin the process of conciliation. Following this, Lasker-Wallfisch testified at the Belsen Trial held at Lüneberg towards the end of 1945, giving evidence against perpetrators such as Franz Hoessler and Dr Fritz Klein. The next recorded testimony Lasker-Wallfisch gave was twelve years later, at the Wiener Library (London) in August 1957, and Lasker-Wallfisch was one of the first survivors to document her experiences in this manner. After this interview, however, Lasker-

²³ Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, *Inherit the Truth 1939 – 1945: The Documented Experiences of a Survivor of Auschwitz and Belsen* (Giles de la Mare, 1996), p.43. All further references will be taken from this edition.

Wallfisch did not publicly speak about her Holocaust memories again for a further 46 years.²⁴

In the interim Lasker-Wallfisch compiled a memoir, 'Inherit the Truth', which she finished collating in 1988. This memoir was intended to be read by close family and friends, and was not meant for public consumption. In March 1991, Lasker-Wallfisch broke her silence and gave a non-media interview to the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive. This was followed in 1993 with a five-part series of monologues, broadcast by BBC Radio 3 and collectively entitled 'Inherit the Truth'. These programmes chronicle Lasker-Wallfisch's experiences of persecution as a result of her 'race', leading up to her internment at Auschwitz and Belsen, and end with her asylum in England in 1946. Following the success of her radio broadcasts, in 1996 Lasker-Wallfisch published an edited version of her memoir under the same name, *Inherit the Truth 1939-1945: The Documented Experiences of a Survivor of Auschwitz and Belsen*. Lasker-Wallfisch then gave a short interview to the 'The Holocaust Historiography Project' (an online site and forum) in 1998.

In 1999 Lasker-Wallfisch took part in an interview with two Radio 4 personnel, in preparation for a programme called 'The Archive Hour'.²⁵ Though there does not appear

²⁴ It is impossible to ascertain how often Lasker-Wallfisch may have spoken about her Holocaust memories in private during this time – though she states that she had not spoken about her experiences with her family before 1985. See Lasker-Wallfisch, *Inherit the Truth*, p.13. See also Chapter 1.

²⁵ Lasker-Wallfisch also gave an interview to Radio 4 in 1999. This interview was integrated into a series entitled 'My Century' to commemorate important events which occurred during the twentieth century in the lead up to the new Millennium. However, this interview is so heavily edited that it provides very little useable material to allow for a comparative analysis with Lasker-Wallfisch's other testimonials. I therefore decided not to examine this interview in my thesis.

to be a recording of this programme stored in the BBC Sound Archive, the preparatory interview conducted before this broadcast went on air was taped in its entirety. The final testimony examined in this study is a non-media interview Lasker-Wallfisch gave to the British Library Sound Archive's 'Living Memory of the Jewish Community' collection (later to become the 'National Life Story' collection). This testimony was taped between May and October 2000.

Case Study 2: Gertrud (Trude) Levi

Background

Trude Levi (née Mosonyi) was born on 23rd April 1924, in the Hungarian town of Szombathely. Her father was a gynaecologist, and her mother was a language teacher from an affluent upper-class Viennese family. Levi also had a brother five-and-a-half years her senior. Due to her parents' mixed nationalities, Levi grew up bilingual (speaking both Hungarian and German) but she also spoke French and English fluently by the age of eleven. At the time of the annexation of Austria, Levi's paternal grandmother was deported to Theresienstadt, whilst her maternal grandmother went into hiding with one of her grandsons. After this, Levi was taken out of school to learn a trade. She was apprenticed as a milliner, but gave up this job to become a nursery school teacher. Levi moved to Budapest to complete her training, but was forced to leave the capital in March 1944 after the Nazi occupation of Hungary. At her parents' request, Levi returned to her hometown whereupon she found that her father had been arrested and her mother had had a breakdown. In May, Levi and her mother were moved into the Jewish

ghetto, and in June Levi and her mother were interned in a holding camp. After volunteering to move to a neighbouring concentration/holding camp, Levi was unexpectedly reunited with her father and two days later the Mosonyi family were deported by cattle truck to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Upon arrival at the camp, Levi was separated from her father and her mother was sent to the gas chamber. After surviving a selection by Dr. Mengele, Levi was sent to the Hessisch-Lichtenau concentration camp where she worked in a munitions factory. Whilst at this camp, Levi volunteered to do a number of tasks - such as burying the commandant's dog - and 'from that moment on, whenever he saw me in camp, he greeted me courteously. I had become a person, not just a number, for him.'²⁶ Levi was nearly killed when she was assigned to a deportation transport of sick women, but was reprieved when the commandant removed her from this group – though she is unsure 'if it was because Schaefer knew me from when I buried his dog, or because I had kept my red cheeks'.²⁷ Levi remained at Hessisch-Lichtenau until March 1945, when she was deported to Leipzig–Schoenau and from there she was marched to Tekla concentration camp. On 12th April 1945 the Tekla camp was liquidated, and the inmates forced on a death march. Towards the end of this march Levi collapsed from exhaustion, but was in such a bad state of health that she was not shot but left to perish. Levi hid in a hay barn until she met with a group of French prisoners of war, after which she eventually made her way to a French liberation centre at Metz. Levi moved to England in 1957 and received full British citizenship in 1958. She has lived in England since this date. Levi's parents and paternal grandmother were killed at Auschwitz. Her

²⁶ Trude Levi, *Did you ever meet Hitler, Miss?* (Valentine Mitchell: London, Portland, 2003), p.22. All further references will be taken from this edition.

²⁷ *Ibid* p.24.

maternal grandmother survived the war, though she died from starvation a few days after the liberation. Levi's brother also survived, and now lives in London.

Testimonial Information

Trude Levi gave her first recorded testimony to the Wiener Library, in March 1958. This deposition is a written account of Levi's experiences during the Holocaust, and was recorded by Levi herself rather than an external transcriber.²⁸ Like Lasker-Wallfisch, after her initial testimonial Levi did not talk about her war-time experiences again for a number of years. In fact, the next time Levi gave voice to her Holocaust memories on record was for a radio programme entitled *Repressed Memory Syndrome* in 1985 – 27 years after her first deposition. This radio documentary combines Levi's memories with those of other Holocaust survivors under an umbrella investigation into repressed memory; and, rather than looking at Levi's personal recollections during the war, this interview is instead focused on the trauma she links to her experiences of persecution during the Nazi epoch. Four years after this interview, Levi gave a non-media testimony to the British Library Sound Archive which became part of their National Life Story Collection. This testimony was recorded over a number of sittings, but all the sessions took place in 1989.

In 1994 Levi gave a short interview to Radio 4, which was included as a slot in *Woman's Hour*. During this interview, Levi speaks about the trauma of her past, and how she

²⁸ Unlike Lasker-Wallfisch, who gave an interview to the same institution which was transcribed by a W. Berent. And though this testimony was recorded a year later than Lasker-Wallfisch's deposition, it is still one of the earliest Holocaust accounts to be recorded in Britain.

recounts her war-time experiences to school children so that they can empathise more thoroughly with the plight of survivors: ‘somehow I try to show them the cruelty, of – being in a norm a normal person just living a normal life and suddenly being, pulled out from that normal life and into this terrible situation [...]’²⁹ In 1995 Levi published her first memoir *A Cat Called Adolf*, and the following year she gave a media interview to *The Jewish Chronicle*. Though this interview was conducted solely with Levi, her husband, Franz, was also present, and the interviewer’s questions are all tightly focused on Levi’s experiences as a slave labourer whilst at Hessian-Lichtenau (as this is the theme of the article that was printed in the March 15th copy of the newspaper, entitled: ‘Flick slave labourer’s sabotage mission at armament factory’).³⁰ In October 1997, Levi gave a second oral-history-style, non-media interview to the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive. The last source examined in this thesis is Levi’s second memoir, *Did you ever meet Hitler, Miss*, which was published in 2003.

²⁹ Trude Levi, testimonial interview for a feature on Radio 4’s *Woman’s Hour*, 1994. All further references will be taken from this recording.

³⁰ Friedrich Flick was a Nazi businessman and industrialist. Flick was the principal shareholder of the German industrial conglomerate Flick Kommanditgesellschaft, which employed a huge number of forced labourers during the war. Flick was convicted of exploiting forced Jewish labourers at a United States Military Tribunal in 1947, and was subsequently sentenced to seven years in prison. He was released from Landsberg prison in 1950, his sentence having been reduced on the grounds of good behaviour. After the war, Flick was also accused of ‘Aryanizing’ Jewish businesses - Nazi parlance for acquisitioning Jewish owned businesses by forced means - during the Nazi era. Though Flick denied these accusations, there is compelling evidence to suggest that he did actively work to ‘Aryanize’ Jewish businesses during the war. For an interesting discussion of Friedrich Flick’s war-time activities, see L. M Stallbaumer’s article ‘Frederick Flick’s Opportunism and Expediency’, in *Dimensions: A Journal of Holocaust Studies* <http://www.adl.org/braun/dim_13_2_flick.asp> [accessed 28/04/08]

Case Study 3: Leon Greenman

Background

Leon Greenman was a survivor who is also well known as a British anti-fascist campaigner, and has been widely regarded as the only Englishman to be interned in concentration camps during the Holocaust.³¹ Born in December 1910 in East London, Greenman was the fifth of six children. His parents were both British born, though his ancestry is Russian and Dutch. As result, Greenman moved to Rotterdam to live with his father's family at a very early age. Greenman's mother died when he was two years old, and his father, Barnett, struggled to support the family up until he married for a second time. Greenman's childhood with his stepmother was not a happy one, and he has even gone so far as to assert that 'the life which I led then was the overture to the life I would lead in the concentration camps.'³² Greenman trained as a barber, and was a keen amateur boxer in his spare time – both skills which aided his survival during the Holocaust. After moving back to London in 1930, Greenman married Esther 'Else' Van Dam on 9th June 1935. Soon after their wedding, Greenman and his wife moved back to Holland to live with Esther's grandmother, and Leon worked as a book seller travelling between England and Holland to peddle his wares. As the political situation worsened, Greenman considered moving back to England permanently - but decided against it when he heard

³¹ Though British POWs were also interned in a camp attached to the Auschwitz III slave labour camp during the war, and were used as slave labourers by the Nazis (see Martin Gilbert's *Atlas of the Holocaust* (William Morrow, 1993)), Leon Greenman is often referred to as 'the only Englishman to be sent to Auschwitz', meaning that he was the only Jewish Briton to be interned as a result of his religion/ethnicity. ('Leon Greenman', *The Times Obituary*, <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article3524503.ece>> [accessed 28/04/08]]

³² Leon Greenman, *An Englishman in Auschwitz* (Valentine Mitchell: London, Portland, 2001), p.4. All further references will be taken from this edition.

Neville Chamberlain's promise of 'peace for our time'. Greenman's son, Barnett 'Barney' Greenman, was born in March 1940, and after his birth the British consulate assured Greenman that, if Nazi occupation did ensue, his family would be evacuated along with all consulate staff in Rotterdam. This promise was not fulfilled when the Nazis invaded Holland. After the bombing of Rotterdam restrictions on the Jewish community worsened, until on 8th October 1942 Greenman, his wife, child, and his wife's grandmother were deported to Westerbork. Whilst at this camp Greenman's grandmother-in-law was deported to an unknown destination and killed, though Greenman's father - who was also deported from Rotterdam - later joined them.³³ The Greenman family continued to live at Westerbork camp, and to appeal against any further deportation on the grounds of their British nationality. However, in January 1943 Greenman and his wife and son were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Upon arrival at the camp, Greenman's wife and child were selected for the gas chamber and Greenman himself was chosen to work. After a period spent in quarantine, Greenman survived a further selection and was forced to do hard labour. Greenman was admitted into the camp hospital on a number of occasions - mainly due to problems with his feet - and was used as a 'guinea pig'³⁴ for medical experimentation by Horst Schumann. In September 1943, Greenman was transferred to Monowitz industrial complex, where he remained for a year and a half. During this time, Greenman worked as a forced labourer and a barber, and sang songs to fellow camp inmates to earn extra rations of soap. In January 1945, with the Red Army approaching, Monowitz was evacuated and Greenman took part in a forced

³³ All Greenman knew is that 'Else's grandmother had been placed in a barracks for the sick and elderly. She was in bed and not at all well and we visited her several times a day. One day when we went to visit, we were told that she had been sent away the night before.'³³ Greenman, *An Englishman in Auschwitz*, p.25.

³⁴ Greenman, *An Englishman in Auschwitz*, p.57.

death march to Gleiwitz. He was then transported by cattle truck to Buchenwald. Though Greenman's feet were gangrenous, and he felt he was 'near the end',³⁵ on April 11th 1945 he was liberated by the American 3rd Army. Greenman's wife, son and sister, Dinah, were killed during the Holocaust, as were much of the Dutch side of his family. His father survived the camps, and returned to live in Holland after the war. Greenman himself moved to London in November 1945, where he remained until his death in March 2008.

Testimonial Information

Leon Greenman gave his first interview to a journalist from the *Evening Standard* newspaper a few days after he had been liberated from Buchenwald concentration camp. A very condensed version of this exchange was published as an article in the newspaper in April 1945. Whilst in a French hospital recovering from an operation in either April or May of the same year, Greenman gave a further interview to the BBC European Service. This interview was intended for public broadcast, though it was never aired on British radio. Greenman then did not talk publicly about his experiences until 1962, when he heard Colin Jordan, the leader of the National Front, speak in Trafalgar Square.³⁶ After this, Greenman made a conscious decision to communicate his Holocaust memories to 'the outside world',³⁷ and in the same year he began to compile his memoir 'An

³⁵ Leon Greenman, quoted in *The Times Obituary*, 10 March 2008, <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article3524503.ece>> [accessed 19/03/08]

³⁶ See Leon Greenman's Obituary in *The Times Obituaries*, 10 March 2008, <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article3524503.ece>> [accessed 19/03/08]

³⁷ Leon Greenman, testimonial interview for the British Video Archive *Holocaust Survivors* collection. Interviewed by Alberta Strage. 1992. Cat no. C533/120 Housed in the British Library Sound Archive and Audio Visual Department, University College London.

Englishman in Auschwitz' – though it was not published for a further 39 years. In April 1986 Greenman gave a non-media testimony to the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive; indeed, he was one of the first Holocaust survivors to be interviewed by the institution. On 16th September 1992, Greenman was also interviewed by the British Video Archive, as part of their 'Holocaust Survivors' collection. In 1995, Greenman participated in a private media interview with an acquaintance, which was designed for distribution as an educative teaching aid.³⁸ Finally, in 2001, Greenman's memoir was published by Vallentine Mitchell, as part of their 'Library of Holocaust Testimonies' series.

Breaking New Ground: Comparative Analysis

Alongside my analysis of the speech disturbances present in survivor testimony, a second procedural method also sets my study apart from other works that deal with Holocaust trauma and memory. Unlike Mark Roseman, I do not agree that it is automatically imperative to compare the eyewitness accounts given by survivors today with other assorted primary source material from the time of their original persecution in order to give meaning to the irregularities which appear in their testimonies, or that this approach necessarily uncovers the most interesting results. In *Surviving Memory: Truth and Inaccuracy in Holocaust Testimony*, Roseman writes about the methodology he uses in his book, *A Past in Hiding*, and defends his enquiry into the testimonial irregularities he uncovers when comparing survivor Marianne Strauss' oral testimonies with other war-time documentation. In this essay, Roseman also casts doubt on the importance of

³⁸ As advised by Greenman during our interview. Leon Greenman, testimonial interview with Jennifer Maiden, 10 July 2007.

comparing the oral and written testimonies produced by Holocaust survivors, arguing that:

...what is revealing is often not the contrast between the *written* and the *spoken* but rather that between perceptions and memories 'fixed' or recorded at different points of distance from the events which they describe, that is, in reports and letters *then*, in interviews and conversations *now*.³⁹

Although this method of research is an intriguing approach to gauging the regularity of survivors' memories as they stand at the present time, Roseman's outright dismissal of the importance of contrasting the spoken and written words of eyewitnesses is, I believe, mistaken. Roseman's argument is flawed for a number of reasons. Firstly, he asserts that survivors written texts are somehow not 'fixed' in the same way that he posits witnesses contemporary oral recordings are. Roseman's argument also revolves around two central suppositions: that the oral testimonies survivors have given must only somehow be contemporary and thus unchanging. As a result, Roseman does not acknowledge the fact that survivors may have given many oral accounts of their experiences *through time*. Roseman also assumes that the written testimonies survivors have produced are not worth examining, since he sees these and survivors' oral accounts as *eundum*⁴⁰ – and, as such, incapable of throwing new light upon different areas of perception and memory in the same way that recent oral records can when used in comparison with contemporary war-time documents. These assumptions have no practical foundation. Indeed, Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, Leon Greenman and Trude Levi have given multiple accounts of their Holocaust experiences at various moments through time since the end of the war, their

³⁹ Roseman, *Surviving Memory*, p.2. Roseman's emphasis, my underline.

⁴⁰ English translation: 'the same'.

testimonies ranging from appeals given on the day they were liberated, to written accounts given ten years after the liberation, and so on. As I show in this thesis, there are often also marked contrasts between these survivors' written and oral accounts for which close and comparative inspection proves extremely productive. In short, to write off written and oral testimonies as somehow not 'recorded at different points of distance from the events which they describe' whilst at the same time asserting that 'reports and letters *then*...[when contrasted with] interviews and conversations *now*' are worthy of further research, attests to Roseman's focus on a circumscribed range of testimonial material.

To add to this, Roseman further suggests that a comparative analysis of survivors' written and oral testimonies can reveal nothing new or particularly insightful in comparison to the contrast between oral recordings and documentary primary source material. Roseman thus ignores the fact that witnesses' written and spoken testimonies, when analysed comparatively and in conjunction with one another, can elucidate different facets, and can offer different insights, into the workings and development of survivor memory over time - and that each of these accounts, when taken together, can reveal a much more detailed picture of the configuration of an individual's remembered experiences. In fact no other scholar has compared the testimonies individual survivors have given over time - perhaps because, like Roseman, they have assumed that such an investigation would not provide fruitful results. However, I believe that it is not only interesting but necessary to conduct such a study in order to aid our understanding of survivor testimony. For though oral historians have already addressed the subject of 'accuracy' and subjectivity in relation to

memory,⁴¹ and scholars such as Roseman have looked at eyewitness memory in relation to other primary source material, in this study I will be comparing the different testimonies produced by a single Holocaust eyewitness with *one another* - rather than with other historical material – to see how survivor memory and recountings change over time. As a literary critic rather than a historian, I will attempt to explore eyewitness accounts from a unique angle: to analyse work conducted on Holocaust memory and testimony in fields as diverse as psychology and sociology, literary studies and oral history, and to bring together these strands of research into the present interdisciplinary project.

Having said this, I wish to make it clear at the outset of this investigation that in attempting to ‘deconstruct’ testimony, as it were, in order to unravel the layers of meaning inscribed in survivor memory, I have no intention of calling the underlying veracity of that testimony into question. I am at pains to highlight this, as I do not want my readers to misinterpret an investigation into the variations and discrepancies present in witness statements as an attempt to disprove or undermine the authenticity of those accounts. Nonetheless, I am aware that this could be seen as a contentious venture. Indeed, Menachem Rosensaft has gone so far as to maintain that ‘Anyone who casts aspersions on their [survivor] memory somehow participates retrospectively in their

⁴¹ Portelli’s *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, and Paul Thompson’s *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford University Press, [1978] 2000) are just two examples of works that all deal with issues of reliability, accuracy and subjectivity in relation to remembered experience. Oral historians have also explored debates such as the character of the interview relationship and the relationships occurring between memory and history, the past as it *was* and as it *appears* in the present (see Rob Perks and Alistair Thomson, ‘Introduction’, ed. by Rob Perks and Alistair Thomson, *The Oral History Reader* (Routledge: London and New York), pp..ix-x, xi-xiii.)

murder'.⁴² Even literary scholars such as Lawrence Langer, in whose work a central concern has been 'memory's encounter with a disintegrating time',⁴³ which he acknowledges leaves memory 'tainted'⁴⁴ by the effects of time and age, has grave reservations about the appropriateness of probing into any other areas in which the recollections of survivors may be changeable:

One preliminary issue remains, and that is that reliability of the memory on which these testimonies must draw for the accuracy and intensity of their details. How credible can a reawakened memory be that tries to revive events so many decades after they occurred? I think the terminology itself is at fault here. There is no need to revive what has never died. Moreover, though slumbering memories may crave reawakening, nothing is clearer in these narratives than that Holocaust memory is an insomniac faculty, whose mental eyes have never slept. In addition, since testimonies are human documents rather than merely historical ones, the troubled interaction between past and present achieves *a gravity that surpasses the concern with accuracy*. Factual errors do occur from time to time, as do simple lapses; but they seem trivial in comparison to the complex layers of memory that give birth to the versions of the self that we shall be studying in this volume.⁴⁵

Although I find Langer's concerns understandable, scholars cannot continue to ignore the fact that there *are* irregularities and inconsistencies present in some survivors' testimonial accounts. Rather than simply writing off these faults as 'factual errors' which have no real bearing, since testimonies of this nature carry with them 'a gravity that surpasses the concern with accuracy',⁴⁶ I think that it is both necessary and revealing to examine these discrepancies more closely in order to attempt to understand why they have occurred.

⁴² Menachem Rosensaft, quoted in Erna Paris's *Long Shadows: Truth, Lies and History* (Bloomsbury, 2000), p.342.

⁴³ Lawrence L. Langer, 'Remembering Survival' in *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, ed. by Geoffrey H. Hartman (Blackwell: Oxford & Cambridge U.S.A., 1994), p.72.

⁴⁴ See also the 'Tainted Memory: The Impromptu Self' chapter in Lawrence L. Langer's *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1991)

⁴⁵ Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, p.xv. My emphasis.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Furthermore, this process does not have to provide 'revisionists' with fuel for their arguments, nor does it pose any disrespect to survivors and their memories of the Holocaust – in fact, through the course of this investigation I hope to prove quite the opposite. By asking the very questions other scholars have shied away from: What kind of inconsistencies are present in survivor testimony? Is the trauma of survivors' Holocaust experiences imbricated in the very structure of their testimonial rememberings? Do survivors employ psychological defence mechanisms whilst giving testimony in order to protect themselves from the reality of their memories? I hope to find that testimony is not in fact, as Elie Wiesel claims, a 'code [that] cannot be broken'⁴⁷ but that survivor recountings can actually provide us with an insight into the relationship that exists between memory and the past - a history that is encoded in the testimonies of survivors, but which we may ultimately be capable of deciphering.

