

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE PROJECT OF MEMORY: LIFE WRITING THE HOLOCAUST

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This phenomenological study explores the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust. Life writing is the term used to describe personal biographical and autobiographical accounts in many genres (Jolly, 2001). As research concerned with how personal writing of the Holocaust is experienced by the writers themselves, this work explores the ways in which memory, narrative and history intersect in the writing processes of each writer. What insights might we gain about personal writing as a tool for helping to understand the past? What might we learn about historical events, such as the Holocaust, from crafted writing made by eyewitnesses? What does it mean for these writers to do this work? What may we learn about personal writing as a mode of learning?

This research is done in the tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology and draws on the work of philosophers such as Heidegger, Gadamer, Merleau-Ponty, and particularly Levinas, as foundational grounding for this study. The work of David Carr, who describes our understanding of experience and history as narrative in nature helped to guide this research as well. Van Manen provides a systematic process by which research employing hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy can be done.

Through engagement with the literature surrounding the existential phenomenon; research on writing after trauma; literature and research on survivor testimony;

philosophical and psychological research concerning the nature of memory and critical analysis of historical consciousness and historiology, I formed questions that guided my conversations with participants.

I recruited twelve participants, members of The Memory Project, a writing group of Holocaust survivors at The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for this study. My phenomenological data suggests that life writing the Holocaust acts as a mode of seeking coherence for these writers. The narrative structure of memory, as pre-writing for life writing, is employed as a tool for greater self understanding and communication of a self by these writers. In addition, multiple communities are called upon by these writers as they craft and revise the texts they make. Conversations with historians of the Holocaust, dialogue with family members and the interactions within our group guide the remembering and writing of these writers and help add to a sense of their own “narrative coherence” described by Carr (1986).

Drawing from insights gained from my participants, I suggest that the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust is a pedagogical process. This process is one in which narrative memory, expanding historical consciousness and writing as impetus and mode of questioning engage these survivors in ongoing discovery and communication of their own life stories. Additionally, I offer an understanding of life writing, memory and history conceived differently than in an objectivist tradition as transformative to a pedagogical sense of engaging in processes of memory, historical consciousness and writing.

The Project of Memory: Life Writing the Holocaust

by

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Dedication

For my Mother, who taught me to question.
For my Father, who taught me to wonder.

For Francine, who taught me these questions.
For Michael, who taught me others.

For the survivors.
For their bearing.

For Betsy, who taught me a scholarship of hearing.

For my family,
Shannon, Cal, Annie,
the home, oh the home
of my being.

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The Memory Project would not exist if not for the deep care and concern Betsy Anthony, my dear friend, has for the stories of others. Without her sense that there was always going to be more for the survivors to say and her commitment to having them tell their stories themselves, The Memory Project would not be. Aside from being indebted to Betsale for this, I am thankful to her for always being willing to sit and talk, drink and kvetch with me.

I have become a scholar by having the way thoughtfully indicated to me by Dr. Francine Hultgren, my advisor and dissertation chair. Through her own way of being in the world she is a model for the kind of pedagogue and leader I hope to become. I am sincerely thankful for this abiding care. I am also filled with gratitude for the guidance

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CHAPTER ONE:
THE PROJECT OF BUILDING: LAYING THE DOORSILL

The Project

Monthly, for more than ten years now, I leave my home and travel to meet with Holocaust survivors. These survivors are members of The Memory Project, a writing program at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, begun through the Office of Survivor Affairs for Holocaust survivors who volunteer at the museum. The Memory Project was the idea of the then Assistant Director, Betsy Anthony, and evolved from a program at Drew University called Leave a Legacy.

It began in the first decade of the 21st century during a time that experienced a renewed sense of urgency to collect the testimonies of survivors of the Holocaust. Projects to record testimony, like University of Southern California's Shoah Foundation, begun in 1995, collected 52,000 first-hand accounts from survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust. I was hired as a writing instructor, ostensibly to complete a similar mission, to allow survivors to recount their testimony (USC Shoah Foundation: The Institute for Visual History and Education, 2014, "Collecting Testimonies" ¶ 1). In 2001, my work with The Memory Project began.

I have called myself teacher, facilitator, and workshop leader and over the years, I have thought of the written works made in connection with our monthly meetings in various ways as well. I wondered, as the work seemed to move through and beyond what could be called testimony, what was being made through the writing done in our group. I wondered what the survivors got out of doing the writing that seemed to be more than simply a chronicle of their Holocaust experience. I wondered if the work was

therapeutic, if the group discussions were. I wondered about the written work's relationship to historical writing. I wondered what meaning the writers made from the work they did and was surprised that so many wanted to continue writing after that first year.

The Context of Questions

As I read scholarly work about writing to learn, about Holocaust literature, about writing testimony, I began to think about how to approach the questions I was forming about our group, about their writing. I am influenced by scholars like Langer (1991), who approach the writing and testimony of the Holocaust as a body of literature, some calling Holocaust testimony an entirely new literary genre with unique generic traits (Eaglestone, 2004). Others, like Felman and Laub (1992), approach the testimony of survivors apart from literature, and describe it as "a long process of witnessing" (p. 79). Related to this is the work of those who describe the act of testifying, or the work of telling, and the psychological impact that work has on child survivors especially (R. Krell, 2007).

My questions about the phenomenon of writing after the Holocaust are informed by the work of these scholars. But my own study, coming as it does from my work as a teacher and education researcher must begin with the survivor's own experience of crafting personal writing, in a writing group, long after the Holocaust. What is this work they are making? What does it mean for each of them to be in the making?

Even after deciding this focus, my approach was not straightforward. I didn't at first know if I would approach researching the group as an ethnographer, hoping to describe the shared culture we made gathered there at the table. Would I try to describe

the genre of the texts made by members of the group, the things each text has in common, studying the text as separate from each writer? I was interested, even at first, in how the work of writing and remembering was approached by the writers, what it was like for them. But, as year after year, many of the Memory Project writers expressed a desire to keep writing, my curiosity grew.

These contexts are important, integral even; they situate the phenomenon, and in doing so, structure the phenomenon itself. But more than that, they make up the life-world which encompasses the questions I have, the work I do and the care I feel for each member of the group. In addition, I am in the room with survivors of a genocide that began nearly forty years before I was born, attached in this way to the personal histories, knowledge and memories they share. These contexts comprise the life-world in which I work with survivors who craft memory into writing. The contexts form the group, inform the writing of these texts and make the phenomenon what it is.

Possessing the Questions

As a human scientist in education, as a pedagogue, I ask here what it means to these Holocaust survivors who write their personal experiences, nearly seventy years after Victory in Europe, to be *engaged in* writing. It is a question touched by these countless contexts and seems fully openable only through the ontological questions able to be asked through hermeneutic phenomenology. The challenge for me as a researcher has been, and continues to be, to name these questions, which Felman and Laub (1992) describe as “questions that we do not know, that we do not as yet possess as questions” (p. xv). Through this work, I have begun to articulate and inquire into my own understandings “which nonetheless compellingly address” (p. xvi) me, which bring me to

this study through my work as teacher and researcher. These questions come by way also of my own interest in writing's processes, and with an ever-growing sense of the complicated relationship of the processes of knowing, memory and writing.

As a methodology, hermeneutic phenomenology approaches questions of being and seeks to describe lived experience. Only through asking, "What is the lived experience of life-writing the Holocaust?" am I able to attempt the daunting task of describing the phenomenon of writing and remembering personal experience as I seek to do here. Notice too, that these questions do not focus on having written, which would cause me to place an emphasis on the finished texts made by these writers. Instead my focus is on what it means to this group of survivors to be *in the making* of these texts. These questions come directly from my own interest in process and in the multiple processes required for learning, remembering and writing.

In asking these questions of lived experience, the survivors themselves provide their insights for interpretation. It is their descriptions of the phenomenon that guide this work, to describe their own lived experience. I work within texts from multiple disciplines, culled from the staggering breadth of work, both scholarly and artistic, on all aspects of the Holocaust. I turn to these multiple texts in order to help name and question actively the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust.

Throughout years of research, several of my own ways of understanding the work done by the survivor writers of the Memory Project have developed and evolved. As a phenomenological account, as interpretation, it seems necessary to describe, as best I can, the process too, of my own thinking through the phenomenon. I have come to a temporary understanding that I describe through this study. I have no belief that this is

my final word, my final thought on this topic, and I hope that I never stop thinking and learning about the work made by these survivors. I understand the *process* of the survivors' writing as the thing I hope to open. The finished texts created by survivors, the completed writing, will be named and assumed by others as literature, testimony, memoir or as some other genre yet to be named. But the process itself, the writing process, the being-in, the phenomenon of being engaged in this writing is the work I seek to open here.

I understand this making by my group participants as something that encompasses the historical. I see the writers engaged in the making of testimony, but a testimony that is personal and specific, and not the final word for their knowing of the past or future. I see the phenomenon as one that exists within the relationships of the people who encompass it, those in the group, and those outside of it, both before and after it. Most importantly, I see the work done through this writing as pedagogical work, as learning and dwelling in questioning.

My work here is to question within and beyond these understandings, to open the phenomenon, the lived time, lived space, lived body and lived relationship of the experience, to dwell in the questions, to describe as fully as I am able, the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust. I am overwhelmed by the impossibility of doing so. As van Manen (2002) describes, and I feel acutely:

These writings do not yield absolute truths, or objective observation. The writer at best gains an occasional glimpse of the meaning of human existence. . . In point of fact, all interpretive phenomenological inquiry is cognizant of the realization that no interpretation is ever complete, no explication of meaning is ever final, no insight is beyond challenge. (p. 7)

This work, questioning lived experience as it does, hopes to provide that glimpse into the meaning that is ascribed by the survivors to their work of writing. In doing so, I turn toward this group of writing survivors, and hope they might teach me, along with all they have already taught, what being in the writing means *to them*.

The Possibility of a Project

The Gift

In 1945, when the keepers cried kaput
Josef Stein, poet, came out of Dachau
Like half a resurrection, his other half
eighty pounds still in their invisible grave.

Slowly then the mouth opened at first
a broth, and then a medication, and then
a diet, and all in time and the knitting mercies,
the showing bones were buried back in flesh,

and the miracle was finished. Josef Stein
man and poet, rose, walked, and could even
beget, and did, and later died of other causes
only partly traceable to his first death.

He noted - with some surprise at first -
that strangers could not tell he had died once.
He returned to his post in the library, drank his beer,
published three poems in a French magazine,

and was very kind to the son who at last was his.
In the spent of one night he wrote three propositions:
That hell is the denial of the ordinary. That nothing lasts.
That clean white paper waiting under a pen

is the gift beyond history and hurt and heaven.
(Ciardi, 1997, p. 225)

Ciardi's poem helps to articulate more clearly questions I have had since beginning my work with Holocaust survivors in 2001. As the facilitator of this group since its inception, I am drawn to describe the experience of our group, to unfold the

phenomenon by exploring it through and in writing. Through many readings of Ciardi's poem, more evocative questions begin to emerge that help me to open the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust.

Joseph Stein, a fictional poet, is described through Ciardi's poem as "half a resurrection" though the other half remains in a grave. Then through the propositions at the end of the poem, there is a gift described that seems to cast writing after the Holocaust as a healing act. Originally, maybe momentarily, I wondered if life writing the Holocaust might, in some way, be this healing act, whether a kind of closure was the gift referred to in the title. Initially it seemed to me that the third proposition described in Ciardi's poem where Stein writes, "that clean white paper waiting under a pen/ is the gift beyond history and hurt and heaven" cast writing after the Holocaust as a mode of therapy, of resurrecting that half-death the poem describes. These first thoughts led me to wonder in what ways writing about the Holocaust might become a mode for survivor writers to work through traumatic past events. I wondered in what ways writing might be a way to leave the past behind.

Over time, both my questions about healing as a process that may be finished, as well as my questions about writing's therapeutic nature have changed. Ciardi (1997) initially seems to describe a "miracle" that might be "finished" through the recovery that writing brings about in the poem; but later he describes the "project" of writing as being "beyond" "hurt." "Beyond" is not the same as separate or apart from experience, but simply after it. Still, the finality described in the poem suggests that a Holocaust survivor/writer might, at some point be finished with approaching memory, be finished with describing it, that the "miracle" might somehow be "finished."

I now wonder how memory is approached and re-approached by these survivors as “historical beings” (Gadamer, 1975/2006) For "historical beings," aware of histories through which they've lived, who "return" through memory to these experiences again and again in order to make sense of them, what might "recovery" be? This recursive memory, as I describe it, may allow for emerging understanding, but is memory ever "finished"? Is "healing" ever a separation from traumatic experience? Is there any sort of return that will allow resolution, through memory, through writing? I wonder further what this recursive memory *means* for all of our “historical consciousness” and for an understanding of what the Holocaust was and is?

The world's "historical consciousness" was changed by the Holocaust, as Langer (1995) writes, “We are still wrestling with the loss of stature that a disaster like the Holocaust imposes on our ideal of civilization” (p. 5). This leads to more and more questions about life writing for its survivors. If there is never a final thought, discovered and communicated through writing and remembering, what is it that we (readers, writers, our historical consciousness) might learn from life writing the Holocaust? In what ways do Holocaust survivor writers conceive of the work they choose to do of writing and remembering? How does this affect what we know of memory, history and writing? Most plainly, how is the writing experienced by survivors? In what ways does their work affect our understanding of what it means to be a survivor? How does it affect the “wrestling” Langer describes?

I approach this study believing that the gift the poem references, is the *project* itself of the "clean white paper waiting under a pen." The poem asks us to consider that the constantly renewed gift, as blank space for writing stretches before us, is a metaphor

for what surviving *is*. Survival is the possibility of projects, the projecting of oneself into a future, as well as the projecting of a changed world into a possible future. As Levinas (1981/1987) writes, "Death is the impossibility of having a project" (p. 74). In this way, project is a moving forward, as survival is a moving forward, as writing is a moving forward through a project. The gift of the "clean white paper" it seems, is the projection of a surviving self into a future. The gift is the possibility of a project. So, if "The Gift" Ciardi describes is this possibility, the gift is one that also may never be totally complete. This, too, is no finished miracle; it is instead the possibility of continuation. The gift is rebuilt, is ever re-approached and is renewed through time. Still, is this projection into the future, this "gift" as Ciardi describes it, one that is beyond "history and hurt and heaven"? And if so, how do the survivors who write about their memories of the Holocaust experience this "gift" of clean white paper waiting under a pen? Is the "paper" a place to record, restate, reinterpret, project, make meaning? Is it a welcome gift? In what sense does this project, this possibility, exist for survivors both literally (in their writing) and metaphorically (in their lives)?

The Clean White Paper: A Building Site

In modern building practices, a building would begin on "clean white paper." The drafting tools of my own father and mother are familiar to me; the plastic rulers that help translate the scale of a house on paper to the scale of a house on the earth, sit on the big drafting table in their office. In vernacular architecture though, the land, the natural features on the land chosen for building would dictate how a house would be sited, situated and constructed. What the builder had seen, and experienced would guide the building. This way of building uses what is available, in the available space, to make a

dwelling that will fit the always temporary needs of those who inhabit the structure.

When the dwellers outgrow the house, a room is added. If the creek rises, the house is moved back from it. The materials used for a house of this type are what exist within the horizon, or what can be made from the land. This helps to describe my understanding of how the clean white paper, in this case the land for building, is a metaphor for what may be made of memory, or for what memory might make. This "gift" is the gift of possibility, the project of building a future.

There is another way that vernacular architecture helps me to understand the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust, and that is in the use of raw materials. The materials of a vernacular architecture, as the material for writing, are made or found by the builder/writer. They are intimately known because these materials shape the context as well as the horizon of the builder/writer. The writer, as it is expressed by the survivor writers who are the participants of this study, write what they know, feel compelled to tell regarding their personal, situated, perspectival history – living and writing as they do, within their own context.

The Past We Can Know

Another way that I initially saw life writing the Holocaust as "a gift," was as a gift to history. I believed that first person accounts of the Holocaust would be seen as reliable accounts of history as they were primary sources for historians. My understanding has been complicated by descriptions of the ways in which we can know the Holocaust. Franklin (2011) describes two prominent views of the Holocaust, one calls the Holocaust "knowable" through a "realist" approach, examined through historical methods of the Holocaust as another historical event. The other approach, the "popular approach" she

describes as “mystical,” a way of seeing the Holocaust as “not knowable” by any but those who survived it (p. 5). But, the Holocaust seen in *either* of these opposing aspects makes life writing of the Holocaust an impossible task. In the one conception, a survivor writer must represent the facts of the Holocaust separate from the personal narrative and subjective meaning making that those events evoke. In the other, she must try to express the “unknowable” in a way that communicates only the personal experience, separate from “historical” facts. Inherent in both conceptions is a troubling notion that the Holocaust experience is one experience, understood by those who lived it uniformly, and that every understanding of the Holocaust *should* fall into either the category of historical or “mystical” (p. 5). A knowledge of the Holocaust as either “objective” or “not knowable” is addressed through Gadamer’s understanding of history.

What Gadamer (1976/2006) calls an "objectivist history" seeks to describe an objective past that is sought by history in the documents and accounts, archives and records of past events. A “historical” description of an objective past makes for an account that describes *beings* separate from *being*. This separation of beings from being creates a myth of an objective past as "a place" in history that may somehow be recreated accurately through dates and documents, what Franklin (2011) calls a “realist” approach (p. 5).

In Gadamer’s conception, a historical past as all "things," reveals itself as a "thing" from and through time, from and through bodies. Because of this, while historians might build a case for an interpretation of history sometimes *using* first hand accounts, first hand accounts, even from survivors and witnesses, are not historically valid on their own according to what Heidegger (1962/2008) calls “*Historie*,” “the science of history,” or

“historiological inquiry” (p. 30). But life writing, which is autobiographical and biographical writing in many genres, is certainly historical in Gadamer's sense (Jolly, 2001) and aligns also with Heidegger's sense of “*Geschichte*” or events that “happen in a historical way” or “the kinds of ‘history’ that actually *happens*” (Macquarrie & Robinson, 2008, p. 30).

For my work, asking here about the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust, the "historical consciousness" of the Holocaust writer is necessary to discern (Gadamer, 1976/2006). "Historical consciousness" describes our sense of our past, present and future interacting to form our perception. It is this history that is explored individually and recursively through memory and through the writing and remembering of the survivor writers. "Historical consciousness" describes our placement within a time, as being shaped by time and as shaping time as we move through it. These survivors, "historical beings," describe through life writing the Holocaust, their own "historical consciousness" (Gadamer, 1976/2006). Heidegger (1962/2008) also describes “*Geshicte*” as a historical sense “which ‘historizes’ out of its future on each occasion” (p. 41). Drawing this distinction between historiology and a historical knowing that allows us to better understand the future, helps me to know the kinds of questions that may be asked of the “historical consciousness” of these survivor writers.

This understanding of the questions that a “science of history” may ask, and those that may be asked through "historical consciousness," provides a way to describe the distinction between life writing as one "interpretation" that may add to themes discerned by historians and instead consider it "continuation" of experience (Carr, 1986). Historians apply an interpretive lens to historical events, and through gathering of evidence, make an

interpretation of the past, seeking themes that help to explain. But might life writing, autobiographical and biographical writing in varied forms, move closer to being a description or "continuation" of lived experience and a way to communicate the lived experience specifically of the Holocaust which can not be known generally?

Initially, I saw the interpretation of "historical conscienceness" as a powerful truth that was made in story, in O'Brien's (1990) conception a "story truth." This sense of life writing moves it beyond interpretation of lived experience, though it may imply that there is a truth that is not a "story truth." Carr (1986) describes life story, our constantly emerging narrative of perceiving, as "continuation" of our knowing, not as interpretation of experience. So while interpretation implies a separation of beings from their knowing, "continuation" implies a constant meaning making of experience as lived experience emerges constantly, through narrative. Carr (1986) describes perception as being experienced through narrative, and because of this, lived experience might be described as a sort of pre-writing for life writing.

Being On The Doorsill

Ciardi's poem helps me to begin to articulate the questions I turn to study. Through my turning to open the phenomenon, new ways into the phenomenon like doorways into a structure, have shown themselves. On the doorsill here, I begin to describe the process of moving in to the phenomenon, the experience of building and dwelling. Like the walls of a house, which help to hold one another in place, the structural beams, the guiding themes of this phenomenon, are part *and* structure of the phenomenon. These guiding themes (memory, history, narrative and writing) inform my questioning of the phenomenon.

