學術討論

War and the Silent Women: The Retrieval of Chinese and European Jewish Women's Narratives of World War II

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Introduction: War, Women and Gender

During the last decades a significant change has occurred in the study of China's conflict with Japan (Banian kangzhan 八年抗戰; eight year war of resistance, 1937-45). The focus prior to the 1990s was the military and political conflicts between the two nations, but attention has shifted since then to the war's wider impact on society, literature, the intelligentsia, and everyday life during this period.[1] Moreover, one may argue, as does the Oxford historian Rana Mitter, that the concentration on war as a vehicle of cultural and political change is in its own right a new trend in Chinese historiography.[2]

This recent scholarship has also begun to take into account the human cost to this conflict.[3] Nevertheless, women and gender-related issues pertinent to the Sino-Japanese war remain relatively unexplored in these new studies. One may

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1 See Fu 1995; N. Huang 2004 and 2005; Smith 2007.

2 Mitter 2005:536; see also Gordon 2006.

3 Lary and MacKinnnon 2001; Barrett and Shyu 2001.

近代中國婦女史研究 第 17 期（2009 年 12 月）

consider this lacunae evidence that revisionist approaches to military history have been slow to incorporate the relevance of gender factors. Even global histories that attempt to fathom the processes by which war socializes men and women to develop particular attributes to enable them to enact their culturally assigned roles, do not always confront the complexities of these matters for Chinese history. For example, in his pioneering study *War and Gender* (2001), the American scholar Joshua S. Goldstein makes a valiant effort to examine the history of Chinese women's involvement in military conflicts, but he limits his remarks and observations to only a few persons and episodes that are already well-known (Hua Mulan 花木蘭, Hakka females in the Taiping forces, and the 1937 Nanjing massacre).[4]

A closer reading of the written record and published secondary studies would have led Goldstein to probe somewhat further the significance of the gender factor in China's military history, and in particular the trope 'woman warrior' in Chinese culture.[5] Moreover, with the advice of a sinologist, he would have encountered in the Chinese historical record verification of the 'woman warrior' phenomenon. Two of the earliest dynastic histories, the *Jinshu* 晉書 and the *Beishi* 北史 featured in their 'biographies of women' sections, the life stories of a number of women with extraordinary abilities in military leadership.[6] Half a century later, the dynastic history of the Song 宋 (960-1276) highlighted the careers of two woman generals Liang Hongyu 梁紅玉 (d. 1135) and Yang Miaozhen 楊妙眞 (ca.1193-1250), who fought the Jurchen and the Mongols, respectively.[7] And with regard to the modern era, Goldstein should have found

4 The collection of studies in Cooke and Woollacott 1993 is also indicative of revisionist interest in the relevance of the gender factor to military history. Also germane is the provocative study by Enloe 2000 which deals with the use of rape as a weapon of war, and the militarization of motherhood. It is noteworthy that one of the world's best-known military studies, *A History of Warfare* (1993) by John Keegan never once mentions war's effect on women or women's role in warfare.

5 For a recent re-evaluation of Maxine Hong Kingston's 1976 publication with that title, see Lan Feng 2003.

6 See *Jinshu* 8:2515 'Zhang Mao qi Lu Shi' 張茂妻陸氏 (Madame Lu, the Wife of Zhang Mao); 8:2523-24 'Fu Deng qi Mao Shi' 苻登妻毛氏 (Madame Mao, the Wife of Fu Deng), and in the *Beishi* 13:3000 'Meng shi' 孟氏 (Madame Meng); and 13:3002 'Zhao shi' 趙氏 (Madame Zhao).

7 Wu Pei-yi 2002. Admittedly, the biographies of these two women were written within those of their husbands, and thus, not in the section 'biographies of women'.

references to the best known life history of a modern 'woman warrior', Xie Bingying 謝冰瑩 (1906-2000) whose autobiographic writings relate the details about, among other matters, her military service in the Northern Expedition (1926) in *War Diary*, and then about her struggles during the Sino-Japanese War in *New War Diary*.[8]

Xie Bingying's personal history also echos the modern trope of 'female heroism' unleashed in the late Qing (e.g. Qiu Jin 秋瑾 [1875-1907]) and which captivated "the revolutionary visions of young women during the early twentieth century."[9] The celebration of female heroism in Chinese history seems to have endured through the twentieth century, despite the relatively quick death of radical fervor after 1911, the gradual disillusion with May Fourth elitist feminist reforms, and even the resurgence of neoconservative ideals of domestic womanhood associated with the New Life Movement. In his study of war and popular culture during the 1937-45 period, the modern scholar Chang-tai Hung underlines the power of female resistance symbols and the profusion of plays featuring stories about Hua Mulan, Liang Hongyu, and the patriotic courtesan Ge Nenniang 葛嫩娘. These figures, he suggests, symbolized the reversal of the May Fourth goals which "championed individualism and subjectivism" to an agenda of wartime priorities that "submerged personal choices and instead, cultivated a collective spirit of self-sacrifice."[10]

Although literary writers, as well as journalists, by the late 1930s were more likely to express the complexities of women actively participating in current

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8 *Congjun riji* 從軍日記 printed in 1927 forms part of the first version of Xie Bingying's autobiography, *Nübing zizhuan,* which was first published in 1936 and translated into English in 1940 by Adet and Anor Lin, the daughters of Lin Yutang. They titled the book *Girl Rebel: The Autobiography of Hsieh Pingying* which was published by the John Day Company in New York in 1940. The British version, translated by Tsui Chi, was published in 1943 by G.Allen and Unwin with the title *Autobiography of a Chinese Girl: A Genuine Autobiography.* Both versions were best-sellers, and translations into Japanese, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and other languages followed. See Wang Jing 2008:166-87. Xie's entire autobiography in English translation was published in 2001.

9 Mann 2000:854. On the history of the literary topos 'heroic woman', see Li Wai-yee 1999 which traces the genealogy of the female-knight errant to the Tang dynasty, and situates this figure's significance for writing about heroic women during the late Ming—early Qing transition period. See also Judge 2008:152-62.

10 Hung 1994:76. Pan 1997 discusses the vicissitudes of feminism in China during the war period.

events, and to consider women's lives in wartime beyond the lens of nationalism,[11] one may also argue that the idea of female heroism—with its accent on the qualities of courage, boldness, and pluck in the face of enemy forces—continued to dominate many Chinese woman-authored autobiographical writings and historical biographies of twentieth century women. Certainly, it is this 'essentialist' theme that penetrates accounts either by, or about, modern woman generals,[12] and not unexpectedly, female participants in the Long March.[13]

Aside from 'female heroism', the other major theme that overshadows writing about Chinese women and war is their role as 'victims', and in particular, their institutionalization by the Japanese Imperial Army as sexual laborers. Many Chinese women, like groups of other women in other regions occupied by the enemy, were made to become 'comfort women' and forced to engage in sex with Japanese soldiers. It was not unknown that these persons may have suffered coerced copulation with as many as thirty men per day.[14] Recent studies of 'comfort women' in East Asia have demonstrated their deceitful recruitment, their primitive and dangerous living conditions (often near the front line), and not least, their profound emotional trauma both during and after the war years when many of them discovered they were infertile due to multiple poor-quality abortions.[15] But even those women who were not subject to such extraordinary brutality, suffered the 'scars of war': the birth of an unwanted child, the fear of abandonment, the sheer sense of helplessness, the lack of income and the onset

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11 Dooling 2004:11-22, and in particular her references to the 'reportage' writing of Peng Zigang 彭子岡 and Ji Hong 季洪 in the magazine *Funü shenghuo* 婦女生活; and in the case of Shanghai woman writers, including Eileen Chang in the 1940s, see Huang 2005.

12 See Cui Xianghua 1995; cf. Wang Zijin 1998. See also the compilation *Nübing liezhuan* 1985.

13 Phui 2007. In contrast, Lee and Wiles 1999 focus on the 'victimization' of three female individual members of the March. Cf. H.Young 2001 and 2005, as well as Spakowski 2005 for more positive analyses of women's experiences in this event. See also Goodman 2000 which underlines what particular circumstances in one location made women actively participate in the war of resistance to Japan.

14 Hicks 1995:11, 18.

15 I thank an anonymous reviewer for this latter information, and for pointing out that often 'comfort women' were forcibly sterilized to ensure their long-term availability for sex-slavery. It is beyond the limits of this paper to discuss the historical problems of writing about the public memory of the *jügan ianfu* 從軍慰安婦 (military comfort women). For further info, see Hicks 1995; Sand 1999; Stetz and Oh 2001; Tanaka 2002; Ueno 1999; Yoshimi 1992, and the many publications by Su Zhiliang 蘇智良.

of poverty, as well as the terrors of aerial attack, bombardment, and fire.[16] Such miseries and deprivation are also integral to China's wartime history, but have yet to be analyzed properly. Moreover, in much postwar historical writing about this era, understanding the Chinese experience of Japanese imperialism has been supplanted by the constraint of demonstrating Chinese nationalist resistance to it.[17]

An important exception to this lacunae is the ground-breaking work by Yu Chien-ming 游鑑明 and her colleagues at the Academia Sinica's Institute of Modern History who have revealed the convolutionary moments and long-term consequences of the years of war and resistance in China during the 1930s and 1940s.[18] For several years now, she has used the methodology of oral history to analyze how war transformed women's lives in East Asia.[19] Like the set of oral histories of those women from the same age cohort that the PRC feminist scholar Li Xiaojiang 李小江 compiled,[20] the stories of Yu Chien-ming's interviewees also extend into the postwar era. And what emerges from her research is a picture of all the multifarious dimensions of war and its effects on the personal lives of women. The discovery of a husband's bigamy and children from earlier relationships, choosing between starvation or complicity with the enemy, the psychological pain of long-term separations from immediate family members, and not least, the postwar turmoil of life as a refugee in Taiwan, are just some of the tragic experiences that Yu Chien-ming's investigation conveys.