⁴⁷ Elie Wiesel, 'The Holocaust as Literary Imagination' in *Dimensions of the Holocaust: Lectures at Northwestern University*, ed. by L. Baldwin Smith (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1977), p.7.

Chapter 1

Compositional Continuities:

Consistency in Survivor Testimony

*Especially for victims, trauma brings about a lapse or rupture in memory that breaks continuity with the past, thereby placing identity in question to the point of shattering it.*⁴⁸

Upon first comparing the testimonies that Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman have given since the end of the war, one is struck by the number of compositional continuities that are traceable throughout their various recountings.⁴⁹ These consistencies range from the contents of these survivors' accounts, to the subject matter in each of their testimonies, and the ways in which they express themselves throughout their depositions. Such parallels are striking as they feature so repeatedly, and in such a similar manner, in each of the accounts Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman have given. But is there a discernable pattern in the ways in which these survivors voice their memories, that suggests a link between the compositional continuities present in their different testimonials? In this chapter, I will examine the commonalities present in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's arrangement of their memories to see whether there is a discernable 'pattern' connecting the ways in which all three survivors have – individually and collectively - testified to the Holocaust over time. I will also explore the idea that that these consistencies may be linked to the trauma suffered by Holocaust eyewitnesses, and

⁴⁸ Dominick La Capra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 1998), p.9.

⁴⁹ By this. I mean their oral, written and videoed testimonies.

suggest that such ‘external...disturbance[s]’⁵⁰ have influenced how survivors relay - and by extension remember - their tumultuous pasts.

Demarcating Subject Matter: Definitive Moments

The most overt compositional commonality perceptible in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s testimonies, is the method by which they elect to speak about the Holocaust. This is because each of these survivors forge their narrations around particular episodes, or as Lasker-Wallfisch terms them ‘coincidence[s]’,⁵¹ when they are recalling their past lives. Such ‘coincidences’ are not exclusive to Lasker-Wallfisch’s accounts. Indeed, all three survivors use a comparable system of what I shall call definitive or epiphanic moments to divide their recollections into distinct areas, and these ‘moments’ demarcate where each survivor makes the transition from speaking about one ‘significant’⁵² event they have lived through to reflecting on the next. For example in Anita Lasker-Wallfisch’s British Library testimony, she moves from speaking about her failed plan to escape from Nazi Germany with her sister to their unsuccessful suicide pact, by dividing her recollections into a series of pivotal instants:

⁵⁰ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, pp. 29-30.

⁵¹ Though ‘episodes’ and ‘coincidences’ are not the same thing, Lasker-Wallfisch uses these terms interchangeably in her dialogue. For instance, she says that: ‘when some people actually had the courage to ask questions...I have always answered them willingly, usually by relating some amusing episode or strange coincidence with which my life seems to have been so richly endowed.’ Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, *Inherit the Truth* (unpublished manuscript), 1988. Housed at the Imperial War Museum Manuscripts Archive. p.1. All further references will be taken from this manuscript.

⁵² What I mean by this, is not that Lasker-Wallfisch moves from relating one ‘important’ recollection to speaking about a less ‘important’ event. Instead, Lasker-Wallfisch herself defines her testimonies as consisting of a string of ‘significant’ incidents, or as she sometimes terms them ‘extraordinary’ or ‘absurd coincidences.’ Lasker-Wallfisch. Unpublished manuscript, p.2.

L-W: You know it was not, I don't think the best thought out escape plan but anything to get away of [sic] that country could be - might be better than staying that's that's really what how it boils down to, *and then comes the famous moment that we had this um, cyanide* on us which, you know was very fashionable those days in case you get arrested you go and kill yourself so, etcetera and I had this cyanide which was given me by a friend of mine did I tell you about that?⁵³

In this extract, which typifies Lasker-Wallfisch's style of recounting, she clearly demarcates where her narration of one memory ends and another begins by using intervallic marker posts – switching to the next noteworthy memory she calls to mind through the introduction of phrenic 'subtitles', such as 'the famous moment', to signify this transition. Lasker-Wallfisch continues to compartmentalise her memories in this way throughout her testimonies, such as when she refers to the 'unbelievable shoe accident or incident'⁵⁴ at a later point in her British Library interview:

L-W: You know that Auschwitz is yeh..., uh it was Birkenau that I arrived and uh – uh-uh you got a-cquainted with the terrible noises of this camp you know screaming and, dogs barking and all that sort of thing, and the next morning we were taken *out* of this block to *another block* where they shaved your hair and they tattooed a number on your arm and took your clothes off you, and this is where the, unbelievable shoe accident or incident took place, that you see it takes a while to understand I understood the prison system but I didn't understand the, concentration camp system. [...]⁵⁵

⁵³ Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, testimonial interview for the British Library *Living Memory of the Jewish Community* collection. Interviewed by Jennifer Wingate, transcribed by Jennifer Maiden, May-October 2000. Cat no: F8849 –F8854. Housed in the British Library Sound Archive. All further quotations will be taken from this transcription. All further references will be taken from this recording. My emphasis.

⁵⁴ Lasker-Wallfisch's emphasis.

⁵⁵ Lasker-Wallfisch's emphasis. My underline.

Indeed, the memories which Lasker-Wallfisch calls upon on such occasions frequently appear to have been selected due to what she perceives as their ‘extraordinary’⁵⁶ nature - a paradigm of which is the time when she ‘became a member of the famous [Auschwitz women’s] orchestra’, or the ‘extraordinary story’ of the guard who stole her civilian clothes whilst she was in prison in her Imperial War Museum interview.⁵⁷ Like Lasker-Wallfisch, Trude Levi also subdivides her memories into a series of definitive moments, such as when she recalls ‘a number of times odd happenings’ which have occurred throughout her life.⁵⁸ Levi even refers to some of these occurrences as ‘odd coincidence[s]’,⁵⁹ - idiomatic language that bears a marked resemblance to Lasker-Wallfisch’s parlance. On other occasions when making the transition between memories, Levi will use less acute indicators to delimit her progression from one recollection to another. For instance, Levi describes the events that befell her family in the lead up to their deportation as a series of ‘blows’, ‘one of the biggest blows [...] that happened to us [her family]’ occurring because of the disloyalty of Christian friends who refused to return the belongings they had been safekeeping to her brother.⁶⁰ Similarly, Levi often

⁵⁶ ‘Extraordinary’ is a word Lasker-Wallfisch uses a great deal when she is reflecting upon her past, for instance, in her interviews for the Imperial War Museum, Radio 4 and the British Library, to name but a few. Interestingly, Primo Levi also subdivides his experiences into a series of ‘famous moments’ in *The Truce*, such as when he writes ‘the famous bundle’ he had to carry for his friend ‘The Greek’, and ‘the famous minutes’ that ‘were laboriously manufactured evening by evening, with the stub of a pencil.’ Primo Levi, ‘The Truce’ in *If This is a Man: The Truce*, trans. by Stuart Woolf (Abacus Books: New York, London, 1987), pp. 215, 237.

⁵⁷ Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, testimonial interview for the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive. Interviewed by Conrad Wood, March 1991. transc. by Jennifer Maiden. Cat no. 11914/4/1-2, 3-4. Housed at the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive. All further quotations will be taken from this transcription.

⁵⁸ Trude Levi, testimonial interview for the British Library *Living Memory of the Jewish Community* collection. Interviewed by Gaby Glassman, April 1989. transc. by Jennifer Maiden, Cat no: F268-F281 C1. Housed in the British Library Sound Archive. All further quotations will be taken from this transcription.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Trude Levi, testimonial interview for the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive. Interviewed by Lyn Smith, October 1997. transc. by Jennifer Maiden. Cat no: 17558/8. Housed at the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive. All further references will be taken from this transcription.

separates her memories into non-specific temporal moments, such as when she says that ‘one day’ something happened:⁶¹

L: [...] Um we were in Birkenau uh one day we were taken to a *shower*, we were walked to Auschwitz into a shower, over very very spiky stones; and um I remember I slipped on a stone I trip uh I tripped up on a stone and I ge got out of the row, and in that very moment one of the SS was already there and gave me a, hit me on the nape of my neck that I fell over, I remember I saw well they say stars, I don’t know what I saw but I certainly - was completely uh – annihilated for a moment I mean blacked out for a moment, I then got up, and um managed to get into the row; [...] ⁶²

It is interesting that as Levi recalls this memory, her dialogue becomes filled with the repetitions and hesitations that I often identify as signifiers of trauma in the coming chapters – ‘shower’ ‘very very [spiky]’, ‘stone’, ‘for a moment.’ Levi’s speech also becomes most noticeably dotted with pauses as she come to the point in her recounting that she recalls her actual assault: ‘I remember I saw well they say stars, I don’t know what I saw but I certainly - was completely uh – annihilated for a moment I mean blacked out for a moment.’. Finally, Leon Greenman also partitions his memories into a series of ill-defined - yet appreciable - fugacious instants, such as ‘there came a time a moment that grandfather wanted to go back to Holland’; ‘now comes the unloading of the train’, in his British Video Archive testimony, and ‘I was in Auschwitz say, February – March – June, summer months it was, I was in Auschwitz, very warm day’ in Greenman’s Imperial War Museum deposition.⁶³ Indeed, Greenman’s disjointed language, repetitive references to being in Auschwitz, and his lapse into the present tense - ‘now *comes* a

⁶¹ Levi, Imperial War Museum testimony.

⁶² Levi, Imperial War Museum testimony. Levi’s emphasis, my underline.

⁶³ Note Greenman’s use of the present tense in his British Video Archive testimony ‘now comes the unloading of the train.’ Such changes in tense are examined in detail in Chapter 2.

time' - at such moments, corresponds with the other signifiers of repressed trauma discussed later in this thesis.

To add to this, all three survivors frequently enhance this episodic manner of recounting by relaying their memories in an audibly and/or temporally jarring way. For instance, Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman often suddenly change the pace of their narrative recountings and move rapidly through a section of dialogue – though interestingly, this regularly occurs when the memories they are recounting are of disturbing events witnessed or experienced. Each survivor also 'jumps' from one scene to the next as they speak, so that the listener is recurrently whisked from one of their 'sub-memories'⁶⁴ to the next in very quick succession. For instance, this temporal 'jumping' is demonstrated most explicitly in Anita Lasker-Wallfisch's monologues, as on a number of occasions during her speeches Lasker-Wallfisch flits from one memory to a second which, rather than occurring in chronological sequence, must have taken place at a later date. Thus the listener is propelled from Lasker-Wallfisch's sister having arrived at Auschwitz, immediately to her having fallen desperately ill:

⁶⁴ This term is used to describe a memory which is distinct in its own right, yet is spoken/written about within the context of a 'crucial' memory of a personal or historical event. An example of a 'sub-memory' would be the survivor recalling a particular personal incident (such as buying a pair of shoes, and the reception he/she received at the shoe shop) which occurred at a time when more momentous changes were happening (such as a family member being deported, and the repercussions this incident had on the survivor's own life). The sub-memory would be spoken about within this context - as a recollection which is important in its own right, whilst being subsumed within another recollection.

L-W: Renate was told that these shoes used to belong to someone who had come through a little while ago and was now in the orchestra. Of course she knew instantly that this could only be me. You have to take into account the vast size of the camp to appreciate the magnitude of the co-incidence. Renate deteriorated very rapidly.⁶⁵

Further examples of this temporal ‘jumping’ can be found in Trude Levi’s testimonies. In Levi’s British Library interview, for instance, she flits from speaking about her arrival at Auschwitz to her mother being gassed, and on to a potential sighting of her father in East Germany after the war, as if these events had happened concurrently. Further to this, when Levi’s interviewer, Gaby Glassman, interrupts her to ask how Levi knew what had happened to her mother – as Levi had stipulated that she knew ‘straightaway’ she had been gassed – she answers by skipping through a series of events that took place over an undetermined period of time in quick succession:

L: Well we saw in which direction she was taken, and uh later on that direction there was smoke there, and uh later on we found they heard what what that s where the smoke came from, [**Int:** um] so it was quite obvious that my mother was taken there,⁶⁶

Through Levi’s recurrent use of the non-specific interludinal phrase ‘later on’, we can see that these incidents did not occur literally one after another, as Levi narrates them to her interviewer. Rather, this indicates that these events occurred over an indeterminate duration, and that Levi has pieced them together at a later date in order to make sense of

⁶⁵ Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, ‘Auschwitz’, *Inherit the Truth* - monologue series for BBC Radio 3. 3 of 5 (1993), trans. by Jennifer Maiden, Cat no: H2151/02 Housed at the British Library and BBC Sound Archives. This monologue is one of a series Lasker-Wallfisch narrated for broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Though this is a spoken testimony, Lasker-Wallfisch is reading this account from a series of written notes based on her unpublished manuscript, *Inherit the Truth*. However, all further references will be taken from this transcription.

⁶⁶ Levi, British Library testimony.

what happened to her mother. This temporal 'jumping' can therefore be seen as emblematic of the way that Levi remembers her mother's murder – as a series of isolated events bound together through a mixture of hindsight and post-war revision. What is more, these are not isolated examples. Indeed, paradigms of this temporal 'jumping' can be found throughout all three survivors' testimonies. Greenman even refers to certain memories as 'jumping' into his head as he recounts, such as when he exclaims that 'an incident jumps into my mind now' during his Imperial War Museum testimony, and again, when he states that 'my mind jumps now' in the middle of his interview with David J. Greenman's use of the present tense on these occasions suggests that for him recollecting is an active process, certain memories occurring to him spontaneously as he thinks about the past. But whilst there is nothing to indicate that Levi and Greenman have employed such measures for narrative effect, Lasker-Wallfisch actually states that this technique is something she has consciously introduced (and may, by implication, have deliberately intensified) when she asserts that: 'I have told mine [my life-story], I have to admit with some reluctance, and I have told it more or less like a series of adventures' in her monologues.⁶⁷ This declaration indicates that in her prepared speeches at least, Lasker-Wallfisch is recollecting the events of her past in an intentionally composed way in order to involve - and embroil - her listening audience. But though Lasker-Wallfisch's tension-building methods of narration might be a deliberately imposed strategy in her written testimonies, this does not explain the fact that this same 'series of adventures' also appear repeatedly in the less formally worded dialogue of her oral depositions. To illustrate this, I will compare Lasker-Wallfisch's recounting of her memory of playing the

⁶⁷ Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, 'England - Eventually, *Inherit the Truth* - monologue series for BBC Radio 3. 5 of 5 (1993), transc. by Jennifer Maiden. Cat no: H2151/02 Housed at the British Library and BBC Sound Archives. All further references will be taken from this transcription.

Traumerei to the notorious Dr Mengele in her written and oral testimonies. The first example is a passage taken from Lasker-Wallfisch's 1996 memoir, and in this extract her matter of fact tone and emotionally loaded language highlights the perversity of Mengele's god-like authority in the camp to great effect:

L-W: Also we always had to be ready to play for any SS personnel who came into our block for light relief after their exhausting work of determining who should live and who should die. It was on such an occasion that I played Schumann's *Traumerei* for Dr Mengele.⁶⁸

Lasker-Wallfisch also talks about having to play this piece of music to Dr. Mengele in her non-media interview for the British Library in 2000 in comparably emotion-provoking terms. As with her previous recounting, Lasker-Wallfisch speaks in similarly terse, pithy sentences here, her straight talking - yet affective – descriptions (such as when she candidly explains her role as an ‘entertainment’ to the SS guards, and states that she was personally at their ‘disposal’) conveying the depraved circumstances in which she recited lucidly and comprehensibly:

L-W: [continuing] is we were always there – ready to entertain. Of course Germans came in you know after their selections they came in wanted to hear some music you know, so we played this that and the other - for the Germans

Int: Inside [L-W: Inside yes] just - for small groups of

L-W: Well the Orchestra.

Int: No [L-W: Oh for small groups of Germans] no for small groups of...

L-W: Well small groups or single people uh you know. Whatever.

⁶⁸ Lasker-Wallfisch, *Inherit the Truth*. Lasker-Wallfisch's emphasis.

Int: What would they do they'd ask you to play [**L-W:** [overriding her int] to play something] something...

L-W: [continuing] they wanted to hear this that and the other and, Doctor Mengele wanted to hear the 'Traümerei', so I played the 'Traümerei' I mean it was as simple as that you know that was a sort of routine you come in they ask for something 'Oh we'd like to hear an Aria sung' or whatever. We were there at their disposal that's...

One may argue that as this interview was given in 2000 - four years after Lasker-Wallfisch had compiled her published memoir - her memories must have been clarified by her writing, and that her decisions about what to reflect upon in her oral accounts were consequently based upon this pre-designed compositional template.⁶⁹ However, Lasker-Wallfisch also focuses on certain 'episodes' from her past in interviews which predate the composition of her unpublished and published memoirs. For instance, during her 1957 testimony for the Wiener Library, Lasker-Wallfisch talks about her first few nights in Belsen concentration camp: about the ineffectual tents which initially housed her transport; about the Russian prisoners of war who suddenly 'disappeared'; and about surviving by converging into a sororal group:

⁶⁹ I mean this in the literary sense of the word, to imply a self-consciously imposed arrangement to Lasker-Wallfisch's remembering. Oral historians in fact posit that that people always remember and relay their past experiences in certain 'storied' forms – though this is not always considered to be a result of deliberate narrative strategy. I discuss this idea in greater depth in Chapter 3.

The camp at Belsen was set up extremely primitively. There were only large tents, which had room for around 1,000 people and which were already full. Lighting and any other comforts didn't exist. We were crammed in here with 3,000 other new arrivals. The tents were therefore so full it was hard to believe. When one wanted to find the toilet it wasn't possible to squeeze oneself through the mass of people to the exit of the tent. After several days a whirlwind came to our aid which tore many of the tents up and dropped them down again onto our heads. After the ensuing panic had subsided we stood outside in the rain for the entire night.[...] Finally one put us [*i.e. we were put*] in huts in which Russian prisoners of war had previously been housed. We assumed quite rightly that one must have simply shot these prisoners of war [*i.e. they had simply been shot*] in order to make room for us in the huts.[...] That I could cope with this situation was thanks to the fact that I had joined forces with ten other women who had also been members of the orchestra. We followed a particular routine, washed daily from head to foot, helped each other with everything and encouraged each other.⁷⁰

Lasker-Wallfisch goes on to talk about these same incidents again in her 1991 Imperial War Museum testimony, her 1993 monologues, her 1996 memoir, and her 2000 British Library deposition. Though Lasker-Wallfisch had written her unpublished memoir in 1988, she has affirmed that she did not look at this work again until she was asked to compile her monologues in 1993.⁷¹ Therefore, though the composition of Lasker-Wallfisch's British library testimony may have been affected by the writing of her memoir, her 1957 testimony and 1991 interview were almost certainly not influenced by any such narrative prearrangements. The utilization of these same specific 'sub-memories' in each testimonial she has given, would therefore seem to intimate that Lasker-Wallfisch recurrently recalls the same memories *unselfconsciously* when she talks

⁷⁰ Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, (Given under her original marital name, Wallfisch) *Cellist in the Auschwitz Camp Orchestra*. (Auschwitz) No.707, August 1957. trans. by Jennifer Maiden, trans. by Anna Brown. Cat no: P.III h. Housed at the Wiener Library My transcript of this interview was translated by A. Brown. All further references will be taken from this transcription.

⁷¹ Lasker-Wallfisch, Imperial War Museum testimony.

about her war-time experiences.⁷² Thus rather than being an intentional literary device, for example a purposefully imposed schemata to Lasker-Wallfisch's remembering, her mode of narration is more likely to be reflective of the way in which she actually *remembers* her past: that certain traumatic memories are magnified in her mind, and that she presents them to her listeners as such, one after another in stark juxtaposition.⁷³

Arranging Memory and Consistency of Content

Alongside the compartmentalization of their memories into definitive or epiphanic moments, Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman also recurrently compose their recollections into cohesive accounts through the use of progressive chronology. For in spite of their continual 'jumping' from one memory to another as they speak and write, it is notable that all three survivors maintain a mostly linear and temporally sequential arrangement to their memories when in the process of recollecting in all of their taped, videoed and written testimonies. Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's reliance on evoking their memories within this chronological framework, and their need to maintain this mnemonist format when in the process of remembering, are most interestingly exhibited when a second party asks them about their recollections out of their 'intended context'. For example, during Leon Greenman's British Video Archive interview he displays a desire to recall his memories in a specific chronology. This is demonstrated

⁷² That is, these memories do not appear in her testimony due to some sort of narrative prearrangement. Indeed, though some memories Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman recall *are* consciously remembered and relayed, for example, when Lasker-Wallfisch states that 'I have to try and reconstruct this' memory for the purpose of communicability, the memories which are of interest here are those that are unselfconsciously constructed and spontaneously given voice.

⁷³ For a more detailed analysis of the anecdotes that feature recurrently in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's testimonies, see Chapter 3.

when Greenman is relaying how his house was looted, and checks himself for speaking about events out of order: ‘As a matter of fact we were robbed of everything; but I’m going too far now’.⁷⁴ Later on in this interview, Greenman is talking about his barracks when his interviewer, Alberta Strage, interrupts to let him know that they have reached the end of the tape. When she does this, Greenman sounds distressed and becomes cross with his interviewer, asserting that she must remember ‘where I am’ or be held to account:

G: [...] Right then comes - uh outside the barrack; you get -

Int: [interjecting] I th I think the time has come for the end of the first hour of the tape [**G:** Yeh] we’ll continue - [trailing off]

G: [Says in assertive voice] So long as you remember [**Int:** Yes I will never forget [trails off]] where I am. Because now now - the trouble starts!⁷⁵

In this extract, the extent of Greenman’s adherence to his own self-imposed chronology is further disclosed when he starts his sentence with the directive instruction: ‘Right then comes’. This wording reinforces the impression that Greenman is imposing an order on the contents of his testimony, especially when taken in conjunction with his anxiety at the stopping of the tape.⁷⁶ Greenman’s reliance on a temporally sequential mode of recollecting is also mirrored in Trude Levi’s manner of testifying. For example, during Levi’s Imperial War Museum testimony she is talking about having to perform hard labour in a munitions factory, when she stops mid sentence and proclaims ‘I will tell

⁷⁴Greenman, British Video Archive testimony.

⁷⁵Greenman, British Video Archive testimony.