Memory, its project and its role in life writing is an important element of the phenomenon I turn to study: *What is the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust?* History and the approach of historical beings toward memory is another of the elements structuring this phenomenon. Memory as a narrative process and humans as narrative beings are elements describing the structure of the phenomenon. Writing, and the role it plays in memory and history, structure the lived experience of the phenomenon also. These components structure and become the structure of the phenomenon. The questions I have surrounding memory, history, writing and narrative call me to the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust. I turn to this phenomenon through hermeneutic phenomenology in order to render the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust and in order to see the structure that makes and is made of that work.

Being In Questioning, Dwelling In

Hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to describe being, seeks to look closely at the nature of experience. Heidegger (1927/1962) describes being as "the most universal concept . . . indefinable . . . (and) self-evident" (pp. 22-23). And in hermeneutic phenomenology the researcher calls to question the nature of lived experience, the question of what being *is*. Because of our condition of being always *in* being, we take for granted the nature of our experience. So through questioning, through research, through writing we seek to define "that which is closest," our being (p. 36). In looking into the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust, this research seeks to address the ontological questions that open what it means to *be* in the phenomenon. In Heidegger's (1954/1971) conception, the researcher's turn to question is part of the nature of "building" and "dwelling" in the phenomenon (p. 347).

However, before I can describe Heidegger's understanding of "being," I have to describe the ways in which Heidegger's philosophy exists within the frame of his actions during and after the Holocaust. For my own work, to describe and open lived-experience it is necessary for me to use Heidegger's philosophy. Though I have employed Heidegger's philosophy, it is tempered with the ethical lens brought by the philosophy of Levinas and by an understanding of the body as medium of experience brought by Merleau-Ponty. Heidegger's work is not merely impossible to ignore; it has shaped my own understanding of what can be known and understood. To explicate the phenomenon, to come to a description of the making of writing by these survivors without describing his actions as a member of the Nazi party, calls into question my own understanding of the ways in which his philosophy and his actions may be intertwined.

The Master's House

Through all of the ways I have thought and wondered about Heidegger and his connection to the Nazi party, I have tried to redeem Heidegger the philosopher as extricable from his actions as a Nazi. Heidegger never publically expressed feelings of regret for having been a member of the National Socialist party and faithfully paid his dues and assessments right up to the end of the war (Rubenstein, 1991). I sought to find a solution to my own unease in understanding my work as an extension of Heidegger's phenomenology. I considered referring only to those philosophers who came after or furthered Heidegger's philosophy toward an ethical higher ground, Levinas, for instance. In my desire to look beyond Heidegger's Nazism, I searched his philosophy for the taint of anti-Semitism ascribed to his work by some, including Rubenstein (1991) and Farias (1989).

Through each strategy, I sought to hear that Heidegger, as philosopher, might in some way be redeemed from his Nazism, and that his philosophy could be a source for this study. But, the philosopher Karl Löwith, a student of Heidegger's, expressed that Heidegger's connection to National Socialism was an intrinsic expression of his philosophy (1993).

In fact, the answer that I got when asking several participants of this study was similar to all those who seek to separate Heidegger the Nazi, from Heidegger the philosopher. A survivor and writer, Gideon, suggested that Heidegger may simply have been a "*fachidiot*" which translates literally as "subject idiot," meaning a person who is without the ability to see or think outside of his or her own field of study (google translator, retrieved January 8, 2014). At first that seemed a way to use Heidegger's phenomenology, separate from him. Later though, it angered me to think that I might somehow remove Heidegger's Nazi affiliation from his philosophy through arguing that the man himself was so single-minded in his pursuit of philosophical understanding that he could not be bothered to understand the systematic annihilation of European Jewry. What kind of a terrible philosophy would it be, coming, as it would have to, from such a "*fachidiot*?"

Herbert Marcuse (1991), Heidegger's student and a philosopher, identified this problem when he wrote to Heidegger in 1947:

A philosopher can be deceived regarding political matters; in which case he will openly acknowledge his error. But he cannot be deceived about a regime that has killed millions of Jews – merely because they were Jews – that made terror into an everyday phenomenon, and that turned everything that pertains to the ideas of spirit, freedom, and truth into its bloody opposite; a regime that in every respect imaginable was the deadly caricature of the Western tradition that you yourself so forcefully explicated and justified. (p. 29)

As Marcuse sees it, there is no redeeming Heidegger the Nazi separate from Heidegger the philosopher, the exercise itself runs counter to Heidegger's own philosophy.

Heidegger was not so distracted by his thinking that he was unable to acknowledge the actions of the National Socialists he aligned himself with. Even Heidegger the philosopher could not be excused for this lapse.

Marcuse lists many accusations against Heidegger and asks for Heidegger to apologize. Finally, he writes the kind of plea that any who value Heidegger's philosophy would want to write. The plea itself is moving in that in it Marcuse articulates an almost naive wish that Heidegger will just say he is sorry. Marcuse, Heidegger's student, is not alone in his hope that Heidegger will save his legacy by trying to excuse his actions. Several of Heidegger's former students, including Hannah Arendt, exhorted him to publically repudiate Nazism (Wolin, 2001). Heidegger, though, seems to see that even that will be pointless, or at the very least beside the point, though he does not seem remorseless. Heidegger responds to Marcuse (1991) by writing, in part:

You are entirely correct that I failed to provide a public, readily-comprehensible counter-declaration. It would have been the end of both me and my family. On this point Jaspers said: that we remain alive is our guilt.

And

An avowal after 1945 was, for me, impossible: the Nazi supporters announced their change of allegiance in the most loathsome way, I, however had nothing in common with them. (p. 30)

Marcuse, Heidegger's student, is unable to give up his teacher, the philosopher, and fears that his actions will undermine the philosophy Heidegger made. Marcuse doesn't just want to save the public face of Heidegger. He needs to see the philosophy that he, along with Arendt, Löwith, Jonas, and so very many others, worked both from and against, as

existing distinctly from Heidegger's Nazism. And Marcuse is right to worry that Heidegger the philosopher will forever be attached to his Nazism. But the philosophy itself moves from Heidegger, lives through Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, Levin, Gadamer and many others I consult in this study. This living philosophy is not encumbered by what Heidegger merely thought or did. It is Heidegger's philosophy, in its departure from everything that had come before it, which stands and lives apart from the actions or even the conceiving of by Heidegger, the man or philosopher.

The Master's Tools

The gale that blows through Heidegger's thinking . . . is not of our century. It comes from the primordial, and what it leaves behind is something perfect which, like everything perfect, falls back to the primordial. (Arendt, as cited in Safranski 1989, p.184)

As Heidegger (as cited in Safranski 1989) describes the possibility of philosophy as "existence's alert awareness of itself" (p. 124) it is possible to see how scholars after Heidegger have expanded on Heidegger's work, but have not refuted it. For how could Heidegger's focus on questioning, his call to attend to being, what amounted to a seismic shift in philosophical thinking, be reversed or ignored (Safranski, 1998)? What Arendt describes of Heidegger's philosophy is also closely related to the pedagogy that I discuss in Chapter Five. Pedagogy as a process of uncovering our own being as Heidegger's philosophy illustrates, guides this work. It is in this way, through the questioning, that the philosophy remains "primordial." Heidegger wrote also that the goal of philosophy was to illuminate existence "where it avoids itself" (Safranski, p. 125). Constant questioning of being is the basis for Heidegger's philosophy, making the philosophy itself, which moves out from Heidegger a philosophy of questioning.

In calling Heidegger's philosophy "primordial," Arendt evokes the dual meaning of his philosophy being both ancient and an "original, or fundamental thing; a beginning or origin; a first principle" ("primordial," 2013). In this case, it is a philosophy that is derived as questioning and made in beginning. This questioning aspect as the heart of Heidegger's philosophy means that dwelling in questioning is not *a philosophy*, as we have known it before Heidegger. It can only, by the nature of questioning, as Heidegger describes it, lead us to more questions, questions that focus us on our being. Levinas wanted, too, to "leave 'the climate' of Heidegger's philosophy for a philosophy that would not be pre-Heideggarian" (Bernasconi, 1978, p.16), in that he wanted to begin again with the questions that are a part of Heidegger's philosophy without Heidegger.

Within this questioning, Heidegger sought to understand the questions surrounding our being, as we are in the world, with others, with things, with ourselves. Heidegger (1927/1962) describes the type of question that allows us to perceive our being more fully as "*that which is to be found out by the asking*" (p. 25). He writes, "The question about the meaning of Being is to be formulated," describing how in the asking we are already finding (p. 25). He writes:

However much this understanding of Being (an understanding which is already available to us) may fluctuate and grow dim, and border on mere acquaintance with a word, its very indefiniteness is itself a positive phenomenon which needs to be clarified. (p. 25)

Heidegger sees our relationship with being as something worth questioning and requiring of questioning again and again. These questions and Heidegger's view of questioning as an opening of being, make the philosophy he created ever open, and in this way beyond Heidegger, separable from him. This means that in asking the questions concerning the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust, ontological questions of lived experience, it is

Heidegger's formulation of questioning that guides me. His questioning is in many ways a systematic remembering of being in that it brings being to question, and it is this that guides my work as building and re-building.

Re-Membering Our Dwelling

For building is not merely a means and a way toward dwelling – to build is in itself already to dwell. (Heidegger, 1954/1971, p. 348)

Heidegger's (1954/1971) building is always described by both the verb and the noun. His building is dwelling in how a thing, an idea, was built and how it might be built – it is a questioning thinking. I am attracted to the metaphor of un-ending building, tearing down and rebuilding as a way of describing memory, life writing, narrative and history because of my sense of my own knowing, as I describe throughout, being constantly built, torn down and rebuilt from experience, through perception. Merleau-Ponty (1964) describes, "The ideas to which we recur are valid only for a period of our lives or for a period in the history of our culture. Evidence is never apodictic, nor is thought timeless" (p. 13).

This description of thoughts that are mutable and able to be useful, for a time, and then torn down when they don't serve any longer and rebuilt into newer, more useful forms applies to my own learning, my always emerging description of my own understanding and the metaphor I've employed of vernacular architecture. I draw from Heidegger (1954/1971) for my own writing and metaphorical choice of building (both lived in and lived). He writes, "All planning remains grounded on this responding, and planning in turn opens up to the designer for the precincts suitable for the designs" (p. 361). In this way, the call of stories from the Holocaust survivors I work with is a gathering of members, the structural supports that I rely on for the dwelling I build, that

build my understanding again and again. So the stories call me and I hear them, or I listen and hear the call to wonder what they are; the end is the same. The call becomes "the design" and opens "the precincts" for that design. Heidegger (1954/1971) writes further:

1. Building is really dwelling.
2. Dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the earth.
3. Building as dwelling unfolds into the building that cultivates growing things and the building that erects buildings. (p. 350)

What does this mean for the phenomenon I turn to study? What does it mean for my study of it, when building becomes re-membering?

Remembering means "To recollect; to think about, reflect on (in some uses without the idea of recollection)" ("remember," 2011). I spend time in Chapter Two discussing memory (problematic for a discussion of the Holocaust) and its relationship with forgetting, but for now I turn to a less common usage - the related, re-membering which means to "put together again, to reverse the dismembering of," or in an obsolete usage, "to provide with a new member or load-bearing component" in building ("re-member," 2011). This usage allows for the kind of building and rebuilding that memory and perception do *for* and *with* one another. It allows for a sense of bringing "members" the structural beams that hold up a building to the discussion of how memory structures us, as we perceive and create its structure. This kind of re-membering becomes most fully situated in the body, as the opposite of dismembering, tearing a body asunder. It is situated in the body (a group) as in bringing all of a group's members to the conversation. It also brings us back to the building, here again as both noun and verb. Re-membering moves toward the future; it is a rebuilding of a stronger structure that houses us all, better and more fully. It is a remaking of the house to fit our changing bodies, our experiences,

and as dwelling in is questioning, it is a mindful remaking. My re-membering is the life-story I build and tear down and re-build as I exist in the constantly moving space between past and future. This place between past and future is also the place where the Holocaust is re-membered, held in its constant presencing and re-presencing through memory, history and writing.

Bachelard (1954/1994) describes "the poetics of the house" (p. xxxvi). His belief that "All really inhabited space bears the notion of home" makes this work of describing the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust, a homecoming, a building and a dwelling. The homecoming aspect of this work, for me, comes from the home made at the table where the survivors and I meet each month. In that place, over time, because of our relationships with one another, I have been moved to wonder what life writing the Holocaust means. Questions begun in wonder are the nature of dwelling thinking. And in all dwelling there must also be a troubling of the house.

In the play, "Inherit The Wind" by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee (1955), Proverbs 11 from the King James Bible is quoted: "He that troubleth his own house, shall inherit the wind." I have thought of that quote often, wondering if a "house" as in a structure, a paradigm, that stands "untroubled" is a "house" worth inhabiting, and it has informed my use of the metaphor of building and re-building.

Heidegger's sense of dwelling as building is also an un-building, a troubling and tearing down and re-building. So Heidegger's building and dwelling tears down and re-builds, troubles the house and dwells. Dwelling thinking requires this un-building and re-building. The wind we "inherit" is the wind of change that brings fresh air to stagnant rooms. As much as the wind may be a storm, the wind is a necessary troubling for

learning around a phenomenon. This building and tearing down and re-building echo also the dual meaning of the word "rendering," the root of which means to cut, and "to boil down." In its most common usage it means "to represent something artistically," and a rendering in light of all of these definitions becomes a better, more truthful description of the phenomenon, a well-built house ("rendering," 2011).

The Life Writing

Life writing, too, is a rendering, and requires the troubling of the house, the building and demolishing required of all writing and of memory. The literary term *life writing* has come to describe the large body of writing that encompasses biography and autobiography, as well as memoir, testimony, and other work that did not originate in written forms, including "artifacts, reminiscence, personal narrative, visual arts, photography, film, oral history, and so forth" (Jolly, 2001).

I choose to use the term life writing because of the fact that the written works of the survivor writers I work with at the museum do not fit neatly into more traditional generic descriptions, but are described by the term *life writing* in that they are life stories, and come from lived experience. The writing done by the survivor writers is not only autobiographical, but includes biographical writing about the lives of others connected to them. The term life writing encompasses this. More importantly, Jolly (2001) describes life writing in this way:

But in the postmodern era the story of a life has seemed to demand explanation in a new way. As the individualism unleashed by capitalism cracks and reshapes in the fire of globalization and the communications revolution, a literature that foregrounds the shape of a single life and its span seems to focus the anxieties of the age. Life writing is now being explored in literary criticism, anthropology, sociology, psychology, history, theology, cultural studies, and even the biological sciences in order to explain an apparent dissolution of life into story. Just as busy is the investigation into our continuing need for stories that confirm or reinvent a

reference to lived experience. The academic imagination has been galvanized by the challenges this has offered to its own epistemological traditions and by the democratizing of knowledge that life writing so charismatically represent.

(Editor's Note, ¶ 1)

Life writing is a term that has in it the word play of writing a life, as in crafting life, during and from experience. It may also be read as the sense of life writing itself – life itself authoring a text, a crafted plot that unfolds as I, the writer and protagonist, move through it. We understand the term in this dual way. In it is the description of the processes that life, learning and writing share, the constant tearing down and rebuilding, the drafting and revision, the ever emerging, constantly changing understandings.

The other meaning that exists in the term is the sense of what it means to write *throughout* a life, over the span of time. All of us are composing through memory and perception in constant composition, maybe without the production of an actual written text. But through life writing the composition may be drafted and revised into an actual text, poem, memoir, biography etc. These differing "texts" exist as both product and process and begin in the pre-conceptual place we encounter (in) story.

In Being

The place where the deciphering of lived experience begins is at the exact moment a being perceives in and through story (Carr, 1986). In this way, continuation through life writing may be the articulation, the revision of lived experience for communication, shared understanding.

In another work of poetry that has helped to guide my turning toward the phenomenon, I see the process I've described above through the lines written by Jacob Glatstein (1987), a survivor of the Holocaust:

I Have Never Been Here Before

I always thought
 I had been here before.
 Each year of my patched-up life
 I mended the fabrics
 of my decrepit, tattered world.
 In memory I recognized
 faces and smiles,
 even my father and mother reappeared
 as longed-for frescoes of the past.
 I have traveled old and squalid paths,
 maneuvered my sails
 between the shores of history.
 I have continually come across the wonder
 of memory inscribing itself,
 and the agitated past
 quietly welling up in the present.
 I thought
 I had always been here.

Only these last ragged years -
 shreds of hair-
 inventive deaths-
 are my days and nights.
 My warped destiny
 I have lived to see.
 The frozen reverie,
 burnt fields,
 cartography of cemeteries,
 stony silence,
 emblems of vicious joy -
 I don't recall them.
 I have never seen them before.
 I have never been here before.

Be still, dead world.
 Be silent, in your ruin.
 Blasted ornaments will bloom again.
 We shall rebuild your foundations
 out of the blood that was spilled.
 And yet the dead will still cry midnight prayers –
 each corpse, a trickling voice.
 Like a tiny candle over each grave,
 a cry will burn,
 each one for itself.

"I am I" –
 thousands of slaughtered I's
 will cry in the night:
 "I am dead, unrecognized,
 my blood still unredeemed."

Such a wealth of gravestones –
 I have never seen them before.
 Day and night I shall mourn the names.

I have never been here before.
 (Glatstein, 1987, p. 111)

Glatstein's poem, like Ciardi's previously, expresses the constant presence of the Holocaust in the life of survivors. It expresses the recurring, recursive, healing and mending that memory and its crafting through writing causes. There is nothing complete in the survival described here, nothing final, and as in Ciardi's poem, the processes of healing, writing, and memory are constant and constantly emerging.

Glatstein's poem's shifting tense, helps us to see the way that past, present and future hold the Holocaust and cause it to be present in ways that can never allow it to reach "the shores of history." This echoes the sentiment of the novelist Pat Barker (1999), who upon accepting the Booker Prize for her novel *The Ghost Road*, describes the Holocaust in this way: "It revealed things about mankind that we cannot come to terms with and cannot forget. It can never become the past" (p. 54).

This constant presencing and re-presencing of the Holocaust occurs in the life writing done by Holocaust survivors even now, nearly seven decades after the Holocaust. Being engaged in the writing process, another process that in its own way causes the writer to "continually come across the wonder/ of memory inscribing itself, /and the agitated past/ quietly welling up in the present," is the work of life writing the Holocaust. This phenomenon I turn to study questions story, memory, history and writing and how

they connect and intersect. Through hermeneutic phenomenology the questions open a way to explore these intersections.

David Krell (1990) wonders whether "writing is a metaphor for memory or memory a metaphor for writing" (p. 4). This parallel is expressed also in the poem through the lines, "I had been here before," "I had always been here," "I have never been here before." Through the twisting tenses of the similar lines a portrait of writing and memory are made. The lines describe a return to the haunting "here" of the poem as being impossible. When he "had" been "here" and had "always been here" there is a tone of desperation, of loss, of being lost. The description here is of memory as a process, of writing as a process. And both are processes that return us *almost* to our remembered sense of the past, in this case, without the speaker wanting to be returned.

Memory and writing both are the casting back that moves us forward, though the speaker in the poem describes a more complicated path. Each process is experienced within the moving frame of a lived life. Both memory and writing are experienced through beings who are *ever* changed through memory and experience. So the poem's narrator can never escape memory; each remembering brings him to a new "place" where this new "he" has never been before. Both memory and "rememberer" are changed through the process. This sense of writing and memoir is at the heart of life writing - writing that has as its material lived-experience, as its topic life story (Jolly, 2001). What may be perceived and understood by the writer, through remembering, through crafting that remembrance into writing? What can we understand about the quality of the experience of memory and life writing? In what ways are the texts created understood by the readers, by historical beings – by us all?