From a historical perspective, these accounts contain those elements which scholars regarding war in other times and other spaces, consider relevant to the retrieval of the past: testimony, narrative, memory and trauma. None of these factors is unfamiliar to Chinese history already during the late imperial era. As a recent issue of the journal publication *History and Memory* suggests, there is a "tremendous variety of Chinese-memory texts representing centuries of cultural history....in which trauma has been particularly salient."[21] "Macro events" such

16 Lary and MacKinnon 2001:9.

17 Smith 2004:4.

18 See Yu Chien-ming et al. 2004.

19 On her approach and her procedures, see Yu Chien-ming 2002.

20 See Li Xiaojiang 2003. Li and her collaborators focused on the women's experiences as direct participants or witnesses during the war. But she also takes her subjects' lives into the land reforms of the early PRC years.

21 Struve 2004:5-6; see also Owen 1986.

as the fall of the Ming, the 1911 Revolution, and more recently, the Sino-Japanese and civil wars of the 1930s and 1940s, are relevant to any global analysis of these concepts. Last year another academic journal, *positions*, featured a special theme issue on 'war capital trauma' in Asia, including several essays that specify the relevance of these more recent struggles to understanding gender and violence there.[22] The article there by Huynah Yang on Japanese military sexual slavery survivors underlines the need once again for comprehending war's dimensions from the viewpoint of gender: how war affects the relative positions of men and women during military conflict. In sum, there is a dearth of research that connects the Sino-Japanese War and gender matters, and where there has been interest in men's and women's experiences of this conflict, too often female roles are usually reduced to either 'heroines' or 'victims', or preconceived as simply 'mothers' or 'caregivers'.

Thus, given this relative silence in the China historical literature on women in the Sino-Japanese confrontation, it does not seem unwarranted to consider how scholars have tackled gender issues with regard to European Jewish women during the Second World War (hereafter, WWII) for which there is now substantial published research. While this paper is not the first endeavor to use the comparison of Chinese and Jewish moments in history – the works of the late Joseph Levenson and more recently, Vera Schwarcz are exemplary here[23] – it is the first effort, I believe, to contemplate how the historical writing on European women and the Holocaust may have relevance for the epistemology of analyzing gender and war in China. Our goal here is to examine what historians and others have written about Jewish women during and after the Holocaust, and to consider how this information may allow us to make a comparison/contrast with Chinese women's experiences during and after the Sino-Japanese War 1937-45. Thus, we do not seek here to document the horrific atrocities that these women in China and Europe faced, but rather to show how scholars utilizing the gender concept in their studies have added meaning to the narratives of women's war experiences.

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22 See Barlow 2008; and also the essays by Ivy, Surin, and Yang in that *positions* issue.

23 See Levenson 1968; and Schwarcz 1992 and 1998. There is also now the growing literature and historical study about European Jewish refugees and their lives in wartime China. See Eber 2008.

The Historiography of European Jewish Women in Holocaust Studies

Despite the wealth of written materials, recorded oral testimonies, photographic collections, and cinema presentations about the Holocaust,[24] there has been a certain invisibility of women and gender matters in all these sources of information until relatively recently. It was only in 1983 when the first academic conference focused on the question of gender and the Holocaust took place.[25] What became manifest during that meeting, and subsequent publications and other academic colloquia was an understanding that what happened to Jewish women during and after WWII was not marginal to the mainstream of Holocaust study, and that given the higher numbers of male survivors than female, the gender factor was crucial to comprehending the complexity of the Holocaust.[26] Joan Ringelheim in an article published in 1985 in the journal *Signs* argued that the Holocaust's killing operations, especially where the Jews were concerned, made explicit distinctions between men and women. Pregnant women, for example, were usually sent straight to the gas chambers. Probing a framework to initiate gender-orientated Holocaust studies, Ringelheim has underlined women's physical vulnerability and the silence that has surrounded the topic. The reluctance of women survivors to discuss sexual abuse and the sensitivity of researchers to avoid the topic have resulted in "a line divid[ing] what is considered peculiar or specific to women from what has been designated as the proper collective

24 Some scholars prefer the Hebrew word 'Shoah' meaning 'catastrophe' or 'calamity' to the English expression 'Holocaust'. The word Holocaust derives from the Greek term *Holokoston*, literally 'burnt offering' which implies a Christian notion of Jewish sacrifice or calvary. I use 'Holocaust' here because of its familiarity to a non-Jewish readership.

25 For the proceedings, see Katz and Ringelheim 1983. Interestingly, around the same time, the first academic workshop on gender politics and wartime discourses of the First and Second World Wars in Europe also occurred. See Higonnet et al. 1987.

26 For a numerical analysis of male-female deaths in the Lodz Ghetto (Poland), see Ringelheim 1993. On page 395 she offers an example differences between men and women: of the 1,128 Berlin Jews transported to Auschwitz on March 5, 1943, 389 men and 96 women were selected for work, while 151 men and 492 women and children were murdered; of the 690 Jews who arrived on the seventh of March, 30 men and 417 women and children were killed immediately.

memory of, or narrative about, the Holocaust."[27]

In general, in historical writing about the Holocaust, the matter of gender has encountered a certain resistance. One will not find gender issues particular to men and women raised in the better known publications, such as those by Saul Friedlander (1992b) or Daniel Goldhagen (1997). Some historians believe that reading the gender factor into the Holocaust 'distorts' the ultimate sense of loss that affected both men and women. In other words, there is concern that the interest in gender distracts from the unity of the Nazi assault on all Jews and "make(s) the Holocaust secondary to feminism."[28] For example, Lawrence Langer, a well-regarded authority on Holocaust testimonies, has questioned whether gender should really be an issue that is mentioned at all (in Holocaust study), and suggests that its application may serve to hide the truth.[29] Langer's views are shared by others,[30] including the noted feminist scholar Cynthia Ozick who challenged Ringelheim's appeal for more attention to the experiences of Jewish women in the Holocaust.[31] But in response to Ozick, Ringelheim reiterates the need to examine those aspects of the Holocaust, such as rape and sexual assault, which are particular to women. That women may have traded their sexuality for survival is a matter so confrontational that many writers have preferred 'to neutralize', rather than attempt to understand, the extent of women's particular victimization.[32] Critics of the focus on gender in Holocaust studies fear that such an approach will "eclipse the Holocaust, subverting its irredeemable horror to a more domesticated *histoire des femmes*."[33]

Nevertheless, despite the neglect of gender in most mainstream historical literature on the Holocaust, and the reluctance to acknowledge its importance

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27 Ringelheim 1998:344. See also Ringelheim 1984.

28 Ofer and Weitzman 1998:1.

29 Langer 1998:362.

30 See Lentin 2000a:691 who comments about the accusations by the noted Jewish writer and scholar Gabriel Schoenfeld (1998) on Ringelheim, Weitzman and Ofer, among others.

31 Ringelheim 1998:348-9.

32 Ringelheim 1997:25. Among female survivors living in Israel, researchers and others (including film makers) have often encountered these women's self-imposed silence. See Lentin 2000b.

33 Horowitz 2000:178. Bos 2003:47n48 raises the issue of how the gender concept, a non-existent category in 1940s Europe, could have played a role in human consciousness. But even then, as she posits, ideas about the behavior appropriate for a person of either sex were a part of people's worldview, as they are now.

(even after the 1980s), there is in fact a vast legacy of memoirs and autobiographies authored by female Holocaust survivors which accentuates this concept's relevance. Already during the War, the Polish historian Emmauel Ringelblum began creating a specific archive of women's lives in his investigative project the *Oneg Shabbat* (Sabbath celebration) which he compiled to document life in the Warsaw ghetto from 1939 to 1942.[34] He commissioned Cecilya Slepak, a former journalist to oversee the women's project and to interview a wide range of ghetto women according to a systematic series of questions.[35] What she and her colleagues found was that the women there had departed from their traditional tasks. In the ghetto women began to assume the role of husbands, protecting and providing, venturing into public places, and even facing soldiers while their husbands remained hidden in domestic spaces. Also published in the immediate post-WWII period was a series of personal memoirs of women who had survived.[36] Documenting life in ghettos and concentration camps, the authors in many instances compiled these writings as part of their own catharsis. Judith Baumel's examination of these records has analyzed what they share in common, and underlines their authenticity, the absence of moralizing, the focus on women's culture, and the role of female self-help and mutual assistance to the author's survival.[37]

Baumel also observes that in contrast to this first wave of publications, there were far less such memoirs printed in the 1950s and 1960s. She attributes this phenomenon and a general lack of systematic research on the Holocaust during these decades to the historical and cultural climate of the period which

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34 Ringelblum's archive was known to consist of more than 100 volumes of diaries, reports, essays, and photographs, only part of which survived the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto. The remaining portions, which were published in Yiddish in 1948, as *Blater Far Geszichte*, were translated into English by Jacob Sloan and published as *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum* in 1958, and re-printed in 1974. See also the recent study by Kassow 2007.