⁷⁶Note that at this point in his recollecting, Greenman is speaking in the present tense – ‘comes’, ‘you get’. This trait that can also be found in Lasker-Wallfisch and Levi’s testimonies, and which will be explored in more depth in Chapter 2.

about that a little bit later', as this incident does not belong to the particular time interval Levi is in the process of recollecting at that moment. In a similar manner, Levi stops recounting during a different section of this interview, saying that 'I am still going to go back a little bit, because um-uh about Hungarian laws'. Levi does this in order to situate her memories within their historical context, filling in the background to her personal circumstances by explaining how changes in the law affected her immediate family. Further to this, Levi is speaking about singing in synagogues and choirs whilst living in Budapest when her interviewer interrupts her and asks about the anti-Semitic national socialist organization the Arrow Cross Party:

Int: [interrupting] um the um Arrow Cross were they in evidence in Budapest did you know –

L: Um not at that time not at that time I did not come across in in Budapest I did not come across anti-Semitism *then*, um after well I will – I I I wanted to just go back a very little bit, um during this whole time of course from the beginning of the war and from the beginning of the uh the Anschluss we had refugees coming to Hungary [...] ⁷⁷

When Levi is asked about her memories of anti-Semitism out of their chronological order here, her chain of thought falters, she hesitates, and seems uncertain as to how she can incorporate this question into her narrative. She finally decides that she needs to 'just go back a very little' so as to link this question with her memories of anti-Semitism, though she instead goes on to talk about the influx of refugees into Hungary. In fact, Levi does not answer her interviewer's question, or speak about the Arrow Cross in this interview – perhaps because it does not 'fit in' to the temporal sequence by which she remembers her

⁷⁷ Levi, Imperial War Museum testimony.

past. Whether this is the case or not, however, like Levi, Anita Lasker-Wallfisch also narrates her memories of the Holocaust in a strictly chronological sequence. For instance, in a number of Lasker-Wallfisch's media interviews when interviewers have asked her questions in a different order to the arrangement in which she wishes to speak about her past, Lasker-Wallfisch invariably sounds disgruntled and her responses to such inquiries are markedly terse. As a case in point, during her preparatory interview for Radio 4's *Archive Hour*, Lasker-Wallfisch is asked a number of questions by her interviewers, Jo Glanville and Smita Patel, which fly in the face of the chronological arrangement by which Lasker-Wallfisch has spoken about her memories in her earlier non-media interviews. The first of these incidents occurs at the beginning of the interview, when Glanville asks Lasker-Wallfisch about her memories of a particular concert rather than starting with a more general question about Lasker-Wallfisch's family or her earliest memories, as is customary in oral history interviews:⁷⁸

1st Int:⁷⁹ Can I ask you first about this, um, this...your memories of this concert?⁸⁰

Lasker-Wallfisch's reply reveals her discomfort, although at what we are initially uncertain: she responds swiftly and a little curtly, reinstating the sequential ordering of her remembering - and by implication rejecting the temporal framework her interviewers

⁷⁸ The Oral History Society provides some informative and interesting guidelines on the interviewing process on their website. See 'Practical Advice: Getting Started', *Oral History Society* <<http://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/>> [accessed 25/05/08]

⁷⁹ When citing the '1st Int', I am referring to Lasker-Wallfisch's primary interviewer, Jo Glanville. When citing the '2nd Int', I am referring to Smita Patel, who acts as a secondary interviewer during this interview.

⁸⁰ Jo Glanville, in Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, preparatory interview for *The Archive Hour: Images of Belsen*. Interviewed by Jo Glanville and Smita Patel, 1999. trans. by Jennifer Maiden, Cat no: 1957915. Housed at the Imperial War Museum and BBC Sound Archives. All further quotations will be taken from this transcription.

have attempted to impose - by ignoring their question. Instead, she firmly suggests that: 'I think perhaps we should start uh you know a little further back'. Subsequent to this, a more explicit instance in which Lasker-Wallfisch's predilection for a progressive chronological framework whilst recollecting (in opposition to her interviewers' more disjointed, un-sequential questioning) occurs in the same interview. Due to the nature of this conversation, being as it is in preparation for a radio programme, Lasker-Wallfisch's interviewers seem keen to focus on aspects of her testimony that have been marginalised in previous public broadcasts on the Holocaust. As such, when Lasker-Wallfisch mentions that she and other camp internees 'looted' German houses after their liberation from Belsen Concentration Camp - a subject not often discussed in survivors' media testimonies - her interviewers' responses are audibly enthusiastic:

L-W: ...then of course I kept talking about I must have a cello [conversational laugh] you see, it was really crazy – in those days one could loot, you know looting? You know what looting is? This is a word that doesn't even – looting is that you just go into anywhere and just take what you want...you know that was, that was fashionable in those days. People went in groups out into German houses and just took what you wanted. And I went on a looting party once, and I found it so impossible – I remember going to this German household and we were supposed to just take anything we wanted...

1st Int: [sounding shocked] That's extraordinary, I've never heard...so when Belsen was liberated...the people from the camp would go out and loot German houses?

L-W: Well it was usually...Ya. I wonder whether we went with British people no I think we just – I mean this is already...when we were able...to leave the, camp, you know which at first we weren't allowed to and we etcetera, etcetera. At this point I can't give you dates nor can I even remember who I went with but I shall never forget seeing a child there looking at me in that house, hold in total bewilderment, can you imagine someone walking into your house...And I said no that isn't for me, you know stealing just stealing something.

1st Int: So, so [L-W: [interrupts] You didn't know that?] No so set the, s s set the scene [bewildered and excited] that you, were sort of what, you would go out of the camp, probably illegally as far as [L-W: Probably illegally yes can't even remember how legal we were, but somebody must have said come on let's go to a German house and take whatever we can.] So you would just march into a house -

L-W: [interrupting] That's right but I mean don't forget too it was not so long ago people marched into our houses and took our parents away, you know it wasn't so extraordinary as it might seem to you. [Interviewers whispering in background] It was only really objects you know I mean, to give you some satisfaction [Talking quickly] but I mean it was so crazy, - but I shall never forget this child looking at me and I thought well I am not going to become a thief. I just walked out. You know I, what pleasure can you get anyway from that sort of thing?, But I'm only mentioning that because, I was determined that no-body should loot a cello for me [...]⁸¹

Later in the interview, Glanville and Patel return to this recollection, and ask Lasker-Wallfisch to 'do the looting story again'. Lasker-Wallfisch's response is hesitant:

L-W: Uh what?

2nd Int: Th when you-were telling us about the looting? [pronouncing words carefully]

L-W: Oh the looting yeh

2nd Int: [interrupting] Do you mind just saying that again?

Lasker-Wallfisch sounds perceptibly agitated that her interviewers have resumed discussion of a topic she had plainly steered the interview away from at an earlier point. She also seems disconcerted that Glanville and Patel have returned to the subject towards

⁸¹ The 'Ya' I use here is not a phonetic spelling of Ja, but to reflect as closely as possible the sound of this word, which is half way between 'Ja' and 'yeh'.

the end of the interview, so that it is mentioned completely out of its context. As a result, Lasker-Wallfisch expresses difficulty in recalling ‘the looting story’ out of its circumstance, and seems disorientated when her interviewers ask her if she minds talking about the event again out of the blue, as it were, stating that ‘I don’t know how to[...] *to get into this*’⁸² in a dispirited tone of voice. Only after Glanville has prompted Lasker-Wallfisch by locating the recollection within its contextual situation, can she resume her discussion of this memory using her interviewer’s suggested ‘memory prompt’. What is more, when Lasker-Wallfisch recites the incident for a second time, her description of the event matches her previous depiction almost word-for-word, although this account is much more succinct than on the first occasion:

1st Int: If you if you tell us about [2nd Int: You were telling us how you were trying to get a cello the [L-W: Ah yes yes you s] the nice officer got you a cello but [L-W: Ja ja my main uh] this is what some people do [L-W: Yes]

L-W: uh- my main thought was really to get a cello, but in those days there was still it was still a fashion to *loot* if you know what looting is looting is, to just go and acquire anything that belongs to other people, in fact exactly what the Germans did, with us, so I can’t remember how it come about but there was a looting party going to a German household and, I was asked to go along and I went along just for the curiosity, and uh w the idea was to go into this German house and just take anything you see that you like, but when I got there - I I couldn’t yeh I I saw it-there was a ch a young child there looking at me in total, *bewilderment*, obviously people don’t understand what’s going on and I couldn’t touch anything anyhow what [slight conversational laugh] to what purpose, what shall I steal there a lamp or? doesn’t – exactly um – replace what they’ve stolen from us. So uh that was looting but a lot-oh that we that did go on but I I always said to whoever was cluca-trying to find a cello, not to loot a cello from another cellist because that, would be too terri although that, I lost my cello there but you know uh - I wasn’t going to be put on the same level as these people [...]

⁸² My emphasis.

Comparative Consistency: Indicators of Trauma

Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's perceptible need to remember their pasts in a specific format, coupled with the protective manner with which they assert control over their testimonial recountings in interview situations, suggests that they may instinctively employ such techniques in order to contain - and thereby to cope with - their memories of traumatic incidents. Such defensive behaviour is in keeping with the Freudian theory of trauma, in which 'a breach in [the psyche's]... barrier against stimuli' forces the individual 'to set in motion every possible defence [sic] measure...[in order to master] the amounts of stimulus which have broken in.'⁸³ To add to this, as is evident when looking at a cross-section of all three survivors' testimonies - both in conjunction with each other and independently - the episodic arrangement of their memories cannot be disregarded by the suggestion that they may be simply anomalous, or confined to one particular survivor's recountings. This is because Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman *all* rely on this sequential mode of composure in order to give voice to their different Holocaust experiences in *all* of their testimonies. Likewise, my method of comparing survivor accounts also shows that such traits are not solely restricted to Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's media testimonies. As a case in point, one could not assert that this style of recounting is only a feature of Anita Lasker-Wallfisch's media interviews, and that she would have reacted differently when recalling her past in her earlier, non-media interviews (as she would have been 'more used to' - or 'better prepared' for - an oral historian's style of questioning). Indeed, further evidence of Lasker-Wallfisch's unease

⁸³ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, pp.29-30.

when taken out of her own sequential frame of reference can be found in the first testimonial-interview she gave after 33 years of silence, to the Imperial War Museum in 1991. So it is that after a relatively long period of uninterrupted dialogic exchange between interviewer and interviewee, the interview is paused and the tape stopped for an unknown period of time. When Lasker-Wallfisch's interviewer - Conrad Wood - begins the tape again, he attempts to remind her of what she had been discussing before the break:

Int: You were giving the reasons why your [L-W: Ja, why I think i in in retrospect you know...so] How did they treat you once they had arrested you?

In spite of her confident interjection before Wood has finished asking his question, Lasker-Wallfisch appears to be disconcerted, and falters as she attempts to take up her broken thought-train. Lasker-Wallfisch also has to pause a number of times before she is able to talk about her past articulately, and seems to have to almost audibly re-align her memories (as she attempts to begin a number of lines of recollection which she leaves unfinished) before she is able to continue with her recounting:

L-W: Well what happened is uh I mean after the initial uh...pretending to be French uh, you know which was really, really rather funny in retrospect, they um put us in prison they you know it was...actually I mean there are other things I can tell you if you want to know, we had with us poison because you know one, one sort of was preparing for the worst and we were uh I had a friend who had um obviously must have had access to these things he gave us a little bottle of what do you call that stuff that you just licked Zyankali it's called in in German...cyanide.

Like Levi, and indeed as previously observed in Lasker-Wallfisch's 1999 preparatory interview, in the above extract she noticeably circumvents her interviewer's inquiry, choosing to talk about the next 'episode' in her life-story - the 'famous' cyanide incident - rather than allow her interviewer to distract her from her self-imposed temporal and sequential mode of recollecting.

Voicing the Past: Vocal Address

Alongside the contents, subject matter and compositional consistencies I have identified in all three survivors' testimonies, another distinct commonality which recurs throughout Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's rememberings is the collected and composed manner in which they speak about their Holocaust experiences. Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's self-possessed approach to recollecting is exhibited in two main ways: firstly, the manner in which all three survivors give voice to their memories, or to put it another way their mode of address, is worthy of note. This is because Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman each - without exception - adopt a formal, at times instructive tenor when talking about their past-lives. For instance, Greenman often uses technical and oratory language as he speaks in his taped and videoed - as well as his written - testimonies. Hence during Greenman's British Video Archive interview he speaks in slow, measured sentences that seem to be well thought out - such as when he talks about his family heritage and details how he is 'derived from' Dutch and Russian ancestry. Greenman also uses wording and phraseology which is somewhat formal - talking about how things have 'come to pass [...] in my history' - and rounding up sections of his past into all-inclusive proclamations such as 'and that was our young life.' Secondly, the tone

of voice all three survivors use when speaking about the Holocaust – what one might term their style of expression – is also striking. This is because Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s vocal intonation varies so little between each of their testimonials, and indeed, throughout each individual recounting. This is particularly significant, as even when they are talking about events which they must have found extremely traumatic (such as their experiences in the camps and living through their family’s deportations) they display very few of the audible signs of emotion which would suggest that they are mentally distressed by these memories.⁸⁴ Indeed, the invariability of Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s composure⁸⁵ is all the more interesting, since, as Phil Mollon asserts in *Remembering Trauma*, the disturbing nature of survivors’ pasts *must* be imbricated in every aspect of their testimonial recountings. To be sure, Mollon states, ‘trauma is *inscribed* in the person’s whole being. These marks and echoes are found scattered everywhere – in the body and its reactions, in [general] emotional behaviour.’⁸⁶

To illustrate the truly extraordinary extent of this composure, I will compare each of these survivors’ methods of address in their written and oral testimonies. For whilst testifying, Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman all assume a rather reserved - what I will call ‘reportage’ - method of speaking about their Holocaust experiences. What I mean by this, is unlike the emotionally-loaded, personal style of recollecting one might expect to see in a Holocaust eyewitness testimony, Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s manner of

⁸⁴ Indeed, Phil Mollon asserts that when people are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder they are frequently prone to outbursts of ‘anxiety, anger, exaggerated startle response...ontological insecurity and general distrust’, as well as vocal lamentation. Phil Mollon, *Remembering Trauma: A Psychotherapist’s Guide to Memory and Illusion* (Whurr Publishers: London and Philadelphia, 1998), p.28.

⁸⁵ The oral history connotations of the term ‘composure’, and the structure of Lasker-Wallfisch’s testimonials in general, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

⁸⁶ Mollon, ‘Preface’ to *Remembering Trauma*, p.xi. My emphasis.

articulation often appears to be a rather 'objective' and dispassionate - albeit reflective – *investigative report* on the Holocaust condition, rather than an eyewitness recounting of events directly experienced.⁸⁷ For example, I will take an extract from one of Anita Lasker-Wallfisch's media testimonies - the beginning of her first monologue, *Breslau* - as a *locus classicus*:

This is an account of my youth as a Jew in Germany under the Third Reich. It's dedicated to my children. We've never talked much about those dark days and how it came about that they have no grandparents. [...] But at what point do you start explaining to your children that there are people in this world who had as their ideology the total annihilation of Jews and other so-called undesirables by murdering them in the most sophisticated manner, and that their own mother escaped being murdered only by a complete fluke? At first I thought that my children's generation would be free of prejudice, and I didn't want their lives to be tainted by hatred and a feeling of being different. I kidded myself that our suffering was an atonement for all time. Now I know better. [...] I have recorded as much as I can so that my children, and their children may inherit the truth and keep alive the memory of those terrible days. [...]

In this extract, one can see that in spite of the fact that Lasker-Wallfisch is speaking in the first person, the way that she phrases her recountings suggests that she is narrating an objective and neutral documentary account of the Lasker family's experience of genocide: 'This is an account of my youth as a Jew in Germany under the Third Reich', for instance. Indeed, aside from immediate personal references, the formal tenor of Lasker-Wallfisch's recountings could - should we not know her circumstance - give the listener the impression that the person speaking is not someone who was directly involved in the events portrayed at all. This fact-based, journalistic method of speaking about her past would seem to indicate that Lasker-Wallfisch is consciously composing

⁸⁷ I return to the idea that Lasker-Wallfisch talks about her past in terms of a description of events rather than in terms of personal reflection later in this thesis.

her speeches, and indeed, this notion of intentionality is heightened as her monologue continues. For when Lasker-Wallfisch states that: 'I kidded myself that our suffering was an atonement for all time', she appears to be using the collective pronoun 'our' in a literary sense to imply a dual meaning. On the one hand the 'our' overtly refers to the hardships endured by Lasker-Wallfisch's own family during the Holocaust, and to her personal sense of loss. On the other hand, Lasker-Wallfisch broadens out her reference – as alluded to by her perspectival shift from a personal to a generational viewpoint – thus implying that the 'our' is being used as a universal indicator; as inclusively representative of the suffering wrought upon *all* of the Jewish peoples of Europe. As such, this binary reference further serves to contextualise the oppression endured by the Lasker family within the whole political and sociological sphere of suffering endured by every Jewish person under the Third Reich, so that as listeners we begin to appreciate, on a personal level, what it really means when Lasker-Wallfisch states: 'Meanwhile the hounding of the Jews grew more and more oppressive.' But in spite of the apparent intentionality of her composed speeches, Lasker-Wallfisch's reportage-manner of address is not limited to her most recent testimonies. In Lasker-Wallfisch's 1957 testimonial, for instance, she similarly lists the incidents that occurred to her family one after another, in precise and factual detail:

My home town is Breslau. My father, the lawyer Lasker-Wallfisch, owned a sizeable legal practice there. When the Jewish Laws were introduced which followed the takeover of the government by the National Socialists, my father was no longer allowed to do his job in the manner in which he had done before. He was permitted to practise as a lawyer without being allowed to appear in court. My father was able to continue in this way until 1941.

In the meantime, in 1939, our flat was confiscated together with the furniture. My parents were forced to move with me and my older sister into the small flat which was owned by one of my uncles and aunts. [...] As a result of the measures taken against the Jewish population, especially the limited food allowance, our life became very difficult.

In the years 1941/1942 the deportation of Jews out of Breslau began. The first ones of us to suffer this fate were my uncle and aunt with whom we lived. In 1942, my father and mother were also taken from the flat and sent away. [...] Some years later my grandmother, who was over 80 years old, was also finally deported. She apparently ended up in Theresienstadt. This meant that my sister and I remained totally alone in the flat. It wasn't long before this flat was also confiscated. Following that we both had to move to an orphanage.⁸⁸

In this account, Lasker-Wallfisch punctiliously catalogues the things that happened to her family, without the slightest emotional inflection. She uses no accusatory language or sentimental accentuation. Instead, Lasker-Wallfisch simply lists the basic facts of her experiences, including the years in which these incidents occurred, and the historical circumstances that led up to her family's deportations. This formal manner of narrating past memories is also a prominent feature of Lasker-Wallfisch's other oral testimonies. Even in Lasker-Wallfisch's 1945 testimonials, which are supposed to be an appeal to relatives living in England, she still relays a factual, descriptive *account* of the events she has witnessed - rather than an emotionally laden *petition* - to her listening audience:

⁸⁸ Lasker-Wallfisch, Wiener Library testimony.

This is Anita Lasker-Wallfisch speaking a German Jewess. I have been imprisoned for three years together with my sister; I am a political prisoner I helped French prisoners of War escape. [...] First I would like to say a few words about Auschwitz. All Auschwitz prisoners the few who are left, are afraid the world will not believe what happened there. [...] My barrack was about 25 yards away from the crematorium, one of the five crematoria that were there. I have seen everything with my own eyes.⁸⁹

Even in her later interview testimonies, Lasker-Wallfisch is extremely collected as she reflects upon her Holocaust experiences, replying to her interviewer's questions with highly detailed, factual descriptions of the events she has witnessed. When Lasker-Wallfisch is asked about playing the cello whilst in the Auschwitz women's orchestra in her *Desert Island Discs* interview, for instance, her reply is reserved and decorous, as well as information packed:

L-W: Well we had a a job a prescribed job we played uh marches in the morning for the people who walked out of the camp and there were thousands and thousands who walked out to walk in work into in the factories, we played concerts on Sundays, between the two camps you know there was an A and B camp in Birkenau, and the SS would come or they would come into the Block and - ask for certain pieces or whatever [...]

In all of these instances, Lasker-Wallfisch reverts to reflecting on the historical background to her situation, and on the factuality of the events themselves, rather than exploring her *reactions* and *emotional responses* to these incidents. When she does speak

⁸⁹ Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, (né Lasker), first testimonial interview for the BBC European Service. Interviewed by Patrick Gordon Walker, April 15th 1945. transc and trans. by Anita Lasker-Wallfisch. Housed at the British Library and BBC Sound Archives. Punctuation amended to mirror original oral recording by Jennifer Maiden. All further references will be taken from Lasker-Wallfisch's personal transcription.

about personal experiences Lasker-Wallfisch maintains a detached, formal style of articulation, focusing on the incidents from her past without mentioning what effect these events had on her as an individual – either psychologically or physically - at the time that they occurred or afterwards. This is also the case in Levi and Greenman's testimonies. For instance, during Trude Levi's British Library interview she talks about her memories of her grandmother. As Levi reflects upon her childhood, she ruminates fondly on her time spent with this independently minded matriarch, who worked in her vineyard and spurned her children's attempts to mollycoddle her. Yet immediately after reflecting affectionately on these memories, Levi goes on to talk about how her grandmother was living in hiding with her daughter and son-in-law when they were killed, and how she was then forced to live in a ghetto where the conditions were so severe that she died a few days after she was liberated:

L: Um my I never knew any of my grandfathers but my grandmothers I knew [...] I loved my other grandmother [father's mother] who was uh at the age of 80 she was still walking out into the vineyards, she had uh her hobby was her vineyard and orchard which was four kilometres away from the village she lived in, and she used to go with her basket and with her big hat, and uh my uncle her son one of her sons was a rich man and said "I take you out with the carriage" and she said "No way I go out" [int laughs] and, then and she worked the whole day in the vineyard and when she came um back walked back and p people we were worried that she is so late, um and sent the carriage she was terribly angry "I don't need to!" [Laughs] Anyway she finally, was um in hiding in Budapest at the, during the War during the occupation with her daughter who lived in Budapest and who married a non-Jew, and uh she was in hiding with them and then she had to eventually had to go into the ghetto - um because they were, um my aunt erm her daughter uh who was my aunt the daughter and her husband went down into the, uh-in-i in an air raid shelter and it had a full *hit* and they were killed, and only their son who was in hiding and my grandmother with him, were saved; but um she then had to go into the ghetto, and she survived the ghetto but apparently she was so weak that a short while afterwards she died and by that time she must have been 82 83, something like this I don't exactly remember, I know we never celebrated her 80th birthday because she denied that she was 80! [slight laugh]⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Levi, British Library testimony. Levi's emphasis.