Sistering the Beams: Re-Membering Our Dwelling

Whenever I am very, very cold, when I stand in a frigid wind, possibly without gloves, but rarely without a coat, I try to imagine something of the cold described in the writing of Holocaust survivors. I recall Primo Levi (1986) who writes:

Just as our hunger is not that feeling of missing a meal, so our way of being cold has need of a new word. We say "hunger," we say "tiredness," "fear," "pain," we say "winter" and they are different things. They are free words, created and used by free men who lived in comfort and suffering in their homes. If the Lagers had lasted longer, a new, harsh language would have been born; and only this language could express what it means to toil the whole day in the wind, with the temperature below freezing, wearing only a shirt, underpants, cloth jacket and trousers and in one's body nothing but weakness, hunger and knowledge of the end drawing nearer. (p. 123)

I cannot feel *that* cold. I can't even remember the cold I *have* felt when I am in my warm house, even though I could describe it. And while you read about me being cold, you don't feel it. I can use words to help you think of cold. I could even make a metaphor of wind that tries to wear me away, sculpt me to bones. But where we know cold is where we feel it. What we read just reaches out to the part of ourselves that has felt it before, our remembrance of cold. We do not *feel* it even through the best, most poignant written descriptions. This is the impossibility of language, and Elie Wiesel (1977) says it is the impossibility of describing the Holocaust. He writes, that those "who did not live through the event will never know it . . . between our memory and its reflection there stands a wall that cannot be pierced" (p. 7).

While it seems impossible to describe *that* kind of cold, *those* experiences, writers attempted it even as the Holocaust was happening (Langer, 1995). I attempt to approximate the feeling when I walk in cold wind because of those writers. The only breach possible in the wall that Wiesel describes happens through language; it is the

closest we may come. Any understanding of the Holocaust may happen only through story, only with language – the communication of telling, the communion of hearing. Levinas (1981/1997) writes this of the "saying" that "Antecedent to the verbal signs it conjugates, to the linguistic systems and semantic glimmerings, a foreword preceding languages, it is the proximity of *one to the other*, the commitment of an approach, the *one for the other*, the very signifyingness of signification" (p. 5, italics added).

The cold I have felt is not the cold of the Hunger Winter, as the winter of 1942 was called. So what does my attempt to imagine it mean? What does it mean that Elie Weisel, Primo Levi, Charlotte Delbo and countless other survivor writers attempt to describe it, amidst other horrors readers can't imagine, in their writing? What do I learn when I try to recreate the feelings of others when I am feeling the cold of winter? Through this felt sense as I experience intense cold I try often to imagine how I might have proceeded had I lived in that time. I try to imagine how I would have acted if I'd lived through the Holocaust. The exercise is futile and problematic.

But isn't this desire, on the part of a reader, to hear and feel, the survivors' desire to tell and to be understood, the point? Is "identification" of a reader with a Holocaust writer, with all the problems inherent in it, not also a rehearsal of justness (Eaglestone, 2004)? Can the life story crafted through life writing by the survivors be a calling out for identification, even as we who hear are unable to ever do so completely? Is our attempt to imagine, tied to our intention? Is it a practice that informs our sense of justice? The survivors do write about the lives they lived before, during and after the Holocaust. I read and try to see a window to that experience. Isn't even the "approach" a breach in the wall between our experiences, a move closer *toward* justness?

But what if the work made by survivors is not merely a representation or an interpretation? What if we see memory not in "Humean fashion as giving us merely the weakened presence of the object" (Carr, 1986, p. 21)? And what if we consider Jerome Bruner's (1993) claim, "There is no such thing as a 'life as lived' to be referred to . . . a life is created or constructed by the act of autobiography" (p. 38)? Then our problematic "identification" with the life writing, with the experience of a Holocaust survivor becomes something more than "identification." Our identification becomes a movement away from a singular object - an I, toward a look at our connectivity - a we. Isn't this action the necessary first step toward justice?

David Carr (1986) describes narrative as not "representation" of life but "continuity" (p. 16). Barbara Hardy (1987/1968) writes, "Narrative, like lyric or dance, is not to be regarded as an aesthetic invention used by artists to control, manipulate or order experience, but as a primary act of mind transferred from art to life" (p. 1). She writes further that we encounter narrative "in a pre-aesthetic state in routine acts of human consciousness" (p. 1). This "sistering" of art (here crafting of life story) and life, as beams of a house may be "sistered" in order to make them stronger, turns the questions about the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust into questions about the communion of listening. These questions ask whether hearing this particular gathering of voices might move us toward a more just life-world for us all. They interrogate whether "identification" might be that which can only "represent" an other, whether it moves too far from the experience of resonance - our movement derived from and moving toward an other.

The Ring of the Hammer: Re-Membering Our Dwelling Through Resonance

Resonance is a drawing toward intersubjectivity. It lies in that moment when we give what Buytendijk calls "the phenomenological nod" (van Manen, 1997, p. 27). That nod is the physical manifestation of resonance with what we have read or heard. There is no better indication of resonance with an intersubjective truth than the quiet "mm hmm" that escapes our throats when we hear or read what we perceive to be an important human truth.

Bachelard (1994) writes of resonance:

Through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds with echoes, and it is hard to know at what depth these echoes will reverberate and die away. Because of its novelty and its action, the poetic image has an entity and a dynamism of its own; it is referable to a direct ontology. (p. xvi)

"Resonance" is defined as "intensification and prolongation of sound, especially of musical tone, produced by sympathetic vibration" ("resonance", 2011). In "sympathetic vibration" we move closer to an understanding of another. This move is a move toward justness, as the moving toward another brings us into greater contact with ourselves, our own being. As Steeves (2006) describes it, "If I do not begin with the acknowledgement that you and I are equals, there will be no conversation . . . If I assume otherwise, I will never hear you" (p. 4). The move toward communication with another gives us a fuller knowledge of our self (our selves). This movement outward is a move toward the world. In moving closer toward the world, this is the questioning thought, "the dwelling" Heidegger describes. This questioning thought is the work of life writing. And then in life writing, through the "poetic image" Bachelard describes, there is a prolongation of the sound, the vibration. Through the poetic image there is continuous movement, continuing. In this way resonance is intersubjectivity through a written work. This

circling of call and response and response and call is intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity happens in real dialogue with another. As Steeves describes it, "Ideas can arise in conversation that are neither yours nor mine, but rather are ours. . . the result is always an intersubjective, aesthetic joint accomplishment" (p. 4).

When this dialogue occurs through the life writing of a Holocaust survivor, what is the continuous movement? I believe resonance and a sharing for intersubjectivity are the reasons writers write, but what vibration moves out from the life writing of Holocaust survivors? It is the questioning aspect that begins in learning about our self from another, moving in vibration toward that other, toward intersubjectivity.

The poem that follows is one that describes my own experience of resonance upon hearing poetry read by Lucille Clifton.

Lucille Means Light

Your storied voice lives in the room
where I heard you first,
when I was young.

My bare feet swung over parquet floors
white mullioned doors, propped open

the light, your voice
spilling out,
pouring into the grass, the river below

bio-luminescence aswim, awash in the liquid churning of your voice
glass winged mosquitoes in swarm, the silvered fish as one reflex, one flash
the shining throat of every tree frog pulsed
along with you. The starred night throbbed in time,

each strummed chord in me
hummed with possible poetry.

What occurred to me through the writing and re-writing of this poem is the strongest memory I have of Lucille Clifton, who was my teacher at St. Mary's College of

Maryland: her beautiful and powerful voice. I imagine it as light and vibration through nature on the rural campus where I heard her read for the first time. It is also a reference to *The Book of Light* (1993), a collection of her poems. The sound of her voice, the vibration of it, its timbre as it embodied the poems she had written, made me want to write and read my own poetry. Her poetry made me want to be like her - moved me closer to myself and simultaneously closer to the world. In my memory, it moved me closer to the natural world of the insects and fish, the tree frogs that vibrate the night in the swampy Maryland summers I grew up in, and closer to a questioning aspect, closer to wonder. This is an example of intersubjectivity caused by resonance.

I understand intersubjectivity to mean the movement toward an other as an understanding of the shared life-world, and I understand that as Carr (1986) points out, intersubjectivity is not only for shared work, but is a part of all conflict, where concepts of shared senses of meanings are hammered out – sometimes violently. Still, I see intersubjectivity that comes from true resonance as more of a move toward shared understanding, a dis-othering of others, a move again not merely toward intersubjectivity but toward justice, by way of resonance. Steeves (2006) describes it in this way:

This is the path to truth, reason, logos as the Greeks understood it - logos that is fundamentally communal; reason that is intersubjective, a project of making rounds to various perspectives in the community to see what the world looks like from there and then attempting to forge a description that does justice to them all; *truth that calls art its handmaiden*. (pp. 99-100, italics added)

So intersubjectivity that can move toward justness is not possible first without the acknowledgement of another. We can think of this as conceiving of an audience, making art, which always seeks communication. Without the voice of the other, which often happens through “truth that calls art its handmaiden,” there can be no experience of

resonance, no vibration from one toward another, and no vibration from one toward the world.

Further, intersubjectivity is informed by the past I've come through, as well as my sense of the future I am moving toward. We are told about the time before we are born by those who lived through it. They tell of those times as they move through the times in which we live, as well. We experience time as a conversation between past and future. This conversation is made through the voices of others - voices from literature, from history, seemingly quiet voices of culture and voices heard explicitly through shared life story and through life writing. The processes of memory, life story, and life writing are recursive, constantly building and rebuilt.

In this way, memory and remembering are not simply casting back to a past time. The self that does the search looks back through all of the intervening years, with the eyes of the person who has lived through each year. The life writer writes of the past with the experience of one who has seen it unfolding *and* as one who must clarify that past, its unfolding and what it all may mean these many years later. Thomas Larson (2009) writes, "It's as if we never quite live in the house of the self because we're constantly building it" (p. 3). The story of a lived life is told and understood through many, many rememberings.

Bachelard (1994) describes it in this way: "Our childhood memory contains only worn coins. It is on the plane of the daydream and not that of facts that childhood remains alive and poetically useful within us" (p. 43). Bachelard's sense of "poetic usefulness" is one that when applied to life writing helps to define it as a place of meaning-making for oneself *first*. In this meaning making, life writing and memory help construct a past that

is necessary to the constant making and remaking of the current moment. This current moment is constructed from our perception and through our understanding of our self (selves) through past events. The current moment informs this newly reconstructed self as we travel with each passing second into a newly forming future - *within* the world and *with* others.

Larson (2009), writes, "Remember may mean to be mindful of the past and to put the parts of a past circumstance together through repetitious recall— that ever-recurring *now* in which we brood over past events again and again" (p. 3). This constructing and reconstructing of a self, always within a new time, a changed place and in an ever-changing body, may even mirror the process that occurs in our brains as well.

Stanislawski (2004) writes, "In general, neuroscientists now argue, autobiographical memory works by extracting the *meaning* of what we encounter, not by retaining and then accessing a literal record of it" (p. 17). So, if we refute the idea of an "objective past," then we must also reject memory as a literal record, and in this way, see memory as recollection/perception, another of our meaning making processes.

This interplay between a mythical literal record and intersubjective truths made from experiences, may be an important part of how we can begin to open the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust. If life writing acts as both a continuation of a life lived and *as the place* where that continuation can be interpreted, intersubjectivity may move onto the page through "the poetic image" that calls out for resonance. If life writing acts as a place where the actions and events that shaped that life are able to be examined by both writer and reader, and in some cases by generations of readers that come after, then resonance calls out for intersubjectivity.

But does the fact of a written text stop the process of conversation necessary for intersubjectivity? Does it as Steeves (2006) describes it, put "too much me in the we" (p. 4)? Or is it the opposite as Barthes (1977) describes? Barthes' sense is an effectual transformation of the I that writes for resonance with an other. He writes, that the "I which writes the text . . . is never more than a paper-I" (p. 161). Isn't it possible though that true conversation can happen as readers read and revive the writer through reading, even a "paper-I"? Isn't it also possible that the deciphering done by the writer, the meaning made by description of a self does not become one sided, that it might remain intersubjective? If life writing is the making of a life story, structuring, for a purpose, a lived life's events, if it is a meaning making process, then meaning remains an intersubjective meaning in reading. If we see life writing as a lived life, perceived in narrative, isn't it possible that the narrative itself is intersubjective, as well as our understanding of it? If we can see life writing as a meaning making tool for better understanding the random events of a life lived, in order to communicate them to others, might we not also see life writing as moving reader and writer toward intersubjective knowing?

Questioning another's experience is the position of dwelling thinking; it is the root of research and it allows us to be open to resonance. To return to resonance for a moment, the children's author William Steig describes his work, in his acceptance speech for the Caldecott medal in 1970, in this way:

Art, including juvenile literature, has the power to make any spot on earth the living center of the universe, and unlike science, which often gives us the illusion of understanding things we really do not understand, it helps us to know life in a way that still keeps before us the mystery of things. It enhances the sense of wonder. And wonder is respect for life. Art also stimulates the adventurousness

and the playfulness that keeps us moving in a lively way and that lead us to useful discovery. (Usher, 2010, ¶ 5)

Research into the world and questions about another, which Steig says is "respect for life" is the aspect that most causes an openness for resonance. Resonance, the movement out from our self that brings us closer to others and toward intersubjectivity, toward an understanding of the world, *fosters* justness. Steeves (2006) describes it this way:

Objectivity is not to be distinguished from subjectivity, but is derived from it. Objective truth is a matter of making the rounds in the community, coming to see the public world as clearly as possible from the perspective of each Other, and doing one's best to forge a perspective that does justice to the whole. The notion of the generality is built in to the notion of the individual. Intersubjective truth is the meaning of objective truth. And the world is one that is shared by many creatures, each with a point of view that needs to be considered when making the rounds. (p. 7)

Is life writing, then, a communicated understanding of a self and a calling out for recognition to others? Do survivors life writing the Holocaust write for/from resonance? Is life writing one mode of asking for reception, with the goal of greater justness in any who respond? These questions are ontological and wonder about the nature of life writing. They seek to understand more fully the lived experience of the survivor writers, and in that way, seek to understand the living world we inhabit together.

Constructing the Self: From Life Story and Lived Experience to Life Writing

Autobiography('s) real subject is, or should be, the development of the inner and outer self, and attending properly to that task can only plunge the author into the abyss of self. The successful memoirist is the one who explores self in ways in which others can see perhaps a glimmer of their own selves. (Yardley, 2004, ¶ 7)

The construction of a self is the subject matter of the life writer. That self is always also a reflection, analysis or representation of the historical, psychological or religious world in which the author herself writes, and in the case of a Holocaust survivor

writer, that world in which the Holocaust is ever present. Bruner (2001) describes how "Eventually the culturally shaped cognitive and linguistic processes that guide the self-telling of life narratives achieve the power to structure perceptual experience, to organise memory, to segment and purpose-build the very 'events' of a life" (§ 4).

Life writing, as a creation of a self, acts as a unifying convention running through St. Augustine's confessions to current works. Augustine's "identity" was formed and questioned through his relationship with God, and each vignette he included is for explicating that relationship (1960). Josephus, a Roman Jew who predates Augustine's writing by 300 years, is taken to task by Stanislawski (2004) for what he calls "overt and covert autobiographical details and agendas" (p. 18). These "agendas" include Josephus' consideration of his contemporary Roman audience in the drafting and redrafting of his autobiography. Stanislawski (2004) rails against the form:

What the novelist and literary scholar A.S. Byatt has aptly termed 'that most evasive and self-indulgent of forms' – is to attempt to unravel the conscious from the unconscious distortions in these texts, to regard autobiographies as artifacts of individuals' quests, tempered by the constraints of our all-too-human embodiment, to make sense of their lives first and foremost for themselves and then, if possible, for their readers. (p. 17)

While the problem he describes of teasing the "actual" from the "perceived" may be problematic, according to his own commitments, his description goes to the heart of the rhetorical purpose of life writing and helps to define it further as a collection of genres focusing on the writer's making meaning for self in the world. What he describes as "all-too-human" seems to hope for something other than a human way to describe human experience.

Zinsser (1998) describes memory in life writing this way, "Memoir is the best search mechanism that writers are given. Memoir is how we try to make sense of who

we are, who we once were, and what values and heritage shaped us" (p. 6). Life writing becomes a text for searching, a canvas for making new knowledge in a clearly situated and perspectival way. The writer is *of* and *in* a time, a place, living in a body and living in shared relationships with others who are also shaped by time, place and embodiment. These contextual truths are personal truths tied closely to the lived-world in which she writes and lives, a call for resonance, a move toward intersubjectivity.

The description of life writing as a place where a writer may begin to survey and come to understand her own lived life through writing is clearly articulated by Nancy Miller (2008):

I could write down what I remembered; or I could craft a memoir. One might be the truth; the other, a good story . . . When I sit down to reconstruct my past, I call on memory, but when memory fails, I let language lead . . . As a writer, the answer to the question, what 'really' happened is literary – or at least textual. I will know it when I write it. When I write it, the truth will be in the writing. But the writing may not be the truth; it may only look like it. To me. (p. 44)

Miller's description casts life writing as personal and self-referential - as a meaning-making act for the writer because the written work made is one of the author's own life, imbued with elements of storytelling, as we perceive life story as narrative, and so it remains in the crafting. Her description, in which she eschews an "objective" truth, is one that describes life writing as continuation of meaning making and not simply as interpretation of memory. This suggests that life writing works at interrogating, continuing a meaning making self *in the world* for the survivor writers of The Memory Project. Life writing seeks to place "the self" within the context of a larger world.

Miller (2008), referring to autobiography, writes that it, like life, exists "in human solidarity, all of us 'inextricably bound up with one another' so too . . . does the genre" (p. 42). Life writing's purpose is struggling to describe a *being in the world*, which employs

the necessary tools of literary device and narrative structure to communicate that being, to make that being resonate with readers (Jolly, 2001). It employs life story and lived experience and memory of lived experience as material for writing. It seeks to describe memory through communicable themes, and as it exists, in story. The work of life writing the Holocaust is in some sense, the work of translating the past into the future, a self to others.

Life Writing, The Structure of Memory and Being in the World

Life writing is a meaning making process, an exploration of being in the world and comes from and through the writer's attempt to describe memory. Here metaphorical language is used to describe events of the past, and writing always a construing act, becomes a way of continuing the life story of perception, re-membering it. Carr (1986) writes of consciousness as a construing act as well, "The life of consciousness is composed" (p. 27). This composition begins before text is written, but constantly informs the drafting of a self through memory. Stanislawski (2004) suggests that "Retrieval of memory is thus much like perception; it is a constructive process and therefore subject to distortion, much as perception is subject to illusion" (p. 16). But while Stanislawski (2004) sees this process of memory retrieval as an obstacle to achieving an "objective past," wishing for more exact instruments, Steeves (2006) sees this sense-making process as the best way to come to intersubjective truth. What Stanislawski (2004) terms "self-fashioning" in written memoir is inseparable from Steeves' (2006) notion of intersubjectivity, and from Carr's description of how we learn and know through the life-story of our self and others. Stanislawski (2004) writes:

Memories are unstable and transient, effected or transformed by beliefs and emotions, and hence by the contexts and cues that evoke these memories even before they are articulated in words and then in writing. (p. 23)

These "contexts" and "cues" are as much a part of the nature of seeing ourselves through memory and showing ourselves through writing as they are the specific lived time and place in which we write, recall and reconstruct our story. Steeves (2006) writes that through navigating these "contexts" and "cues" or as he calls it, "making the rounds," we are building intersubjective truth. The "contexts" are the landscapes in which we live – the lived time, lived space, lived body and lived relationships of our lives (van Manen, 1997). The "cues," are the ways in which we come to understand these experiences- the ways we make sense of ourselves in the world.

Casey (2009) points out that "narration" stays true to its origin in "*gnarus*," meaning "to know," and life writing that seeks the resonance of a reader makes narration a mode of learning intersubjectively. This process moves us toward better, and clearer, communication of one to another. In that writing, we learn to understand our self through communicating our self to the world; and in that communication we move closer to the world, and simultaneously closer to our self.

The following reflection by Geva (2008) describes how writing gave her a process and a place to reflect on her past and how she comes to make meaning from and through it.

Sorrow Follows Laughter

Whenever my children were having a good time, laughing their heads off, not responding even to my warnings to stop, I used to tell them, 'You will see that in the end there will be tears!' After a while they stopped laughing, but when they were older they wondered why - why should they stop?

Even my grandchildren would ask me, 'Where does this idea come from?' I really could not remember why I had gotten so carried away telling them to stop

laughing. It scared me to hear wild, uncontrolled laughter. It was a bad omen for me, but I could not explain it. All I knew was that I myself could not laugh anymore as I used to do when I was younger.