35 On Slepak, see Ofer 1998:143-67.

36 Baumel 1996a:115-6. There were also accounts written by men, but those by women outnumber them. On the other hand, the best-known personal accounts of the Holocaust tend to be by men, from survivors such as Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel to scholars such as Yehuda Bauer and Raul Hilberg.

37 Baumel 1996a:117. These diaries include those by Kitty Hart (1946; republished in 1961), and Mary Berg (1945). See also the discussion by Lixl-Purcell 1994 about the significance of women's memoirs.

was focused more on the evils of Nazism and fascism than on the personal traumas of their victims. The survivors themselves, who were under the pressure to assimilate into the culture of their adopted countries, were also less likely to seek a public forum to bear witness.[38] Reading the Holocaust-related historical literature produced in the United States around that time, the historian Peter Novick suggests that there was a kind of "family-of-man" ethos whereby the Jewish survivors were expected to homogenize with the rest of America. Moreover, Novick writes that the seeming suppression of concern with the Holocaust was not unrelated to the Cold War political climate when Germany became an important new ally against the communist Soviet Union.[39] Other historians have also noted how the 1950s and 1960s were a time of "repression" with regard to historical writing about the Holocaust.[40] For example, in postwar France, as Henry Rousso has shown, Charles de Gaulle and other public officials 'smoke-screened' any information about the complicity of many French people with the atrocities committed against the Jews during the War; instead, they fashioned a legend about the shared purpose France during the Nazi occupation as a site of remarkable resistance, a phenomenon which Rousso has called "the Vichy syndrome".[41] The general nonchalance and disinterest toward the history of the Nazi regime's treatment of the Jewish people during the first twenty years or so after the ending of WWII made information about the Holocaust difficult to acquire. When the well-known author Raul Hilberg tried to publish his ground-breaking scholarly work *The Destruction of the European Jews*, he met one rejection after another until 1961 when a survivor family offered to subsidize its publication.[42] It was only in the 1970s that the Holocaust was no longer a subject of interest to Jews alone, or Jews and Germans, but an integral part of modern history.[43]

The next cohort of women-authored publications emerged in the 1970s when suddenly, there was according to Baumel, a "rush" to publish Holocaust memoirs. No longer the marginal objects of history, the female authors of these

38 Baumel 1996a:119-20.
39 Novick 1999:85-102; 114.
40 Confino 1997:1393.
41 Rousso 1987.
42 Cole 1999:2.
43 Marrus 1994:115.

accounts were now welcome in both academic and commercial publishing circles. Baumel attributes this greater appreciation of women and family survivor stories to two factors. First, a broader shift in historical writing: by the 1970s, a new kind of social history that focused on marginalized groups (as opposed to statesmen, generals, diplomats, and elite institutions) began to dominate both teaching and research. Those who had once been condemned to silence—women, children, criminals, and the "lower orders" in general—now held center stage.[44] Second, the development of women's studies, also connected with the popular social movements in the late 1960s and their concern with equality in relation to sexuality and gender, prompted more scholarly interest in women and the Holocaust.[45] Thus, it may be argued that women's earlier marginalization or gendered silences in Holocaust mainstream history were part of the general repression of women's experiences and roles in the past, rather than something specific to Holocaust studies which itself did not attract attention until the 1970s. But once interest in women and gender issues did become familiar, more and more texts also began to appear that validated the importance of the gender factor in historical writing about the Holocaust. Key texts included those compiled by Vera Laska, Renate Bridenthal et al., and Marlene Heinemann.[46] Such changing attitudes also helped foster awareness of the role that German women played in communicating Nazi values among the populace. For example, Claudia Koonz examined the ways in German women were active in ostracizing and excluding those persons defined by the Nazis as non-Aryan in their day-to-day dealings with people.[47]

One may well ask where does the diary of the Holocaust's most famous casualty, Anne Frank, fit into this historiography? Anne's diary was first published in Dutch in 1947 with the title *Het Achterhuis* (The Attic/Secret Annex), but in an edited version by her father Otto.[48] He excluded her own references to

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44 Wilkinson 1996:82.

45 Baumel 1996a: 123-4.

46 Laska 1983; Bridenthal et.al. 1984; Heinemann 1986.

47 Koonz 1987. See also Milton 1984; and Bock 1998. Koonz 2007 updates her 1987 book with both bibliography and important new insights about gender issues in Germany both during and after WWII. See also Grossman 2007:216-18.

48 In 1986 when the complete and unabridged versions of the Diary were finally made available to the Dutch public, it became clear that there were three editions of Anne's diary: the original, written day-to-day from 12 June 1942 to 1 August 1944 (except for the period

her Jewishness, her sexual self-discovery, her troubled family relationships, as well as her anti-German remarks. He had received the original (written in exercise books and loose sheets) in 1945 from a family friend, Miep Gies who kept it after the Frank family's arrest and deportation in 1944. At first Otto Frank could not find a publisher—four leading Dutch publishers rejected it—until 1946 when an eminent Dutch historian Jan Romein read the manuscript, and wrote about it in an Amsterdam newspaper *Het Parool. Het Achterhuis* was printed by Uitgeverij Contact in June 1947 with a print run of only 1500 copies. Greater interest in Anne's diary only manifested itself after 1952 when Anne became 'Amercanized'.[49] This published edited version, known as *The Diary of a Young Girl*, was received with great acclaim in the USA and thereafter, in Europe and in Japan, with Anne becoming the War's redemptive figure; she carried the message that despite the Holocaust, "humanity was fundamentally good, and that the devastation wreaked by the Nazis had been but a momentary lapse in the ultimate civilizing trajectory of Western culture."[50]

The American play and movie adaptations of Anne's diary, again based on this edited version which interpreted Anne's writings according to a universalistic ethic,[51] became, in Catherine Bernard's words, "a symbol of moral and intellectual convenience, reduced to a mechanism for easy forgiveness."[52] Appreciation of

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from 6 to 22 December 1942); Anne's own re-written version 12 June 1942 to 1 August 1944 (completed between 20 May and 4 August 1944); and the one edited by her father, which was based on Anne's re-written adaptation. See Waaldijk 1993:329. For the English version of the final (complete) edition, see Barnouw and van der Stroom 1989.

49 The first edition of the Diary to be published outside the Netherlands was in 1950 in French. The English versions were both published in 1952: a British translation by London publisher Vallentine Mitchell, and the American by Doubleday in New York.

50 Bernard 2000:24. Elsewhere Bernard 2003:209 recalls how the psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim, a survivor of Dachau and Buchenwald, was nearly alone among commentators in his publicly-expressed distaste for the 'Anne Frank phenomenon'. In 1960 he wrote that "The universal success of *The Diary of Anne Frank* suggests how much the tendency to deny the reality of the camps is still with us, while her story itself demonstrates how such denial can hasten our own destruction."

51 On those efforts to make Anne into a myth and the controversies over the omissions and distortions of Anne's diary as portrayed in the play and the first English film, see Melnick 1997.

52 Bernard 2000:27-8. Doneson 1987:169 argues that Anne's dialogue in these media productions was emptied of Jewish particularity in order to guarantee their appeal to a gentile audience, and that this was done in accordance with the assimilationist ideals of the

Anne Frank in the popular imagination did not easily give way to any critical scholarship about 'Anne the writer', the female documentalist on the eve of her adulthood, capable of making the sharpest observations about the world about her. 'Anne the girl' remained isolated from the impurity of adulthood in order to facilitate her function as a redemptive figure, and 'Anne the emerging woman' did not attract recognition. In that way, one may argue, the popular reading of Anne Frank "has been instrumental in the erasure of gender from Holocaust studies." [53]

Since the late 1990s, however, critical evaluations of Anne's diary and its impact have appeared,[54] and a steady stream of feminist interpretations of women's Holocaust experiences, both in anthologies and individually-authored works have also been published. Among the most important are the collection of articles in Carol Rittner and John Roth's volume *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust* (1993), and the compilation *Women in the Holocaust* edited by Dalia Ofer and Leonore Weitzman (1998). Many of the articles in this latter volume highlight the gender-specific aspects of Nazi persecution. Also important are Judith Baumel's book *Double Jeopardy: Gender and the Holocaust* (1998a), Brana Gurewitsch's collection of personal narratives, *Mothers, Sisters, Resisters: Oral Histories of Women Who Survived the Holocaust* (1998), and Nechama Tec, *Resilience and Courage: Women, Men, and the Holocaust* (2003). This last volume addresses the specific gender-related questions that made the female Holocaust experience different from that of the male. Perhaps, one of the most definitive signs of the progress in the advancement of women and gender Holocaust studies is the work by the male scholar Yehuda Bauer whose 2001 volume entitled *Rethinking the Holocaust* contained a chapter "The Problem of Gender: The Case of Gisi Fleischman." Here Bauer underscores the idea "that the problems facing women as women and men as men have a special poignancy in an extreme situation such as the Holocaust" (p.167). Nowadays,

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1950s. Rosenfeld 1980:17 considers this presentation of Anne's diaries as one of the most 'antiseptic' works of Holocaust literature.