In this extract, Levi integrates these horrific incidents and the eventual death of her grandmother into her other fond childhood memories, so that she moves unhesitatingly from her grandmother's death to the fact that she always denied her age (which she obviously still finds a source of affectionate amusement, as indicated by her modest laugh at the end of this recollection). Though this memory must be emotion provoking – by virtue of its horrific subject matter, content and Levi's professed closeness to her grandmother, whom she loved – she maintains a blithe tone, and is seemingly removed from the events she is relating. Similarly, Levi does not go into what effect her grandmother's death has had on her personally whilst communicating these incidents, and instead goes on to talk about the apparently unconnected subject of Hungarian dress without referencing these events again. Likewise, during Levi's media interview for the *Jewish Chronicle*, she talks about how she was forced to work as a slave labourer:

L: [...] in a factory called Hoßenhaven or Hirschhagen, and uh and now it's also called uh-uh it's it's known under the name Friedland. And but – I did not know it was called Friedland we were just taken there we were in uh the-the, uh commando was in uh-uh Buchenwald out uh out uh camp, was in a place called Hessisch Lichtenau; we were 1,000 Hungarian Jewish women, um Hungar well who were brought from Auschwitz there. And uh basically were there about eight and a half months. Um, the camp uh - and uh the camp was 11 kilometres away from the factory, um Hessisch Lichtenau was in the vicinity of Kassel which was the nearest town; uh there was also a not very far from there another camp, which was called um [break in tape] I have got also some friends who are also really living in penury now in Hungary. Um and uh we were taken uh we had to most of the time we had to walk to the factory which was a nearly two hour walk through to a couple of villages; uh I was uh well when we arrived there we were shaven before we arrived there we were shaven there, when we got there we got underwear [...] ⁹¹

⁹¹ Trude Levi, testimonial interview for the *Jewish Chronicle*. Interviewer: Helen Jacobs. February/March 1996. transc. by Jennifer Maiden. Taken from Levi's own copy of the tape-recording. All further references will be taken from this transcription.

Though Levi talks in minute detail about the situation and location of this munitions factory, she does not describe her time as a slave labourer in personal terms at all. When she does talk about her experiences during this time, Levi does so in relation to general and collective circumstance – what ‘we’, that is the group of 1,000 Jewish women, experienced. Once again, Levi does not discuss her emotional reaction to these events whatsoever, instead focusing on background information and statistics – such as the fact that it was a two hour walk to get to the factory – rather than what she and her comrades felt about this forced march, and how it effected them either physically or psychologically.

Like Lasker-Wallfisch and Levi, Leon Greenman similarly maintains a matter-of-fact tone of voice as he speaks about traumatic past events, such as when he mentions how all his Dutch friends kept ‘disappearing [...] until the day came that we were taken away’ in his Imperial War Museum testimonial. Whilst recounting this memory, Greenman does not exhibit any change in his vocal intonation whatever, and though he does speak about such incidents in relation to his own experiences, he does not describe the physiological or psychological impact such events had on himself or his family – either at the time or after the Holocaust – in any of his testimonies.⁹² For instance, in Greenman’s interview with David J he talks about the hard labour he had to perform whilst at Auschwitz.

⁹² In the rare instances Greenman does touch upon his personal feelings, he does so in the most fleeting terms. For instance, Greenman did mention that he was ‘scared’ when he and his family were deported to Auschwitz during our interview in 2007. However, Greenman quickly reverted to reflecting upon the facts of situation and on what happened to his wife and child, without further reference to his personal emotions. Leon Greenman, testimony with Jennifer Maiden.

Greenman is in the midst of recalling having to carry bags of cement, when he mentions being beaten because he once dropped one:

G: [...] Now the work actual work in Auschwitz was uh carrying parts of barracks and pulling them up, an uh, when that was done, getting down to the wagons loaded with uh hundred weights of cement, sand, coal, rails, cables anything to do, with, building. I must have carried millions of bricks wagon loads with bricks we had to carry from one place to another [...] We had to push - the - train with our shoulders inch by inch until it stood where we could unload the goods [...] One afternoon [...] I carried 52 sacks of cement on my back from where they were till another place, up to a truck, along a wooden plank which if you stood in the middle bent down and you had to be damn careful not to drop, the sack of cement, because, they would call this sabotage it did happen that one day I did drop, a sack of cement like that and I was terribly beaten up about it.⁹³

Whilst recounting this memory – which is in itself highly unusual since none of these survivors tend to reflect upon incidents of abuse they have directly experienced⁹⁴ - Greenman's tone of voice and narrative pace does not change, remaining unemotional and focused on factual details – such as data, for example, carrying exactly 52 bags of cement during that afternoon. There are no hesitations, pauses or marked stammerings in Greenman's speech as he recounts this incident. Nor does Greenman's vocal tempo slow after he has mentioned being 'terribly' assaulted; rather, he continues on in an even narrative tenor. The only implicit signs of Greenman's mental disturbance are that he seems to flit over this event, his vocal rapidity increasing to some extent as he reflects upon his actual attack. Nor does he go into any detail about his feelings or the repercussions he endured as a result of the assault. To add to this, Greenman does not talk

⁹³ Leon Greenman, testimonial interview. Interviewed by David J. 1995. This recording was given to me by Leon Greenman. trans. by Jennifer Maiden. All further references will be taken from this transcription.

⁹⁴ As is explored in detail in Chapter 3.

about this beating again during the rest of his testimonial – though he does repeat and clarify other memories later in his recounting.

In fact, though one might dispute the idea that survivors maintaining a composed narration when speaking about such events is odd, it is the sheer scale of Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's lack of emotional reaction whilst recounting memories which they *must* find distressing that is truly staggering. If we look at a cross section of Anita Lasker-Wallfisch's testimonies to illustrate what I mean by this, we can begin with how she discusses her grandmother's deportation in her Imperial War Museum interview. Lasker-Wallfisch first mentions this incident 'in passing', briskly skipping across the details of the scene, and moving on to the next sub-memory in its place:

L-W: [...] It wasn't particular I don't think we were so deprived as it was very difficult to produce a *meal* you know and I mean all sorts of, planning went into actually it wasn't just us that we had to feed but we had to feed these old people as well and then the two, uh the other couple went and then we were just left with the grandmother and eventually the grandmother was deported as well. So it was just the two of us left and of course we were minors you know we were way under 21, so uh the Jewish community got wind of that we were –what was left of them – we were sitting there on our own and so they stuck us into an orphanage...⁹⁵

During this recounting, Lasker-Wallfisch's voice remains composed, though there are linguistic indicators of trauma strewn throughout this description. Lasker-Wallfisch, for instance, repeats herself when reflecting on having to find food for her grandmother and their two elderly lodgers. She also briefly hesitates a number of times as she recounts this memory - 'uh' - instead of smoothly giving voice to her recollection of events, as she had

⁹⁵ Lasker-Wallfisch's emphasis.

done previously. In addition to this, Lasker-Wallfisch's speech is speckled with uncharacteristic pauses here – two hiatuses, followed by a lasting silence at the end of her dialogue, a quiescence that is coupled with a corresponding vocal cadence.⁹⁶ Taken together, these breaks - in their aberrant appearance and syntactical positioning - together with Lasker-Wallfisch's other atypical falterings, look to be indicators of trauma. Indeed, Lasker-Wallfisch's intonation, semantic vacillations and scant description of the events surrounding her grandmother's deportation, are not the only factors present in this extract that would seem to be resonant of psychological disturbance. Most glaringly, Lasker-Wallfisch also refers to her grandmother impersonally in this passage, as 'the grandmother.' By using the article 'the' rather than the personal pronoun 'my', Lasker-Wallfisch appears to be distancing herself from the emotional intimacy of her connection with her grandmother, thereby unconsciously positioning herself as an observer - that is, an 'outsider'⁹⁷ looking 'in' to the occurrences portrayed.⁹⁸ This would seem to suggest that the very *consistency* of Lasker-Wallfisch's matter of fact tone might be a signifier of her mental disturbance; that she is using the rigidity of her composition as a mental crutch that enables her to speak about her harrowing past. And though one may suggest that Lasker-Wallfisch is only using the term 'the' as a mark of respect (as referring to your elders in the third person can be a sign of deference in the German language) she actually refers to 'my grandmother' when reflecting on her childhood memories at an earlier stage

⁹⁶ That is a marked down-turn in the pitch and tone of Lasker-Wallfisch's speech as she gets to the end of her thought-train and recounts being 'stuck' in an orphanage by the Jewish community.

⁹⁷ Greenman, British Video Archive testimony.

⁹⁸ One may also argue that this linguistic irregularity is present as Lasker-Wallfisch is speaking in a second language. However, in using this example in conjunction with other similar variations, I am able to illustrate that it is not an isolated incident. In fact, Lasker-Wallfisch speaks about memories which must have been 'emotion-provoking' in an unemotional tone of voice in all of her testimonials as far back as 1945. For an in depth discussion of the problems of analysing testimonies given in a second language, see Chapter 4.

of the interview. It is also worth remembering that German is also Trude Levi's mother tongue, yet in the earlier extracts she continually refers to her grandmother through the use of the possessive pronoun 'my'. Moreover, later in this testimony Lasker-Wallfisch refers to living in Belsen in the midst of thousands of dying people and decaying corpses in a similarly matter of fact manner, yet during this section of dialogue identical linguistic waverings to the ones identified above also occur in her speech:

L-W: [...] a man like Kramer was so *used* to living in these conditions he probably he didn't didn't see anymore that this was not acceptable, like us I mean we lived among these bodies...you know I mean this is was no more to me than a body...so for for the innocent who comes in it must have been quite staggering, we grown into this you know we didn't smell it anymore [...]⁹⁹

A comparable incident also occurs during Lasker-Wallfisch's interview for *Desert Island Discs*, when she is asked if she knew that the people who were marched into gas chambers were going to be killed *en masse*:

L-W: Abs well, you know how they arranged it they said that you are going to have a bath, - and they had special hooks with numbers on and told the people to put their clothes neatly so they can find them again and, - you know uh and you like to think that – well if that's the case then everything must be OK. So the the actual uh – cleverness behind it is is *mind-boggling*...'cause can you imagine what would happen if, thousands of people suddenly started revolting [Int: um] like they did, in some places but I mean there was, they were led like sheep...

Although this is not a personal memory *per se*, we know from Lasker-Wallfisch's testimony at the Lüneburg Trials that she had personally watched people being led to the

⁹⁹ Lasker-Wallfisch's emphasis.

gas chamber 'like sheep' on many occasions.¹⁰⁰ We also know from Lasker-Wallfisch's other testimonies that she too had been stripped for a shower, and stood naked not knowing whether she would live or die upon first entering Auschwitz.¹⁰¹ That Lasker-Wallfisch's fluidity of speech begins to break down precisely when she talks about these two subjects, implies that these topics bring to mind her personal recollections of suffering; so that by recounting 'factual' information about the Holocaust in a neutral vocal tone she is attempting to prevent the evocation of her own experiences of these atrocities.

Trauma in Consistency?

Whilst working with child survivors of the Holocaust, Anna Freud observed that, in contrast to her expectations, many of these children showed an apparent absence of powerful emotion when reflecting on their past lives. 'We do not know,' she writes:

¹⁰⁰ When asked my Colonel Backhouse 'Did you see any selections for the gas chamber?' Lasker-Wallfisch replies 'Yes, I saw many selections.' She goes on to describe one: 'People had to get up from their beds and pass by a few SS people. Among them was Hoessler and Dr. Klein. The ones who did not look all right then put them on the side, and the ones who could live they put them on the other side, and after a few days the lorries came and picked the selected people up...There were so many people coming in the camp that nearly every night a queue was standing for the crematorium waiting for their turn. Most of them went to the gas chamber.' Transcript from the official British Record of the Trial at Lüneburg (ref. WO 235/14, Crown Copyright) quoted in Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, *Inherit the Truth 1939 – 1945: The Documented Experiences of a Survivor of Auschwitz and Belsen* (Giles de la Mare Publishers Limited: London, 1996), p.158.

¹⁰¹ In fact, had it not been for the serendipitous exchange of a pair of shoes, Lasker-Wallfisch is unlikely to have been 'saved' at all: when she first entered Auschwitz, Lasker-Wallfisch was shaved and tattooed by a woman who asked for her shoes. Lasker-Wallfisch agrees and they continue to chat. Lasker-Wallfisch mentions that she plays the cello and the girl announces 'That is fantastic...Stand aside. You will be saved.' (72) Lasker-Wallfisch is then left on her own while the other members of her group were filed into another room, and begins to think she is going to be gassed. Lasker-Wallfisch then meets Alma Rosé, leader of the Auschwitz women's orchestra, who again said 'you will be saved'. (73) Soon afterwards, Lasker-Wallfisch joins the camp orchestra. Quotations taken from *Inherit the Truth*.

which aspect or element of an experience will be selected for cathexis and emotional involvement...Where we expect to unearth buried memories of death, destruction, violence, hatred, etc., we usually found the traces of separations, motor restrictions, deprivations...¹⁰²

Miriam Warburg has correspondingly observed that the female concentration camp survivors she counselled after the war relayed their memories in a 'strange, impersonal way'. She concludes that 'it is, perhaps, a form of protection adopted, unconsciously, by all those who have suffered almost beyond human enduring.'¹⁰³ Taken in this context, Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's impersonal manner of address and reluctance to reflect on their emotional and mental wellbeing is an understandable reaction – a psychosomatic defence to guard against 'the pain of remembering'¹⁰⁴ traumatic events. In an extension of this theory, Robert Lifton has explored the specific psychological processes which bring about such detached testimonies in his study of the trauma endured by survivors of historical events. Like Freud and Warburg, Lifton has found that survivors of catastrophes such as the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima exhibit an unusual level of detachment when talking about events they have found personally traumatic. Lifton has labeled this apparent impassiveness part of a process of 'psychic closing-off', in which:

...[people] simply ceased to feel. They had a clear sense of what was happening around them, but their emotional reactions were unconsciously turned off.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Anna Freud, 'Child Observations and Prediction of Development: A Memorial Lecture in Honour of Ernst Kris' (1958 [1957]), *The Writings of Anna Freud, Volume V: Research at the Hampstead Child-Therapy Clinic and Other Papers 1956 – 1965* (New York: International Universities Press, 1969), p. 133.

¹⁰³ Miriam Warburg, 'Personal Experiences of Camp Inmates at D.P. Center of Foehrenwald, Bavaria', Jewish Central Information Office, London, February 1946. *American Jewish Committee Archives*, <http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/DP13.PDF> [accessed 25/05/08] p.1.

¹⁰⁴ Semprun, *What a Beautiful Sunday!* p. 105.

¹⁰⁵ Robert Lifton, *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima* (The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill and London, 1991 [1968]), p.31.

Lifton posits that this technique is so effective that survivors are able to withstand speaking about their memories on numerous different occasions, as it actually enables them to distance themselves, or as he terms it ‘clos[e] [themselves]...off *from death itself*’.¹⁰⁶ Given the truly peculiar extent to which Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman maintain their ‘matter of fact’ tones of voice and manner of address - which remain unwavering even when they are discussing incidents which they must have found extremely traumatic – it seems highly likely that these survivors have ‘closed’ themselves off from the realism of their memories of death. The pervasiveness of this apparently neutral language throughout all three survivors’ accounts also suggests that this pattern of trauma is very much linked to the consistencies in content, topic and voice previously identified. But in contrast to Lifton’s theory, though my study of survivor testimony endorses his concept of ‘psychic closing off’, my research also shows that Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s accounts are not devoid of emotional reaction.

Hostile Expression

This is because though Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s vocal intonation alters very little whilst giving testimony – since they all maintain an even tone of voice and regular narrative tempo whilst recounting in all of their testimonies, as has been noted - this composure *is* intermittently ruptured. Moreover, these ruptures are not the result of audible distress or anguish, as one might expect. Rather, all three survivors become

¹⁰⁶ Lifton, p. 34. My emphasis.

intermittently confrontational and defensive whilst speaking about their past lives. This often happens when the survivor in question is annoyed with the way an interviewer has questioned them, or the manner in which an interview has been conducted. On such occasions their speech assumes an aggressive tinge, and their responses can become terse and combative. I have commented that such behaviour is exhibited by Leon Greenman when his interviewer attempts to challenge his self-imposed chronology, after which time he becomes palpably hostile.¹⁰⁷ Trude Levi also becomes markedly assertive when her interviewer, Gaby Glassman, interrupts her on a number of occasions during her British Library interview. For instance, when Glassman asks Levi if it was cold sleeping outside during the daytime at Auschwitz, she does not allow her interviewee to answer the question in her own time, but rather attempts to interrupt Levi twice while she is speaking to ask her another question. When this happens Levi replies curtly, and after a short lived verbal tussle in which both interviewer and interviewee attempt to override each other, Levi cuts her interviewer off and continues with her dialogue, her tone of voice becoming noticeably belligerent and the pace of her narrative increasing to prevent further intrusions. Anita Lasker-Wallfisch is the most assertive interviewee in this survivor trio, and the most explicit example of her becoming aggressive in response to an interviewer's interjections can be found during Lasker-Wallfisch's interview with Jennifer Wingate, again for the British Library. This collision occurs when Wingate insists that she has read about an interview in which Lasker-Wallfisch supposedly states Dr. Mengele did not like hearing Bach being played by the camp orchestra. When her interviewer does not back down with this assertion - in spite of Lasker-Wallfisch's protestations to the contrary - she begins to become clearly defensive. This self-protective reflex is evident in Lasker-

¹⁰⁷ See page 55.

Wallfisch's intonation, as she becomes short tempered and rebukes her interviewer about the sort of questions she is being asked:

Int: Um I read somewhere that you said that Mengele did *not* want to hear Bach...

L-W: I never said that. Sorry.

Int: S' in one of your interviews.

L-W: I said that? Couldn't have said it because, that's not, why should I have said that?

Int: He did h-he-he he heard Bach?

L-W: I don't know whether he heard Bach [**Int:** Oh] but I never said that Mengele didn't like Bach. I wouldn't know what he likes I didn't ask him, where did you get that from?

Int: One of your interviews. [Decisive, slightly aloof tone that Lasker-Wallfisch instantly reacts to]

L-W: What do you mean [**Int:** [speaking over her] one of our radio interviews] *one* of my interview[s], *never*. Misunderstanding.

Int: OK

[SOUND OF LASKER-WALLFISCH LIGHTING A CIGARETTE]

L-W: [Interviewer intakes a breath and begins to talk [**Int:** What did -] Lasker-Wallfisch overrides her] I think I think I know what you're talking about it was a-a documentary. A documentary where one of the survivors, talked about *Kramer*... And put on a record of, - of Bach yes does that ring a bell?

Int: [Long pause]

L-W: [impatiently] Yes or no?

Int: Possibly [**L-W:** Yeh. Well forg, [**Int:** yes OK] delete that [**Int:** OK] doesn't doesn't come into it and is not of any interest anyway

Int: Alright. Well how did you f-feel when you were playing pieces of music you knew so well?

L-W: [annoyed tone] Dear Interviewer... These qu-questions I can't answer. [Very snappily] What do you mean what did I feel like what there? How can I know now what I felt like [CUT OFF]

[TAPE IS PAUSED]

Lasker-Wallfisch's defensiveness is also manifest in the vocal pitch and pacing of her speech at such moments. For Lasker-Wallfisch converses uncharacteristically quickly during this section of dialogue, taking few breaths and continuing to speak impatiently until she has finished making her point.¹⁰⁸ Lasker-Wallfisch also increases the volume of her address in an anxious attempt, it seems, to remain focused on her memories and not to become sidetracked by alternative lines of enquiry.

The verbally and physically aggressive behaviour exhibited by survivors of traumatic events is a phenomenon that has been well documented by psychologists and psychotherapists since the end of the war. This cognitive aggressiveness which has been termed 'reaction formation',¹⁰⁹ occurs when survivors are faced with feelings which they do not wish to confront, in this instance, perhaps feelings associated with having to play for Mengele after Lasker-Wallfisch knew he had conducted a selection, as well as frustration that her memories are not being conveyed with factual accuracy – the age-old fear that survivors are not being listened to by the 'the rest' world.¹¹⁰ This entails survivors becoming assertive as a preemptive form of psychic defense – a further

¹⁰⁸ As far as is possible, though this is not ideal form of mediation as written transcriptions do not allow for a representative visual image of Lasker-Wallfisch's speech patterns.

¹⁰⁹ Anna Freud, in Joseph Sandler and Anna Freud, *The Analysis of Defense: The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense Revisited* (International Universities Press: New York, 1985), p.124.

¹¹⁰ Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, (Stuart Woolf Collier Books, 1986 [1959]), p.23.

example of subliminal protection mechanisms rather than consciously imposed defensive techniques. Knowing that Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman unconsciously employ defensive measures such as this whilst recounting means that the fact their testimonies do not contain audible bouts of other intense emotions such as passion, hatred or distress is even more curious, and further adds to the argument that this emotional absence must be due to the trauma of witnessing.

Conclusion

As I have demonstrated, there are a number of marked consistencies present in the ways in which Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman relate their past lives. These continuities range from the contents of all three survivors' testimonies, to the subject matter discussed and the manner of vocal address that each survivor has employed. These commonalities are so appreciable that they can be traced through each testimony Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman have given since the end of the war, as well as tracked between each survivor's accounts. The astonishing regularity of these variations shows that there is indeed a pattern in Holocaust survivor memory, and this pattern will be further explored in my coming chapters. What is more, my research has shown that this motif centres around the disturbances Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman endured during this time. When faced with recalling events which place survivor 'identity in question to the point of shattering it',¹¹¹ survivors have adopted defensive mechanisms in order to cope with their past traumas. But whilst these traumas have broken continuity with the past, survivors have reinstated that severance of continuity with the imposition of their *own*

¹¹¹ Dominick La Capra, *History and Memory*, p.9.

recurrent narrative consistencies. Indeed, it is the very commonalities present in their accounts which have, I posit, empowered Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman to speak about the harrowing events they have witnessed.¹¹² Therefore, unlike Dominick LaCapra, I do not feel that it is the ruptured continuity between survivors' memories today and their recollections of the Holocaust which places 'identity in question to the point of shattering it.' Rather, my findings show it is the very *maintenance* of this rupture which allows for the articulation of Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's most traumatic memories in their post-war testimonial recountings.