During one of the Museum's writing workshops I was asked to write about any event that happened before the war and my thoughts drifted to a day in March 1944 when I had some friends over to study for upcoming exams. When we were done, we sat around and relaxed, talking, joking and laughing as only young girls do. We were already starting to get out of control when one of the girls, Marian, lifted her pinky and repeatedly said, 'little finger, pinky!' We laughed so hard. We begged her to stop, but when she kept quiet and just lifted her pinky it made us roll on the floor in hysterical laughter. We were so happy, so carefree. We loved our life, we loved each other, and we loved our studies. We were making our plans for the summer and discussing where to spend our vacation . . .

Three months later the entire Jewish population of my hometown of Miskole, Hungary was deported to Auschwitz. All of my girlfriends who I had laughed with that day were killed.

When I thought about that laughter-filled day in the writing workshop, it suddenly dawned on me why I could never really laugh since then, why I had told my children to stop laughing, why I had thought that sorrow follows laughter.

It took more than 64 years for me to remember that beautiful day in my room with friends, to remember being overwhelmed with youthful carefree laughter.

Now I understand the profound impact the Holocaust has had on me, and my family. Now I understand why I repeatedly warned my children, 'Do not laugh so hard. You will see that in the end there will be tears.' (Geva, 2008, pp. 11-12)

This reflection informs the writer's sense through time, of herself as a young girl, as a mother and as a grandmother. In this recollection is her children's response to their mother's warning, as well. Further, the final sense we are left with as readers is that Geva has not lost her belief that "in the end there will be tears." Her present and future include the Holocaust as surely as her past. Knowing the root of her belief that "sorrow follows laughter" does not cause her to change the warning she gives to her family, in fact she concludes this piece of writing by repeating this warning. More importantly, what she is able to remember through the writing is the wonderful memory of her friends, though it is deeply overshadowed by the murder of these young girls in Auschwitz. It is their

happiness she says it took her "more than 64 years to remember" while their loss has not been forgotten for a moment.

Geva's piece helps us to understand that the Holocaust is not finished and is not living merely as memory for survivors. The echoes of the Holocaust she describes reverberate and ring out like sound in all directions and are not the static memory of a static past uncovered. What is told and recalled is also not static. It helps to project memory into a future and is ever building the project of memory.

In the Building: Joinery

When I was offered the job of leading the writing workshop for Holocaust Survivors at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, I worried that because I was younger than the participants they might feel I was not qualified to teach them. I was worried that the survivors would be right in thinking that and I would indeed *have* nothing to teach them. I suspected, too, that writing could not *be* taught. I worried also that I couldn't offer advice or give constructive feedback for the writing they would do - it seemed impossible then to comment on writing that came from personal experience of the Holocaust; what would I say about it? I felt unequal to the responsibility of being witness to personal, individual testimony. I admit all of these fears now because of my belief that our understanding is always built, and torn down and rebuilt through experience. The story of my turning toward the phenomenon happens through the way in which my understandings have changed during my time working with survivors, working with their writing.

My fears became over time, questions for study. They are the questions that lead me to inquire of these workshop writers about the meaning of life writing the Holocaust.

Each of these fears and the outcomes of these imagined expectations have led me to wonder about the "presences" of the group. What and how do the qualities of the group, the setting etc. affect the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust? Merleau-Ponty (1955/1964) writes, "Perception does not give me truths like geometry but presences" (p. 14).

These "presences" exist in each of the questions I ask about the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust. What is the presence of our group? What is the presence of story and memory for the writers? What is there that is perceived and known before understanding and before the "intellectual act" of "deciphering" Merleau-Ponty (1955/1964) describes (p. 15)? What are the "presences" of history and narrative, story and memory for these writers? Finally, Merleau-Ponty describes how our perception is "pregnant with its form" (p. 15). If that form and our perception do not *take* the form of narrative, but instead, in our pre-conception we experience the world as story, then do we work both from and more fully toward experience in life writing (Carr, 1986)?

Merleau-Ponty (1955/1964) writes, "We observe at once that it is impossible, as has often been said, to decompose a perception, to make it into a collection of sensations, because in it the whole is prior to the parts" (p. 15). But the relationship between whole and parts is ever drafted, emerging and evolving. As memory is ever drafted, life writing is the re-presencing of parts (events, memory of past experiences) to make a whole that is constantly emerging and continuing. Merleau-Ponty writes, "But in perception it is 'real'; it is given as the infinite sum of an indefinite series of perspectival views in each of which the object is given but in none of which is it given exhaustively" (p. 15). This sense that relationship of the object and subject (a body that takes a "point of view") must

be understood as the "real" as the always growing fullness that describes lived-experience, is a way of describing knowing that does not strip the "meaning" from the "sign" or the "form" from the "matter of perception" (p. 15). This also helps to conceive of a way of describing the "setting" of our group and the work we do there as ever changing, comprised by its present, past and future. The "setting" of our group itself is ever emerging, comprised of the places we meet and have met, current and past members, our evolving purposes etc. So the ever drafted, constantly revised and rebuilt sense of the phenomenon that emerges through each passing moment is meaning making that is, of course, never complete.

The conference table where The Memory Project meets is the place where our setting is centered, though this is not the only setting for our group. Writers complete their work both in their perceptions, through their thoughts and on paper, or on computer screens. Life writing is made in places both actual and imagined, described and unuttered. They work in places of this time and in past places. Their work happens in train cars, in fields, rivers, barns, lumber yards, at other tables, in barracks, in the Palace at Versailles, in city streets and in all the places and times in between and in in-between places. It is only through the ontological questions around "historical consciousness" that help to comprise "lived time," that we can describe the multiple and changing place of our group (Gadamer, 1975/2006).

We gather at the table also to eat lunch together. And while we eat the food brought to us by the museum's cafe, the food of our group is from multiple childhoods through time or from yesterday's breakfast. The food of our group is egg salad, or chulant and latkes, eggs, and often it is a small bit of bread, never enough soup. This is

the experience of the lived-body that intersects as all bodies do, with lived-time, lived place and the relationships as we live them. Time has changed our group, changes it each month and will continue to change it. Some participants have been attending these meetings since their beginning in 2001. Some have joined us at different points over time. Five members have died and more have come and gone from the group.

I began working with this group as a newly engaged, high school teacher and have become, since knowing the survivors, a wife, a mother of a son, a mother of a daughter, a stay-at-home mother and adjunct instructor, a graduate student and teacher. All of these shifts in time, space, body and relationship also change the phenomenon, the group, the writing and the meeting of us all there.

For the lived-experience of life writing the Holocaust, Merleau-Ponty's (1964) description of "perception" being "pregnant with its form" means that the point of view, the perception of history from nearly seven decades later is not a distortion (p. 15). Memory is not a shade of the "objective past," but instead is one setting of the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust. This setting that Merleau-Ponty calls the "entourage" must be carefully considered and described; the lived-time, lived-space, lived-body and lived-relationship of each writer *and* of the group itself, is necessary to the understanding of the phenomenon. So writing, the group, history, memory, story are not separable from the phenomenon, but become part of its fullness (van Manen, 1997).

The group's function is for writing and for *the* writing, but writing is both from and of the group as it is from and of the individuals who make up the group. The group is made at once from each individual and exists as a whole, reconstituted each time by time, by bodies, by space. There, I teach and learn, learn and teach from and with each

participant, from the writing, from writing itself - the act of it, the product I make and the product made by others. These parts and wholes build one another and are built and it is this building as both noun and verb to which I turn. Merleau-Ponty (1964) writes:

The classical analysis of perception reduces all our experience to the single level of what, for good reasons is judged to be true. But when, on the contrary, I consider the whole setting [l'entourage] of my perception, it reveals another modality which is neither the ideal and necessary being of geometry nor the simple sensory event, the "percipi" and this is precisely what remains to be studied now. (p. 14)

I turn to study this phenomenon because of my experience with this group. The impetus of this research, as I've described, is the experience of being in the room with the survivors, knowing each writer, hearing his or her story. Those *feelings* lead me to wonder further about the experience of life writing the Holocaust. My desire to know more about life writing as a mode of important learning, my interest in writing from and about personal history, is built from and of the experience of working with the writers of The Memory Project.

Inhabiting the Questions: Being in the Building

Why does research take form as a question? How is it that the 'what?' already steeped in being so as to open it up the more, becomes a demand and a prayer? (Levinas, 1981/1997, p. 24)

I traveled to the museum anxiously that first day, feeling uncomfortable and nervous in dressy clothes, and now nearly every month since then, I have traveled to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to meet with The Memory Project writers. I feel transported during my time at the conference table by the stories recounted by the survivors. I might be transported though to times before the war, where families are remembered with love and affection, or I might be transported to what Emil Fackenheim (1979) describes as "Planet Auschwitz." Each recollection is colored by and related to

each. The families described with love are, those same ones murdered in the death camps.

This realization makes every account of life before the war, every party, every trip to school, a story of foreboding. I, and all readers of these stories, know what is coming, while the people of the story do not. Every story is tense with this dramatic irony. Every birthday party, or Sabbath dinner recollected, personalizes the Holocaust, protracts the scope to a human level – the six million become that person's brother, this person's cousin. The Holocaust heard in this way becomes both more and less comprehensible. The collective history becomes personal and the trauma gets closer, more immediate, and in that immediacy, more horrible – more difficult to comprehend.

There are times when the personal stories of the Holocaust I read and hear, are, in individual cases, redemptive. There is the family who saved Marcel and his family, the several Belgian families who hid Harry. I return to think of these stories as a sort of antidote, but does hearing the Holocaust told by those who survived it change my understanding? Primo Levi (1986) writes, "Every survivor is an exception" (p. 27) and I, hearing the Holocaust told and read to me by the survivors, know it through these exceptions.

Much of what I know of the Holocaust comes through the "exceptions" who share the table with me. This entire study is based on the work made by those who survived. Through the stories I read I often can't help but focus on the survival itself. There are times when I wonder what quality caused these people to survive. What force allowed for survival? I wonder, too, what causes these survivors to write their stories of survival. What questions are asked (or possibly answered) through life writing the Holocaust?

How does the writing affect their sense of themselves, as survivors, as writers and as people? And what does it mean for us all?

Re-Membering: A Narrative Structure

Emmanuel Levinas (1981/1997) writes, "Thanks to God, I am another for the others" (p. 158). "The passing of God, of whom I can speak only by reference to this aid or this grace" (the responsibility of justice from and to the other) "is precisely the reverting of the incomparable subject into a member of society" (p. 158). Many of the written pieces about life *after* the Holocaust describe the sense of "becoming" a "member of society" again, of seeking belonging. Warsinger (2008) writes in her piece entitled "Belonging," about an encounter that changed her sense of herself as an outsider:

For me, that instant was a major turning point in how I felt about myself. Even though I had been a citizen of the United States for some time, I wondered how a child who had been in the Holocaust could come face-to-face with the President of the United States. There must have been some order and perfection in the world after all. The incident took only a moment. The guard asked me to please wait for the elevator to return, but before the doors closed President Truman wished me good luck with my baby.

I knew then that my child and my future children, my husband, and I would be safe and live in a society where we belonged. (p. 41)

I wonder, though, if Levinas means that the Holocaust itself is "the incomparable subject"? Is "this grace" the intersubjective communication that brings a survivor into the conversation in the first place? Is Warsinger's communication of her own sense of safety and approval, her sense of herself as an American, part of her ability to add her voice, to move toward intersubjectivity? These questions and the others I have asked previously guide my turning toward the phenomenon, help to render the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust. They seem to me as though they must be asked in the same way

that each question helps to move this rendering of the phenomenon toward the action van Manen (1997) says is at the heart of researching lived experience.

If the Holocaust changed victims' and survivors' sense of themselves, it also irrevocably changed our sense of the world, and possibly of narrative as well. While there can be no redemption of the Holocaust, writing, memory, narrative and history change our understanding of the events continually. Langer (1995) writes, "We are forced to surrender the comforting notion that suffering has meaning – that it strengthens, ennobles or redeems the human soul" (p. 5). But these are the stories of survivors; their survival doesn't mean that suffering has meaning, only that the Holocaust must also be understood as encompassing their stories of survival as well.

The writing of survivors now, sixty-seven years after the Holocaust, projects these writers into a future. Their writing is not meant to try to redeem the events of the Holocaust, but the life-story of these survivors has become one where continuation is present, where regeneration, of a kind, occurs. I believe it doesn't dismiss the enormity of the Holocaust's horror or approach the "dubious feat of wresting meaning from the murder of 5 to 6 million innocent men, women and children" to see, on this personal level, a kind of reclamation for these writers (Langer, 1995, p. 7). Langer (1995) writes:

Just as the Holocaust experience crushed the structures of self that usually favored survival, forcing victims to find new means for staying alive, so its literature sabotages the reader's hopes for a durable affirmation lurking in the dusk of atrocity. Reading and writing about the Holocaust is an experience of *un*learning; both parties are forced into the Dantean gesture of abandoning all safe props as they enter and, without benefit of Virgil, make their uneasy way through its vague domain. (pp. 6-7)

So in turning to study the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust I also make my "uneasy way." Still, I focus through these questions about what it means for the survivors

to be writing, to continue to experience the events of the Holocaust. The questions around the phenomenon though, move us all toward new understandings of the Holocaust, as survivor writers create work that helps us to question further the bounds of narrative and writing, memory and history.

The House Built by Hermeneutic Phenomenology

The questions I ask about the phenomenon of life-writing the Holocaust are phenomenological questions. They come from (and through) the overarching question that guides my study, *what is the lived-experience of life writing the Holocaust?* This question seeks to dis-cover and explore the experience of the writers, of our group and of the life-world in which they write. It is not a question though that will yield an absolute answer. The questions themselves are important for that fact, and for the implication that what I open does not purport to be an answer for all time, for all people or for all places. This rendering of the lived-experience of life writing the Holocaust is a rendering, through phenomenological habits, that seeks to move beyond a simple naming, correlating, or categorizing the experience of the survivor writers. This work, these questions require inquiring of the writers' being in the world. The phenomenological habits van Manen (1997) describes are:

1. turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
2. investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
4. describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. maintaining a strong and orientated pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
6. balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. (pp. 30-31)

These habits help us to see a way in which to make philosophy manifest, to *do* research through the questions of hermeneutic phenomenology in order to help inform a greater

sense of being-in-the-world.

The Doorway Itself: Further in to the Building

More fully exploring the existentials of our group is part of the work I do in Chapter Two. There I describe further the fundamental themes of history, writing, narrative and memory. Through each of these themes I explore each counterpoint as well. I look at memory's correlate, forgetting. I examine the relations of writing to silence. I look further into Gadamer's sense of history, and ways that the past may be constituted or conceived. I also look further at the ways in which life writing the Holocaust challenges what we know of narrative.

In Chapter Three I trace the particular hermeneutic phenomenology that guides this work – how life story informs themes of resonance, intersubjectivity and justness, and how these themes are described through the philosophies of Heidegger, Gadamer, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas. I show how these concepts come to be understood, particularly as they relate to the Holocaust, in the philosophies of David Carr.

In Chapter Four, I decipher my conversations with Holocaust survivor writers and explore themes around the integral relationship between audience and purpose for these writers. I also explore in Chapter Four the intersections of these writers' work with the work of historians of the Holocaust, among the multiple ways these writers are in conversation with history. In Chapter Four, I consider writing as it is described by the survivor writers as an “expanding” and continual process for learning and knowing led by their own questioning.

In Chapter Five, I explore the pedagogical implications for writing as a deciphering tool, for viewing memory and writing as meaning making processes and for

what it means to remain in questioning, to be engaged in process. I explore what a pedagogy of questions may add to our understanding of writing, memory and history.

CHAPTER TWO:

ASSEMBLING THE STRUCTURE: A FRAMEWORK OF MEMBERS

The Vernacular Architecture of Memory, Narrative, History and Writing

War

The same ashes will cover all of us:
 The tulip - a wax candle flickering in the wind,
 The swallow on its flight, sick of too many clouds,
 The child who throws his ball into eternity -

And only one will remain, a poet -
 A mad Shakespeare, who will sing a song, where might and wit is:
 - My spirit Ariel, bring here the new fate,
 And spit back the dead cities!
 (Sutzkever, 1991, p. 115)

Perhaps because the disaster is so great there is nothing to be gained by expressing in words everything that we feel. Only if we are capable of tearing out by force of our pent-up anguish the greatest of all mountains, a Mount Everest, and with all our hatred and strength hurling it down on the heads of the German murderers of the young and old - this would be the only fitting reaction on our part. Words are beyond us now. Our hearts are empty and made of stone. (Lewin, as cited in Langer, 1995, p. 3)

I begin this chapter with the two perspectives above to describe a central tension that exists around life writing the Holocaust. This tension presents itself as the contradiction: words are not enough to describe personal experience of the Holocaust; words are all we have to describe personal experience of the Holocaust (Eaglestone, 2004). This tension exists in the writing excerpted above as Lewin (1988) produces a powerful metaphor *through language* to imagine a fitting retribution for "German murderers" while he simultaneously laments the powerlessness of "words." Sutzkever (1991) imagines not the "Mount Everest" of strength but a Shakespeare to help recreate the world. Though, he imagines that the cities will be "spit back." Here the verb acts as both the harsh action of spitting as well as how the cities must be reinvented by a mouth,

through speech. Still Holocaust writers lament the "linguistic system" as unable to bear, unable to truly communicate the Holocaust experience (Levinas, 1981/1997). Wiesel (1990), Levi (1986), Delbo (1995), Améry (1999), and Semprun (1997) all depict the inadequacy of language to describe experience. Améry (1999) writes:

[It] would be totally senseless to try and describe the pain that was inflicted on me. . . . One comparison would only stand for the other, and in the end we would be hoaxed by turn in the hopeless merry-go-round of figurative speech. The pain was what it was. Beyond that there is nothing to say. (p. 33)

The literature is filled with similar descriptions, *in writing* of the ineffability of the Holocaust experience. Semprun (1997) writes:

Memory was too dense, too pitiless for me to master immediately . . . Whenever I awoke at two in the morning, with the voice of the SS officer in my ear, blinded by the orange flame of the crematory, the subtle and sophisticated harmony of my project shattered in brutal dissonance. Only a cry from the depths of the soul, only a deathly silence could have expressed that suffering. (p. 159)

Notice the two opposing responses that Semprun chooses, or rather does not choose, in that he modifies each response with "only." The "deathly silence" and/or the "cry from the depths of the soul" are each appropriate, he says. But nothing else will seem to convey the experience. Semprun's sense of this tension as the only two appropriate responses to the Holocaust is communicated in much of the life writing of the Holocaust.

Related to this sense that "there is nothing to say" or no way to say it, is the expression by writers that *they* cannot say it. At times language seems unable to contain experience; at other times the experience requires a better language, crafted by a better writer. Semprun (1997) writes, "What's at stake here is the exploration of the human soul in the horror of evil . . . We'll need a Dostoevsky!" (p. 127). These expressions that language and writing must fail to communicate the experience of the Holocaust become a generic trait of the writing that is produced from it. This device acts as a way *to be able to*

express the personal trauma of the experience. The device is one that emphasizes the space between the experience of the Holocaust and shared expression of that experience. So the experience and the memory of the experience cause a kind of "void" or "crux" that "forces upon the witness both the imperative to speak and the knowledge that to speak the experience and to act in the face of that experience is both impossible and impossible to avoid" (Bernard-Donals, 2009, p. 4).

This is the space also between Levinas' (1981/1997) description of "the said" and "the saying" (p. 5). Levinas writes, "The correlation of the saying and the said, that is, the subordination of the saying to the said, to the linguistic system and to ontology, is the price that manifestation demands" (p. 6). The utterance of experience creates something apart from the experience, "the said." The "said" is created *from* the experience, but only approaches the actual experience; it *is* never *it*. The "said" allows for "an approach" to the experience as well as an approach to an other (Levinas). Bernard-Donals (2009) describes it as "a void that is productive of a positive ethics" (p. 4). What is told about an event stands in for the event but can never *be* it. What is described of experience only "approaches" experience. But in this way, might it be that the "hopeless merry go round of figurative speech" described by Améry (1999), becomes *more* of an exchange between hearer and speaker, reader and writer? Might this exchange be the "approach" Levinas describes of "one to another"?