53 Bernard 2003:203. As Buruma 1998 notes, for the mass of Dutch people, Anne herself has become almost beatified into a kind of precious Dutch commodity, a "Dutch Joan of Arc...the saintly victim every Dutch schoolchild knows." Nevertheless, to this day, the Dutch intelligentsia has a problem with the place of Anne Frank in the country's history, and in particular, how effective Dutch collaboration was in helping the Nazi destruction of the local Jewish population. See Bovenkerk 2000; de Haan 1998; Moore; 1997; and also Wolf 2007:54-94, which contains important references to this dilemma.

54 See Enzer and Solotaroff-Enzer 2000; de Costa 1998; Rittner 1998; and Brenner 1997.

as the editors Elizabeth Baer and Myrna Goldenberg claim in the Introduction to their book *Experience and Expression: Women, The Nazis, and the Holocaust* (2003), "arguments that validate or stimulate gendered studies of the Holocaust far outweigh, in both substance and quantity, those proffered by critics and skeptics" (p. xxvii). And for those opponents who still critique the relevance of gender, one may retort "while Nazi policy in regard to the destruction of its enemies was not gender specific, Nazi practice was."[55] For example, research on German Jewish families shows that in the earliest stage of Jewish annihilation, the Nazis viewed men as a greater threat to their political system than Jewish women, and thus they set out to eliminate Jewish men first, and thereby destroyed the patriarchy within these families.[56]

Despite the achievements of recent women and gender Holocaust studies, there remains the proclivity in many publications to reduce women's experiences in terms of their sexuality. In this way, women may be seen as particularly vulnerable – biologically vulnerable – to Nazi brutality, or at the same time as predominantly 'bonding' and 'nurturing', even in the face of extreme atrocity.[57] In many accounts women became 'mothers', regardless of factual circumstances. "Treating women as a more or less unified group with similar behavioral characteristics ignores important differences in cultural background, social class, age, economic standing, level of education, religious observance, and political orientation – differences that, like gender, contributed to the way victims responded to their circumstances."[58]

Thus, just as in so many of the studies of Chinese women during the Sino-Japanese war period where there is the inclination to essentialize and limit analysis to the categories of 'heroine' or 'victim', so there is also the tendency in the Holocaust literature to present an idealized portrait of women's behavior – strong (like men) or nurturing (like women) – that rubs away the complexities of women's experiences, and to a certain extent, 'domesticates' the Holocaust. It is within this same battleground of the 'domestic space' where Jewish women, just as their East Asian counterparts, first had to face resistance and struggle for their

55 Goldenberg 1996:669.

56 Kaplan 1998:59.

57 Both Kahane 2001, and Tec 2003:176-88 deal with this theme.

58 Horowitz 1994:265. Tec 2003 is one of the few exceptional studies that analyzes all these factors.

lives. As Horowitz has observed, because the war against the Jews was launched in the home and the community rather than in a distant battlefield, it was in the beginning encountered and fought in the domestic realm.[59] The implication of this remark is that female survivors' testimonies, unlike traditional war narratives, may reflect intimate settings made unfamiliar by atrocity: the home, the synagogue, the marketplace.

The Dilemmas of Survival and Resistance in Historical Perspective

The domestic arena was the site of combat in both Europe and East Asia because of the kind of warfare that both the Nazi and Japanese military regimes practiced. World War II was a 'total war', meaning "...the commitment of massive armed forces to battle, the thoroughgoing mobilization of industrial economies in the war effort, and hence the disciplined organization of civilians no less than warriors."[60] The innovation of viewing civilian populations in wartime as an extension of military forces also led to the concept of concentration and labor camps. The genocide of European Jews was also integral to this radicalization of warfare. While neither the Germans nor the Japanese recruited women into military service, they did not hesitate to deem them legitimate targets of violence in either armed battle or in their occupation regimes. The wholesale killing of civilian men, women, and their children became a common and essential part of their strategies, for the distinction between soldiers and civilians ceased to matter.[61]

And yet, there were differences between how men and women were treated by the Nazis and Japanese military authorities. During its invasion of China, the Japanese army either shot men of fighting age, or conscripted them as labor. Women were often raped or forced into prostitution. Not only were women raped as a 'gesture of conquest'—but also as an act of humiliation, "*against Chinese men, to*

59 Horowitz 1994:276.

60 Chickering and Förster 2005:2. According to Wasserstein 2007:68, the phrase 'total war' was first phrased by the German aphorist Geroge Christoph Lichtenberg in or around 1776.

61 Chickering and Förster 2003:1.

prove their impotence" (emphasis added).[62] As Timothy Brook observes, the horrific story by Zhang Yibo 張懌伯 (1884-1964) in his collection *Zhenjiang lunxian ji* 鎮江淪陷記 (A record of Zhenjiang under occupation; 1938) about a married couple who came into Zhenjiang from the countryside to sell a basket of cucumbers, reveals the kind of gruesome actions the Japanese inflicted, but differently on men and women. According to Brook's telling, the couple "was stopped at the city gate by Japanese guards. They stripped them and forced them to kneel naked in public for hours, until one of the guards raped the wife with one of her cucumbers. He commanded the husband to eat it, and when the man refused, he shot him."[63]

It is well-known that the Nazis sought directly to threaten and debase Jewish women. Survivors have told of their terror and humiliation when ordered to undress, or when their pubic hair was shaved along with the hair on their head. While the edict ordering Jewish religious men to shave their facial hair was a cultural message of obliteration, the shaving of female bodily hair was predominantly sexual victimization. "Taking away a woman's clothing and exposing her person to the gaze of men with whom she had no familial or sexual relationship was a crude and effective act of sexual violation....shaving had a communicative value, intimately tied to their sexual personality."[64] Notwithstanding the conventional wisdom that racial laws inhibited Germans from raping Jewish women, evidence indicates that Nazis did violate them and then immediately murdered these victims.[65] There is also data that Jewish women were prey to male members of the 'Judenrat' (Jewish councils) who demanded sexual favors in exchange for greater survival chances. One female survivor wrote: "In Poland, both in ghettos and camps, sexuality was a means of buying protection from the Jewish policemen and others who had means and power."[66] Often these Jewish Councils held the power of 'life over death'. Because they could select who could do heavy labor for the Nazis, they also could defer or exempt these persons from

62 Brook 2005:23-4.

63 Brook 2005:24.

64 Ni Aolain 2000:63.

65 Ni Aolain 2000:53.

66 Karmel 1969 cited by Ringelheim 1984:72-3. The 'Judenrat' was a Nazi-delegated Jewish Council of Elders—all male and headed by former community leaders (such as rabbis), although often the secretarial work was done by women.

deportation to death camps. 'Younger' Jewish men could escape immediate death through labor.[67]

Such situations remind us that war is also about 'gray zones'.[68] 'Gray zone' was the term the Italian Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi (1919-87) assigned to the moral area occupied by those in the situation holding power over others, e.g. camp prisoners who became 'kapos' (captains) in exchange for food and other privileges, and who inflicted cruelty on fellow prisoners.[69] Privileged prisoners, Levi observed, were a minority of the camp populations, but "they represented a majority among survivors."[70] Survival in the camps took many forms, and was not necessarily physical. Passive resistance included smuggling, evading call-ups, and not least, behaving humanely toward fellow prisoners.[71] This latter form of survival strategy was practiced by women prisoners in Auschwitz. Neiberger's research on the formation of female 'family groups' there, based on their memoirs or interviews with women survivors, shows how essential this kind of network proved to be.[72] Her study focuses on how women, sometimes in pairs, but more often in groups of three or more, tried to stay together, and came to associate with their shared group. Such networks encouraged survival through the pooling of resources and energies, and most importantly, the preservation of their individual identities. "Forming a family in Auschwitz was an act of resistance at the personal level, because it gave life meaning and offered support and hope."[73]

Neiberger's work exemplifies another important transformation in Holocaust studies in the last decades, from an examination of the mechanics of death to an exploration of the dynamics of survival.[74] Baumel who interviewed survivors of sexually-segregated camps, including males, has analyzed what drew these groups together: same hometown origins, biological kin relations, or proximity—women

67 Cole 2006:44 makes the point that the statistics of Schindler's list, with 1000 men and 200 women, indicate the differences of survival rates between men and women.

68 Card 2000.

69 Levi 1989; see also Levi 1961.

70 Levi 1989:40.

71 Rohrlich 1998:1-2.

72 Neiberger 1998.

73 Neiberger 1998:144.

74 Baumel 1999:329. One of the first publications by a former prisoner to discuss survival factors among women in Auschwitz was Delbo 1968.

in the same barracks or workplaces often formed a type of social community.[75] She adds that the larger the group the greater the chance of survival—larger groups heightened the chances of protection, and supported physical as well as mental endurance. She found that the success of the female groups depended on the speed of their bonding—how quickly women enmeshed themselves in these networks—and the strength of these ties. Her research also points to the relevance of an individual's prewar life. Women who had had experience in organizing and connecting with other women before the War were more likely to adapt to family groups in the camps. The gender factor is also relevant to Baumel's analysis. She discovered women's webs were horizontally-orientated, meant to encompass as widely as possible, while male survivors more often than not participated in hierarchical organizations, and their communication skills in the camps were vertically-orientated.[76]

On the other hand, the same author conveys the findings of those survivor eyewitnesses of ghetto life where women did not always conform to the image of good mothers and dutiful daughters.[77] Polish Auschwitz prisoner and survivor Tadeusz Borowski reported having viewed young mothers abandon their infants, and hiding behind the rows of women in order to escape selection for the death camps, rather than put their children's well-being first.[78] The prescribed role of women in crisis also did not always hold true for unmarried women without children. Among the young men and women stuck in ghetto conditions in occupied regions, it was the girls and young women, more than their male counterparts who faced the dilemma of whether to escape, or to maintain the traditional female responsibility of caring for aged parents or younger siblings.[79] The squalid and terror-filled existence in the ghettos exacerbated the choices women were forced to make in order to survive.