¹¹² This idea is developed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2

Audible Irregularity:

Absences, Additions and Discrepancies in Utterance

Even if sometimes “a cigar is just a cigar”, psychoanalytic study has never portrayed [the] human psyche as anything so passive as to be subject to simple forgetting. How then do analysts account for what appears to be forgotten experience?¹¹³

In common with the series of consistencies traceable throughout Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s various testimonies, there is also a perceptible string of omissions that can be tracked through each of these survivors’ recountings. These omissions are discernable when a particular memory which features in one or two of Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi or Greenman’s testimonies, is then absent from all their other depositions. These ‘missing’ memories are conspicuous, as regardless of where they are mentioned – whether they appear in a written or an oral account, a media or a non-media interview – they are not spoken about again, no matter what medium the testimony is recorded in, and irrespective of how the witness is interviewed. To add to this, there is also a noticeable pattern of ‘additional’ memories present in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s oral and written testimonials. These supplementary memories are detectable when a certain recollection is brought up - or expanded upon in more detail - in one testimony, yet an equivalent description is not present in any of Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s previous or subsequent accounts. One might assume that these memories have been included or omitted by chance; that any parallels between these irregularities must be the

¹¹³ Lawrence E. Hedges, *Remembering, Repeating and Working Through Childhood Trauma: The Psychodynamics of Recovered Memories, Multiple Personality, Ritual Abuse, Incest, Molest and Abduction* (Jason Aronson Inc: Northvale, New Jersey, London, 1994), p.20.

result of happenstance. But as these variations seem to occur at such similar points in all of these survivors' recountings, can they simply be dismissed as examples of 'forgotten experience'? To answer this question, in this chapter I will examine the omitted and additional memories present in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's testimonies to see whether there is a connection between the circumstances which lead to a memory-addition or absence. Further to this, I will explore whether noticeable linguistic irregularities occur in survivors' oral accounts when Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman are in the midst of relaying these supplementary and anomalous memories, and investigate if such utterer variations also follow a perceptible motif. Finally, to conclude this chapter I will be asking whether such excluded and additional memories are the result of 'ordinary forgetting'.¹¹⁴ Irmi Elkan maintains that 'ordinary forgetting' occurs when 'when one doesn't want to pay a bill', and as a consequence, 'one might forget to write out the check or post the letter'.¹¹⁵ Conversely, when one is reflecting on a traumatic incident 'forgetting', Elkan asserts, does not occur. I posit that the human psyche employs defensive measures when reflecting on traumatic circumstances, in order to ensure the containment of events too disturbing for the survivor of those incidents to actively remember.¹¹⁶ Indeed, Lawrence E. Hedges endorses this view, going so far as to say that in traumatic situations 'the human psyche [is not so]...passive as to be subject to simple forgetting'.¹¹⁷ But if this is the case, what could an emergent 'trend' in the insertion or omission of certain memories in different testimonial accounts - given by the

¹¹⁴ For a useful definition of the difference between instances of 'ordinary forgetting' and incidents of defensive repression of memory, see Joseph Sandler and Anna Freud, *The Analysis of Defense* pp. 230-231.

¹¹⁵ Irmi Elkan, quoted in Joseph Sandler and Anna Freud, *The Analysis of Defense: The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense Revisited* (International Universities Press: New York, 1985), p. 230.

¹¹⁶ When I talk about events that are too disturbing for witnesses to 'actively remember', what I am alluding to is my primary hypothesis: that there are certain memories which survivors either consciously suppress or unconsciously repress, as they are too disturbing to openly reflect upon due to their traumatic nature.

¹¹⁷ Hedges, p.20.

same survivor over time - signify, and how are these variations linked to traumatic 'forgetting'?

Untold Experience and Testimonial 'Forgetting'

The trauma theorist Richard F. Mollica has suggested that survivors of violent incidents - 'once...ready to tell the[ir] trauma story' - tend to either leave particularly traumatic memories 'untold' or, conversely, to 'repetitively recite' them.¹¹⁸ In Chapter 1, I have demonstrated how Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman seem to 'repetitively recite' certain memories in an analogous style in all of their oral and written testimonies. But to add to this, my research also shows that there is evidence to support the idea that Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman harbour 'untold' memories, elements of which surface at junctures in their otherwise regular recountings. The reader/listener is alerted to the presence of these omitted memories when the survivor chooses – or is directed - to talk about certain recollections in one testimony, which then do not feature in their subsequent accounts. As a working example, in Anita Lasker-Wallfisch's 1945 testimony she talks at length about her experiences of living in both Auschwitz and Belsen, and of the atrocities she had witnessed being committed there. In her first address, Lasker-Wallfisch talks about having seen 'healthy people [being] thrown into the flames [of the crematoria] alive'¹¹⁹ in Auschwitz. She also reflects upon the selections which took place 'left, right [...] Right to life, left to the ovens'.¹²⁰ Besides this, Lasker-Wallfisch talks graphically

¹¹⁸ Richard F. Mollica 'The Trauma Story: The Psychiatric Care of Refugee Survivors of Violence and Torture', in *Post-Traumatic Therapy and Victims of Violence*, ed. by Frank M. Ochberg (Brunner/Mazel Publishers: New York, 1988) p.311.

¹¹⁹ Lasker-Wallfisch, first BBC European Service testimony.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

about hearing the screams of prisoners being put to death: 'we could hear their cries in our barracks'.¹²¹ In her second appeal, Lasker-Wallfisch goes on to talk at length about the medical experimentation which took place in the camp, led by the notorious Dr. Mengele:

A certain Dr. Mengele was engaged in research work .I.e. [sic] twins and women were brought to the notorious Block 10 for experiments to be performed on them. They were sterilized – Experiments were carried out them for which guinea pigs were normally used. But for them, Jews were just good enough. Furthermore, experiments were carried out on twins. Ie. [sic] Their tongues were almost torn out, their noses opened, etc. People perished after two to three months of these experiments.¹²²

Yet despite the fact that Lasker-Wallfisch's recollections of these scenes are so clearly and methodically expressed in her 1945 appeals, other than a brief reference to people being thrown into the flames of the crematoria in her Imperial War Museum interview, none of these memories are mentioned again in any of Lasker-Wallfisch's subsequent testimonies. To add to this - and in contrast to the composed way in which Lasker-Wallfisch speaks about this memory in 1945 - when she does fleetingly remark upon this recollection in her Imperial War Museum interview, Lasker-Wallfisch exhibits marked signs of trauma. This is because her previously lucid speech is suddenly interrupted by a

¹²¹ Lasker-Wallfisch, first BBC European Service testimony.

¹²² Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, (née Lasker), second testimonial interview for the BBC European Service. Interviewed by Patrick Gordon Walker, April 15th 1945. transc and trans. by Anita Lasker-Wallfisch. All further references will be taken from Lasker Wallfisch's personal transcription. There is no surviving recording of this interview in the BBC Sound Archive. As a result, it has not been possible for me to listen to this interview and faithfully transcribe the linguistic variations present – as has been the case when working with Lasker-Wallfisch's first European Service testimony and other accounts. Therefore, I have replicated Lasker-Wallfisch's punctuation, spelling and grammatical incongruities exactly, for example, I have transcribed her manner of writing '.I.e.', rather than substituting it with the conventional spelling and punctuation of 'i.e' – and have included her mistakes into this extract, such as when shes writes 'I.e.' and then later writes 'Ie.'

number of uncharacteristic and lasting hiatuses as she begins to talk about this incident, and this is followed by a period of Lasker-Wallfisch speaking unusually quickly without pausing for breath:

L-W: [...] and there was an unbelievable influx of people and...the Crematoria couldn't cope with them really and I mean there was it was just...flames sky high, and they threw people into the flames alive I mean they just had to get rid of people it was just unbelieve I mean inferno isn't in it and we were playing there in the block away, but we weren't actually sitting in front of the Crematorium we were very close to the Crematorium but we weren't actually sitting in front of it playing, but this music business you see that's, it's like you go to the dentist now you get music you know or - you take off in a plane you get music because it somehow befuddles the mind a bit, there's a sort of psychological a background to to this where there is music I can't be so bad you know?¹²³

In conjunction with the unusual gaps in Lasker-Wallfisch's speech whilst relating this memory, she also talks in an aberrantly stammering and repetitive manner, leaving words unfinished as she hurries through this recollection. Lasker-Wallfisch's digressive analogies to everyday situations (visiting a dentist, catching a plane), and euphemistic language when she refers to 'this music business' (rather than dwelling on the reality of her situation - having to play in an orchestra whilst people were put to death) adds to the impression that she is deeply disturbed by this memory. And though one may attempt to contest this reading, by proposing that Lasker-Wallfisch has not referred to these memories again because they were in fact simply hearsay, part of camp 'legend',¹²⁴ rather than because she finds them traumatic, Lasker-Wallfisch herself counters this theory. For Lasker-Wallfisch is unequivocal in her assertion that she is describing events that she

¹²³ Lasker-Wallfisch, Imperial War Museum testimony.

¹²⁴ And that, as such, Lasker-Wallfisch has forgone speaking about these incidents in place of reflecting on events she actually witnessed occurring.

actually *saw* occurring in her 1945 appeals, stating unambiguously that, ‘I have seen everything [I have described] with my own eyes’.¹²⁵ Indeed, this leads us to the most stark – and perhaps significant – indicator of mental disturbance in Lasker-Wallfisch’s 1991 testimonial excerpt. This traumatic signifier is the difference in perspective between Lasker-Wallfisch’s 1945 recountings and her equivalent Imperial War Museum reflections. For in Lasker-Wallfisch’s later account, she does not mention that she actually *saw* these events taking place at all. Instead, she skirts around a direct visualization of the scene, speaking in the third person: ‘*they* threw people into the flames alive’¹²⁶ and diverting her attention to the ‘psychological background’ to the event, instead of concentrating on the lived reality of the incident as she experienced it happening.

Like Lasker-Wallfisch, Leon Greenman also talks about incidents that he has ‘seen with my eyes and felt with my own body’¹²⁷ in his earliest interview, which are then absent from his later oral and written accounts. In Greenman’s 1945 testimony, for instance, he recounts how he was kicked by a Kapo ‘on head and face until blood was pouring from my ears and nose.’¹²⁸ Greenman goes on to list a number of methods of abuse and torture he had either been subjected to, or had witnessed occurring whilst at Auschwitz:

¹²⁵ Lasker-Wallfisch, first European Service testimony.

¹²⁶ My emphasis.

¹²⁷ Greenman, ‘Preface’ to *An Englishman in Auschwitz*. Greenman in fact states here, that all the things he writes about in this memoir are things that he has ‘seen [happen] with my [own] eyes.’

¹²⁸ Leon Greenman, testimonial interview for the BBC European Service. Unknown interviewer. 25th April-26th May. Cat no. 1CDR0031784. Housed in the British Library Sound Archive. transc. by Jennifer Maiden. All further references will be taken from this transcription.

I could keep on telling you how, one night, 12 prisoners were hanged, in front of us, because three of them had hit back at an SS guard; and the SS commander telling us that next time it would be 100 of us. Or how they hit ours heads between [sounds like 'boulders'] and blocks of wood, and how Doctor Striker experimented with kind new kinds of implements on our body; how, when some of us had dysentery, they made us step with bent knees and without shoes in the snow and icy water for nearly an hour.¹²⁹

Though Greenman speaks in the third person here, saying how 'they' did things to 'us', he is actually talking about his own experiences in the camps. This is evident, as Greenman refers to personally watching the 12 prisoners being hanged whilst at Auschwitz, and about the medical experimentation that was performed on his body, in his other testimonies. But whilst these memories *are* spoken about in Greenman's later accounts, he *does not* mention being beaten until bloody; having his head hit on a block of wood; having to 'step with bent knees' with dysentery;¹³⁰ or having to walk for an hour without shoes in the snow, in any of his later oral or written testimonies. Yet what unites these seemingly disparate omitted memories, and indeed, connects Greenman's missing memories with Lasker-Wallfisch's very different 'absent' recollections, is the nature of these rememberings. What I mean by this, is that Lasker-Wallfisch and Greenman's missing memories are thematically all the same *type* of recollection; that is to say that these survivors' omitted memories all have a very violent content, and are each focused on brutal incidents witnessed and experienced firsthand during their internment in concentration camps. And though both survivors seem able to talk about

¹²⁹ Greenman, 1945 testimony.

¹³⁰ The only possible reference Greenman might make to this incident appears in her memoir, *An Englishman in Auschwitz*. In this book, Greenman writes about how he punched a prisoner in the face after a heated argument in the camp hospital. When he was caught by a nurse, Greenman was castigated for his misdeed by 'get[ting] out of the bunk and, with bended knees and outstretched arms, I sat for punishment in front of my bunk.' p.53. However, no reference is made to his having to 'step with bent knees', nor does Greenman make any reference to having dysentery here.

these memories immediately after the war – probably due to the ‘freezing of feeling’¹³¹ discussed in Chapter 1 - in Lasker-Wallfisch and Greenman’s later accounts, it seems, these recollections have been relegated to the sphere of ‘untold’ experience, and buried ‘so that they can be [mentally] disposed of’.¹³²

This is not to say that survivors cut all memories of violent incidents from their later testimonies.¹³³ Trude Levi, for instance, talks in detail about her memories of forced prison workers dying from sulphur poisoning in her British Library interview, stating that: ‘very often one of them suddenly got poisoned, and uh then would die it took about a week for them to die and they were screaming you could hear them from the medical, [sic] barrack, the whole day and night screaming they it was terrible torture they died with under terrible torture, and it was it was a terrible thing to hear.’¹³⁴ Levi also talks about ‘the yellows’¹³⁵ in her 1958 testimony, her Imperial War Museum testimony, her media interview for the *Jewish Chronicle*, and her memoir *Did you ever meet Hitler, Miss?* Like Levi, Leon Greenman talks about being marched past the body of a person who had just been shot, the SS having planted a flower in the fatal wound, in his 1995 interview with David J. But conversely, though Greenman states - as he recounts this memory - that he ‘will never forget’ this scene, he does not mention the event again in

¹³¹ Paul Valent ‘Child Survivors: A Review,’ in *Children Surviving Persecution: An International Study of Trauma and Healing* ed. by Judith S. Kestenberg and Charlotte Kahn (Praeger: Westport, CT and London, 1998) p.112. Valent’s phrase is used to describe a similar state of traumatic shock as Robert Lifton’s definition of survivor’s ‘psychic closing off’ – as referenced in Chapter 1.

¹³² Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, pp. 29-30.

¹³³ Again, as discussed in Chapter 1.

¹³⁴ Trudi Levi, British Library testimony.

¹³⁵ As Levi calls the poisoned forced labourers who worked as chemists in the Nazi munitions factories. This nickname refers to both the colour the chemists became as they were gradually poisoned by an overexposure to sulphur, but also to their use as ‘canaries’, testing the levels at which exposure to these chemicals became fatally toxic. (See Trude Levi’s *Did you Ever Meet Hitler, Miss?* P.28). Quotation taken from Levi’s British Library testimony.

any of his previous or subsequent testimonies. Why is it then that survivors will omit memories of some violent incidents from their testimonies and not others - and that the events which are missing from Lasker-Wallfisch and Greenman's post-war testimonies are often the very memories which feature so centrally in their earliest accounts?

In order to examine these incongruities, we must first explore the possibility that such omissions are attributable to 'normal' instances of forgetting, as opposed to being strategic examples of traumatic exclusion. William F. Brewer has suggested that survivors of traumatic incidents tend to have stronger memories of 'unique' occurrences and 'poor personal memories for repeated events'.¹³⁶ According to Brewer, a survivor's memory of an originally unique event would 'show reduced personal memory strength', that is, would feature less prominently in subsequent accounts, 'if it is followed by other similar events'.¹³⁷ Not only would Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman have been witness to numerous incidents of gratuitous and unprovoked violence throughout their time in concentration camps which would, in Brewer's scheme of events, diminish the significance of individual scenes of suffering. But as time went on and other survivors spoke out about their experiences, these memories of violence would in themselves become more 'similar' to other survivors' accounts of the Holocaust, and as such, less 'unique' to Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's personal situations. In this chain of reasoning, we might thus expect to see survivors' memories of medical experimentation and selection lines featuring less and less centrally in their testimonies as time went on,

¹³⁶ William F. Brewer 'What is Autobiographical Memory?' *Autobiographical Memory* ed. by David C Rubin (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney, 1986), p 45.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

so that what was principally significant to Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's earliest testimonies would necessarily become more marginal in their later accounts.

My findings, however, do not support Brewer's theory. For instance, if Greenman's personal memories of his Holocaust experiences had been jaded due to an 'overexposure' of witnessing and as a result suffering had become for him 'expected' and 'commonplace',¹³⁸ it follows that such memories would not feature so prominently in *any* of his testimonials, especially in his earliest recountings so close to actually living through these - what must have been for him at the time - 'commonplace' events. To add to this, if Brewer was correct in his supposition that an originally unique event 'will show reduced personal memory strength if it is followed by other similar events',¹³⁹ this suggests a gradual and ongoing process of unconscious re-assessment and re-prioritization – one that would see a survivor's recounting of such events *steadily diminishing* over time as they became less and less 'unique' to that survivor's individual circumstance. But there is no evidence of an ongoing marginalization of the memories present in Lasker-Wallfisch and Greenman's 1945 interviews – and Trude Levi's 1958 testimony - in their later testimonies. Rather, certain memories which appear in these survivors' earliest testimonies are simply completely absent from all of their later testimonials, whilst some of their omitted memories are *only* present in their later accounts. Furthermore, even if my findings did corroborate Brewer's theory about why events which feature so centrally in survivors' first testimonies do not then reappear in their later accounts, his hypothesis *still* does not explain why some violent incidents have

¹³⁸ As opposed to 'unexpected' and 'unique' See Brewer, *What is Autobiographical Memory?*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* p.45.

been omitted from survivors' accounts, whilst others are spoken about in most of their testimonies.

This is not to say that there is no discernable link between each of Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's absent memories, or that it is impossible to determine a motif in these omissions that might explain their seemingly random nonappearance. For if one looks at the personal character of the memories excluded from Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's accounts, an interesting pattern does begin to emerge. This is because the violent memories which are missing from these survivors' later testimonies are mostly centred on brutal events *directly experienced* by the survivor him or herself. In contrast, the violent incidents that are included in all three survivors' post-war testimonies instead tend to focus on brutality inflicted *on others*, which is then reported on by Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman in their capacity as 'eyewitnesses' to Nazi war crimes. Indeed, if the reader were to look at these omitted memories objectively, one can see that the traumatic content of these incidents *must* lie at the heart of their absence. This is primarily because it seems so odd that events actually *experienced* by survivors should be omitted from their personal testimonials, and substituted for events that they only *witnessed* occurring. But these omissions are even more extraordinary, when one takes into consideration the fact that almost all other memories which feature in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's earliest testimonies are repeatedly referred to in their later accounts.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ As does Levi's memory of 'the yellows'. This is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Indeed, previous studies on eyewitness testimony confirm the peculiarity of these omissions. For instance, whilst researching the content of witness testimony, Elizabeth F. Loftus found that when a person is asked to talk about a previously recalled traumatic experience, eyewitnesses' memories of events - as presented in their earliest accounts - are highly likely to reappear in the same format in their later testimonies. 'Thus', Loftus continues, 'if a witness to an accident reports early on that the driver of the damaged vehicle ran a red light, this detail would be likely to appear in later recollections, whether it was true or not.'¹⁴¹ In fact, Loftus proposes that 'early comments' made by the eyewitness are '*frozen into place in one's memory*' so that they 'pop up frequently when the witness recalls his [sic] experiences at a later time.'¹⁴² Loftus' findings highlight how unusual it is that events which feature so prominently in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's earliest testimonies should then fail to reappear in any of their later accounts. It also suggests that the way victims of extremely traumatic events - such as prolonged and brutal crimes - reflect upon their pasts, is markedly different from the way they might recall 'everyday' traumas, such as witnessing a violent assault or a close-quarters car accident; that in fact, Holocaust memory seems to adhere to entirely different governing principles to 'normal' memory, and that by extension, omissions of this nature are a far cry from a regular instance of forgetting.

The theory that survivors may omit or 'forget' certain memories whilst speaking about the Holocaust in order to cope with the trauma of remembering, has also been substantiated in practice. Whilst analyzing the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, for

¹⁴¹ Elizabeth F. Loftus, *Eyewitness Testimony* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge (Massachusetts) London: 1996 [1979]), p.84.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* My emphasis.

example, Henry Greenspan has noted that a number of the people he interviewed appeared to have ‘blocked out’ certain memories in order to cope with their pasts whilst speaking about the genocide.¹⁴³ In one instance, Greenspan examines the testimony of a survivor named ‘Paula’, who was imprisoned at Birkenau Concentration Camp during the war. Paula openly speaks about having adopted psychological coping mechanisms in order to deal with her most traumatic memories, stating that she is able to protect herself from these recollections by metaphorically ‘pull[ing] down the shade’ on these events, and retreating into her ‘own little world’ where she ‘choos[es] shadow over sight’.¹⁴⁴ Perhaps Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman, like Paula, omit certain memories from their later testimonies in order to ‘block out’ the past, and defend themselves from the most disturbing events that they have witnessed.

Such deliberately – and, indeed, involuntarily – induced instances of ‘forgetting’ are certainly in keeping with established studies on trauma and memory. In *Bodily Memory and Traumatic Memory*, for example, Allan Young directly ascribes symptoms such as incongruous ‘forgetting’ to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, which he describes as a pathology in which the past ‘invades’ the present.¹⁴⁵ If this is the case, survivors of extremely traumatic events would go to great lengths to defend themselves against their memories of harrowing experiences which in essence ‘cause [the emergence] of [their]

¹⁴³ See Greenspan’s analysis of Paula’s testimony. Henry Greenspan. *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History* (Praeger: Westport, Connecticut, London, 1998) p.16-18.

¹⁴⁴ Henry Greenspan’s *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History* (Praeger: Westport, Connecticut, London, 1998), p.16.

¹⁴⁵ Allan Young. ‘Bodily Memory and Traumatic Memory’, in *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* ed. by Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (Routledge: New York, London, 1996), p.97. My emphasis.

post-traumatic symptoms.’¹⁴⁶ By ‘forgetting’ these select memories, and leaving them ‘untold’, Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman would thus be able to protect themselves from the symptoms of PTSD which would trigger them not only to recall, but also to actually ‘reexperience’¹⁴⁷ these incidents in the recounting.