For the Holocaust survivor life writing the Holocaust, in what ways is this approach through language a return to the world of others? By this I mean, can writers through language, commune with others, both others of the past and the future? What does this approach mean to survivors whose earliest experiences include "separation"

from others, culture, family etc.? Might this "approach" through language help to describe the resonance of a reader? And what would it mean for this reader through the experience of resonance to be moved toward justness? Is resonance a way in which a reader can "approach" experience through written accounts? Even without any of this, Levinas (1981/1997) warns that "the said" is the price "the saying" must pay to *be*. In his sense of "being," the other is how we are made manifest and how we know it.

Life writing the Holocaust exists within this tension between the saying and the said, between the experience and its utterance, and this tension helps us to understand better the members that guide my understanding of this phenomenon: memory, narrative, history and writing. Memory and forgetting, which I explore in the next section, are called by Bernard-Donals (2009) "facets of the same phenomenon of understanding" (p. 3). And it is with this sense that each of the members that structure the phenomenon are composed of these "facets" that I also explore history, writing and narrative. I explore each with the understanding that none of these members can stand on its own in the phenomenon. Memory, narrative, history and writing structure the phenomenon and are integral to its structure and to one another. These guiding themes allow for the "narrative elaborations of the lived meaning" of life writing the Holocaust (van Manen, 1997, p. 109).

In the section that follows the discussion of memory and forgetting, I explore the relationship between event and narrative of an event. This relationship lies at the heart of Carr's (1986) sense of how we perceive as narrative beings and differs from those who see narrative making as an after-the-fact intellectualizing of experience. Next, I trace a relationship between history and writing where both must remain open to the present in

order to be in Heidegger's expression, "worthy of questioning" and "worthy of thought" (p. 362). Through this sense of writing and history, I trace the tension between this history as "actual" and Gadamer's (1975/2006) "historicity." The distinction lives in Gadamer's description of human knowing as being always situated in history, as we are "historical beings." Exploring each of these themes through the "facets" that build them, allows me to describe the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust in its fullness, within the contexts that make it and which are made by it.

The Built and Building Past: Memory and Forgetting

Full fadom five thy father lies,
 Of his bones are coral made:
 Those are pearls that were his eyes:
 Nothing of him that doth fade,
 But doth suffer a sea-change
 Into something rich and strange.
 Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell:
 Ding-dong.
 Hark now I hear them - ding dong bell.
 (Shakespeare, trans. 1974, 1.1. 397-405)

Ariel's song from *The Tempest* may not have been what Sutzkever (1995) had in mind when he wrote, in his poem cited in the beginning of this chapter: "My spirit Ariel, bring here the new fate, And spit back the dead cities!" (p. 563). Still the transformation through memory, the "sea-change" Ariel describes in his song, makes the act of spitting back the "dead cities" emblematic of the problems of recreating the past through memory. And "recreation" may be what we wish of memory, but rebuilding seems to describe better how what is built again through memory may be "something" that is both "rich and strange." So, while the sea nymphs are ringing the bells, the transformation of "thy father" is underway, and in memory the "sea-change" is always ongoing, never

completed. Just as the cities that Sutzkever calls to be returned are "dead" and not the living cities they had been, what we recall from the past is never able to *be* again.

Sutzkever's (1939) use of Ariel as the spirit able to rebuild cities may be a call to God, as Ariel's name means lion of God ("ariel," 2012). In this way Sutzkever calls for an avenging angel; the power of action here is one of recollection, recreation, but power is what he calls for. Ariel is the character charged by Prospero to cause the storm of *The Tempest* that makes Ferdinand cry, "Hell is empty, And all the devils are here" (I.1. 213-215). Just as the characteristics Sutzkever asks of his Shakespeare are that he be "mad" and that he have "might" (p. 563), his call for power, whether it is a call for retribution or recollection both figuratively and literally, is a call for memory. And memory is survival in that it "involves a bodily 'attempt to reopen time, starting from the implication of the present'" (Bernard-Donals, 2009, p. 15). Memory is survival in how it projects us toward a future. Memory places a person within time, allows for a vantage point for moving forward. Memory allows for our "protention" into the future (Carr, 1986). The casting of oneself into a future through rebuilding of a past is self-preservation. It is survival.

Carr (1986) writes:

Life can be regarded as a constant effort, even a struggle to maintain or restore narrative coherence in the face of an ever-threatening, impending chaos at all levels, from the smallest project to the overall 'coherence of life' spoken of by Dilthey. (p. 91)

This "coherence of life," what Dilthey, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty call "Zusammenhang des Lebens, the 'holding together'" of life, happens through memory (Bernard-Donals, 2009, p. 9). This is the project of memory - how memory moves us forward through an always on-going narrative of events. This built and building memory adds to coherence. This built and building memory guides the building and frames the builder *through that*

building. Memory's narrative is made from the sense we make of and for ourselves in time, space, relationship and body. Memory, in this sense, becomes a place where understanding is discerned and made.

In translating Merleau-Ponty, Bernard-Donals (2009) describes it in this way:

To remember is not to restore under the gaze of consciousness a tableau of the self-subsistent past; it is to ensconce oneself on the horizon of the past and to unfold little by little perspectives contained there until the experiences bounded by that horizon are, as it were, lived anew in their temporal place. (p. 30)

In this way, the experiences of the past bounded by ever-changing time are re-understood by ever-changing beings. Notice Merleau-Ponty does not say that we *re-live* experiences, but that they are "lived anew." Living experience "anew" means that in each "remembering" we are new with re-newed perception and constantly emerging understanding – this is another way in which memory is survival. Within this sense of memory, Shakespeare's choice of pearls for eyes and coral for bones to describe the "sea change" in Ariel's Song makes for an apt description of remembering. Coral grows itself "little by little" or "step by step," and pearl is secreted layer by layer over a grain of sand. These natural sea changes describe the process of memory over time as constantly renewed and ever emerging.

Forgetting: Hammer and Nail

Pearls and how they form might be even more apt a metaphor for the memory making process when we begin to consider how memory is beholden to forgetting.

Remember and the now rare usage *re-member*, described in Chapter One, both share the idea of recollection, or re-collecting the things of the past. We can't *re* collect a thing that hasn't been, at the very least, "out of our hands." So forgetting becomes the impetus for re collecting, remembering: the oyster secretes the mother of pearl to smooth over an

irritation, a grain of sand. Forgetting *requires* remembering to make the past smooth, in this sense understandable. Without the impetus of forgetting, the remembered past cannot be "lived anew." Without living the past anew, there is only Gadamer's (1975/2006) unreachable, fictional "objective past" (pp. 300-304), which is to say, that without forgetting and the living anew of the experience there is no past at all. Gadamer writes, "To be historically means that knowledge of oneself can never be complete" (p. 301). And as the pearls as eyes in Ariel's song, to remember is a continual growing process of understanding, spurred on by forgetting. It is a survival of coherence through sea change.

Forget is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "To omit to mention, leave unnoticed, pass over inadvertently" ("forget", 2012). So if *remember* is the taking up of an event, the past, a memory; *forget* connotes laying it down. *Forget* is defined further as "To cease or omit to think of, let slip out of the mind, leave out of sight, take no note of" ("forget", 2012). So *forget* may be both active and passive. You may "pass over inadvertently," or you may "omit to think of." The latter seems to connote some deliberate action of forgetting.

And often *remember* is not active, or at least memory is not always sought. Recollection may not require that the past be recalled. This means that recollecting or remembering can happen without our calling memories back to the "gaze of consciousness" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2002). Memories we may wish *not* to remember may be recollected, unbidden. The writing of Holocaust survivors often describes memory coming upon them when they wish *not* to remember. The passage above where Semprun (1987) describes awaking "with the voice of the SS officer in my ear" is an

example of how forgetting may be an action that is actively sought. So remember means also to experience forgotten memory when it is unwanted. It may be in this case a kind of "un-forgetting" that assails a survivor.

This has implication for the "coherence of life" when we consider how forgetting is the action that someone may initiate to *foster* coherence. This forgetting, then, is the missing element in memory's narrative; it is the silence and wordlessness that Semprun describes above as one of the fitting responses to the Holocaust. This forgetting though causes the "crux" the "void" that memory seeks to fill. Amichai (2000) writes:

To the confession 'We have sinned, we have betrayed' I would add the words 'We have forgotten, we have remembered' – two sins that cannot be atoned for. They ought to cancel each other out but instead they reinforce one another. (p. 45)

Forget and remember describe one another and without each the other is meaningless.

But what about when memory becomes ingrained? What about memory that becomes so much a part of us that we don't think of it as something we have learned or experienced, but as something we are?

Memory: In the Making

Remember is also *retention* of a shape as in how a rubber band has "memory."

The Oxford English Dictionary defines *remember* in the case of objects in this way, "Of a thing: to retain, or appear to retain, some record of (an event, condition, etc.) in a way that affects future action" ("remember," 2012). So a bowstring springs back to nearly its original shape, but retains a measure of slackness from use. A mattress remembers the body that sleeps on it; a pillow remembers the head that lies upon it as a physical imprint. To remember, in this sense, when applied to human remembering implies the way memory forms each of us. There is a near return, but never a complete return to a past's

state of being, but the return shapes us. This usage of memory describes a bodily remembering, as objects remember in a spatial and physical sense.

A further usage of *forget* relates to being shaped but comes about in an archaic expression. "I forget myself" means I have forgotten my manners, lost my decorum, lost *my sense of myself*. "I forget myself," means I am no longer coherent to myself. This expression shows how we are *made*, by remembering. Memory, which we make, makes us in each remembering. Our sense making selves are able to place ourselves within time, within the narrative of perception and we are shaped by the experience. Winterson (2011) writes:

It is the fossil record, the imprint of another life, and although you can never have that life, your fingers trace the space where it might have been, and your fingers learn a kind of Braille. (p. 5)

This Braille of the past becomes a manual; it allows for survival in that it is learning.

Through remembering and its impetus, forgetting, we are constantly learning how and who to be. In Heidegger's (1937) description, "The human being is who he is precisely in the making [*Bezeugung*] of his own being" (as cited in Levin, 1971, p. 36). In the making, is the project of memory.

Memory: Both Form and Function

Memory truly is on the verge: the past can make itself bear painfully on the present but it can't be brought into the present in representation or mimetically. What this means is that the only vehicle for memory is the body, as it is inscribed by the event and calls for its inscription – its indication – but that doesn't quite have the tools for it. Memory is indexical insofar as it is a convergence of collected, collective memories, and of histories, that provide a way to know a memory's environs, but it is indexical in that it allows you to read only that which is concealed by its own shorthand, in its breathlessness. We should think of memory as a kind of writing, in that events may be indicated rather than recollected, indicated from one body onto another. (Bernard-Donals, 2009, p. 15)

Bernard-Donals (2009) describes memory as indicative and rejects the notion of memory as "representation" of the past. That troublesome descriptor "representation" means that memory stands in fully for the event itself, while not *being* it. Representation is a pretender, a costumed version of the event, of experience. And of course, the relationship between event and memory is more complicated than that. Memory and event "approach" one another. Memory is given breath in the body, "breathless" though it may be. The metaphor implies a person who has just run, trying to tell you about the experience of running, when they are not quite yet able to use their breath to do so. Your experience of hearing is tied with the fact that some of the words are unutterable in that time, from that body. Still, you are able to understand. Memory is embodied and is from and of the body. Those we "approach" have bodies as well and understanding happens from one to another, through the nature of indicating experience. This verb, *indication*, means also a gesture that points to experience. So the gesture, comprised of speech and silence is a showing of oneself as much as a sharing of experience. It shows far more than it tells.

Memory is also embodied in that even without utterance, without the recollection of memory to thinking, memory shapes us. In the writing of Holocaust survivor Frank Ephraim (2003), the memory of the Holocaust is enacted in a routine he describes in "Sardines." He writes:

'We have to eat the sardines,' my mother said. She always bought the ones canned in tomato sauce. I did not like the combination; I preferred oil.

'Why can't you get the ones in olive oil?' I asked.

'No, oil is not good for you. Tomatoes are much better – they are a vegetable,' she answered with a stern look at me. It was no use to argue. I knew she would never buy the sardines I liked.

We had sardines every few weeks from the stock of a dozen cans stacked in the linen closet. The idea was simple. The canned sardines served as the escape provisions for the family.

My father put it this way: 'In case we have to run, small cans of sardines are easy to slip into one's pockets, or pack in a bag. They do not spoil and provide a meal that is nourishing.'

To keep them edible, even though they were canned, this emergency food was opened and eaten periodically and then replenished for 'fresh' cans of sardines.

This was in 1960. World War II was long over. Our wartime experiences were a memory, but to my parents they were a lesson never to be forgotten. (Ephraim, 2003, p. 6)

The memory expressed through Ephraim's story is embodied: it recalls hunger, that most embodied experience and fear. Though it does not directly describe either, it indicates both. The description of anticipation of the past repeating itself and the desire never again to be caught off guard are something we are able to connect ourselves with in the story, bodily. The remembered hunger is all the more present in the story as the family members do not discuss it. The tenseness of being caught, the remembrance of how to avoid it in the future, are the Braille that Winterson (2011) refers to in the end of the last section. Winterson's image is of memory being written on the body. Certainly the memory of hunger that compels a mother to move bodily to protect her family is both written on the body and written anew by the body through the *action* of memory. Even the repeated eating of the canned sardines produces a bodily change, the protein of the fish changes the structure of the body - memory is literally shaping the body, in this way.

Doesn't memory always shape the body? We describe a person as "beaten down by life" and the image is of a person stooped as though to receive the next blow.

Expectancy, fear, even the physical choice to run or fight are all shaped by memory, all

made in experience. Memory physically shapes the body, and as memory, is experienced as perception, by our lived bodies.

Embodied memory presents itself also in the way that memory is often bidden to return, or comes unbidden, through the senses. The senses call back memory and are often found in the expressions of memory, such as: *I can see her face like it was yesterday, I can hear her voice in my head*. But, senses are not just a way to recall experience, a vehicle for memory. The body is "our general medium for having a world" Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) writes, and it is through the body that we sense and make the world we interact with (p. 169).

But our body is not merely one expressive space among the rest, for that is simply the constituted body. It is the origin of the rest, expressive movement itself, that which causes them to begin to exist as things, under our hands and eyes.
(Merleau-Ponty, p. 169)

Remembering does not consist of recalling an objective faded memory of senses, or of senses calling back memory *as* thoughts, or as Merleau-Ponty calls it "mental activity" (p. 24). Memory is sense memory, since all memory is embodied, as all perception is. Merleau-Ponty (1964) says that "the body is history," and in this way we experience past, present and future through our historical body, always moving through experience with our ever-emerging understanding written on/through the body (p. 23). It is both the corpus of our knowing and how we know it; it is form and function.

In the case of the sardines in the story above, the sardines act on our body's knowledge. We imagine the density of a can of sardines in our hand, the sound of the key separating from the tin. We might experience the smell of the fish in oil, the feel of revulsion or hunger that accompanies "seeing" the fish with their heads still on. We might visualize the order of the sardines in the can. We might think of the expression,

"like sardines in a can." We come to the sardines with meaning, with contexts, and the sardines we might encounter after are imbued with further meaning through our reading of this story. After reading this story, after hearing of Ephraim's experience, the meaning of sardines has changed. These are not simply cans of sardines in a closet. The sardines are safety, escape, sustenance. They signify the lingering fear Ephraim's parents felt nearly 20 years after their Holocaust experience. And while that family's fear is something we did not experience, it is something we can *feel* through reading the story.

This is how symbols work in memory too. There are never *simply* sardines. Just as there is never memory separate from meaning. The symbol of the sardines is how we are able to connect with the story. Our own body's need for food, our experience of fearing a future is how the story forges a connection with us. It is how the story can produce resonance in us. Our understanding of how we might not like to eat sardines and our imagination of what might make us *happy* to eat them is how we come to *feel* Ephraim's family's situation. We feel the importance of the stashed food, of being prepared, of fearing hunger even without experiencing a flight from home ahead of the Nazis. This feeling is the approach Levinas (1981/1997) describes. Even Ephraim can never get exactly to the event, back to the experience. In memory, through writing, he approaches also.

If memory is writing, as Bernard-Donals (2009) writes, symbols are one way that reader and writer interact "from one body onto another." Symbols are the concrete object, the sensible thing, that allow the sharing of meaning from one to another. Symbols are the writer's tools to forge connection through the story and out to the world. They provide the journey back to what Moran, in referencing Merleau-Ponty, describes

as "the perceptual, pre-conceptual experience of the child" (p. 402). It is a return to feeling.

The symbol as concrete object helps us to share meaning from body to body. Abram (1996) writes, "Perception is . . . reciprocity, the ongoing exchange between my body and the entities that surround it. It is a sort of silent conversation that I carry on with things" (p. 52). This "conversation" is one that allows for a shared approach to "things." Approaching these "things" there is made a meeting place; the symbol is the place where we may meet one another. But narrative is the symbol's surroundings, the context that makes symbols comprehensible, just as humans give them meaning.

The Reconstructed Past: How To Tell a "True Story"

"So you want another story?"

"Uhh . . . no. We would like to know what really happened."

"Doesn't the telling of something always become a story?"

"Uhh . . . perhaps in English. In Japanese a story would have an element of invention in it. We don't want any invention. We want the 'straight facts,' as you say in English."

"Isn't telling about something - using words, English or Japanese - already something of an invention? Isn't just looking upon this world already something of an invention?"

"Uhh . . ."

"The world isn't just the way it is. It is how we understand it, no?"

And in understanding something, we bring something to it, no? Doesn't that make life a story?" (Martel, 2001, p. 302)

Martel's character Pi Patel, the first speaker in the passage, describes the world as existing in relationship to our understanding of it. He describes even the seemingly objective act of "looking" as invention and casts telling about anything as story. The exchange in the passage above describes a further tension in telling about the Holocaust through writing. In the first tension I described the prevalence of the expression in Holocaust writing that words are not enough to describe the Holocaust, yet they are all

we have. This second tension, which I explore in this section, is one that wonders how to tell a "true story" about the Holocaust. The experience is described by Holocaust writers and is typified in Delbo's (1978) account of surviving Auschwitz. She writes, "Today I am not sure that what I have written is true (*vrai*). But I am sure that it happened that way (*veridique*)" (p. 128). This thoughtful approach to crafting story around actual events describes, too, how Delbo approaches memory through language and relives experience through that telling. She writes:

I stand in the midst of my comrades and I think that if I return one day and want to explain this inexplicable thing. I will say: 'I used to say to myself: You must stand again today. It is because you will have stood again today that you will return, if you do return one day.' And this will be false. I did not say anything to myself. I did not think anything. The will to resist no doubt lay in a much deeper and more secret mechanism, which has since broken; I shall never know. (p. 72)

The description highlights the space between event and memory of the event, but it also casts a further distinction between description of an event and the event itself. Just as we are never able to access an event as actual through memory, no event can be remade exactly through description. This desire to recreate the experience, to communicate "the straight facts" is also a desire to return to an "objective past." Even Delbo here casts "story" as being separate and too far from "what really happened." The Holocaust itself seems to defy description, as Langer (1995) writes:

In an odd sense, it invites us to share the aura of the new arrival at Auschwitz and Treblinka – disoriented, hesitant, fearful, hoping for the best – until he or she grew acquainted with the worst, and then had to find a vacant chamber in the imagination for the unthinkable. (p. 7)

The describing of such experience seems to defy language, let alone objectivity. Still as though memoir or testimony could or should be written under this belief in a false objectivity, many have described how to get at this mythical "true story." Benzion Dinur

(1957) warns Yad Vashem about the use of Holocaust memoir for historical research:

These memoirs must be treated in the same way as any other testimony and must, of course, be properly examined. The plain and unvarnished character of the narration and presence of the narrator on the spot at the time constitute in themselves no guarantee of the authenticity of such memoirs. The reasons need not be any desire to 'amend' or 'improve' upon actual events for any ulterior purpose. It is difficult for the individual to liberate himself from his own personality. He has a propensity to see the past and his own past experiences from the vantage point of the present. In such evidence every effort must be made to establish all the facts relating to the narrator, his location and status during the period of the catastrophe, and his subsequent career. We must keep in mind that one of the requisite qualities for writing reminiscences is that of recreating the 'climate' existing at the time and thereby to reconstruct the past. (p. 18)

How could a writer telling about experience "reconstruct the past" as actual for a reader? What would it mean for a writer to "liberate himself from his own personality?" This proposed separation of observer from experience removes the element that makes testimony valuable in the first place. Even if it were possible to do so, separating the human aspects of the "eye witness" account, the "first person account," renders testimony pointless. If there is no seeing without the body, no knowing without experience, no past without our historical sensibility, then testimony without the personal can never be. And how could we, why would we want to, separate time from those beings that experience time? How could we separate trauma from those bodies that experience trauma? What would the value of a record be, without the experience of seeing and feeling? Impersonal testimony of lived experience pretends to be truth; it furthers the myth that the "objective past" may somehow be reached (Gadamer, 1975/2006). The mythical impersonal retelling of a reconstructed past can never be a past that helps to build a moving forward, a future. This pretend past is one that is dead and static. It is a past that tells no tales.