In comparison to the amount of interest the Holocaust has generated in the academy, the Sino-Japanese War has received much less attention, and thus our understanding of issues of survival and resistance in this war theatre is also relatively less developed. As Lary and MacKinnon write, while the military details

75 Baumel 1999:338-9.
76 Baumel 1999:341-2.
77 Baumel 2000:40-1.
78 Borowski 1988.
79 Dobroszycki 1984.

of warfare in East Asia, and sometimes their costs, have been the subject of research, there is less known about the direct economic, social, political, and psychological damage to the Chinese people.[80] One may say that the Sino-Japanese War began with the invasion and occupation of Manchuria in 1931, six years before the official chronology which marks 1937 as the start of the struggle. The conflict broadened into a full-scale invasion of China in 1937, with the first assault on Beijing in July, and the second at Shanghai in August. Beijing fell and capitulated almost immediately while the defense of Shanghai and surrounding regions put up a good fight against the Japanese. Nevertheless, with the punitive attack on Nanjing in December 1937, and the withdrawal of the Nationalist government to the interior, China's eight-year nightmare began in earnest. From a broad perspective, this period in Chinese history may be viewed as yet one more instance of the country's vulnerability to foreign invasion since the 1840s and its debilitating effects on the populace. Lary and MacKinnon suggest one of the long-term effects was 'fear of chaos' (luan 亂) which instilled a deep sense of 'survivor mentality' among ordinary Chinese.[81]

In such circumstances, resistance against the enemy may have involved all kinds of compromises, including outright collaboration. But as a number of historians have argued, the concept 'collaboration' is highly ambiguous, and the line between resistance and collaboration was often fuzzy, not least because for those under occupation, the resumption of normalcy was critical to survival.[82] For example, ambiguity is what best characterizes the actions of Jimmy Wang (Wang Chengdian), a Nanjing-based auctioneer, who supplied food to refugees, and prostitutes to the Japanese. As Brook writes: "Is feeding refugees an act of resistance or a way of helping the occupier establish control? Is recruiting prostitutes an act of collaborating with the occupier, or a way of protecting the majority of women by giving soldiers nonviolent opportunities for sexual

80 Lary and MacKinnon 2001:12. In the same Introduction (p.10), Lary and Mackinnon claim there has been 'a dearth of memoirs' about the War which ultimately intensifies the accounts of foreign witnesses. Outside the Chinese academy, 'war is [considered] an aberration from the political and social norm', and should not be taken too seriously (p.10). Barrett 2001: 14-15 discusses the problems of accessing data about the War in Chinese libraries until recently.

81 Lary and MacKinnon 2001:13.

82 See Brook 2005; Coble 2003; Duara 2003; Fu 1995; Mitter 2000.

activity?"[83] Poshek Fu's study of the Shanghai film industry introduces similar concerns with regard to the role of cinema producers. He compellingly argues that although "Shanghai cinema constituted an institutional part of the occupying power, it did not articulate an ideological position to legitimate that power."[84] His point is that one must make a distinction between working with, or for, the proselytizing of the ideology of the occupying rulers. In their compilation of studies about wartime Shanghai, Christian Henriot and Yeh Wen-hsin make the case that the city's experience should be summed up, not within the parameters of 'heroic resistance and shameful collaboration', but in terms of bloody struggles between those committed to normalcy in everyday life and those determined to bring about its disruption through terrorist violence and economic control.[85] Using the term 'shadow' to entitle their collection, they underscore that Shanghai during the war was not a site of sunlight and darkness, nor white and black certainties, nor resistance as opposed to collaboration.

Other cultural historians have also demonstrated the complexities analyzing 'resistance' from a gender perspective. Lo Jiu-jung's analysis of the life of the 'traitor' Li Qingping 李青萍, a female artist whose work symbolized race/nation in ways that men could not, reveals how war could bring both opportunities and dangers for women seeking economic independence.[86] Susan Glosser's study of the contents of the Communist leading magazine *Shanghai funü* 上海婦女 asserts that the journal's advocacy of the pursuit of ordinary life, and of the daily sustenance of mind and body for women in Shanghai under extraordinary circumstances, was heroic and represented women's culture of resistance.[87] From her research on the writings of two leading Shanghai women wartime writers, Su Qing 蘇青 (1914-82) and Zhang Ailing 張愛玲 (1920-95), Nicole Huang concludes that their discourse of domesticity functioned as an implicit commentary on the sense of loss and fragmentation during the early 1940s.[88] In

83 Brook 2005:241.

84 Fu 2001:197.

85 Henriot and Yeh 2004.

86 Lo Jiu-jung 2003.

87 Glosser 2004. Cf. Lü Fangshang's earlier 1981 analysis of some eighty women's journals.

88 N. Huang 2004; 2005. One may recall the choices that Eileen Zhang offers her heroine in her story "Se, jie 色戒" (Lust, caution) which was made into a movie by Ang Lee in 2007. The tale's central character Wang Jiazhi must face the intertwining elements of loyalty and betrayal, mass patriotism and individual desire (along with love and lust), choices that

occupied Manchuria (Manchuko) where the Japanese authorities promoted the cultivation of the conservative ideal 'good wives, wise mothers' (*xianqi liangmu* 賢妻良母) as part of their cultural agenda, they met critique and open resistance by numbers of women writers. Norman Smith's recent research on the lives, careers, and literary legacies of seven prolific Chinese women writers shows how they openly articulated their dissatisfaction with the patriarchal and imperialist nature of the Japanese cultural program in Manchuria.[89] But, as he argues, these same writers also worked in close association with colonial institutions. The irony of the situation, he observes, was "...the colonial state that they condemned for its conservatism afforded them the freedom to pursue the independence that they sought."[90] In other words, ineffective and misogynistic Japanese colonial practices spurred these women to disavow the regime but also to utilize the local publishing media to express themselves, and gain recognition for themselves as important writers.

Elsewhere, in rural regions where fighting was the norm during most of the war years, people were more easily exposed to the direct vicissitudes of combat, resistance, survival and there women faced increasing hardships. As Yu Wenxiu 余文秀, one of Yu Chien-ming's interviewees, expressed about her life during the war years, there were often blurry lines about what was the right thing to do at any given time. She herself underwent army training along with her then fiancé (and later husband).[91] They managed to survive this era during which time Yu Wenxiu, despite her military background, served as an elementary school teacher in regions far away from her home locale in Suxian 宿縣 (Anhui province). This meant long periods of separation from her husband. Her oral history also indicates the dilemmas that she and other ordinary people faced in order to articulate loyalty to state and party, and the compromises they made in order to survive the Japanese occupation. When Yu Wenxiu's father-in-law who served the Guomindang as an undercover agent, was seized by the Japanese in the Guangxi region, he was made to work in their customs inspection unit. But after the War he was incarcerated by the Chinese government as a traitor, and Yu and

reflect the dilemmas of individuals caught up in wartime no-win situations.

89 Smith 2007.

90 Smith 2004:313. Smith 2007:131-37 focuses on the consequences (and complications thereof) for these writers in the period post-1945 through the early 1980s.

91 Yu Chien-ming 2004:115-53.

her family had great difficulty extricating him from a prison whose location had fallen under Communist control.

Narratives, Testimony, and the Gendered Memory of the Holocaust

Yu Wenxiu's narrative, as well as those by others reproduced in Yu Chien-ming's book, remind us how essential 'local knowledge', from inside a situation, is for outsiders to understand the gendering of wartime experience. At the same time one should consider how narratives of women's experiences (written or spoken) are constructed. Even the rich archive of memoirs, diaries, fictionalized autobiographies, autobiographical fictions, oral history, and video testimony that the Holocaust has yielded must be recognized as texts which are constructions, and reconstructions, of encounters and memories.[92] In general, historians utilizing these kinds of materials have demonstrated the complexities of analyzing them. Much of the pre-1980s Holocaust scholarship treated 'testimony' as if it were a 'reflection' of an easily accessible truth,[93] but more recent research takes into account the pivotal role of language and textuality in survivors' statements.[94]

This new work has benefited from the growing historiographical interest in the process of narration as a manifestation of both cultural understanding and linguistic expression made popular by Hayden White's 1973 book *Metahistory,* which helped launch the 'linguistic turn'.[95] Since this 'linguistic turn', Holocaust

92 For the feminist viewpoint on this matter, see Scott 1991.

93 Moi 1985:45 calls this tendency 'reflectionism'. A 'reflectionist reading' fails to see the narrative as a (re) construction of a confusing, multi-faceted experienced reality; instead, "a reflectionist reading considers the text a more or less faithful reproduction of an external reality to which we all have equal and unbiased access." She adds: "This kind of viewpoint neglects to consider the proposition that the real is not only something we construct, but a controversial construct at that."