Additional Memories: Examples

Whether, Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman have consciously chosen to suppress these memories in their later accounts, or whether this is an example of survivors having unconsciously repressed certain images in order to contend with the trauma of witnessing, is uncertain. What is beyond contention, however, is that this is not an isolated example of survivors having omitted reflecting on events in some testimonies which are then recalled - at times in detail - in other oral and written accounts. Another overt instance in which Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, for instance, has included anomalous memories in one account, which she then fails to mention in her other testimonies, occurs in her published memoir *Inherit the Truth: 1939-1945*. For in this testimony there are a number of ‘additional’ memories included, and these additions consist of either previously unmentioned facts, or are extensions of existing memories that have themselves not been discussed in Lasker-Wallfisch’s other accounts. As such the supplementary memories that feature in *Inherit* are wide ranging, extending from the inclusion of small details, such as the fact that Lasker-Wallfisch remembers that her room in Berlin ‘contained fifty-

¹⁴⁶ Allan Young, *Bodily Memory and Traumatic Memory*, p.97.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

seven pictures'¹⁴⁸ and that her aunt's husband 'was a most disagreeable man' (31) to larger particulars, such as the fact that Lasker-Wallfisch was working in a hospital laboratory before she was transferred to a paper factory, and Schammot, the 'sandy, gritty substance' which Lasker-Wallfisch tells us 'made a dreadful scraping sound' when it was used to clean the prison toilet, 'a deeply distasteful occupation'(54). Lasker-Wallfisch sees this memory as significant enough to be the subject of an entire paragraph in her memoir, although she only speaks about it briefly in one other oral testimony.¹⁴⁹ Lasker-Wallfisch also writes about 'the pretty Czech girl' who lived in the cell opposite her in Breslau prison, who 'was counting on getting a death sentence for sabotage' (61) and the fact that an SS officer who came to get her from the Quarantine Block in Auschwitz was called 'Hoessler' (73). These memories are noteworthy, as they are not mentioned elsewhere in any of Lasker-Wallfisch's other oral testimonials.¹⁵⁰

Like Lasker-Wallfisch, Leon Greenman also includes a number of additional memories into his memoir, *An Englishman in Auschwitz*, which are only present in this account. For instance, Greenman writes in detail about where his wife's grandmother lived, including her address: 'Harddraeverstraat, number 15b.'¹⁵¹ He also writes about how, when his father's house was bombed, he 'saw lots of people lying on the grass patches near the houses...[and] some soldiers lying there, not seeming to know what to do.' (12)

¹⁴⁸Lasker-Wallfisch, *Inherit the Truth*, p.19.

¹⁴⁹ In Lasker-Wallfisch's British Library testimony.

¹⁵⁰ However, a number of these memories also feature in Lasker-Wallfisch's unpublished manuscript (though in the case of Mala and Funia, only very briefly and in much less detail). This is to be expected, however, since Lasker-Wallfisch's published memoir (1996) was based on her unpublished manuscript (1988). Other than this unpublished account, this is the only testimony in which any of these memories are present. I will debate whether this is because this testimony is a written account as opposed to an oral account of the Holocaust later in this chapter.

¹⁵¹ Leon Greenman, *An Englishman in Auschwitz*, p.9.

Greenman continues to write about his work-group marching to and from Birkenau, and his memories of the orchestra that played accompaniments to their marches. He goes on to talk about a friend of his, Lois Bannet, who played 'violin and trumpet' and who '*as the story goes*'¹⁵² (45) was taken into the camp orchestra after auditioning in front of a Kapo. Later, Greenman writes about his experiences in the camp hospital, and of a friend who joined him there. Greenman details how he watched his friend, Louigi Levi, 'grow weaker and thinner, day after day' until eventually he 'fade[d] away, like a dying candle'. (120) Finally, one of the most extensive additional memories Greenman includes in this memoir, occurs when he is writing about how he became ill and was helped by a camp 'comrade':

I developed piles and was suffering with them now. One morning my Dutch friend Jo de Groot who slept in a bunk next to me and with whom I shared a lot of time, took me by the arm. He said that I had no need to march out to work that wintry morning, for, as the commandos were marching out to work, the men who felt sick and [were] unable to go could report to the camp hospital for treatment. And so, my friend Jo walked with me to the doctor at a spot on the square. I felt too much in pain to talk, so Jo did it for me, telling the doctor that I could not walk very well. I was allowed into the hospital. I stayed about five days, my ailment soon passed and the little rest had done me good. (78)

It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions from the incorporation of such a seemingly disparate array of memories. Indeed, on the surface of things it seems unlikely that anything could link Lasker-Wallfisch's recollection that her room in Berlin contained a certain number of pictures with her time spent in a paper factory. However, when one

¹⁵² My emphasis. Interestingly, this seems to suggest that Greenman is including additional information gleaned from other survivor's testimonies into his narrative. The idea that survivors may subsume certain incidents into their memories of the past which may not in fact be part of their own Holocaust experience, is expanded upon later in this chapter.

looks again at the type of additional memories which are reflected upon in Lasker-Wallfisch and Greenman's memoirs, two possible connections become apparent. On the one hand, it might be that the memories which are only included in Lasker-Wallfisch and Greenman's memoirs are not 'extraordinary'¹⁵³ enough to feature in their oral testimonies. This reasoning is in line with Brewer's assertion that only 'unique' memories would feature centrally in survivors' accounts of the Holocaust – a theory which my findings do not appear to support. On the other hand, it could be that these memories do not feature in Lasker-Wallfisch and Greenman's other testimonies as they are somehow connected to their experiences of trauma. Though it is impossible to ascertain whether Lasker-Wallfisch found working in a paper factory traumatic, it is not unlikely that she associates her memories of Hoessler with disturbing events. Lasker-Wallfisch also plainly states that she found cleaning the prison toilet with Schammot a 'deeply distasteful occupation.' More overtly, Greenman's additional memories almost all relate to distressing events – such as the loss of close friends, the bombing of his home town, and experiencing great amounts of pain with hemorrhoids. Even Greenman's recollection of his wife's grandmother's address could be linked to his memories of trauma, since it was from this house that his family were eventually deported. Perhaps it is something to do with the medium of written testimony (which necessitates the methodical and piecemeal examination of memory, and invites the use of more expansive detail) that forces survivors to remember events they would normally skim over – an idea which I will develop shortly.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Lasker-Wallfisch, British Library testimony.

¹⁵⁴ The differences between written and oral forms as a means of mediation is discussed fully in Chapter 4.

Leaving this debate to the side for the moment, however, the additional memories that Trude Levi includes in her memoirs have similarities to Lasker-Wallfisch and Greenman's supplementary recollections, though they seem to converge around a different topic. To begin with, unlike Lasker-Wallfisch and Greenman, Trude Levi's memoir *A Cat Called Adolf* is focused on her post-camp experiences rather than her life before and during the Holocaust. Likewise, her second memoir, *Did you ever meet Hitler, Miss?*, catalogues Levi's responses to specific questions. As a result, there are fewer additional memories detectable in these memoirs than there are in *Inherit* and *An Englishman*. Nevertheless, there are still some incidents which Levi only talks about in expansive detail in her memoirs. As an example, Levi goes into great detail when speaking about the women that she was barracked with at Auschwitz. For instance, Levi explains who these women were, where they came from, and defines her relationship with each of them – such as the 'Günsberg sisters'¹⁵⁵ who ran a beauty parlour in Szombathely; the 'Kohn sisters' who Levi describes as 'rather colourless' (6), and Puci Dukesz 'to whom I felt closest in the whole room' (6). Levi also talks about how she and an unnamed friend or family member smuggled her grandmother's valuables over the border into Hungary, to stow at a friend's house for safe keeping;¹⁵⁶ how the man who promised to bring her a recorder was called Neumann;¹⁵⁷ and that 'the only way to commit suicide in Auschwitz was to throw yourself onto the high-voltage electric fencing' after which time 'the electricity had to be switched off and the fence cleaned, which was hard work and not very pleasant' in her question-and-answer memoir *Did you*

¹⁵⁵ Levi, *A Cat Called Adolf*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁶ See Levi, *Did you ever meet Hitler, Miss?* p.45.

¹⁵⁷ Levi, *Did you ever meet Hitler, Miss?* p.47.

*ever meet Hitler, Miss?*¹⁵⁸ Other than the obviously disturbing image of people throwing themselves onto electrified wire, there is no further evidence to suggest that Levi's additional memories are connected with her experiences of trauma – though it might be that she associates the people in the camp and the clandestine smuggling of family artifacts (which were eventually lost) with feelings of distress and disturbance. Nor could one argue that people committing suicide in such a horrific way is not 'extraordinary', since this method of death is unusual even by Auschwitz standards.¹⁵⁹ However, what seems to unite Levi's additional memories is their connection to interpersonal relationships: it is Levi's rapport with each girl in her barracks, and her sororal affiliations within the group dynamics of the camp, which are the focus of most of her supplementary recollections. Similarly, Levi recalls her trip to retrieve her grandmother's belongings in terms of fraternal interaction, as she continually refers to the experience using the plural personal pronoun 'we', and recalls events in terms of the activities she and her friend/family member/s partook in along the way: 'We used to go into the mountains for hikes...we brought over a precious hand-painted dinner set...we picnicked on Persian carpets with silver cutlery.'¹⁶⁰ The guard who offered to bring Levi a recorder is also making a fraternal gesture, though he does not follow this act through the completion. The only supplementary memory which breaks with this trend is to do with

¹⁵⁸ Levi, *Did you ever meet Hitler, Miss?* p.44.

¹⁵⁹ This is because very few people chose to commit suicide whilst in concentration camps. Levi's memories of such deaths would therefore be extremely unusual, since suicide itself is not often spoken about in survivor discourse due to its very infrequency. Also, though death was an everyday part of camp life - with many dying from starvation, for example, each day- many of the most violent killings were often conducted in a clandestine manner. The only inmates to witness gas chamber murders, for instance, were the specially selected *Sonderkommando*, who were themselves summarily executed to prevent them from speaking about the atrocities they watched being committed. The extremely violent nature of a suicide committed by flinging oneself against an electric fence would therefore, in a very concrete sense, be quite 'extraordinary.' For an interesting discussion of Holocaust suicides, see David Lester and Richard Stockton *Suicide and the Holocaust* (Nova Science Publishers Inc, 2005).

¹⁶⁰ Levi, *Did you ever meet Hitler, Miss?* p. 45.

the unnatural severing of this fraternal link – through the isolated and forlorn act of suicide. In fact this deed, due to its very infrequency in the camps, literally as well as figuratively locates the individuals concerned on the periphery of camp life, as those who, without a group to ‘bully each other’, as Lasker-Wallfisch puts it, could not survive.¹⁶¹

Aside from the atypical occurrence of these additional memories in the first place, one of the things I found most interesting whilst examining Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s supplementary recollections is that so many of them are present in their written testimonies. And though supplementary recollections do also appear in all three survivors’ oral accounts, they are much more of a feature of their memoirs. A great deal of research has been conducted into the different methods of narration employed by eyewitnesses when relaying their memories of the past in written and oral depositions. Historians have in fact found that there is a divergence between which memories witnesses choose to call upon, and how they elect to narrate their recollections in these different testimonial forms. In *The Voice of the Past*, Paul Thompson discusses the different memories that feature in the testimonies of eyewitnesses to historical events according to their genre. Thompson concludes that witnesses who relate their memories through writing tend to include details that are absent from their oral accounts, as writing, he asserts, necessitates a greater degree of reflection, often being ‘analytical in manner’ and more highly ‘elaborate’ in detail than oral accounts which tend to be ‘full of redundancies and back-loops’.¹⁶² Written accounts such as memoir also, Thompson posits, relate a different *kind* of memory – portraying a version of events that the author

¹⁶¹ Lasker-Wallfisch, Imperial War Museum testimony.

¹⁶² Thompson, p. 279.

'believes appropriate for a public memoir',¹⁶³ in a manner 'trapped in the conventions of the style of writing'¹⁶⁴ that the witness feels is fitting for public consumption. Certainly if we look at the sort of 'additional' memories previously listed, my findings appear to endorse Thompson's theory. This is because many of the additional memories present in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's memoirs are essentially explanatory, background, factual details that further qualify an existing memory already mentioned in their other testimonies, rather than relating distinct personal experiences in themselves. Such additions could therefore be attributed to survivors scrutinizing their recollections more thoroughly, and including as much 'linear'¹⁶⁵ and circumstantial detail as possible into their testimonies for the sake of their public readership. Such information would certainly help Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's readers to visualise the experiences they describe in more specificity, the additional historical information they include underscoring the veracity of the experiences portrayed.¹⁶⁶

Myth Making: Additional Memories or Camp 'Legend'?

However, there are also some additional memories that feature in these survivors' memoirs which are not simply 'elaborations' or more detailed descriptions of incidents Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman have already touched upon in their other testimonies. For instance, Anita Lasker-Wallfisch writes about some events she personally witnessed taking place in her memoir, which she has not reflected upon in any

¹⁶³ Thompson, p. 279.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. That is chronologically detailed.

¹⁶⁶ See Chapter 4.

other testimonial. The first time that Lasker-Wallfisch discusses a supplementary memory she has not mentioned in any other testimony, occurs when she reflects with first-hand knowledge on the death of a famous Kapo called Mala. Mala Zimetbaum was a 'block-elder' (82) at Auschwitz, who has become part of camp 'legend' for her humanitarian treatment of her fellow internees and for her dramatic suicide.¹⁶⁷ This execution features prominently in many survivor testimonies, as Mala's compassionate nature and refusal to submit to degradation made her a celebrated and heavily mourned casualty of the Nazi death machine. But although Lasker-Wallfisch writes about Mala and says she was 'forced to line up and watch her execution' (82), no-where else in Lasker-Wallfisch's testimonials does this spectacle feature. To confuse the situation further still, at the start of the next paragraph Lasker-Wallfisch is in the middle of talking about something else, when she writes, almost as an aside: ' – and that was before my time too' (82) as if she is saying that the memory she had been discussing before – her memory of Mala – was also 'before her time'.

¹⁶⁷ After a failed escape attempt, Mala and her Polish boyfriend were re-captured and destined for execution as an 'example' to the other internees. But before the guards were able to kill her, Mala slashed her own wrists in front of the assembled camp whilst hurling abuse at her executioners, in what Lasker-Wallfisch terms 'a heroic last stand' *Inherit the Truth*, p.82.

Many Holocaust survivors have talked about Mala's suicide as if they had witnessed it themselves, although it has later transpired that many of them had not.¹⁶⁸ Andrea Reiter attributes such 'mis-rememberings'¹⁶⁹ of significant events – the examples she uses being Mala's suicide and the shooting of the SS man Schilling by a young Jewess – as survivors' constructing 'a defence against the destructive potential of the remembered experience'.¹⁷⁰ In Reiter's scheme of events, the presence of such incidents in survivor testimony attests to the trauma involved in their experiences, when certain happenings are absorbed into the collective memory of camp internees 'where they could be assigned a symbolic [and one might add an affirmative] meaning'.¹⁷¹ In her 'heroic last stand'¹⁷² Mala took control of her own destiny, selecting and implementing her own choice of death in a public act of resistance against her persecutors. In an environment where those who were killed had no control over their own fate, witnessing Mala's refusal to submit to the degradation around her - and assertion of her own humanity in the face of Nazi brutality - would instill in other prisoners a feeling of empowerment, reinvigorating them

¹⁶⁸ Indeed, Geoffrey Hartman has attributed such misrememberings to the Holocaust survivor's need for 'heroism' at 'time[s] of victimage'. Hartman in fact asserts that when 'heroism [is most wanting] there is [a] little mythic inflation in the testimonies' of survivors, and that this human need to create a 'forward-looking memory, [in] the hope of having a story to tell' may have allowed many to survive the horror the concentration camp life. See Geoffrey Hartman, 'Holocaust Videography, Oral History and Education' in *Tikkun: A Bimonthly Jewish & Interfaith Critique of Politics, Culture & Society* (May/June 2001) <<http://www.tikkun.org/magazine/index.cfm/action/tikkun/issue/tik0105/article/010521.html>> [accessed 02/02/05]. Alistair Thomson has also observed this phenomena occurring in the testimonies of Australian Second World War Veterans, who he observes 'related scenes from the film *Gallipoli* as if they were their own.' See Alistair Thomson's 'Anzac Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory into Practice in Australia' in *The Oral History Reader: Second Edition*. ed. by Rob Perks and Alistair Thomson (Routledge: London and New York, 2006), p.245.

¹⁶⁹ To borrow Alessandro Portelli's term.

¹⁷⁰ Andrea Reiter, 'Memory and authenticity: the case of Benjamin Wilkomirski' in *The Memory of Catastrophe* ed. by Peter Gray and Kendrick Oliver (Manchester University Press: Manchester, New York, 2004), p.134.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Lasker-Wallfisch, *Inherit the Truth*, p.82.

with a sense of their own humanity, and invoking a feeling of communal morale, whether they were there to witness it first-hand or not.

Anomalous Memory

Yet this is not the only anomalous memory to feature in Lasker-Wallfisch's memoir. For instance, immediately after Lasker-Wallfisch's description of Mala's suicide she begins to write about 'The Blockova' of her block, and a certain Pani Funia:

The Blockova of our block was a certain Czajkowska, a Polish woman. She had been in charge of the orchestra before Alma's arrival – and that was before my time too. Then we had a Stubenälteste, a sort of 'head girl'. Her name was Pani Funia. I can see her now. She must have had facial paralysis because her mouth was all to one side. She doled out the soup; 'Po Zupe, Dziewczyнки', she used to shout. Her face and voice are etched into my memory. (82-83)

Once again, and as with Mala, Pani Funia is someone who Lasker-Wallfisch has not mentioned in her testimonial recountings before this point. And yet she says that her 'face and voice are *etched* into my memory'.¹⁷³ Indeed, Funia has made such a lasting impression on Lasker-Wallfisch's consciousness, that whilst writing her memoir she 'can see her now' in her mind's eye, even fifty years on. But why, if this memory is so profound, has Lasker-Wallfisch not discussed it before (or indeed after) she wrote this testimonial?¹⁷⁴ Other such memories are also scattered through Leon Greenman's testimonies, such as when he writes about his experiences on a cattle truck transport between concentration camps. Whilst recalling this journey, Greenman writes a highly

¹⁷³ My emphasis.

¹⁷⁴ Aside from in her unpublished manuscript, as previously discussed.

descriptive account of an incident which only features in one of his other testimonies - when an SS officer caught him collecting snow in a container.¹⁷⁵

I had one thought in mind: fill this container up, and get back into the truck before an SS man catches you. All of a sudden I felt something hitting my back, the gun of an SS guard. He shouted at me: 'You dirty, [sic] swine. What are you doing there?' I turned and looked up at him, saying: 'We are hungry, give us something else to eat.'

He dragged me upright, and told me to help carry my comrades, pointing behind me. 'What comrades?' I thought. I looked around: there were other chaps carrying our dead comrades, who had died in the trucks. One long parade, their stiff dead bodies, blue, green, yellow and dirty black faces and hands. (112)

Being caught by an SS guard and not knowing if he was going to be shot for a breach of regulations, is an incident which is shocking enough in itself. But being confronted by the sight of his dead 'comrades', whom he describes as 'stiff' with 'dirty black faces' is a scene which, by its very dreadfulness, one would think would be indelibly imprinted in Greenman's memory. Further to this, Greenman is forced to carry the bodies of his fellow prisoners to a carriage where he finds many corpses piled on top of each other 'like loaves of bread.'¹⁷⁶ In fact, Greenman goes on to describe how he 'could not stand it any longer' as he felt, after seeing this atrocity, that he was 'tak[ing] part in this mass murder.'¹⁷⁷ Overwhelmed by his experience, Greenman ignores the guard's orders and runs away to hide in another truck, where he is taken in and concealed by his fellow

¹⁷⁵ The only other testimony in which Greenman speaks about this memory is the first recorded testimony he gave after his 1945 BBC account – to the Imperial War Museum in 1986. In this testimony, Greenman talks about seeing bodies that were 'blue yellow, green dirty, dead frozen men with beards...I never saw so many heads and feet.' Yet he only testifies to this event on one other occasion - in his memoir. Greenman's memory of this event is also described in greater detail in his written account. See Greenman's Imperial War Museum testimony.

¹⁷⁶ Greenman, *An Englishman in Auschwitz*, p.112.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

prisoners. Greenman's emotional involvement in this event, so intense that he actually felt he was participating in the Nazi genocide, makes this an extreme and particularly austere experience – even in Holocaust terms. Indeed this, coupled with Greenman's acute sense of disempowerment – to which he responds by absconding from the scene, and in so doing, risks being shot – makes this a particularly unusual memory. Yet like Lasker-Wallfisch, strangely, this memory is only discussed in one of Greenman's previous interviews, and in none of his subsequent recountings.

Like Greenman and Lasker-Wallfisch, Trude Levi also recalls some extra additional memories in her written testimonies, which are not present in her other accounts. In Levi's 1958 testimony, for instance, she writes about having to endure a medical inspection during which she had to stand still for some nine hours in the pouring rain. After this wait, 'some SS officers arrived and [...] examined our throats with a torch and the palms of our hands'.¹⁷⁸ Levi also talks about having rounds of unfinished inoculations against typhus and diphtheria in this testimony – memories which are once more not mentioned after this point. Yet again, what seems to unite Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's omitted and additional memories is their traumatic content. This is because the various recollections which only feature in their memoirs – whether they are concerned with medical inspections which carried with them the potential for selection; the Kapos who had control over who received food and who could administer vicious beatings; or the enforced disposal of the dead - all surround events which Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman found at the very least upsetting, and at most deeply

¹⁷⁸ Trude Levi, (Given under first marital name, Deak) *A Woman Survives Auschwitz and the Death March*. March 1958. Cat no: P.III h (Auschwitz) No.864. Housed at the Wiener Library. All further references are taken from this transcription.

disturbing. Alternatively, one may attempt to explain the presence of such previously omitted memories by returning to Thompson's theory, reasoning that Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman are evoking a different *kind* of memory in their written testimonials that is 'significantly different [from their oral testimonies] in what it conveys'.¹⁷⁹ As written language is 'grammatically elaborate, linear, spare, objective, and analytical in manner, precise yet abundantly rich in vocabulary',¹⁸⁰ it would seem to follow that recollections relayed in a written memoir would necessarily be recorded in greater, more meticulous detail than memories recounted in an oral interview situation. But this explanation is far too simplistic, as it does not take into account the fact that there are some anomalous memories present in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's oral interviews, which they relate in much *greater* depth of personal detail than when they are describing these same events in their written accounts. If we take as a *locus classicus* an occurrence which is not often reflected upon in detail in Anita Lasker-Wallfisch's testimonies - her memories of Kristallnacht - we see that when Lasker-Wallfisch writes about the 'night of shattered glass' in her first unpublished memoir in 1988, she talks about the event *itself* relatively briefly and in rather scant detail. Instead, Lasker-Wallfisch chooses to discuss the historical and political background to the situation, describing the incidents which took place on that night in general adumbration, rather than talking about events from the first-hand perspective of an eyewitness:

¹⁷⁹ Thompson, p.278.

¹⁸⁰ Thompson, p. 279.