Holding Together: Narrative Coherence

Attempting objectivity may not be how a writer gets to truth. The author Tim

O'Brien (1990) describes the problems encountered in trying to shape narrative out of the chaos of war. These are the problems, he contends, of anyone trying to write about real life. He writes, "It wasn't a war story. It was a love story. It was a ghost story. But you can't say that. All you can do is tell it one more time, patiently, adding and subtracting and making up a few things to get at the real truth" (p. 565). O'Brien's own work, so often based on his actual life as a soldier, purposefully blurred the imaginary line between fiction and memoir, and sought to tell truths through story (Meyer, 2005). O'Brien inverts the expression, and describes a "story-truth." He writes, "I want you to feel what I felt. I want you to know why story-truth is truer sometimes than happening truth" (p. 179). O'Brien here names the *description* of the event as possibly "truer" than the event itself. Delbo's (1978) account above is an example of this. She uses language to allow the reader to see how she might revise and question her revision of the past; her reliving of experience through description *is* her desire to be "truer." And in Delbo's case, her "happening truth" may not be communicable, while her "story truth" is told and in that telling, evokes response in a reader.

Van Manen (1997), too, sees the description of an event, writing about the event as central to communicating and understanding human experience. He writes, "But poetizing is not 'merely' a type of poetry, a making of verses. Poetizing is thinking on original experience and is thus speaking in a more primal sense" (p. 13). So "story truth" does not attempt to attach to an objective and static past; it instead attempts to communicate the truth of a human experience, seeking resonance with the listener. It seeks to be most personal and, in that way, most understandable to others. Resonance through "story truth" is resonance from personal description of lived experience, and it

moves outward toward others.

In preliminary conversations with participants I asked in what ways writing opened experience for a writer. Esther Starobin (2009) responds:

A lot of writing brings out things that I wouldn't say to people, because I don't talk to people about what is going on in my mind or remembrance. . . . When I speak (give a speech), you try to get an idea across to different people and you sort of gear it to whoever you think they are. But it is a very public kind of thing, which is very different from the writing. I think in the writing, often things come up that I didn't realize I'm saying, I might not say it if I knew I was saying it. But I think it (writing) does make you examine things differently, see them differently.

Esther's sense is that writing allows her to examine experience. She perceives her writing as coming from a more personal place than when she speaks. This personal place, the "examining" she describes is the impetus of resonance. And resonance is what makes a "story truth" truer. It is in the connection through writer and reader that true story becomes "story truth" and moves away from "the congeries of 'facts,' which, in their unprocessed form," make "no sense at all" (White, 1974, p. 397). This distinction between "true story" and "story truth" is one that informs the tension of how to tell a human truth about the Holocaust, how to move forward in meaning making around the catastrophe. Since it is within the lens of "story," through perception, that we look upon "this world."

Here Heidegger (1962/1927) describes how perception is 'true':

This means that seeing always discovers colours, and hearing always discovers sounds. Pure *noein* is the perception of the simplest determinate ways of Being which entities as such may possess, and it perceives them just by looking at them. This *noein* is what is 'true' in the purest and most primordial sense; that is to say it discovers, and it does so in such a way that it can never cover up. (p. 34)

Heidegger does not translate *noein* as "thinking," as it has often been translated before, but as "In-die-Acht-nehmen" which in English could be rendered as 'taking in, facing up

to, respectful perceiving" (Burik, 2009, p. 19). In Heidegger's sense, facts are not discrete "entities" but are enmeshed with our perception, our seeing of things. Our seeing can never be more or less "factual;" it can discover, as there is no fact without our seeing. Just as "story truth" can be a truer truth, in that it describes what we are able to know, our own constantly remade sense of experience.

It is even in this seeing that story exists. In seeing, through our "historical being," story is simultaneously made. We perceive as we encounter all things, as they connect to us and to one another. We perceive not "facts," such as they are, but immediately and imperceptibly in story. Steeves (2001) writes, "But perhaps being human is best understood as being a particular character in the intertwining stories of the living world" (p. 28). His notion here, that we are enmeshed in stories, highlights the relationship between beings as story-tellers. Story is described by Boyd (2009) as an evolutionary adaptation, and by Gotschall (2011) as being part of our brains' "wiring." But whether we see story as biologically imperative or not, story is part and parcel of human perception (Carr, 1986, p. 75).

The First Story: Narrative As Human Structure

They (stories) are told in being lived and lived in being told. The actions and sufferings of life can be viewed as a process of telling ourselves stories, listening to those stories, and acting them out or living them through. . . Sometimes we must change the story to accommodate the events, sometimes we change the events, by acting, to accommodate the story. It is not the case, as Mink seems to suggest, that we first live and act and then afterward, seated around the fire as it were, tell about what we have done, thereby creating something entirely new thanks to a new perspective. The retrospective view of the narrator, with its capacity for seeing the whole in all its irony, is not an irreconcilable opposition to the agent's view but is an extension and refinement of a viewpoint inherent in action itself. (Carr, 1986, p. 61)

Story is not simply the structure we lay on top of experience to understand it after

the fact. Carr's sense of narrative as perception goes further than a belief that sequence, or narrative *structure* alone is at the heart of how we understand our lives retrospectively. He describes how our actions are inherently narrative and how our sense of the past is even more so. Carr's description of narrative as knowing or perceiving as action is central to opening the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust. This sense is at the heart of how writing is a further step in drafting, revising, writing a life that is already "being written" through perception.

Narrate means "To relate, recount; to give an account of, tell as a *narrative*" ("narrate," 2012). This definition is one that implies that in order to narrate something we may simply give an account, what Carr calls a "chronicle" and compares to a play by play in a baseball game. But then when we notice that in narrating, we are creating a *narrative* then something else is being made. The definition of *narrative* is given as "A thing narrated or recounted; a story, an account" ("narrative," 2012). The difference between a "chronicle" and narrative is highlighted in that what is told, whatever is recounted becomes a story. Carr describes it in this way, "Narrative requires narration: and this activity is not just a recounting of events but a recounting informed by a certain kind of superior knowledge" (p. 59). This superior knowledge comes from Carr's sense that in our life's narrative we are author, character and audience. He posits, "I (the narrator) tell or remind or explain to myself (the hearer) what I (the character) am doing. None of this requires that I literally talk, even silently, to myself" (p. 63). In this sense narrative is not simply the structure we impose on events and experience, nor is it the way we understand events after the fact; it presupposes all action and revises accordingly as we live in story. This way of knowing means that narrative is not conceptual after the

fact theorizing. It is lived.

Esther Starobin compares her memory to a text. Her sense is that she is able to perceive events, or things, from her past, as symbols. She says, "I think one of the things that I have found so helpful (through working with our group) is realizing that you can look at a little small thing, for instance my boots, and think about it and realize that it's a symbol." In this sense memory has decipherability, interpretable meanings that are both found and ascribed to our emerging sense of the past.

What does this mean, then, for history, our sense of ourselves as historical beings living in story? What does it mean for writing, the further steps of revision and crafting to put down lived story as life story?

The Slide of the Lock: History as Opening

Enlightenment is not the same as clarification. I had no clarity when I was writing this little book, I do not have it today, and I hope I never will. Clarification would also amount to disposal, settlement of the case, which can then be placed in the files of history. My book is meant to aid in preventing precisely this. For nothing is resolved, no conflict is settled. No remembering has become a mere memory. (Améry, 1976, p. xi)

In the 1976 introduction to his memoir, Améry (the pen name for Hans Maier) proclaims that he does not want his Holocaust experience filed away as history. His sense that history allows for the "settling" of something, for "clarification" leads us back to explore my early sense, described in Chapter One, that writing about the Holocaust might bring "closure" to the writer. Bachelard (1958/1994) explores closing and opening:

In the domain of values, on the other hand, a key closes more often than it opens, whereas the door-knob opens more often than it closes. And the gesture of closing is always sharper, firmer and briefer than that of opening. (p. 73)

Past experience when it is to be "enlightened" and not "clarified" in Améry's sense must be opened and not closed. Bachelard conceives of opening as an inhabiting, a dwelling.

He writes, “‘A knob on the door; people go in the house, they live there.’ It is not merely a constructed house, it is also a house that is 'lived-in’” (p. 73). So an opening history allows for dwelling thinking; it is a history that cannot be "settled" but can be lived in. Gadamer (1975/2006) writes, “historical understanding include the relative closure of a historical event” (p. 297). He writes further, “the implicit presupposition of historical method, then, is that the permanent significance of something can first be known objectively only when it belongs to a closed context – in other words, when it is dead enough to have only historical interest” (p. 297). What would it mean, then, for history to be "opened?" to remain alive? What would it mean to remove history from the file that Améry envisions and reverse the "disposal" he describes of experience to history?

Gadamer (1975/2006) describes how the effort to recreate the conditions of seeing anything of the past as it was in its own "world" would produce nothing more than a "dead meaning" (p. 160). And further, "The essential nature of the historical spirit consists not in the restoration of the past but in thoughtful mediation with contemporary life" (p. 161). Esther Startobin (2009) describes the experience of her writing, as one that enables great connection to her family, in the present:

It is sort of like a spider web. I’m finding out things, but I’m connecting with my siblings . . . and with the grandkids and the connections to Germany, because I don’t have any connection to Adelsheim (her hometown in Germany) otherwise. Which (researching in order to write) has brought that about. So maybe I write to make those connections.

Might this description of a past that must interact with the present mean, for the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust, that life writing may act as this "thoughtful mediation?" Can we see and make meaning of the past through writing about it in the present, for the future? Is this also how story is lived?

In her story, "The Table," Louise Lawrence-Israëls (2008) describes a table that stands through history and means differently through each usage. Still the table's accumulated meanings may be understood from the vantage point of the present, with an eye toward the future. The table becomes a symbol that in Lawrence-Israëls' description, adds to her sense of her family through history. She begins:

The old family table now stands in the dining area of our house in Bethesda. The table was made in 1907 when my grandparents got married. It was made of solid mahogany wood in Holland. It was our custom to gather around it for big meals at birthdays, holidays and any other excuse to be with family and friends. The table was made to seat 24. (p. 22)

Her choice to focus on the table as a meeting and gathering spot for family allows her to describe the table through its presence in her family, in the many settings her family inhabits, through war, survival of the Holocaust, and after. While her actual family is displaced into hiding, the table remains in her grandparent's house. She writes:

This routine was abruptly halted when the Nazis invaded Holland. German officers confiscated the house and my grandparents went into hiding. What happened to the table? I wish the table could tell the story.

The house was pretty comfortable and had many rooms filled with beautiful furnishings. Did these Nazi officers have nice banquets? Did they enjoy sitting at such a beautiful table? What did they discuss? Did they talk there about strategies to murder Jews? Did they realize that many Shabbat dinners were enjoyed at the same table they were using for meeting to plot the removal of all Jews in Holland? They must have had very good food, while we were always hungry in hiding.

After we were liberated, it took a while before my grandparents went back to their home – they were afraid of what they would find. They were very surprised. The house seemed cared for and it seemed that most of their furnishings were still there, including the table that could seat 24. (p. 23)

Now Lawrence-Israëls is able to describe the table through the changes that time and events have caused, and the table reflects back these new meanings. Through the Nazi's use of her grandparent's table, the table's meaning expands to also become territory

that must be retaken. The Nazi's use can never be removed from the table; the story of the table changes, grows. The meaning expands again through the description of the loss of those who used to gather at the table. This, too, expands the meaning of the table.

She realized though that a lot of her friends and family members would not enjoy her cooking anymore, would not be singing Shabbat songs, would not help her celebrate birthdays. They were no more; they had been put on transports and were brutally murdered. My grandmother was a strong person and she made up her mind to continue with her gatherings. It was not easy. For many years, food was rationed and it was difficult to get the right ingredients for her recipes. (p. 23)

The table itself, is not what it was without the gathering of people, the food upon it. This changed meaning of the table is one we understand; we feel it, even if we have never experienced it. At the Passover Seder a glass of wine is poured for the prophet Elijah. The tradition has expanded to sometimes include leaving one chair empty at the table, to symbolize those who are lost from the gathering, those absent from the table. In *this* telling, the table as symbol of the family grows again; the table expands its meaning.

The table was extended again to all its glory. We did the same for our other daughters. After our assignment in Belgium was over we moved to the United States. The military sent movers who packed the table carefully and the table arrived at our new house.

The next big event was our eldest daughter's wedding in 1989. The table was used for dinners with family and friends and sometimes we had to add another table so we could seat everybody. This time my sister brought her tablecloth and napkins all the way from Holland.

Cooking and setting the table always kept me busy. All the holidays and birthdays were celebrated at the table. When my husband retired from the Army, we brought the table to our house in Maryland. Now we sit for dinner at the table with our own children and grandchildren. There are 14 of us. Our youngest granddaughter danced on the table, it is as strong as ever. (p. 25)

The table would have come to *mean* differently had Lawrence-Israëls' story been different, or indeed differently told. The table through Lawrence-Israëls' personal history, through this story, remains open as she describes the table as "strong as ever."

This continuous line she draws through the story casts the family as thriving in spite of Nazi plans. The image of her granddaughter dancing on top of the table is a picture of jubilation, and it evokes the expression "dancing on someone's grave." This expression means that Lawrence-Israëls' (2008) family, symbolized by the table, has outlasted an enemy, moved forward from the Nazi's use of her family's table. The expression applies to the table and to the family and portends the generations to come. Again, the table is not merely a table. As Lawrence-Israëls describes continuous use, the table remains open, or openable. It remains un-settled, present and in its use meaning filled.

Room and Board: The Table as Gathering Place

The *table's* use as a symbol is also not settled but remains "poetically useful" (Bachelard, 1994). The table as a metaphor for family as Lawrence-Israëls (2008) casts it in the story above is one of the ways that we understand "table." Our sense of what "table" means, though, allows it to be used as a symbol that moves through time and experience. As a symbol, or as an object, table is something we know. We understand that a table's context is all-important. A table in a diner means something different to us than a table in a dining room. We understand that we will use different manners at a conference table than at the table in our own kitchen. If a meeting is called at the kitchen table, the people there will act in a different manner than they would at Sunday breakfast. When lunch is served over a conference table, the change in the table's function might change the atmosphere of the room. We have laid our hands, or draped our arms, or hung our heads over every table at which we've had a meal and we know table as a symbol to which we bring our own contexts. Bringing our own sense to the symbol allows for conversation between reader and writer.

We bring personal context to the table. Our conversation allows for the space of those involved, as intersubjectivity. We interact with the table of Lawrence-Israëls' story through our own experiences of tables. Did you always sit down with family to eat a meal when you were young, or did you and your siblings sit at T.V. trays? Did you eat over the sink between jobs, or eat alone? Were you uncomfortable at meals, worried about good table manners and fearing criticism? Were there silver napkin rings, or paper napkins, or your shirt's sleeve? Was the table a family heirloom that stood in your grandparents' house, or a card table set up in the kitchen? Were you required to eat in silence or asked to talk about your day? Each of these are meanings that might be brought to tables you read about, see, sit at.

To Come To The Table: Symbol as Gathering Place

The table is of history and in that way of the future. The *tabula rasa* is a clean slate metaphorically, or an empty table literally ("table," 2012). There are bed tables, bridge tables, backgammon tables, bird tables and alter tables. To stick with the dining table, it could be called "the daily breader" as in the place where meals are received ("table," 2012). Board is another name for a table; room and board means a place to sleep and a meal. A sideboard is a piece of furniture that sits to the side of a table. The table becomes synonymous with the gathering that happens there, the meal that is eaten there. To bring parties "to the table" means to have people agreeing to discuss a topic of importance to all. To "table a discussion" means to keep the conversation open for another time, for it to remain unsettled.

An archaic meaning of table describes a piece of wood, used as a "raft after shipwreck" ("table," 2012). A no longer used figurative use of table means the "penance

or repentance as the salvation of a sinner" ("table," 2012). This usage is a punning reference to the "tablets," literally "little tables" upon which the Ten Commandments were carved. This use of table from "tablet" becomes the use of "table" as "noticeboard" or a place where information is presented such as the "multiplication tables" where information is organized for use ("table," 2012).

Our sense is that the table is at the heart of every home, as a hearth is also physically a table. The definition given by the Oxford English Dictionary reads, "A flat and comparatively thin piece of wood, stone, metal or other solid material; a board, plate, slab, or tablet, esp. one forming a surface used for a particular purpose" ("table," 2012), meaning that tables are able to be written upon and on.

Table as symbol and as object embodies all of these contexts, all of these descriptions and allows for the conversation that occurs through meeting at a symbol. The meaning of table grows and evolves as our use of it does. The conversation around symbols occurs and keeps occurring. In this way through language, through narrative, history remains open, ever able to be discussed. The writing does not cause the past to become static in time, set in place. The author's necessary use of language and symbols allows for meaning making. Bachelard considers this: "Very often . . . it is in the opposite of causality . . . that I think we find the real measure of the being of a poetic image. In this reverberation, the poetic image will have a sonority of being" (p. xvi). Through the symbol, the poetic image, a truth through resonance is forged. What does this mean, then, for us, for the phenomenon, that Lawrence-Israëls' (2003) writing, and the writing of survivor-writers exist now, as the table exists, as an object, and as texts, where meaning can be made? What might it mean for these pieces to act on us in the

way symbols do, for them to coalesce meaning as symbols do? How do the writing process and the "finished" product of writing inform one another within the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust?

The Unfinished Product: Writing as Process

A book is not shut by its contours, it is not walled up as in a fortress. It asks nothing better than to exist outside itself, or to let you exist in it. In short, the extraordinary fact in the case of a book is the falling away of barriers between you and it. You are inside it; it is inside you; there is no longer either outside or inside. (Poulet, 1970, p. 57)

A living text is necessary to the injunction to "never forget" the Holocaust. This sense that life writing the Holocaust might be one way to act "in thoughtful mediation with contemporary life," is clear from a preliminary discussion I had with Susan Warsinger (2009) a survivor writer (Levinas, 1981/1997, p. 161). She describes her work as a text that might act to spur readers to action in the face of injustice:

Well I guess in case they're curious about their ancestors I want them to understand, I'm sure they are going to see injustice in the world, some other kind of injustice and I hope that they will learn how to deal with it. I hope that perhaps that they might, if they see injustice happening that they will get more involved Uh, I guess I got involved, when I saw injustice here in the United States with the black people then I did all kinds of work and so I want my grandchildren to do the same thing and so maybe they will . . . if they see injustice. (Susan)

This sense that her writing now might act as a way for future generations to act in the face of injustice is beyond simply remembering the *fact* of the Holocaust or even the *facts* of the Holocaust. It asks that meaning be made in the story Susan tells of her survival. It asks that action be taken as a result of that meaning making. She goes on to say:

And I guess later on when I found what was going on, I felt extremely guilty and I said, because I was in this children's home, maybe there were a hundred, around a hundred children and I know that I left with my brother in 1941, but I know that most of the other children weren't able to get out and so I guess I felt guilty because I was the one that got out. And all those other children who were just as worthy as me, even more worthy than me and some of them were a lot smarter

than me and had more understanding about life and they didn't get out. So I guess it made me . . . and eventually this guilt went away, it went away. But somewhere in my head it's still here and um uh maybe that's one, another reason why I wanted to write. (Susan)

Susan expresses that she feels a kind of responsibility to tell the story of her life, to tell something of the children she knew. This belief is at the heart of how the living texts created by the survivor writers may take their material from past events but are pointed, like memory, toward a possible future. This, too, is memory's project. The description here of writing as attaching a reader, through language to a past, returns us to the experience of resonance described in Chapter One. Language elicits our response; it fosters resonance. Language, through the writing, puts us in *a place* where we are able to experience and this experience, acts on our perception, on our further action. Susan describes this as her goal for her writing, in the first passage.

In Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1958) critique of Descartes' Meditations, he writes of language:

This certainty which we enjoy of reaching, beyond expression, a truth separable from it and of which expression is merely the garment and contingent manifestation, has been implanted in us precisely by language. It appears as a mere sign only once it has provided itself with meaning, and the coming to awareness, if it is to be complete, must rediscover the expressive unity in which signs and meaning appear in the first place. (p. 466)

Each of the tensions I have described in this chapter: that language seems unable to describe the Holocaust and that story exists too far from "actual" experience are addressed here by Merleau-Ponty. Our sense that we may somehow escape language to get to actual experience has the result of casting story as untruth and casting writing as even further than that from "actual" experience. In our understanding that construction of story through language makes "something else" out of experience, we hold to the idea

that we might somehow recapture experience *outside* of language. This false sense makes memory, narrative and writing pale in their comparison to a supposed, but never able to be reached, truth.

Through these two chapters I have described language as pointing outward from experience. I have described writing as a way to use the raw materials of experience to make meaning of experience. This sense of writing as a discovery process is one that is described through hermeneutic phenomenology.

In the following chapter I describe the ways in which memory, history, story and writing are described by hermeneutic phenomenology and the ways in which the phenomenon unfolds through the ontological questions able to be asked through its methodology. Further, I describe my study through the way that dwelling thinking requires a questioning aspect. I describe also in Chapter Three how using the methodology rendered by van Manen (1997) allows for tracing and opening the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust.

Following Chapter Three, through conversation with the Holocaust survivor writers of The Memory Project, I describe what meanings they have made from writing about real life experiences, through memory, through language, and with (within) a historical sensibility. I approach these questions with connection to the people at the center of the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust and with passionate interest in the phenomenon in the world. Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2002) sense of time and history evokes this poignantly for me:

Time is, therefore, not a real process, not an actual succession that I am content to record. It arises from my relation to things. Within things themselves, the future and the past are in a kind of eternal state of pre-existence and survival; the water which will flow by tomorrow is at this moment at its source, the water which has

just passed is now a little further downstream in the valley. What is past or future for me is present in the world. (p. 478)

It is in the phenomenon's presence "in the world," that these ontological questions guide the rendering of the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust as it moves forward.

CHAPTER THREE:

ASSEMBLING THE CONSTITUENTS: CORNERSTONES AND KEYS

The Home Phenomenology Builds: The Growing Doorway

I begin this chapter with a poem by Stanley Kunitz (1979), who describes here how memory presents itself, how questions, which are the impetus of research, present themselves. His poetic engagement shows how embracing these questions as they present themselves can bring us both closer to the phenomenon we study and closer to our own being:

The Knot

I've tried to seal it in,
 that cross-grained knot
 on the opposite wall,
 scored in the lintel of my door,
 but it keeps bleeding through
 into the world we share.
 Mornings when I wake,
 curled in my web,
 I hear it come
 with a rush of resin
 out of the trauma
 of its lopping-off.
 Obstinate bud,
 sticky with life,
 mad for the rain again,
 it racks itself with shoots
 that crackle overhead,
 dividing as they grow,
 Let be! Let be!
 I shake my wings
 and fly into its boughs.
 (p. 1)

The poem helps me to understand, through its story, through its references and through its language, the reasons I have for situating myself in the frame of hermeneutic phenomenology as a beginning researcher and as a beginning scholar.

The phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust is one that presents itself to me through experiences with the people of the Memory Project. In this manner, the constituents, those who make and are made by this phenomenon act as the cornerstones and keys of the phenomenon itself. They build and are built in it and through it. These building elements, in a structure, provide the strength of an opening, as a keystone holds an arch or a window frame open. The cornerstone sets the slope of a wall, sets the quoin, acts as a guideline for the building's structure. The participants of this research are the constituents of the work I do at the museum and act as the impetus for the questions I ask. As I've described in Chapters One and Two, my experiences with the survivor writers present questions that I cannot turn away from, as the speaker of the poem tries to paint over the knot in the lintel that will not be ignored.

The knot in the poem recalls the mark of blood on the lintel of Moses' people in Egypt, which signified that their first-born children would be spared. In the biblical story, as in the poem, the mark on the lintel becomes a symbol of regeneration. Questioning is a regeneration also. Through Heidegger's (1927/1962) sense of *Dasein* or *being* as the matter of hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, the questions we ask are ontological in nature. The questions are those that bring us closer to our subject of inquiry and that put us, simultaneously, in direct contact with our own being – which is also the source of our questioning.

Heidegger (1993a) writes, "The questioner is present together with the question, that is, placed in question" (p. 93). Being placed in question means to be also the subject of inquiry as, *in play*, or to be the topic "in question." This being *in play* means that our own being is always also *in question* and therefore always able to have meaning.

Heidegger (1962) writes that "Meaning is an *existentiale* of Dasein, not a property attaching to entities, lying 'behind' them, or floating somewhere as an 'intermediate domain'" (p. 193). Questioning is also regeneration in this way, in that by questioning the being of an other, being itself becomes "discoverable in that disclosedness" (p. 193). So in this same way, the "cross-grained knot" of Kunitz's (1979) poem intrudes into the world and allows for the speaker in the poem to "Let be!"

As the problem/opportunity/question of the "cross grained" knot presents itself "with a rush of resin" in the poem - the intrusion of it into the "world we share" is how the speaker is able to move closer to the problem/opportunity/question while moving at once closer to him or herself, which makes being more visible. The problem/opportunity/question become branches "that crackle overhead," a question that "racks itself with shoots," ideas that are "dividing as they grow" and each is understood as the renewed understanding of a self, that allows for relationship with an other. And this relationship with the other is the pure heart of questioning.

Being At Home: The Researcher in the Methodology

In hermeneutic phenomenology, the self of the researcher is not able to be separate from the phenomenon she studies. Heidegger (1927/1962) writes, "Every inquiry is a seeking (*Suchen*). Every seeking gets guided beforehand by what is sought. Inquiry is cognizant seeking for an entity both with regard to the fact that it is and with regard to

its Being as it is" (p. 24). In this understanding, a researcher asks with a foreknowledge of the subject in mind, but must be able to question the questions asked, so we ask not only *if* a being is, but what it means to be. Heidegger's sense that we look at both being and beings in every question we ask as phenomenologists places the researcher not at a remove, but as a being hoping to understand being more fully. This is research that seeks to see the door frame *and* to look through it, while wondering all the while what the frame itself bars from view. The hermeneutic phenomenologist's questions must be open to allow for the life world of the phenomenon to be understood in ways that might have been previously denied or unseen. The complexity of how a phenomenon exists in the world is not to be explained away, but instead, opened up (kept open) in a way that keeps the phenomenon as Heidegger describes "worthy of questioning" and "worthy of thought" (p. 362).

So it is that I ask, what is it for this phenomenon, for myself as the researcher, that makes hermeneutic phenomenology the philosophical grounding in which I situate myself and in which I am situated? In what manner does hermeneutic phenomenology allow for the colloquy that will engage and describe the phenomenon? What is it that hermeneutic phenomenology makes visible through the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust? Why, then, is hermeneutic phenomenology the methodology I choose in order to open the phenomenon?

Van Manen (1997) writes that hermeneutic phenomenology "attempts to explicate experiential meanings as we live them in our everyday existence, our life world.

Phenomenological research is a search for what it means to be human" (p. 12).

Hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to describe the life world of a phenomenon through

questioning the expected and accepted interpretations of it, by interrogating the banal language used as shorthand to characterize it (Heidegger's sense of "enframing" or "*Ge-stell*"). Heidegger (1927/1962) writes:

Thus we cannot apply to Being the concept of 'definition' as presenting traditional logic, which itself has its foundations in ancient ontology and which, within certain limits, provides a justifiable way of characterizing 'entities'. The indefinability of Being does not eliminate the questions of its meaning; it demands that we look the question in the face. (p. 23)

Hermeneutic phenomenology does so with the purpose of exploring and understanding being. Heidegger's (1927/1962) conception of *Dasein* casts us as beings *in being* and both whole and part of being. We are in it, but so in it that we may not be aware of it, until we begin to question the nature of it. He writes, "*Dasein* is not only close to us – even that which is closest: we are it, each of us we ourselves. In spite of this, or rather for just this reason, it is ontologically that which is farthest" (p. 36). Because we are being(s), we are farthest from being and beings until we begin to question, until we are called to wonder what being *is*. This is Heidegger's sense of "dwelling thinking." It is through this wondering, not in order to characterize, but to approach understanding of being and to explore the life world we share that we come to fuller understanding of a phenomenon.

Wherever man opens his eyes and ears, unlocks his heart and gives himself over to meditating and striving, shaping and working, entreating and thanking he finds himself everywhere already brought into the unconcealed. The unconcealment of the unconcealed has already appropriated whenever it calls man forth in to the mode of revealing allotted to him. (Heidegger, 1993d, p. 324)

In this way, Heidegger describes how turning to question, looking closely in order to see, allows for discovery sought by a discoverer. In research we strive to look to see, aware that we are the being doing the looking and aware that it is through our own being,

because and in spite of it, that we *can* see. I approach research in this way as a re-seeing, an un-concealing of being, through questioning the nature of being - an ontological question that explores the life world of the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust.

The Opening: Writing as Dis-covering

For this phenomenon the essential themes of writing, memory, history and story/narrative are expressed *through* and *as* these existential and ontological questions. It is the seeing and re-seeing of the writing process; the never ending process of memory making through narrative; and the constantly recursive way that history is made, read, questioned, discarded and then used as raw material for the next making, for which hermeneutic phenomenology as a philosophical grounding allows. The opening of the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust through hermeneutic phenomenology allows further for a greater understanding of my own being, both in and of the phenomenon, as it opens the life world of The Memory Project writers. I situate myself within the framework of hermeneutic phenomenology because of the kinds of questions that must be asked within the framework, because these questions (ontological and existential) seem to me to be the questions that must be asked by and of human subjects.

When I began to learn about hermeneutic phenomenology I compared the methodology with an artistic process, specifically with the writing of poetry, but hermeneutic phenomenology is not art and the work is not poetry – though it shares the desire to resuscitate language and the belief that writing fosters/is discovery, and as such, is a poetizing through a language of revealing. Gadamer (2006) cautions us, though, that "Aesthetic experience is indifferent to whether or not its object is real, whether the scene is the stage or whether it is real life" (p. 77). But hermeneutic phenomenology is deeply

concerned with the real, the essential nature of the life world in which phenomena come to being. Heidegger (1993b) writes, "What should be examined are beings only, and besides that – nothing; beings alone, and further – nothing; solely beings and beyond that – nothing" (p. 95). His play with language allows us to see that beings do not exist outside of being. At the same time, he means that in hermeneutic phenomenology we study being and in studying being, we must study its corollary, nothingness. Krell (1993) describes Heidegger's conception of "nothingness" in this way: "'The nothing' comes to be a name for the source not only of all that is dark and riddlesome in existence - which seems to rise from nowhere and to return to it - but also of the openness of Being as such and the brilliance surrounding whatever comes to light" (p. 91). Hermeneutic phenomenology does not strip the connections between "things," but describes them *in* their relationships, *through* those connections to other things.

The mode of description, the phenomenological rendering, does not paint over, as art might, or obscure through language as poetry might the essence of the "things themselves" that hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to know, that I as a researcher desire to study. Writing and re-writing, crafting through writing is the mode used to render the lived experience of the phenomenon. This methodology is most appropriate for this phenomenon because writing as a dis-covering process mirrors the work done by the survivor writers. Hermeneutic phenomenology is the methodology that allows for the study of how writing is a pneumatic and allows for the questioning of how memory is a text.

Hermeneutic phenomenology becomes in this way, a home for me as a beginning researcher, and the doorway becomes my vantage point, or point of view – built by me,

for my use. My dwelling is a questioning, and in dwelling I look to see the doorway, the frame around it and the view beyond. There is no doorway without the building; the dwelling, which is also questioning brings me closer to "the world we share," the life world.

The Four Existentials: Frame and Structure of Lived Experience

Van Manen's (1997) four existentials, "*lived space* (spatiality), *lived body* (corporeality), *lived time* (temporality), and *lived human relation* (relationality or communality)" (p. 101 italics in the original) are the basis for exploring the life world of the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust and allow for a description of lived experience with the conversants. They are able to be "differentiated but not separated. They all form an intricate unity which we call the life world – our lived world" (van Manen, 1997, p. 105). Heidegger (1993a) writes:

Thus *phainomenon* means what shows itself, the self showing, the manifest. . . to bring into daylight, to place in brightness that within which something can become manifest, visible in itself. Thus the meaning of the expression "phenomonon" is established as what shows itself in itself, what is manifest. The *phainomena* "phenomena" are thus the totality of what lies in the light of day or can be brought to light. (p. 73)

Because phenomenology refutes the idea that beings (subjects) occur separated from context (objects), phenomenology describes the life world. In this example, "the light of day" the "brightness that within which something can become manifest" is the manner in which we get to the things themselves. This life world is always built by and of the constituents of time, place, bodies and relationships. In the living life world we come to know ourselves through and in the world. Coming to understand the life world is an understanding of a reflective nature. The life world and lived experience are interpreted through "relating the particular to the universal, part to whole, episode to

totality" (van Manen, 1997, p. 36). This part to whole relationship means that each instance of lived experience accumulates the total of lived experience *and* that each instance is experienced in and because of the total. We undergo lived experience and reflect on it afterwards. Through this reflection the lived experience "gathers hermeneutic significance" in that we, through memory and through revisiting this memory make meaning from experience and through it (van Manen, 1997, p. 37).

This "past presence" gives us the sense that the life world is one we constantly recreate as it is built through our experience. The meaning we make of an experience is how we place our self within the scheme of things, how we see our selves in relation to the past, present and future world. Our meaning making is how we place our experience within the sum total of all experiences everywhere. Finally, it is how we understand our own being and its relationship within all being. Van Manen (1997) writes:

All phenomenological human science research efforts are really explorations into the structure of the human life world, the lived world as experienced in everyday situations and relations. Our lived experiences and the structures of meanings (themes) in terms of which these lived experiences can be described and interpreted, constitute the immense complexity of the life world. (p. 101)

The life world may be described through the four existentials, and the four are related and interconnected; each informs lived experience specifically.

Lived experience is described through the four existentials van Manen (1997) explicates, and each is related to each. So, in this way van Manen describes time through use of the visual imagery of "lived space:" "The temporal dimensions of past, present and future constitute the horizons of a person's temporal landscape" (p. 104). The landscape is something we see, the physical frame in which we live, the horizon toward which we project ourselves. In describing being, the four existentials frame experience

and are the structure on which it lays. To describe the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust, the four existentials can help to guide the description of the phenomenon.

Lived Time

Lived time is the way in which we perceive time, the way time can be experienced as stretching out or contracting independent of objective time, the time measured by clocks (van Manen, 1997). Time is experienced also through our existing as learning beings; each experience shapes us as we experience and interpret through each moment of living. Lived time is also related to memory in that how we think of past events is affected by our perceptions of the now, and our sense of what is coming.

Steeves (2007) describes time in this way:

The instantaneous Now moment is a fiction. Like the notes of a melody that are experienced long after they sound, so each and every experience I have stretches forward and backward in time, calling forth what has just passed and anticipating what is to come. (p. 104)

This echoes the refrain, spoken by a person calling forth memory, or having it come forth unbidden, of *I can close my eyes and picture it*, or *I can still see his face like it was yesterday*, and means that memory has the ability to make something, in some sense, present again. Aristotle, as cited by Bernard-Donals (2009) describes the difference between mneme or memory and anamnesis or recollection where anamnesis is a coming to presence, not as an object in the present, but as a process or movement. However, the experience may be one that is temporal, spatial and corporeal all at the same time. Being able to "see" a person from the past, in one sense allows the person seeing to go back in time, or allows for the re-presencing of a past. The lived-body "sees" with the eye or mind's eye, thereby transporting the "see-er" back in time "bodily." In that transformation of time, the lived-space is viewed and "re-seen."

Writing about that time and place may never be fixed within one time. A knowing now, from a self now, frames the experiences lived then. Therefore, I wonder about the "time travel" done by survivor/writers when writing about or visualizing the past. What is the lived time of this experience? What is it that is made present through the experience of memory? How is the lived time of the survivor writer experienced? In what manner is the Holocaust as a past event experienced through and in time, through and in the writing? What meaning is made, I wonder, of the experience of remembering and writing over time? In what way does remembering affect the experience of the *then*? And how do these multiple *thens* affect the writer's sense of lived time, and of memory?

The temporal space of the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust is made more complex through the use of writing as a description of time. The language requires the use of verb tenses to describe lived experience. The writing requires crafting to express the temporal experience of living through an event, and new insights gleaned after the fact. Further is the dis-covering process of writing, which van Manen (1997) describes in this way, "So that in the words, or perhaps better, in spite of the words, we find 'memories' that paradoxically we never thought or felt before" (p. 13). In this way, the thinking about the "then," has implication for our way of thinking about the "now" and vice versa. When Holocaust survivors say that they are writing for "history" or for "their family," they describe the complex interplay of past and future in the work they are making, and this interplay is one of the ways in which the phenomenon may be more fully opened.

Lived Space

Lived space is our perception of places, and our sense of being in a space. How we perceive the spaces around us as opposed to their physical location and measured dimension is our sense of lived space (van Manen, 1997). Space is perceived by our bodies, felt through our five senses and may change as we grow and learn through time. Our experience of space is also tied to our experience of the bodies in that space. Van Manen (1997) writes, "Adults have learned the social character of space, conventional space. There are social conventions associated with space that give experience of space a certain qualitative dimension" (p. 103). This "qualitative dimension" means that, as with lived time, lived relationship and lived body, lived space is experienced through perception, making separate accounts of the same place personal and individual. As with all of the existentials, space is highly influenced by the other existentials.

The lived space of a favorite room changes qualitatively as it intersects with time. The quality of the light in the room in summer looks different to the lived body than the light in winter. Even the sense of being alone in the room happily or unhappily, or there with others, affects our sense of it. Further affecting our sense of lived space is what we do in the space. Imagine the "qualitative dimension" of a space used for hiding during the Holocaust. Consider how the act of hiding must change the way that space is experienced. And how time spent in hiding, changes the nature of the space.

I wonder also about the space we encounter when making a written work. As the piece is built word by word, my sense of it is spatial; it appears to be built before my eyes. Moving parts of writing around in the space of a document is another way I experience spatiality in writing. If lived space can be experienced in the writing process,

then how is it experienced by the writers of The Memory Project? What is the space inhabited by writing? How is space inhabited through memory and by the presencing I questioned above when discussing lived time?

Lived Body

The fact that we experience each of the other existentials and perceive them all through our bodies makes all of our knowing, embodied knowing (van Manen, 1997). Lived body is the way we perceive our body and through our body. As phenomenology refutes the Cartesian sense that the body and mind are separable, our knowing is through and of our bodies. The lived body hungers, ages, feels cold and pain and in each lived experience the body perceives time, space and relationship through these, and many other, sensations. Levin (1985) writes:

Metaphysical thinking takes place only in the theoretical 'mind,' and is always in an 'I think (= represent to myself) that . . . Ontological thinking is radically different: it engages us in the opening wholeness of our being, and takes place as much in the life of our feet and hands and eyes as it does in our head, our brains or in our mind. (p. 56)

For the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust, how are the described perceptions of bodily sensation, a part of the lived body of the phenomenon? In what ways are the life of the feet, the stomach, the heart (both literally and figuratively) part of the lived experience that stretches over time? In what manner does the body remember? In what way does the body experience the phenomenon? What would it mean for sensory language, language that evokes the body's senses, to contribute to the lived bodily experience of life writing the Holocaust?