94 Baumel 2000 reflects on the value of women's oral documentation and autobiographies. See also Schiffrin 2002 on how linguistic theory is relevant for the analysis of Holocaust survivors' speech patterns.

95 White stimulated historians to contemplate the rhetorical strategies they employed to conceptualize the past, and to think about the so-called 'neutrality' of the historical narrative. Other theoretical breakthroughs included the work of Ann Rigney on narratives and the French Revolution (Rigney 1990; 1992), and Penny Summerfield, whose 1998 book on

historians are more likely to acknowledge that 'experience' is not only both uniquely personal and positional, but also that it is influenced by the different lenses and discourses through which they and the survivors understand and describe themselves and the world. They have differentiated several levels at which witnesses (both male and female) "create meaning" out of the past.[96] These levels include first, *experience*: survivors cannot tell everything, so they choose to report only certain experiences. Second, there is *memory*, which by necessity is also selective: there will be certain events they can remember or choose to remember, but not others. The third level is *narrative emplotment*: survivors choose a structure, a tone, a preferred order to relate their experiences. At the same time, it is important to stress that gender does play a role on all three levels: "men and women remember and recount differently."[97] General research on memory indicates that gender does in fact affect memory, and that gender differences in memory are the effect of preferences which are in turn caused by socialization.[98] For example, male prewar socialization which valued independence and autonomy may account for the fact that men in their narratives or testimonies (such as those by the well-known authors Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi) were less likely to recount the important relations they had with other men in the camps. The modern Holocaust scholar Pascale Bos argues that European men born in the first decades of the twentieth century (when memories of the First World War were still prevalent) would tend to put greater emphasis on recollections that contain instances of individual strength, heroism, or autonomy than those of dependent bonds. In contrast, she contends, women born in the same era who had been socialized to value relationships and interdependence, would tend to remember friendships and networks and choose to accentuate them in their narratives.[99] Nevertheless, she cautions, one must not accept such testimonies as

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British women's lives during the War argues personal testimonies are not representative of a coherent, already given sense of self, but a process in which memory is produced and reproduced from the range of discursive formulations available in the past and present. Wang Lingzhen 2004 makes a similar claim about subjectivity and its uses in early twentieth century female autobiographical writing.

96 Bos 2003:31.

97 Bos 2003:33.

98 Loftus et al.1987. See also the essays by Ely and McCabe 2005; and Leydesdorff, Passerini, and Thompson 2005.

99 Bos 2003:36.

always reliable.

Testimony is a contentious issue among Holocaust experts. For some writers, the problem with testimony is the sanctity to which it is assigned so that all the complexities therein are dismissed.[100] Somehow, the survivors—who are considered unique—can inform us not just about the Holocaust, but offer "universal lessons regarding morality and the human condition."[101] In this view, because the Holocaust would seem to hold messages for the advancement of humanity, we should honor the narratives of those who witnessed, i.e. those with 'first-hand testimony'. In other words, because survivors were neglected in the immediate postwar period, there is now a moral significance attached to our response of their testimony.[102] Such longing to treat survivors in an ethical manner may also explain the readiness of the public to embrace survivor narratives, as well as the shock of learning that some of these works are in fact works of fiction.[103] No doubt for many survivors bearing testimony has given them a sense of purpose, allowing them the possibility to confront the past, and gain ontological authority. But too often those in custody of these testimonies may not treat them properly. Greenspan's analysis of those publications expounding survivors' accounts postulates that there are basically two forms of presentation. The first has a kind of ethnic/religious rhetoric and heroic quality.[104] The compiler 'honors' the tales and stories survivors have to tell, and infuses his/her own values into theirs.[105] The second engages in a seemingly knowledgeable psychoanalytical pathology of the survivors—their stress, their guilt, their shame. The survivors' testimony is interrogated and re-interrogated so that every silence, every stutter and every minor statement takes on significance in a clinical

100 Browning 2003:40.

101 Waxman 2006:169.

102 Waxman 2006:170.

103 One of the most notorious cases is the work *Fragments: Memories of a Childhood, 1939-1948* (London, 1996; originally published in German as *Bruchstücke: Aus einer Kindheit 1939-1948*; Frankfurt, 1995) by the Swiss writer Binjamin Wilkomirkski, a book which won a series of prestigious prizes but was proven a fake in 1998.

104 Greenspan 1998.

105 An example is the uncritical and hagiographical introduction by Gurewitsch in her 1998 book in which she conveys the 'privilege' she has to meet and speak with women who have suffered great adversity and pain, and yet express hope, love, and faith in humanity.

discourse, which is often expressed in terms of 'survivor syndrome'.[106]

There is also an alternative to this positioning of the witness, i.e. charging the listener with the burden of the testimony. Such thinking forms the basis of the influential work by the psychoanalyst (and Holocaust survivor) Dori Laub who believes 'testimony is impossible'. Along with Yale University professor Shoshana Felman, Laub has argued the Holocaust was an event without a witness. The Nazis not only tried to exterminate the physical witnesses of their crime, but also any other vestiges of their atrocities. Moreover, the inherently incomprehensible and deceptive psychological structure of the event (not being told where one was going, being deliberately given hope against hope by the Nazis who were intent on ensuring the docile cooperation of their victims) precluded its own witnessing.[107] And thus for those persons who bear testimony in the 'Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University', speaking is not a simple recording of memory but rather a speech act reconstructing the very possibility of speaking and being heard by another, which is in turn the condition for being able to hear oneself. As Laub has written: "The degree to which bearing witness was required, entailed such an outstanding measure of awareness and of comprehension of the event--of its radical otherness to all frames of reference—that it was beyond the limits of human ability (and willingness) to grasp, to transmit, or to imagine."[108] The general lesson Laub wishes to convey is that the listener actively contributes to the construction of testimonial narrative, and the receiving is analogous to the giving of testimony because it too involves a process of selection and omission, attention and inattention, highlighting and overshadowing, for which the listener remains responsible.[109]

Laub's work owes much to that of Sigmund Freud whose early writings on trauma developed in conjunction with his hermeneutical understanding of memory. Freud believed that all perceptions of experience were retained as whole memories in the unconscious mind, and memories however painful to face, haunt our conscious minds. Moreover, only by working through repressed memory will

106 The expression 'survivor syndrome' was first coined by the Norwegian psychiatrist William Niederland in 1968.

107 Felman and Laub 1992:xvii.;80.

108 Felman and Laub 1992:84.

109 Trezise 2008:19, and Laub 2009, in response to Tresize. See also J.Young 1997.

be empowered to liberate ourselves from it.[110] For a number of Holocaust scholars, these ideas are relevant to how they write about the relation between history and memory. For example, Saul Friedlander (himself a Jewish Czech refugee hidden in wartime France) who has approached this matter from a psychoanalytical perspective, argues that his own coming to terms with the Holocaust was a long process of "working through" the gaps in his memory.[111] He also believes that the Holocaust's historical meaning remains an open question due to methodological issues surrounding the problem of narrative. Because narrative by its nature is selective and limiting, it can reduce the 'awe of memory' to a fixed framework (chronological, geographical, media-bound) that may obfuscate the possibilities of historical representation.[112] Similarly, Dominick LaCapra in his many publications has contended that any attempt to reconcile memory and history must be mediated by a psychoanalytical reckoning.[113] While LaCapra gives no answer to the question of whether a constructive form of historical knowledge can be created from our connection to the Holocaust, he does offer suggestions to construct historical representations that aim at empathic understanding, but he also denies the possibility of ever knowing "how it really was."[114]

In contrast to this viewpoint on history and memory, there is also a comprehensive theory of collective memory which too has inspired some Holocaust scholars.[115] The concept of 'collective memory' was first articulated by the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) who argued that memory was provisional and defined by contemporaneous uses; in other words, memory was continually reshaped by the social and temporal contexts into which it was received.[116] In Halbwachs' formulation, collective memory is constructed through the action of groups and individuals who weave individual memories into social frameworks. Halbwachs saw memories being 'conflated' as they were continuously being revised, and thus 'reduced' into idealized images. While remembering may

110 My understanding of Freud here is based on Hutton 1994.

111 Friedlander 1992a.

112 Friedlander 1992b.

113 LaCapra 1994; 1998. See also Klein 2000:139-43 on LaCapra.

114 Roth 1998:110; see also Rothberg 2000.

115 On the historiography of 'collective memory', and its growing popularity since the 1980s, see Wertsch 2002:Ch.3.

116 Hutton 1994:149.

be done individually, it is social groups who determine the form that the remembering takes. Without social frameworks to sustain them, memories wither away. In contrast to Freud, Halbwachs saw memory not the hidden ground of history, but an internal activity of the living mind that could never be recovered.[117]

In Holocaust studies, one of the most influential uses of the concept 'collective memory' may be viewed in the work of Peter Novick whose 1999 book *The Holocaust and Collective Memory* elaborated how present and future concerns dictate which bits of the past are remembered. He asserts that while American Jews did receive reports of some of the worst atrocities carried out against the Jews during the time of WWII, they did not really begin to view the destruction of European Jewry as a singular event—as the Holocaust—until the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961 in Israel.[118] In Israel this court case brought to an end what some observers consider a certain ambiguity that had characterized both official and private Israeli attitudes toward the Holocaust. According to Tim Cole and James E.Young, the early years of Israeli state-building were marked by a reticence in talking about the Holocaust, which was an event seen by "early statists like David Ben-Gurion...as the ultimate fruit of Jewish life in exile" and therefore "represented a diaspora that deserved not only to be destroyed, but also forgotten."[119] Such vagaries ended with the Eichmann trial, as survivor after survivor took the witness stand in the courtroom, and recounted their Holocaust experiences. Thereafter, the Holocaust became a matter of widespread public attention in Israel and elsewhere, and 'victimhood' began to acquire a more positive status and partly because the 1967 and 1973 wars showed both Israel's strength and its continuing vulnerability.