The first colossal indication of impending disaster was on the 9th of November, when Herr von Rath, a minor official at the German Embassy in Paris was killed by a Jew by the name of Gruenspan. This incident ‘spontaneously enraged the German people’ (as the press put it at that time), and the first major pogrom of the Nazi era took place. Synagogues were burnt down and all Jewish shops smashed up and looted. (Jewish shops previously had to be earmarked by having the owner’s name written in regulation size letters, with the star of David next to it. So there was no mistaking a Jewish shop with an Aryan one). The majority of the male population was arrested [...] Every day that came to an end with one’s family still intact was a kind of achievement. My father escaped arrest on that famous ‘Kristallnacht’ (night of shattered glass), as it became known, on the 9th of November thanks to the courage of a great friend of ours WALTER (MATHIAS) MEHNE, who was a violin maker in Breslau. He was not a Jew, and deliberately ignored the fact that the streets were littered with Gestapo looking for Jews. He climbed the stairs to our flat, took my father with him, and drove him around in his car for the rest of the day. – [Lasker-Wallfisch’s capitals] ¹⁸¹

But when Lasker-Wallfisch talks about Kristallnacht in her interview for the Imperial War Museum in 1991 she discusses the incident in much fuller detail, including additional memories not previously mentioned. Lasker-Wallfisch also speaks about this occurrence in the first person, and in contrast to her written testimony, this reflection is much more focused on her own personal experience of that night’s events:

L-W: ...Well you everything, uh all the shops smashed up and...you know the streets were littered with glass really I remember glass and I was a another thing that I remember is liquor running in the – you know when they smashed up liquor stores - running in the gutter. And of course the shops weren’t just smashed but they were looted and...but you know you probably know that in those days one could tell a Jewish shop they had to have special writing on them, you know special special regulation letters and a star I think as well I mean everybody knew a Jewish shop it wasn’t very hard to find...I just remember this great big smashing up of, of things and people were *disappearing*. I came uh, I think I must have gone gone back home the next day. ¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Lasker-Wallfisch, unpublished manuscript testimony. p.6. Lasker-Wallfisch writes about Kristallnacht in an almost identical manner in her published memoir.

¹⁸² Lasker-Wallfisch’s emphasis.

Although a comparison of the above extracts also shows that Lasker-Wallfisch's address assumes some decidedly literary elements in her published memoir, these two accounts could not be classified as different *kinds* of memory. Rather, these recollections place a different *emphasis* on remembering – presenting Kristallnacht from two varying perspectives. In one, Lasker-Wallfisch tries to portray the historical context to the 'night of shattered glass' in vignette for her reader; in the second, she attempts to give voice to her more personal memories of November 9th, 1938.¹⁸³ But there are also some interesting and fundamental differences between these two accounts. In the first, Lasker-Wallfisch discusses Kristallnacht from the standpoint of a historically informed narrator who can recognise the marker-posts of persecution to come with the benefit of hindsight. As such, Kristallnacht is for her 'the first colossal indication of impending disaster' in the future; she knows what triggered the event and reflects on the circumstances which made it so devastating. However in the second oral account, Lasker-Wallfisch is not speaking from the perspective of a historically informed narrator so much as from the viewpoint of an actual *eyewitness* to these events, reflecting on her own memories in the first person. More importantly, this is no direct reportage style of remembrance; as unlike her previous and subsequent recollections, during this passage of dialogue Lasker-Wallfisch's entire tone of voice and manner of address changes. Information which Lasker-Wallfisch was certain of in her written accounts suddenly becomes indefinite – she is unsure whether

¹⁸³ This comparison shows the value of oral history recordings, which allow us the luxury of simultaneously analysing testimonial recountings from a variety of different standpoints.

shops had to display the Star of David and if she went home the day after the riot.¹⁸⁴ Lasker-Wallfisch's otherwise even speech tempo also alters, slowing and becoming filled with pauses, breaths and abrupt hiatuses. Besides this, Lasker-Wallfisch's tone of voice becomes more pensive and focused on her recollection; her words are repeated and jumbled together; and she employs what I shall term 'active' rather than 'conclusive' verbs¹⁸⁵ such as 'people were disappearing', which gives her memories a sense of immediacy and present-ness. All of these elements give the listener the impression that Lasker-Wallfisch is visualising the scene and then relaying what she observes of it back to her interviewer – almost as if she were in the midst of actively *witnessing* the atrocity, rather than reflecting on the distant past. Lasker-Wallfisch's style of address adds further weight to this reading, as she begins to voice her thoughts out loud, remembering new things and articulating them as she speaks. Lasker-Wallfisch also talks in long, fast, elongated sentences when voicing her memories at such moments in her recollecting, pausing for breath very infrequently and not 'holding back' to compose her thoughts (as she has previously done) but rather jumbling her memories into words as she thinks of them, whilst continuing on with her recollections – even when her interviewers ask her about a different topic. If we take the extract below as an illustration, when Lasker-Wallfisch is talking about her family's attempts at emigration, the reader can see she is

¹⁸⁴A fact which Lasker-Wallfisch is certain about in her later interview for the British Library. She also states with certainty that she went home the next day in her published memoir and British Library testimony, yet here she is unsure.

¹⁸⁵For instance, if Lasker-Wallfisch is speaking about events which she witnessed occurring in the far-past, it follows that she would refer to the incident using conclusive verbs in their correct grammatical tense, referring to people as having '*disappeared*' during Kristallnacht, the past participle and perfect aspect (that is the grammatical aspect which refers to a state resulting from a previous action) and use of the past tense indicating that she is referring to an event which occurred in the past. However, when Lasker-Wallfisch states that 'people were disappearing' she is using the active verb/participle (or gerund – verbal noun) and progressive tense, indicating that the events she is describing have not been followed through to their completion – as if they are actually still happening at the present time.

speaking in long, quick, extended sentences - the lack of punctuation illustrating how she hardly pauses for breath whilst in the midst of relaying this memory. Lasker-Wallfisch also stumbles over her words as she speaks here, as if she is talking before she has really thought about what she is saying:

L-W: So there wasn't a place really that welcomed people at all so it it wasn't easy, well in fact it was impossible and in there I've also got letters from my parents begging to at least - realising that everything was too late - can you please take the children at least the children because there were a [sic] English families that would take children and in fact my sister had a place with a reverend Fisher who was going to take her in he had a daughter the same age and there already question of the school uniform you know that had got quite far this arrangement, my sister could have got out, and I was supposed to go to Paris again to study at the Ecole Normale but one didn't know that anyhow Paris wouldn't have helped very much and all these last this correspondence about that took place middle to end of August. And suddenly it was too late everything, the war was declared and we were still there, had the war been declared two weeks later I would have possibly have been in Paris which wouldn't have helped but my sister would have been in England but, you know everything fell to pieces...so that's how it was and then we were trapped.¹⁸⁶

These linguistic variations, coupled with the way in which Lasker-Wallfisch appears to be so absorbed in recalling her past at such moments, seem to demonstrate the fact that the events of Kristallnacht are being more than merely remembered and relayed - indeed, that such memories are ostensibly physically 'possessing' Lasker-Wallfisch, so that fleetingly the temporal boundaries between past and present are dissolved, and it seems as if these events are actually happening to her in the present. Leon Greenman similarly reflects on the process by which he remembers his past in her memoir, stating that his

¹⁸⁶ Lasker-Wallfisch, Imperial War Museum testimony.

memories often ‘transported me back in time...All the fear and horrors and inhumanity that I had experienced in the camps were alive in me again, as if I had never left.’¹⁸⁷

The concept that survivors in the process of relaying certain traumatic memories can become ‘consumed’ by their recollections of the past is a recognised phenomenon. In *Remembering Survival*, Lawrence Langer discusses the fact that survivors who re-acquaint themselves with the actuality of the Holocaust through testimony often express a disjunction between what they consciously remember and the feeling of being totally ‘possessed’¹⁸⁸ by their memories. Henry Greenspan has also found this whilst interviewing Holocaust survivors, noting that certain eyewitnesses he has spoken with have given recountings ‘that appeared to have a mind and memory of [their] own’.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, Dominick LaCapra sees survivors being ‘possessed’ by certain traumatic memories from their pasts as decisive evidence of ‘untold’ experiences – or, as he terms them, ‘memory lapses’ - surfacing in their otherwise composed recollecting.¹⁹⁰ These memory lapses signify reminiscences which have either been consciously omitted, that is denied, or unconsciously repressed by a survivor in order to cope when speaking about the past. But, LaCapra continues, memories that have been suppressed and/or repressed in this way are not ‘forgotten’ in the conventional sense of the word. Rather, such memories ‘return in a transformed, at times disfigured manner’¹⁹¹ that, it follows, is manifest in the broken and disjointed mode in which survivors attempt to express these recollections. The fact that Lasker-Wallfisch’s discourse becomes peppered with gaps, hesitations and

¹⁸⁷ Greenman, *An Englishman in Auschwitz*, p.2.

¹⁸⁸ Langer, *Remembering Survival*, p.72.

¹⁸⁹ Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors*, p. xvii.

¹⁹⁰ LaCapra, *History and Memory*, p.10.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

repetitions when she is in the midst of recollecting such memories is therefore of the utmost importance, if these vacillations were not present in her speech before or after this point in their recollecting – which is the case in these instances. In fact there are very few moments during Lasker-Wallfisch’s testimonials in which she hesitates in this manner, and importantly, these speech related irregularities almost always occur when she is attempting to relate a memory that has a disturbing content.¹⁹²

Perceptible Trauma: Patterns of Audible Irregularity

These findings are not exclusive to one of Anita Lasker-Wallfisch’s testimonies. In fact, in a number of Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s testimonies, as they begin to talk about the most terrible events they experienced during the Holocaust their recountings become full of pauses, breaks and tonal falterings that were not present in their dialogue before this point. Just such an episode can be found in Trude Levi’s oral testimonies, when she gets to the stage in her recounting that she has to reflect on her arrival at Auschwitz, and on the fate of her mother who had been with her up until this point. When Levi recounts this memory, her previously lucid and composed speech *consistently*

¹⁹² Although irregularities do of course occasionally occur at moments during which Lasker-Wallfisch is not relaying traumatic memories, it is worth noting that at times when she is more relaxed and less ‘consumed’ by a recollection, Lasker-Wallfisch almost always realises when she has made a mistake and is quick to correct herself, such as when she is talking about forging papers in her Imperial War Museum testimonial: ‘[we were] involved in what we are doing what we were doing’, or when she is in the midst of a flow of dialogue in her media interview with Sue Lawley for *Desert Island Discs*: ‘I think one of the ingredients were of survival was to be with other people.’ Lasker-Wallfisch, testimonial interview for *Desert Island Discs*. Interviewed by Sue Lawley, August 1996. transc. by Jennifer Maiden. Cat no: 16832/2. Housed at the Imperial War Museum and BBC Sound Archives. All further references will be taken from this transcription. It seems it is only when Lasker-Wallfisch is deeply involved in what she is talking about, that she makes numerous grammatical errors which she leaves unrectified and apparently unnoticed in her discourse, and these discrepancies instill her narrative with a tremendous sense of the immediacy and urgency that Lasker-Wallfisch must have felt on such occasions.

begins to fracture and break down in her oral testimonies. If we take as a comparative example Levi's description of this incident in her Imperial War Museum interview and British Library testimony, we see this rupture occurring:

L: [...] and my mother went completely mad - and uh - senile and she was repeating words, um [**Int:** had had she] [**L,** continuing to talk over her] and we couldn't do anything about it [...] and uh we arrived and then they took us out and there were these uh, - people coming men men coming with striped clothes, uh and uh and some others and they shouted at us [...] I still was with my mother and then my moth uh they looked through and they took my mother away, and uh afterwards I learnt that the place where they took her was the gas chambers so she was straightaway – gassed, [**Int:** when [**L** continues with her recollection without interruption]¹⁹³

Int: [interrupting] your your mother she had been dragged off?

L: Yes well she has been gassed straight away I mean she has been g dragged off in the direction of the – crematoria, - and in a way I was quite happy; [change in tone, more sombre, then begins to speak quickly] I don't know I'm not sure that she still realised what was happening to her - first of all, and secondly I was-s happy that she didn't have to go through all what happened to us this dehuma uh this dehumanising, this humiliating ex uh these hum these humiliating extra uh experiences, uh so that I I think I was - quite happy for her [sombre tone]¹⁹⁴

Though Levi tries to avoid speaking about her mother's murder in her Imperial War Museum interview (skirting over her arrival at Auschwitz in favour of speaking about the behaviour of the Kapos and the lynchings that were carried out in retribution the end of the war) her interviewer brings the conversation back to Levi's mother, as she is asked bluntly what had happened to her. At this point Levi is compelled to speak, and as her dialogue progresses it is filled with a great many more pauses and hiatuses than had been

¹⁹³ Levi, British Library testimony.

¹⁹⁴ Levi, Imperial War Museum testimony.

present in her utterance before this point. Levi's tone of voice also changes as her dialogue continues, becoming unusually sombre at the two points she asserts she was happy that her mother had died early on, rather than living through the camps. Yet after these moments of realism, Levi's speech picks up pace and she begins to talk conspicuously quickly, as if she is trying to hurry past this recollection onto the next. To add to this, Levi's voice simultaneously becomes speckled with a string of hesitations and repetitions as she reflects on the dehumanization and humiliation which her mother was spared – but which she was forced to endure in concentration camps. Likewise, when Levi reflects on this same memory in her British Library interview, her speech becomes similarly dotted with pauses and hesitations, though her dialogue becomes even more confused and dislocated as she remembers the scene in this testimony. Levi's speech also changes tone and pace as she gets to the moment that she has to confront the fact her mother was gassed, becoming slower and more disconsolate. But there are two even more interesting marker posts of trauma present in this account, that are missing from Levi's Imperial War Museum interview. Firstly, Levi begins this recollection by talking about her relationship with her mother in terms of personal association: '*I was with my mother*'. Then, after a momentary confusion in her speech, there is a subtle shift in Levi's narrative viewpoint, as the 'I' and 'my' is replaced by 'they' and 'her'. This change in perspective indicates a break in Levi's personal relationship with her mother, as from this point on she speaks about what happened to her from 'their' standpoint – focusing on what the *Nazis* did, rather than dwelling on what *Levi* did as this happened, and what *she* felt; the implicit shift in positions also illustrates how the bond between mother and daughter was prematurely severed from this moment on. On top of this, although Levi's interviewer

attempts to interject as she relates this memory, Levi ignores her interviewer's interruptions and continues to speak about her past without stopping. This total absorption in recounting her memory - remarkable as it does not often occur in Levi's testimonies - would seem to indicate that she is utterly 'possessed'¹⁹⁵ by this memory as she is recalling it, so that for Levi - at this moment - the past is very much intertwined with the present.

Like Levi, when Anita Lasker-Wallfisch is discussing the fate of her parents her normally articulate speech also repeatedly begins to break down, and importantly, this also happens recurrently on each occasion that she reflects on this memory in all of her media and non-media testimonials. When the topic of conversation moves on to the last few days that Lasker-Wallfisch spent with her mother and father in her interview with Jennifer Wingate, for instance, her otherwise uninterrupted, even speech becomes dotted with gaps, breaths and minor hesitations:

L-W: Künigl was a very wonderful man I mean he, he was very dependant on my father as well because he he did his court case, when my parents were deported which was in 1942 on the 9th of April...it was only my mother my father who had - like the convocation to appear in within 24 hours, you know it was always, the systems was weren't always the same in their case it was in 24 hours to report to a certain place, but not my sister and I, so um...we wanted to go with them.

Similarly, when Lasker-Wallfisch is forced to think about her parents' deportation in her media interview with Sue Lawley for *Desert Island Discs* as her interviewer asks her about the incident directly: 'they came for your parents [...] you would have been 16 at

¹⁹⁵ Langer, *Remembering Survival*, p.72.

the time, - did you ever find out exactly what happened to them?', Lasker-Wallfisch's hitherto composed and steady dialogue again begins to waver:

L-W: Not exactly but pretty exactly that they were sent to a place called Izbica, and uh-m the method of killing people there was that they had to dig their graves and were shot into the graves but I have no - actual 100%, confirmation of that but - I can well believe it that's what happened

In this extract, when Lasker-Wallfisch gets to the point where she has had to surmise that her parents were shot and then also confront the fact that she has no knowledge as to their real fate or final resting place, her previously fluid and lucid speech ruptures and fractures: Lasker-Wallfisch's discourse thus becomes pitted with vacillations and pauses in the midst of recollecting, and her voice simultaneously changes tone and pitch, becoming more remote and tinged with a detached and melancholy edge. This example is all the more arresting, since it is the only instance during this entire interview where Lasker-Wallfisch seems to be obviously distressed - from the atypically prolonged silence at the end of this extract, one might even go so far as to say overwhelmed - by her memories. More striking still is the fact that Lasker-Wallfisch is not speaking about directly *remembered* events here. Instead, she seems to be disturbed at the evocation of a *remembered memory* – as she recalls the moment that she learnt of her parent's final destination and of the facts about Izbica - rather than when (as in other instances) she is drawing on memories of events she actually witnessed taking place. In fact, later in the same interview we learn that Lasker-Wallfisch found out all of this information at a much later date, when she was conducting research on the Holocaust at the Wiener Library in London:

L-W: [...] out I don't know and I never knew what happened to the people in Izbica til I went to the Wiener Library, many years later, where curiously enough - they found some report about Izbica there-are no survivors at all. I went some years ago back to them to find this piece of paper and they can't find it I don't know where it is, but Izbica is very near Chelmno Sobibor and one of the places where they made people dig their own graves and uh shot them into the graves, *undress* - take their clothes off shot them into the graves [said very quickly] I've got pictures of that.¹⁹⁶

Although she could find no evidence of her parents' executions at Izbica, and in spite of the fact that her hesitating speech patterns indicate she finds speaking about their demise distressing, Lasker-Wallfisch seems paradoxically to derive a degree of comfort from the materiality of the only tangible object she could obtain from the camp – a photograph of the fate meted out to deportees such as her parents. Nathan Beyrak, the director of the Israeli division of the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, has spoken about the 'comfort' he derives from finding out details of the circumstances in which his relatives died during the Holocaust, whilst interviewing survivors of the genocide. Although not a survivor of the camps himself, Beyrak has voiced an opinion expressed by other members of the first and 'second-generation' of survivors,¹⁹⁷ when he reflects on how he felt 'compelled'¹⁹⁸ to find out as much detail as possible about the deaths of his family members:

¹⁹⁶ Lasker-Wallfisch, British Library testimony.

¹⁹⁷ Marianne Hirsch, 'Mourning and Postmemory', in *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings*, ed. by Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg (Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p.416 Like Beyrak, Daniel Mendelsohn also describes his journey to find out more about his family's history in terms of cathartic release in *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million*. In this book, Mendelsohn details his quest to find out about the lives and homes of relatives that were murdered during the Holocaust, and this journey takes him across the globe in search of information. See Daniel Mendelsohn, *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million* (HarperCollins, 2006)

¹⁹⁸ Nathan Beyrak, quoted in Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*. trans by Jared Stark (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 2006), p.128.

I have no details of the murders of my relatives, my grandmother and her mother, sons and daughter...which probably took place in the death pits near Slonim. I always felt compelled to know, to learn the most intimate details of what they experienced, moment by moment. I think the nearest I got to satisfying my curiosity was when I taped the testimony of a man who was taken to the very same pits, possibly together with my family, and described the experience in great detail. Unlike my relatives, he fell into the pits without being hit by a bullet, and later managed to climb out.¹⁹⁹

For Beyrak, establishing details of the probable circumstances of his relatives' deaths gives him a sense of 'closure' - ending the indefiniteness and ongoing hope plaguing those relatives who wait in suspense for their 'missing' family members. Ascertaining the site and circumstances in which their relatives died also provides Beyrak and those like him with a tangible point at which – and, in Lasker-Wallfisch's case, a physical artifact in which – it is possible to begin the grieving process. Annette Wieviorka goes further still, suggesting that it is the historical facts and testimonies of other survivors that provide the relatives of victims with a sense of space and place that had hitherto been denied them. In this chain of events, finding out the details of a relative's death 'reestablishes not only the identity of the survivors but also the identities of the descendants of those who died without graves'.²⁰⁰ Judging by Lasker-Wallfisch's reaction to her remembered memory of her parents' probable death, it seems doubtful that she experienced such a positive epiphany upon acquiring this information. But what is most germane about Wieviorka's theory in this context, is the idea that material evidence such as testimonial verification²⁰¹ may give survivors a sense of identity and legitimation when talking about their

¹⁹⁹ Beyrak, quoted in Wieviorka's *The Era*, p.128.

²⁰⁰ Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*. trans by Jared Stark (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 2006), p.128.

²⁰¹ i.e. testimonials given by other survivors which seem to 'back up' or reinforce the experiences being expound by that survivor.

experiences, which would allow them the freedom to speak about memories which may otherwise have been left tacit.

Physical Artifacts and Testimony

Indeed, Lasker-Wallfisch seems to derive this sense of security from primary source material such as the aforementioned photograph whilst giving testimony in other interview situations, aside from her *Desert Island Discs* testimonial. For Lasker-Wallfisch actually refers back to primary source material from the time of her persecution in almost every interview she has given, going so far as to take photographs, documentation and even concert tickets from the war into her interviews, which she then refers to at regular intervals as she reflects on the past.²⁰² Like Lasker-Wallfisch, both Greenman and Levi bring additional material into their interviews with them – from photographs and official documents, to the ashes of those cremated during the

²⁰² A good example of this is occurs during the interview Lasker-Wallfisch gave in preparation for her appearance on 'The Archive Hour.' During this interview, Lasker-Wallfisch refers to a number of documents she has brought with her whilst in the process of recollecting. This happens to such an extent, in fact, that her interviewers have to remind Lasker-Wallfisch that she needs to explain her memories – rather than simply showing them physical documents – 'because it's radio we can't see it.' Jo Glanville, speaking in Lasker-Wallfisch's preparatory interview.