Gender enters into this conversation about history and memory in the

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117 Hutton 1994:149. Mention should also be made of the concept 'postmemory', first posited by Hirsch 1997. 'Postmemory' which is mediated through photographs, films, books, refers to testimonies distinguished from memory by generational distance, and from history by deep personal connection. See also studies by J.Young 2000, and Lentin 2006:465 where she writes that postmemory is one facet of collective memory. According to Hirsch 2008: 106 "postmemory also describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up."

118 Novick 1999:133-45.

119 Cole 1999:8; J.Young 1993:211.

narratives of female survivors in Israel. Ronit Lentin, herself an Israeli and the daughter of Holocaust survivors, puts forward, after decades of research among her people, that male survivors' narratives tend to correspond with collective memory and its nationalized constructions, whereas female testimonies are hesitant and recursive.[120] In a book-length study, Lentin demonstrates how the autobiographical narratives and creative works of her female interviewees are "counter-narratives" challenging the Zionist meta-narrative with its usual emphasis on masculine heroism and militarism. She also argues that Israeli public discourse on the Holocaust has tended to pathologize survivors, and that this process of stigmatization often feminizes survivors as a mythical counter-type of the virile Israeli sabra.[121] Bos, also reviewing a large number of published narratives, concludes that gender is one of the important lenses through which survivors (male and female) perceive and understand themselves as members of their community.[122]

All the complexities and weaknesses that Lentin and Bos have perceived in their analyses of gendered memory permeate the history of one of Israel's most famous war heroines, Hannah Senesz (1921-44), a Hungarian- born Jew who immigrated in 1939 to Palestine where she worked for a time on a kibbutz.[123] In 1942 she was chosen to join a special operation organized by British intelligence and the Yishuv (pre-State Israel) to drop parachutists, originally from central and eastern Europe, behind enemy lines in a clandestine mission to aid the Allied war effort. Among the specific goals of this task force was to assist Jews in occupied Europe and to strengthen the Zionist movement. Having completed a course in wireless operations, parachuting, and general military instruction, Senesz joined several dozen colleagues (including two other women) and jumped into Europe.[124] In June 1944 she crossed the Hungarian border, but was captured, tortured, and put face-to-face with her mother Catherine who had remained behind in Budapest at the start of the War. Hannah Senesz was tried for espionage, offered

120 Lentin 2006:471.

121 Lentin 1996; 2000b: Ch.6.

122 Bos 2003:38.

123 Baumel 1996b; 1998b.

124 Baumel 1998b explains why only Senesz achieved fame in contrast to the other female parachutists Haviva Reik and Sara Braverman, and accentuates the gender factors relevant to the Senesz myth.

a pardon if she admitted her guilt, but refused and was shot to death.

Senesz's story came into the collective national memory of the state of Israel in several stages, which according to Baumel, reflected Israeli society's cultural and political values from the mid-1940s onward. In the first period 1943-45, Israeli historiography stressed the total equality of male and female efforts in this British/Zionist mission, and thus Senesz's story conformed to the contemporary Zionist ideological 'neutered' ethos of no gender differentiation.[125] In the next historical period, from the late 1940s until the mid-1970s, the parachutist mission became a national symbol of Israeli courage and sacrifice, and the women participants were imbued with alternative, non-threatening sexual/gender characteristics. Senesz became the "Israeli Joan of Arc," a local vestal virgin whose purity was surpassed only by her heroism.[126] The lacuna, such as her romantic attachments before 1939 and her outspoken desire to become a martyr, never entered part of the 'doctored' representation that made her and the mission sacrosanct in Israeli history. Senesz's diary, first published in 1950, was censored, with references to her Hungarian childhood and personal life removed, as they might mar the impression of the almost 'sabra' heroine pure in body and spirit.[127] While the canonical image of Senesz continued to dominate history books and school readers in the 1970s, there appeared during the 1980s the first cracks that would shatter the heroine's invincibility. A number of academics and journalists began to raise questions about the successes and failures of the mission, and doubts about the "untouchable virgin of Israel," whom they suggested was a pawn of a mis-managed Zionist effort to cover up its own wartime inadequacies. With the publication in 1994 of Senesz's uncensored diary, along with files documenting her life on the kibbutz where she lived, the holy aura around her began to fade. Baumel and other scholars have been able to unravel the myths surrounding Senesz, and to restore the gender component to her narrative. According to one of Baumel's interviewees who knew Senesz's surviving relatives, the last words she spoke before her execution was "I'm only sorry that I die a virgin."[128] Thus, Senesz, nearly 65 years after her death, is no longer the 'silent woman'.

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125 Baumel 1998b:102-3.

126 Baumel 1998b:104.

127 Baumel 1998b:104.

128 See Baumel 1998b:108 where the author makes the remark "This is hardly a Zionist credo."

The Retrieval of Women's WWII Narratives in Comparative Perspective

In this paper we have tried to indicate how the evolving historical evaluations of the experiences of Chinese and European Jewish women during and after WWII share certain commonalities, and how gender is a useful tool to contemplate the similarities as well as the differences in the analyses of their narratives. In writing about both these groups of women survivors, historians have revealed the 'silence' that has surrounded their wartime suffering and their postwar recovery in published studies, until recently. On the other hand, there is still little work on the significance of gender in Holocaust memory (rather than historical) studies, while research on Chinese women in the WWII era is only beginning. But in both sets of circumstances, excavating an 'archaeology of silence', that is reclaiming women's experiences, hidden from history as they may be, is not sufficient without contextualizing these experiences within the gendered analysis of catastrophic events.[129]

In the case of Chinese women this silence is also a product of the prevalent historiography which is highly politicized, and burdened by the effects of 'national mythmaking', as well as the politics of memory.[130] To date, contentious debates about the 'military comfort women' and the Japanese wartime atrocities in Nanjing dominate exchanges between historians, politicians, and activists, but have not (yet?) resulted in some kind of historical understanding between these parties that transcends national divisions.[131] The historical reconstruction of China's War with Japan 1937-45 remains controversial, and a sensitive issue which may be summed up as East Asia's "unmastered past,"[132] or "ruptured

129 Lentin 1997:13.

130 He Yinan 2007. See also Denton 2007, a study of Chinese war museums which demonstrates how representations of the Sino-Japanese War in the Maoist era contrast significantly with those developed since then. The earlier musea stress heroic revolutionary struggles, while the later ones highlight the themes of national suffering and victimization.

131 For a perceptive analysis of this situation, see Yang Daqing 2000.

132 This expression derives from the title of Charles Maier's important 1988 study about the Holocaust and German identity. Germany's struggle with its Nazi past and the Holocaust has also not been without controvery. On the *Historikerstreit* (historians' debate), see Baldwin 1990.

history."[133] The irony of the problem of how (PRC) China and Japan interpret the War period is that quarrels about this history intensified four decades after the War ended, in the early 1980s, "when the majority of the population no longer had direct experience of the War and the two countries had developed close economic and social ties."[134] One specific reason for the more recent clashes originates in the attempts by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru-kai), founded in 1997, to promote school books which in effect "minimize Japan's culpability for its wartime actions."[135] In 2005, tensions about this matter rose to a head when the Japanese Education Ministry approved a junior high school textbook distributed by this Society. In response, both the PRC and South Korean governments issued formal complaints against the Japanese government, and encouraged loud public demonstrations. Again ironically, it was also in 2005 that the People's Republic of China, Japan, and South Korea released jointly a trilateral history textbook (but published in Chinese, Japanese, Korean) which propagated a 'nuanced approach' to the War, allowing multiple perspectives, and written with the goal of reconciliation between the three countries.[136] This textbook devotes some attention to the suffering that people of all the three countries experienced, and does include passages discussing Japanese troops' sexual violence and the use of 'comfort women'.[137] Nevertheless, given that both these textbook volumes appeared in the same year, it would seem that 'national experiences' of the War will continue to influence the writing of its history, and the politics of collective memory will still play a role in political discourse.

The politics of memory is in itself a phenomenon of today's global culture,

133 Jager and Mitter 2007. One of the implications of this expression is that even nowadays it is more likely than a history of this period issued in East Asia will be a national narrative, and not a regional history.

134 He Yinan 2007:44. On how China uses the theme of 'victimization' in its toolkit for political bargaining with Japan, see Suzuki 2007. See also Mitter 2003 which focuses on the political dimensions of China reviving memories of national victimization and imperialist aggression.