Holocaust.²⁰³ It seems that this compulsion to take supporting ‘evidence’ into different interview scenarios may be to do with survivors’ consciousness of their listening audience; that they feel they need ‘proof’ to verify their recollections, as they have all faced cynicism and incredulity when speaking about their experiences in the past.²⁰⁴ Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman may also be using the physicality of these artifacts as emotional ‘props’ to structure their recollections around, and to help them maintain an

²⁰³ Indeed, Leon Greenman actually brings what he terms a ‘handful’ of crematoria bones and ashes as ‘proof’ of the Nazis extermination of people in concentration camps to some of his interviews, such as his British Video Archive testimony. Greenman has placed these remains in a black box with a clear Perspex top. They sit on a material bed, and on the side of the box Greenman has written an inscription which he reads out: ‘[...] and I got written down here, ‘when Buchenwald concentration camp was liberated by General Patton’s 3rd Army on April the 11th 1945, I Leon Greenman Auschwitz prisoner, 98288, was wandering about the camp grounds, when I came upon the ovens, in which were remains of prisoners cremated; behind me, were *four large wooden* containers, filled to the top, with the remains of many of our comrades. I could not help, but to take *some* of these pieces of bones, almost ashes as it *proves* the truth, of what went on in, these Nazi concentration camps.’ [Greenman’s emphasis] See Greenman videotestimony. For a fascinating glimpse of the array of source material Greenman refers to whilst giving testimony, see the BBC News link to the testimonial he gave for Holocaust Memorial Day, 2008: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/pop_ups/03/uk_an_englishman_in_auschwitz/html/8.stm> [accessed 19/03/08] This testimony consists of a series of photographs of Greenman holding artefacts, photographs and drawings he has sketched himself with accompanying captions relating to his camp experiences, and the providence of each article he exhibits.

²⁰⁴ In Lasker-Wallfisch’s unpublished memoir, she speaks about the ‘acute humiliation’ she has felt when speaking about her experiences in some scenarios. as she has ‘encounter[ed] boredom and disbelief’ on the part of her addresses. This cynicism has had a profound effect on Lasker-Wallfisch, evoking humiliation ‘on behalf of the millions of dead, and I also feel guilty. It is the age old guilt of the survivor, who wonders why he should be in a position to talk at all.’ When faced with such reactions, it is hardly surprising that Lasker-Wallfisch should feel the need to take supporting evidence into her interviews with her, to avoid such disturbing feelings being brought to mind. This will be explored more fully in coming chapters. Greenman and Levi also speak about the fear of not being believed in their testimonies, and of the incredulity with which they were met when relaying their experiences after the war. Trude Levi, for instance, talks about how she was asked to speak at the Jewish Ladies Guild in Durban after the war in her British Library interview. She continues: ‘And I spoke to them, and told them all about it, all about my experiences in camp, and, and when I finished, and I mean, this was ‘48, March or beginning of April, and I still didn’t have any money to buy any clothes or anything, because I, when I finished, one of the ladies came up to me and said, “Well, yes, my dear, it’s a very sad story, and, of course, you suffered a lot, but I am sure that you exaggerated a little bit.” And the other lady came and tapped me on the shoulder, and said, “My dear, if you would dress a little bit nicer, you would be quite a pretty thing.” And that was the only reaction I got, after having spoken for about two and a half hours. And these were women who actually were, either themselves Kishinev, I mean, as children, went through the Kishinev pogroms, and that’s why they were emigrated to South Africa, or were children of people who emigrated to South Africa, and it was quite, and then afterwards, I, for quite a long time, I didn’t tell anyone, because I felt so upset about these remarks, that people just didn’t believe me, and people didn’t understand, and didn’t want to know, didn’t want to hear what has happened.’ Levi, British Library testimony.

organised narrative framework as they recall emotionally disturbing events.²⁰⁵ There is testimonial evidence to support such a theory. Many survivors take physical evidence into their interviews with them, which they then refer to at regular intervals whilst giving testimony.²⁰⁶ So much so in fact, that interviewers who have been involved with the collection of Holocaust testimony have themselves noted that some of their interviewees refer to primary source material in order to structure their testimonies into a selectively constructed 'whole', leaving out memories which may be psychologically harrowing.²⁰⁷ For example, when reflecting on his interviewing experiences, Nathan Beyrak also talks about a male survivor who 'dug out a diary'²⁰⁸ which he then took into a testimonial session for the Fortunoff Archive. This survivor referred to his diary throughout his interview, telling 'stories, reading extracts from the diary before the camera'.²⁰⁹ Beyrak then mentions that the session interviewer noticed this survivor was skipping over pages in his diary, and asked him why he was doing so. The survivor responded by saying 'that certain things written in the journal could not possibly have taken place, because he had no memory of them whatsoever.'²¹⁰ Beyrak notes with some interest that when one read these missed pages, 'particularly the description of hunger, there can be no doubt about their authenticity. But the witness did not want to read these pages aloud. They seemed to

²⁰⁵ As would be in keeping with my previous findings in Chapter 1.

²⁰⁶ For instance, Dr Anthony Grenville of the Association of Jewish Refugees has commented that many of the Holocaust survivors interviewed for *The AJR Audio-Visual History Collection*, refer to photographs or some other form of documentation whilst giving testimony. Dr Anthony Grenville, email conversation with Jennifer Maiden 23/07/07.

²⁰⁷ See Nathan Beyrak's description of his experiences interviewing Holocaust survivors in 'To Rescue the Individual Out of the Mass Number: Intimacy as a Central Concept in Oral History', in *These Faces Talk to Us* ed. by Maurice Cling and Yannis Thanassekos (La Fondation Auschwitz, 1994) p.p.100-151.

²⁰⁸ Nathan Beyrak. Quoted in Annette Wievioka, *The Era of the Witness*. Trans Jared Stark (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 2006) p. 136

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid* pp. 136-137.

him simply “unreal”²¹¹. Beyrak understood this survivor’s reticence to acknowledge the authenticity of such incidents as examples of his being unable to connect his memories with the experiences described in the diary. However, if one looks at the types of memories this survivor found it difficult to reconcile himself with – his experiences of physical deprivation, such as acute hunger, and suffering – it seems likely that rather than being ‘unreal’, these experiences may in fact have been all too ‘real’ and as such, suppressed or repressed. Acknowledging these experiences as authentic would, it seems, require that the survivor reflect upon - and speak about - these painful recollections, and confront memories which he/she has ‘forgotten’ in order to retain his or her sanity. The presence of such ‘untold’ experiences, which, if mentioned at all, are often referred to briefly and in scant detail, is not uncommon in other survivors’ testimonials. Henry Greenspan, for instance, has written about a survivor named ‘Leon’, who overtly stated that horrific episodes are *precisely* the type of experiences he specifically chooses not to ‘remember’ in interviews, as he frankly asserts that ‘the memory is selective, no question. And the selection is probably toward suppressing the traumatic events and concentrating on others which have some human or redeeming quality.’²¹² The historian Nicholas Stargardt has similarly noted whilst researching the testimonies of Jewish and non-Jewish children during the Second World War, ‘the most dreadful experiences’ the children recounted ‘were often described in the most fleeting terms’.²¹³

²¹¹ Beyrak, quoted in Wievioka, *The Era*, p. 136.

²¹² ‘Leon’, quoted in Henry Greenspan’s *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History* (Praeger: Westport, Connecticut, London, 1998), p.156.

²¹³ Nicholas Stargardt, *Witnesses of War: Children’s Lives Under the Nazis* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2006), p.239.

The presence of Beyrak's interviewee's diary in his interview consequently provides him with a ready-prepared narrative, which enables him to forgo the potentially hazardous task of resurrecting memories which were likely to be steeped in trauma. But whilst potentially providing a narrative aid to the structuring of their testimonial recountings, unlike this male survivor, Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's documentation is not extensive enough to allow them to elude memories of suffering altogether. Therefore despite frequently referring back to supplementary primary source material, all three survivors are intervallically forced to speak about some memories they appear to find quite disturbing. This is evident, as when Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman are compelled to talk about the most harrowing incidents they experienced during the Holocaust, time and again their speech becomes filled with linguistic and vocal falterings such as those previously examined. But in addition to these irregularities, there are further dialogic 'shifts'²¹⁴ present in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's discourse at such moments, and these associated variations - occurring as they do at the same specific points during their recountings - lend weight to the hypothesis that such irregularities are likely to be a sign of concealed trauma.

Tense Slips and Grammatical Variations

For instance alongside the hiatuses and hesitations discussed earlier, Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman also intermittently slip from speaking about certain events in the past tense to speaking about them in the recent past, present and future tense. At such moments - as has been previously noted in Levi's recountings - it almost invariably

²¹⁴ To use Alessandro Portelli's term. *The Battle of Valle Giulia* p.11.

seems as if they are totally ‘consumed’ by their recollections, the boundaries between their present-day ‘common memories’ and war-time ‘deep memories’ apparently being breached, or as Charlotte Delbo would term it, rupturing the ‘skin of memory’²¹⁵. A case in point occurs when Lasker-Wallfisch is talking expansively about her post-liberation feelings and experiences in her preparatory radio interview with Jo Glanville and Smita Patel, which are additional memories that only feature in this testimonial. When Lasker-Wallfisch begins to reflect upon the arrival of the British Army in Belsen, for example, her tone of voice changes and on a number of occasions she trails off into silence.²¹⁶ Lasker-Wallfisch’s speech also becomes confused and speckled by pauses at this point in her recollecting. But most interestingly, Lasker-Wallfisch begins to slip between referring to her experiences in the past tense to speaking about them in the present tense, as if momentarily she cannot separate her past-life from her present self:

L-W: Well you know after the first euphoria came a tremendous sobriety, and I mean luckily I have all the letters that *I’ve* written to my sister, uh and you you can almost sort of feel the the – how how everything went down you know after the euphoria and, everybody who was, in a British uniform was a was a God to us you know and bit by bit we found out no *they’re* just people, and even found I remember once I was very very shocked an anti-semitic remark, uh so we thought that everything that *isn’t* a concentration camp *is* paradise...but it wasn’t [...] ²¹⁷

Like Lasker-Wallfisch, Leon Greenman also slips between tenses when relating disturbing memories in his oral testimonies. In Greenman’s British Video Archive

²¹⁵ Charlotte Delbo, *Days and Memory*, trans. by Lamont (Marlboro, Vermont: Marlboro Press, 1990[1985]), p.2.

²¹⁶This is extremely unusual, as there are very few instances when Lasker-Wallfisch pauses whilst giving testimony in any of her interviews, and even fewer examples of her dialogue tapering off into silence.

²¹⁷ My emphases.

testimony, for example, he talks in detail about the selection he was subjected to upon his arrival at Auschwitz where his wife and son were taken to the gas chamber. While Greenman is relating this memory, his previously consistent use of the past tense is intermittently replaced by present tense references:

G: '[...] 50 men were taken out for slave labour that leaves about 700. From the 700 people left men women and children 4 or 5 young ladies were taken out - probably for Dr Mengele experimenting.- And the rest went to the bathroom; what we thought they get a bath; no it was the *gas* chamber and within 2 hours, those people were ashes, my wife and child were ashes. And the way they *k-kill them* in the thing by *choking - choking* - [almost spat out, with vehemence] But we didn't know that in that moment; we didn't know nothing about gassing people, or that they they would beat you up not *yet*, but that was the first thing tha that they were beating up that woman. [witnessing a woman being beaten during the selection]

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Here, Greenman incorporates a number of present tense verbs into his recollecting: when he is relating the figures of his transport, which '*leaves*' 700 people, and when he is talking about Mengele '*experimenting*'. After this, two tense shifts occur in short succession when Greenman is talking his wife and child being murdered: firstly, when he says how the Nazis '*kill them*' and secondly, when he repetitively relates how they were '*choking - choking*.' These shifts in tense are accompanied by irregular hiatuses and a change in vocal tone in Greenman's recounting, as his voice takes on an angry and vehement tenor. Like Lasker-Wallfisch and Levi, the tempo of Greenman's dialogue also alters when he is relating this memory, slowing when he talks about his wife and son dying, and then speeding up to normal pace again over a very short period. This is not a

²¹⁸ Greenman, British Video Archive testimony. Greenman's emphasis.

one-off occurrence. Later in the same testimony, Greenman is talking about the camp doctor when he digresses to talk about an Italian non-Jewish man he watched die, and as Greenman does so, his hitherto fluid speech becomes halting:

G: [...] and he told me that everybody's got to leave Buchenwald, uh-uh the Germans want it that way and nobody kept uh be kept and opposite me...I'm back again in - gosh I'm back in Monowitz, [voice quavers a little] [**Int:** N-now this is this is now uh April] [**G** continues with his recollection as if she hasn't interjected and speaks over her] - I'm back in Monowitz [**Int:** [continues to talk] in Buchenwald] and this this Italian non-Jew came and I saw him *die* I saw him die from beginning to the end, [**Int:** the] [quickly skips onto next memory] anyhow, getting back to Buchenwald,²¹⁹

In this section of dialogue, Greenman's previously articulate recollecting is replaced by a period of indeterminate confusion. Not only does his speech become peppered with gaps and minor hesitations, but these irregularities are also accompanied by a number of shifts in tense. Greenman thus begins to speak in the present tense rather than the past, 'everybody's got to leave', 'the Germans want', talking over his interviewer as if he has not even heard her attempts to interrupt him. But in this extract Greenman goes further still, as he actually proclaims that '*I'm back in Monowitz*' - as if he is actually *returning* to the camp whilst speaking about it - before hurrying onto his next memory at an uncharacteristically fast pace, as if to avoid speaking about this recollection further.

But Greenman is not the only Holocaust survivor to exhibit such behaviour. Indeed, slips of this nature are so conspicuous in Lasker-Wallfisch's testimonies due to their almost

²¹⁹ Greenman, British Video Archive testimony.

complete absence from all of her other accounts.²²⁰ And though such changes in tense are more frequent in Greenman's testimonials, only when he is reflecting on certain memories are such shifts accompanied by dialogic pauses, hesitations, repetitions and changes in vocal pitch and tempo. Tense changes of this nature also repeatedly occur at specific moments throughout Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's other media and non-media interviews. During Lasker-Wallfisch's testimony for the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive, for instance, she moves from speaking in the far-past tense to talking in the present and recent past tense, giving the listener the impression that the incidents she is discussing are actually happening to her *now*.²²¹ When Lasker-Wallfisch is reflecting on the desperate attempts her family made to emigrate before the outbreak of war in 1939, she says: 'they would have only allowed us in if we could have brought proof that we *will* go further, [and use it] just as a transit place',²²² using the future and recent-past tense. A similar episode occurs later in the same interview, when Lasker-Wallfisch is talking about the bottle of cyanide she used to carry with her so that she could commit suicide if she were captured in the recent-past tense, using active rather than conclusive verbs in the progressive tense: 'I was smelling it', and once more when

²²⁰ Indeed, in his *Introduction to Psycho-Linguistics*, Brian T Riley states that whilst 'we all make mistakes when we are speaking', most people will consciously choose to correct themselves. Riley continues that the most important point to bear in mind when analyzing linguistic irregularities is that the speaker 'know[s] how to correct [their mistakes]' and that 'we can recognize our own mistakes for what they are.' Brian T Riley, *Introduction to Psycho-Linguistics* (Cosmo Publications, 2000) p.83. When Lasker-Wallfisch, for instance, makes a linguistic error in the course of relating events which are not traumatic in nature, she almost invariably recognises her mistakes and corrects them in this manner. However, when she is in the midst of relaying incidents which evoke personal trauma, Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman do not abide by these conventions leaving their mistakes uncorrected and seemingly unnoticed as they speak at such moments. It seems that Riley's theory can not be applied to the dialogue of those relating highly traumatic experiences, and that the psycho-linguistic implications one may obtain from Holocaust survivor speech vary greatly from the linguistic inferences we may gather from 'everyday' (that is dialogue that is not imbued with trauma) speech.

²²¹ And reminiscent of the active 'witnessing' scene discussed earlier

²²² My emphasis.

she is discussing how she and her sister were finally caught by the Gestapo, when a whole string of errors in tense occur during one short exchange:

L-W: [...] after 21 days of um...sitting in prison, it was decided whether *you're* going to be handed over to the Justice Department or or whether you stay with the Gestapo have you heard of this before?

Int: Yes.

L-W: Ya, so after 21 days it's a decision made if the Gestapo *keeps* you, which *means* straight in a concentration camp, or the Justice Department *keeps* you, which *means* you have a trial. And we were very lucky we were taken out of the Gestapo clutches and put into the Justice Department because we had actually committed, several crimes I mean *we've* been guilty of forgery [...] it's possible that somebody knew the Lasker-Wallfisch girls *are*, at the Gestapo lets try and a I don't know [...] ²²³

Such variations, coupled with the way in which Lasker-Wallfisch appears to be so absorbed in recalling her past at these moments, ²²⁴ seem to demonstrate that these events are at the forefront of her mind on such occasions; indeed, that they physically 'possess' her, so that fleetingly – as with Levi and Greenman - the temporal boundaries between past and present are dissolved, and it seems as if these things are actually happening to Lasker-Wallfisch in the here-and-now. ²²⁵

²²³ My emphasis and my ellipses.

²²⁴ Indeed, Lasker-Wallfisch's style of talking – thinking out loud, remembering new things as she speaks, talking in long, fast elongated sentences and not seeming to 'hold back', just jumbling her thoughts into words as she thinks of them – would seem to support the idea that she is quite *consumed* by remembering her past at certain points during this interview. For example, when Lasker-Wallfisch is talking about her family's attempts at emigration she speaks in long, quick, extended sentences and jumbles her words, as if she is talking before she really thinks about what she is saying: 'So there wasn't a place really that welcomed people at all so it it wasn't easy, well in fact it was impossible and in there I've also got letters from my parents begging to at least - realising that everything was too late - can you please take the children at least the children because there were a English families that would take children and in fact my sister had a place with a reverend Fisher [...]'.
²²⁵ And she gives voice to them as such.

Although these may seem to be radical claims, this reading of Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's testimonies tallies with my previous findings - the available testimonial evidence supporting, and indeed endorsing, such an interpretation of these survivors' memories. For even when one takes into account the fact that Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman are not native English speakers, and allow for the fact that slips of this nature are bound to occur from time to time since they are speaking in a foreign tongue, it is still possible to discern a pattern in the appearance of these linguistic irregularities.²²⁶ This is because if we compare the points at which such tense 'ruptures' occur, one can see that they are only *consistently* present in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's speech when these survivors are recalling incidents that they seem to be totally 'consumed' by remembering. This discovery is supported by Dominick LaCapra's findings in *History and Memory After Auschwitz*, in which he argues that Holocaust survivors frequently reach moments during their remembering when they appear 'compulsively to repeat, relive, [and] be possessed by' their pasts.²²⁷ LaCapra also argues that irregularities of this nature tend to be 'conjoined'²²⁸ with instances of induced 'forgetting', as survivors leave some of their memories 'untold' - that is either 'denied or repressed' - and that these 'forgotten' memories are in fact 'lapses [induced by]...trauma'.²²⁹ As a result, recalling a traumatic event, LaCapra posits, 'brings about a lapse...in memory' that is sustained - either consciously or unconsciously - in order that a survivor can protect his or her

²²⁶ As I have already mentioned, although I am aware that German speakers do sometimes use the present tense as a literary device still signalling the past tense, and on occasion also use the past and present tense interchangeably, there is I believe simply too much of a pattern in the way in which Lasker-Wallfisch slips between the far-past, recent-past and present tense when she is recalling certain events in every one of her testimonials, for this to be merely coincidence or evidence of a conscious narrative stratagem.

²²⁷ LaCapra, *History and Memory*, p.10

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ LaCapra, *History and Memory*, p.10.

present-day ‘identity’²³⁰ whilst speaking about events which ultimately threaten to engulf them.

Conclusion

*There's no absence, if there remains even the memory of absence. Memory dies unless it's given a use. Or as Athos might have said: If one no longer has land but has the memory of land, then one can make a map.*²³¹

In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Paul Ricoeur asserts that, in essence, memory is seen as functioning in opposition to forgetting; that the chief purpose of memory is to ‘struggle against’ forgetting, which is in turn perceived as an intrinsic ‘attack on the reliability of memory.’²³² I believe that suggesting ‘forgetting’ functions somehow apart from memory, and that absences of this nature signify, as Ricoeur puts, it a ‘weakness’ in remembered experience, is a fundamental misconception. During the course of this chapter, I have illustrated how additional and omitted memories appear in the different testimonies of Holocaust survivors, and examined where such ‘untold’ memories surface in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s recountings of the past. I have found that these ‘absent’ memories appear to follow a clearly delineated pattern – consistently occurring when survivors are forced to recollect traumatic incidents in a range of media and non-media testimonies over time. It therefore seems that these ‘forgotten’ memories, rather than indicating a ‘gap’ in survivors’ recollections, actually denote a deliberate ‘un-remembering’ of certain events in order to cope with recalling such emotionally

²³⁰ LaCapra, *History and Memory*, p.9.

²³¹ Anne Michaels, *Fugitive Pieces* (Bloomsbury, 1997) p.193.

²³² Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London, 2004), p.413.

disturbing moments from the past. From this frame of reference, the occasions where additional or absent memories do appear in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's recountings indicates that the containment mechanisms which withhold their traumatic memories have been temporarily infringed. Indeed, the very occurrence of these memories in the various testimonies these survivors have given over time proves that these incidents have not been 'forgotten' so much as buried to allow Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman to live with their harrowing pasts. Thus, whilst I agree with Nicholas Stargardt that 'interpreting absence[s] and silence as evidence of an underlying trauma is...fraught with difficulty',²³³ through closely analyzing the discourse of Holocaust survivors I have found compelling linguistic evidence, in addition to the silences and falterings present in Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman's speech at such times, to endorse the theory that such 'irregularities' are indicative of latent trauma. Yet to think of 'forgotten' recollections as evidence of the unreliability of memory, and as underscoring the limitations of using Holocaust testimony as a historical source is, I believe, a misapprehension of what such 'absences' show us. The emergent motif in the occurrence and regularity of these 'forgotten' memories - when read through the prism of traumatic stress - illustrates that such recollections can in fact reaffirm the reliability of testimony, both *in spite of* and *because of* these variables. Paul Ricoeur touches on this idea, when he questions what 'forgetting' might actually entail for the eyewitness: 'Could forgetting then no longer be in every respect an enemy of memory, and could memory have to negotiate with forgetting, groping to find the right measure in its balance with forgetting? And could this appropriate memory have something in common with the renunciation of

²³³ Nicholas Stargardt, *Witnesses of War: Children's Lives Under the Nazis* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2006), p.366.

total reflection?’²³⁴ Indeed what I have demonstrated perhaps most clearly in this chapter, is that Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman’s memories of traumatic experiences are not in fact ‘absent’ from their testimonies; nor are they instances of ‘ordinary forgetting.’ Rather, though concealed, these ‘untold’ memories do surface at junctures as Lasker-Wallfisch, Levi and Greenman recount their past-lives, and by tracing the outlines of these ‘memories of absence’²³⁵ I have been able to salvage a part of that which is lost. To some extent, then, this gives me the ability to ‘make a map’²³⁶ of memory that allows ‘analysts [to chart the course of] what appears to be forgotten experience.’²³⁷

²³⁴ Ricoeur, p.413.

²³⁵ Michaels, p.193. My emphasis.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Hedges, p.20.