135 Wang Zheng 2009:102.

136 Wang Zheng 2009:106-09. This textbook (nongovernmental) project, conceived in 2002, originated in efforts by fifty independent teachers, historians, and members of civic groups from China, Japan, and Korea to try to write a 'unified historical interpretation of the past conflicts' that would play a role in the reconciliation between the three countries.

137 Wang Zheng 2009:108.

and thus, reassessments of the war and the postwar periods have become increasingly guided by comparisons.[138] While earlier historical assessments on Japan and Germany focused on the characterization of wartime fascism, or the traumas of Auschwitz and Hiroshima,[139] public debate beginning in the late 1980s and 1990s has centered on the 'management' of war legacies in the postwar period.[140] What has now emerged is a kind of 'transnational memory' which informs postwar generations what is relevant about this conflict. As the Japan historian Carol Gluck has written: "Holocaust memory challenges genocide everywhere, and Hiroshima memory confronts nuclear warfare past and future."[141] And as for the 'comfort women', she adds, they are also part of a transnational memory which challenges the male 'heroic narratives' rationalizing the link between war and sexual violence. 'Comfort women', along with other gender-related matters pertinent to the *Banian kangzhan* are now 'coming into memory'. Just as the Holocaust which came into memory only in the 1960s, the history of the 'comfort women' is only now becoming part of the collective memory of war in East Asia. The next step is to incorporate other 'silent women' into the narratives of WWII.

Two very recent attempts to help reach that goal are the 2009 studies of Pan Yihong and Li Danke who focus on the War and women loyal to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Guomindang (GMD), respectively.[142] Pan's research was based on a series of interviews she conducted in 2001 with five women who had all joined the CCP during the War, engaged in resistance work both in urban and rural regions but who did not see military combat. Pan underlines the fact that their stories were 'submerged' by Mao-era official CCP historiography which marginalized almost all women's wartime contributions—with the exception of those women who directly participated in the Anti-Japanese Allied Forces.[143] But since the 1980s, the CCP's history offices and women's associations at all levels have published information about Chinese women's

138 Seraphim 2007:32. See also Seraphim 2006.

139 Buruma 1994; Bosworth 1993.

140 For example, Chang Jui-te 2001 examined the ways that the commemoration of war in both China and South Korea is used to keep animosity toward Japan alive.

141 Gluck 2007:49.

142 Pan Yihong 2009; Li Danke 2009.

143 As Benton 1999:6-7 notes, because of the Mao cult, the roles of men, as well as women, outside the Communist base areas during the war were concealed in historical accounts.

'heroic efforts' during the Sino-Japanese War. Nevertheless, the majority of these publications are officially-sponsored, with the aim of reinforcing the CCP's legitimacy in the post-Mao era. For Pan this situation was incentive to undertake a study that would go beyond the rhetoric of the (Communist) 'martial heroine' model, by attempting to probe her interviewees' inner feelings, conflicts, and moral ambiguities. She found that her subjects (all of whom she gave pseudonyms), were young, educated, urban, and from petit bourgeois or landowner classes when they joined the CCP for political reasons, i.e. "to save the nation."[144] But as Pan analyzed their narratives, she also found another common factor in their life stories: their motive to become a Party member reverberated with gender issues. They hoped to attain their own independence from patriarchal family demands, and from conventional societal expectations to marry and raise a family. Pan concludes that in their lifetimes these women had to negotiate their identities as individuals and CCP members which in the long run did not always bring personal satisfaction.

Li Danke's research concentrates on women in the GMD-held Chongqing area. There activists of different ideological persuasions consciously used the total war mobilization effort and anti-Japanese nationalism as the platform to organize an extensive women's movement in the city and surrounding countryside. She bases her study on a wide-array of contemporaneous women's magazines as well as documents held in the Chongqing municipal archives. She argues that wartime conditions offered women a great opportunity to demand their rights as citizens and formal participation in Chinese politics. Activists, both on the GMD and CCP sides, debated the assumptions behind employment discrimination against women, and included the voices of Zhou Enlai 周恩來 and his wife Deng Yingchao 鄧穎超, who challenged the continuing influence of the dictum *xianqi liangmu* in wartime propaganda.[145] Li also writes about women who tried to gain a voice in the People's Political Council, founded in 1938, and which had removed to Chongqing with the government. She sees this feminist led political activism as the basis of postwar local governmental reforms.[146] Li maintains that that female activists also took their politics to the countryside during the War and developed a massive education program for rural women. Her pioneering research on this

144 Pan Yihong 2009:7

145 Li Danke 2009:37.

146 Li Danke 2009:56.

topic is yet one more step toward gaining more knowledge about women's efforts functions, and contributions during the War.

Aside from political reasons that account for the lack of Chinese female voices in War narratives, there is also a cultural dimension to consider here. Forgetting or amnesia is often seen as a positive force in Chinese tradition for the sake of ongoing life. Chinese mythology communicates that it is a female icon, Old Lady Meng whose soup holds the key to new life. Old Lady Meng, a figure borrowed from Buddhist folklore, dispenses the Broth of Oblivion to souls departing this world: after drinking the soup, the soul goes over the Bridge of Pain, and demons hurl the soul into waters for new life.[147] Although this icon of amnesia is not necessarily indicative of any value attached to women as articulators of the past, it may symbolize the kinds of cultural mediations involving memory and forgetting which are used to communicate gender relations that create and maintain social cohesion.

This speculation becomes all the more credible when we consider one of the most important themes emerging in Yu Chien-ming's discussions with her interviewees, i.e. their longing for an end to the chaos of their wartime existence and a return to the personal stability of their prewar lives--as opposed to any expression of desiring political reform or legal recompense in the postwar aftermath. Such aspirations remind us of yet another commonality between these Chinese women and the European Jewish survivors, i.e. the centrality of the domestic sphere in the first stages of their encounters with the War. In many of the Chinese and European testimonies, we hear about the contrast between the everyday things men and women did before the conflict, and the behavior that the War made them assume. When food shortages occurred and living conditions worsened, it was the women who were supposed to "make things work" by coping with ever-shrinking resources for running their households, and raising their families' spirits. In Germany, as Nazi patriarchal ideology exalted German male domination and demasculinized Jewish men, it also spurred gender reversals in Jewish households. Jewish women took on new roles as breadwinners, family protectors, and defenders of businesses, medical practices, and found themselves representing their male relatives in schools, hospitals, offices, and so on.[148]

147 Schwarcz 1998:40-1.

148 Kaplan 1998:59.

In wartime China, as forced evacuation and mass migration intensified, the social and moral authority of the traditional extended Chinese family deteriorated.[149] And yet, with the popularity of those modernizing discourses which had promoted birth control and the postponement of female marriage fading away, and the actualities of war denying Chinese men and women easy access to contraception, women found themselves ever more easily burdened with traditional responsibilities in housework and child-rearing. For example, the narrative of Yu Chien-ming's subject Zhang Wang Mingxin 張王銘心 relates her prewar ideals (celibacy) to the realities of her wartime and postwar life (married with several children).[150]

One of the problems with reading gender into the memories of both Chinese and European Jewish women is that their stories may seem banal or trivial, compared to accounts of dangerous military feats or major battles. When one is confronted with the unimaginable suffering caused by the Nazi regime or the Japanese Imperial Army, so the argument goes, discussions of the minutiae of day-to-day interaction between man and wife, or the struggle to find food, or the dislocation of consumer goods and services, seem to pale in comparison and rob the victims of the honor and dignity they deserve. But, as Ofer and Weitzman point out, the opposite is true. It is these details of everyday life—the portraits of women who saved a single ration of bread or a few grains of rice for her children—that restore individuality and humanity to the victims.[151]

Perhaps, the most obvious common factor in both these women's histories is their absence in any proper collective memory of WWII. In the case of European Jewish women, we may refer to the remarks of Saul Friedlander writing in 1992 that a 'master narrative' of the Holocaust was emerging. But it would seem that only until recently this was in fact a master (male) narrative, one that reflected the male voice, the male experience, the male memory as normative.[152] As (male) scholars have attempted to tie the Holocaust to the heritage of the European Enlightenment,[153] they have not only excluded women from this

149 Lü Fangshang 1995.

150 Yu Chien-ming 2004:61-118.

151 Ofer and Weitzman 1998:14.

152 Horowitz 2000:159. This male experience dominates Claude Lanzmann's 1985 motion picture *Shoah* which features no women in the scenario, except as victims.

153 Bauman 1989, following the work of Max Horkheimer and T. Adorno. Bauman argues that

indictment of modernity, but they also have denied women any historical agency in the public realm.[154] In this scenario, modernity, or rationality, was born out of two separate male and female spheres where men assumed the responsibility of public decision making and action, and women the duty of human caring. The master narrative for Chinese women is all the more difficult to formulate because of both contemporary political constraints, and to a certain extent, cultural conformities that inhibit efforts to reconcile living memory with history. But, as in the case of European Jewish survivors, those Chinese women who directly experienced WWII are now aging rapidly and passing away, and so there is an ever-greater urgency to gather as many testimonies and as much written evidence as possible, in order to better understand the role of gender in these conflicts now, and for generations thereafter.

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part of understanding the Holocaust involves focusing on how the Jews, who expanded their boundaries because of the possibilities that Enlightenment modernity and emancipation offered, were consequently rejected (and murdered) by the dominant European majority.

154 Allen 1997.

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