Lived Relationship

The experience of the other is described through the body, through our cumulative and changing sense of others and our relationship with others (van Manen, 1997). Lived relationship is also our sense of ourselves in the scheme of things. From one perspective I am a mother, from another a wife, from another a teacher, and in each of these my sense of self is described through my relationships. My relationships form my perspective as one relates to others, and as I relate those others to myself. This sense of how relationship to beings and things describes our actions and place in time, space and in our bodies is how we see through and with others. Van Manen writes that it is also how we are able to "transcend ourselves" (p. 105):

In a larger existential sense human beings have searched in this experience of the other, the communal, the social for a sense of purpose in life, meaningfulness, grounds for living, as in the religious experience of the absolute Other, God. (p. 105)

In what way, then, is the lived relationship with others and with the Other experienced through the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust? In what manner are others experienced through writing of their loss? Do the writers experience relationship to God through life writing? In what way is the experience of life writing the Holocaust, as a member of a writing group experienced through the participant's sense of relationality?

In each of the four existentials I have raised some of the questions that guide the description of the lived experience of the phenomenon. These four existentials, van Manen (1997) describes as being inseparable except temporarily, as a mode of describing a phenomenon through research. In the following written work it becomes clearer how the four inform one another and comprise the life world. The multiple perspectives in the

written piece show further how perspective itself is how we know the world, how we make meaning from experience.

Perspective: Coming to an Understanding of Standing

Perspective is the place from which an object may see or *be* seen. "Perspective is not a distortion" (Steeves, 2007, p. 90). Neither then is memory. Whatever may be told years after an event is not merely an interpretation, or a representation. It is instead, an understanding, a meaning, a "continuation" of experience (Carr, 1986). The telling is one that tells about the teller and tells about all the eras that that teller has told in and told through. Esther Starobin (2008), a Holocaust survivor and writer describes the complex ways time and her evolving perspective change her own sense of an object in her story entitled "The Boots."

I love to look at the boots that are so stylish these days. There are so many different types but they all remind me of the little boots that are tucked away in a safe place in my home. My boots are brown and lace up the front. It is obvious that they have been worn a lot and patched again and again.

The boots traveled with me from Germany as I left my home and parents when I was just two years old to start a new life in England. I was part of the *Kindertransport* that rescued Jewish children and sent them to live in England. I suppose I wore them on the train, the ship, and then another train as I traveled to a new family. In Thorpe I must have worn those boots for a long time. My foster father, who worked in a shoe factory, repaired them many times, as is evident when I look at them. Like all children, I outgrew the boots and cared nothing more for them.

Many, many years later, in 1964, Alan Harrison, my foster brother, came to the United States as a Fulbright exchange teacher. He brought me a gift from my foster mother, of these boots, which she had kept safe all those years.

I find it strange to think that these ordinary boots can represent such caring and love to me. My parents bought the shoes for me in Germany. My foster father repaired them for me in England. My foster mother saved them for me and sent them to me in the United States when I was an adult and could appreciate the significance of a little pair of brown boots. (p. 33)

Starobin's story has the boots acting as a mode of conversation, an unbroken line from parents to foster parents to her. The boots become, in Starobin's conception of them here, a symbol of love, protection, care and keeping. The boots are specific and personal; they may exist separate from Starobin's perception of them, but with a different meaning. The boots she describes cannot be any other pair of boots in the world, but are cast by her in the story as mutable, as is her perspective. The boots to Starobin *now* have become quite different from the boots *then*, where she outgrew them and cared no more for them. This description of Starobin's understandings of the boots allows them to be seen as an object that is not static in time and meaning, but as an object whose meaning has changed through time, through experience and understanding. The boots are remembered through lived space, time, body and relation.

At any step on the journey of Starobin's boots, the boots mean a different thing to each person associated with them. Her conception of the boots is different at different times and changes the meaning of the boots as time goes on, as she matures and lives through different life experiences, such as becoming a mother of daughters herself. This is the lesson of the boots. The boots, made by a person's hand, were to be used, worn for utility. The boots began as cows' hide, but became through work, time and shifts in perception, something else entirely. Each of these changing views is a perspective; each becomes a memory as time passes and time's passing changes the perspective. This changing perspective, and perspective in general, is within the purview of phenomenological research. The understanding of the standing of beings is its purpose.

Through Heidegger's (1993c) description of a work of art I explore further what it

is that hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to describe. In Van Gogh's painting of a pair of shoes, Heidegger interprets the wearing of the shoes as well as the work of art:

On the leather lies the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles stretches the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls. In the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining worry as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, the trembling before the impending childbed and shivering at the surrounding menace of death. (p. 159)

In Heidegger's description above, the shoes act as a constantly changing constant presence within the time, place, body and relationships of the woman. He writes, "But perhaps it is only in the picture that we notice all this about the shoes. The peasant woman, on the other hand, simply wears them" (p. 160).

The work of hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry moves beyond the interpretation of the work of art, in this case Van Gogh's painting, and beyond the possibly unexamined usage, or "readiness to hand" of the shoes, by the peasant woman. It seeks to ask other questions entirely, and to move closer to the life world inhabited by the shoes and the wearer, the intersection of the real woman he imagines and the shoes he interprets. Heidegger writes further:

If only this simple wearing were so simple. When she takes off her shoes late in the evening, in deep but healthy fatigue and reaches out for them again in the still dim dawn, or passes them by on the day of rest, she knows all this without noticing or reflecting. (p. 160)

Hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry seeks to understand the standing of the peasant woman as she stands, or stood, in her own shoes, her experience of "being there" – in capturing the woman's standing, we capture her perspective. This making explicit of the implicit wearing of the shoes is the work of hermeneutic phenomenology, and as a

methodology, it asks questions that enhance our understanding of the life world, through our questioning of its true nature.

The Shape of The Doorway: What is Seen Through Hermeneutic Phenomenology

To do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings. And since to *know* the world is profoundly to *be* in the world in a certain way, the act of researching – questioning- theorizing is the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world to become more fully part of it, or better to become the world. (van Manen, 1997, p. 5)

The study of our "being in the world" is different from what is sought by other forms of education research and is meant to elicit a different response. Action is the result sought by research in hermeneutic phenomenology; responsibility for beings is the point of studying being and beings. Hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to foster responsibility for an other, and in so doing, repair the world we share. Levinas (1997) writes, "Responsibility for the others or communication is the adventure that bears all the discourse of science and philosophy. Thus this responsibility would be the very rationality of reason or its universality, a rationality of peace" (p. 160). Levinas sees this responsibility to others as the purpose of the work we do, as the basis for time and for our own being. Van Manen writes, "It is the progress of humanizing human life and humanizing human institutions to help human beings to become increasingly thoughtful and thus better prepared to act tactfully in situations" (p. 21).

So while empirical scientific research seeks to know *how*; hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to know *the essence of being in experience*. While empirical research seeks to know *how much, how often* and *when*; hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to understand what quantity, frequency or time mean to human beings *as they experience them*. Original experience, before theorizing occurs, is the subject

hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to describe. Empirical research seeks to create phenomena in ways that can be reproduced, or generalized to other groups. Hermeneutic phenomenology asks about original experience, seeks to describe its essence, but does not assume that experience can ever be generalized or exhaustive. Empirical scientific research demands that the researcher remain "objective" and "unbiased," separated from the subject of study. Because being is individual and original, hermeneutic phenomenology requires the researcher's "general orientation to life" to describe the phenomenon of "lived experience" so that the "essence of being" is uncovered. It is in that uncovering that the possibility for justice and peace may exist (p. 28). So while the "otherworld" is described as an area for ethnographic research, hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to uncover being in its essential and mutable incarnations in *this* world (Van Maanen, 1988).

Hermeneutic phenomenology differs from Edmund Husserl's descriptive phenomenology that sought to create a science of "the essential structures of pure consciousness" (Moran, 2000, p. 60). Heidegger's phenomenology, developed further by Gadamer (2006) among others, is a mode of interrogating lived experience, and as a mode of interrogating the questions we use to get to understanding. Heidegger (1993c) writes, that the task is not "to solve the riddle. The task is to see the riddle" (p. 204). With every question guided by a pre-understanding of the phenomenon, albeit a vague understanding, the questioning of the questions themselves allows us to begin to get to a truth of human experience. This truth lies in lived human experience, in Heidegger's description, "truth . . . driven back to the subjectivity of the human subjects" (p. 124). We are called to question the modes of our knowing themselves. Since how we first come to know a phenomenon is

through culture, language, and history, hermeneutic phenomenology requires the questioning of these as well. Because of this, we interrogate ordinary encounters of everyday life, the language we use to describe them and our own perceptions of these experiences to move to the questioning of being (Moran, 2007).

Because of this requirement to engage the symbols of language, culture and perception in phenomenological study, Gadamer (2006) develops Heidegger's phenomenology by exploring and expanding on the hermeneutic aspects. In Gadamer's phenomenology, as in Heidegger's, the life world is already always open, but our unity with the life world is only implicit. Through questioning our ways of knowing, our sense of tradition, and the entrenched meanings of language we are able to make our unity with the life world explicit. Gadamer (2006) writes of hermeneutic phenomenology:

It is not only that historical tradition and the natural order of life constitute the unity of the world in which we live as men [sic]; the way we experience one another, the way we experience historical traditions, the way we experience the natural givenness of our existence and of our world, constitute a truly hermeneutic universe, in which we are not imprisoned, as if behind insurmountable barriers, but to which we are opened. (p. xxiii)

This understanding of the researcher as a part of the unity of a life world means that through a "new critical consciousness," through the research, we strive to be aware of the modes of perception that have been so influenced by tradition and by language. The researcher must put at the forefront of research communication with the phenomenon of study, while interrogating the language and historical knowing.

Because of the ontological questions I ask, the phenomenon I seek to open, and because of my understanding of writing as a dis-covering process as well as a method of hermeneutic phenomenology, my research is situated within this methodology. My research, my desire to do research in the first place, requires the ontological questions

that *are* phenomenological in both mode and method, and I must employ the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology for both their frame and structure.

In the next sections I explore the ways phenomenology approaches history, memory, writing and narrative. These themes are essential to the description of the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust and are approached through the writings of hermeneutic phenomenology through Heidegger and Gadamer.

Cornerstones: Themes Essential to the Phenomenon

Van Manen (1997) describes an essential theme for a phenomenon as that which "makes a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is" (p. 107). Just as cornerstones provide the "salient angle of a wall," the themes of history and memory, writing and narrative are essential to the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust ("cornerstone," 2012). Van Manen asks that we pose one question of the phenomenon to develop and differentiate essential themes. He writes, "Does this phenomenon without this theme lose its fundamental meaning" (p. 107)? That we might be able to describe the phenomenon without discussing a certain theme allows us to know how essential that theme may be. Just as a cornerstone has come to mean the most important, or consolidating element, for the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust, describing the phenomenon without the theme of "history" is impossible. Through asking about the nature of history, present both in the writers' experience and in the written product of the writers, the phenomenon becomes more of itself instead of something else entirely.

Further, as with the four existentials, the essential themes allow a way for description to be made of the phenomenon by beginning with the constituent parts. The

part to whole relationship described by van Manen (1997) means that the essential themes are imbued with the phenomenon as they are its structure, and for the purposes of study, as they are its frame.

The Window Frame's Keystones: History and Memory

In hermeneutic phenomenology, history is distinguished from historical objectivism, which Gadamer (2006) writes, "resembles statistics," that he describes as, "excellent means of propaganda because they let the 'facts' speak and hence simulate an objectivity that in reality depends on the legitimacy of the questions asked" (p. 300). Historical objectivism is related to the discipline of History as it strives for objectivity through methods designed to get to historical accounts that generalize experience and separate events from the beings perceiving them. David Gross (2000) describes memory's inability to act as an artifact for the study of History:

The processes of memory involve so much selecting, editing, revising, interpreting, embellishing, configuring and reconfiguring of mnemonic traces from the moment they are first registered in the mind until the moment of retrieval that it is almost impossible to think of memory as a trustworthy preserver of the past. (Gross, 2000, p. 32)

That there is a past to "be preserved" contrasts with Gadamer's (2006) conception, but aligns with an objectivist sense of the past as "existing" in the record of facts or in "actual" events. Gadamer writes of the objective past, "Is this a romantic refraction, a kind of Robinson Crusoe dream of historical enlightenment, the fiction of an unattainable island" (p. 303)? This unattainable island sets "reality" as separate from beings and being. In phenomenological thought, this kind of "reality" is seen as impossible to recreate, because any recreation of a thing means that something new, something else is made.

Gadamer (2006) illustrates the sense of history in hermeneutic phenomenology as

a horizon and of humans as "historical beings." As historical beings our being is always situated in this changeable horizon. Phenomenological thought works to describe beings within the horizon, affected and constituted as we are by the four existentials. So we historical beings are constantly coming *through* history and are in each moment able to perceive and decipher the past we have lived through and to reflect on it as a text for future actions, thoughts and ideas. Gadamer (2006) writes:

The historical movement of human life consists in the fact that it is never absolutely bound to any one standpoint, and hence can never have a truly closed horizon. The horizon is, rather, something into which we move and that moves with us. Horizons change for a person who is moving. Thus the horizon of the past, out of which all human life lives and which exists in the form of tradition, is always in motion. The surrounding horizon is not set in motion by historical consciousness. But in it this motion becomes aware of itself. (p. 303)

For the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust, the events of the Holocaust do not stay put in that time and place, but are made present from that time until now in newly discoverable and newly understood ways. This ability to be aware *of* and thinking *within* our own history becomes what Gadamer describes as our "historical consciousness." "Historical consciousness" does not form a separate horizon, but becomes part of the horizon we inhabit. This horizon, which moves as we move, is described, too, by our own sense of our tradition and heritage, our situatedness in the life world.

In phenomenological thought the historical nature of humans is also described by their learning through time and experience. Husserl, as cited by Carr (1986), describes two modes of memory: primary memory (or retention) and secondary memory (or recollection). Primary memory allows a person to place herself and her experiences in context along with the past; in Carr's (1986) description it is "horizon- consciousness" (p. 22). This being steeped in the past allows for construction of a building *whole*. So as you

read each word on the page, it connects to the words before it to construct a sentence and then a paragraph. Without the knowledge of the words that have come before, the whole of this work could not be experienced or understood. Even after you no longer remember each word, or any of the words for that matter, the whole of the work will exist to you, as a whole, coloring imperceptibly or dramatically, your understanding of experiences that come both before and after.

Carr (1986) describes Husserl's conceptions of retention and recollection in this way: "Retention and recollection are thus two radically different ways of being conscious of the past. Recollections come and go, whereas retention belongs to all experience" (p. 22). In this way history is linked inextricably to memory. Since history cannot exist separately from lived experience and memory is the means by which we carry or recollect past experience, memory and history act upon one another. Through the concepts of retention and recollection, two types of memory work to structure experience into understandable events. Carr writes, "The life of consciousness is composed, then, in the phenomenological view, of a sequence of more or less distinguishable experiences" (p. 22), and it is these experiences and our retention and recollection of them that form the texts we may decipher through hermeneutics.

In this way, memory is also a construing toward the future. Carr (1986) writes, "The relation of my past experience to the one I am now having is not that the former causes the latter, but that the former has meaning for me now" (p. 27). This meaning making is how we extend ourselves into a future. Husserl calls this "protention" and links it to the primary memory or retention that allows for consciousness of context. Carr describes it in this way: "Our experience is directed towards, and itself assumes,

temporally extended forms in which future, present and past mutually determine one another as parts of a whole" (p. 31). This sense that past, present and future constitute an ever-emerging life world deals with retention but does not specifically describe how memory may be recollected, or what that recollection means.

In Carr's (1986) description, recollection is the re-presencing of the past, different from retention and related to forgetting in that something *comes back*. Aristotle, as described by Bernard-Donals (2009), writes that there must be a starting point for the motion of recollecting or calling back of memory and that that starting point is always an absence. In this way recollection moves us *toward* memory. Michael Bernard-Donals (2009) writes:

The person brought to memory does not experience the presence of an object or event . . . but is brought to nexus, a juncture comprised not by a convergence of objects or events but a concavity of experience, a void. In Krell's terms, 'kinesis . . . here means a gradual or perhaps quite sudden coming-to-presence or self-showing of an absent being that till now was also absent from memory' and what occurs is a 'nexus or node - the origins of what Dilthey, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty will much later call the *Zusammenhang des Lebens*, the 'holding together' or cohesion of life.' (p. 9)

I think of these nodes as junctures. So where memory is ever present if not explicit in retention, in recollection, memory is happened upon and, therefore, affects the *whole* of our memory through that happening, that "coming-to-presence." The movement is one that is recursive, a back and forth where we begin in the middle and where we are always *in* history, but where we return again and again to memories that affect our sense of the whole each time we revisit them or they revisit us.

Bernard Donals (2009) believes that these flashes of recollection, which begin with forgetting are the impetus for writing about past experiences. The relationship between forgetting and memory, in this conception, is that the former is the impetus for

the latter. This, then, is a mirror for the relationship between a being and an other, where the other is the impetus for communication. Writing is one response to the impetus to communicate, to ask of another, "what are you?" Further, that communication may come in the form of past and present needing to speak to one another, as they can only do through memory. Through this conversation between past and present, between one and another, an understanding of sorts happens, a sorting, a deciphering of experience for the future.

Writing and Narrative: The Mullioned Windows

Deciphering the past and present is meaning making, and while memory and history begin the process, first narrative and then writing make individual meaning explicit through ordering and then crafting. The process of deciphering meaning though, begins with perception. Carr (1986) describes our perception as immersed in narrative: "The narrative structure pervades our very experience of time and social existence" (p. 9). His claim that we experience perception through the ordering and meaning making process of narrative, makes writing closer to being a naming of our perception, a description of our lived-experience.

Roland Barthes (1977) writes that "Narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there like life itself," and in this way, narrative structures our perception apart from culture and gets to be a description of human lived experience. "Narration" comes to us from Latin and Sanskrit, meaning to "know" to "be acquainted with" to be "expert" and "skillful" and comes from the Greek root word meaning "knowable" and "known" (White, 1980). In this sense, *how* we know and how we *are*

able to know are structured or understood through our human understanding of narration.

White (1980) writes:

Far from being one code among many that a culture may utilize for endowing experience with meaning, narrative is a metacode, a human universal on the basis of which transcultural messages about the nature of shared reality can be transmitted. (p. 2)

If narration is our way of knowing and transmitting our knowing to others, the relationship puts the relationship of one to another, front and center. Our understanding of our lived-world, in this conception, is one where we know ourselves, know our experience, through translation of it to be understood by another.

Carr (1986) writes of this when he describes lived relationship amidst lived time in this way:

Natural and social events, such as the movements and actions of others around us, are configurations we follow through time in spite of their discontinuities. Some of our more complex actions are performed discontinuously as well, and in the intervals we are occupied with other actions which serve other ends. Each of these is like a distinguishable 'story-line' constituted by our protentions, retentions and intentions. (p. 75)

Then he describes how we are ever-perceiving and then knowing through story:

If each of these stories requires a narrative grasp, a quasi-narration which holds the story together, my life-story requires yet a further, more comprehensive grasp which takes them all as mine and establishes the connections among them. My "life" . . . is of course composed of all the experiences I have and the actions . . . in which I engage. . . it is itself something temporal which unfolds in time and whose phases I survey prospectively and retrospectively from within an ever-changing present. (p. 73)

Carr questions:

Can my life be regarded as an event I experience, an experience I have or live through or perhaps an action I perform? Is it thus the sort of "story" in which I am character, story-teller and the audience all at once? (p. 73)

He contends further that, "full-fledged story-telling arises out of life" (p. 17).

So, while perception of experience happens through narrative, writing is a step further, a further crafting of lived-experience for communication in writing. This crafting or structuring through deliberate use of language and through poetic devices moves writing closer to the condition of the work of art. It is what distinguishes narrative, which just *is*, from writing, which is *made*.

For phenomenological rendering of lived-experience, writing is the method that allows for meaning making, first for a writer and then for a reader. "Writing is self-alienation. Overcoming it, reading the text, is thus the highest task of understanding" (Gadamer, 2006, p. 392). Through writing, an understanding is put forth, from a writer to an other; the written text is a communication of a self to an other. Through these conceptions, writing becomes not only a communication of a knowing, it becomes a way of knowing. Writing uses the ingredients of lived experience in order to structure and understand lived experience. Through the structure of perceiving through narrative and the crafting of communicating through writing, the writer and reader can come to forge a sense of their shared reality and how it describes each of them. This forging is the place where writer and reader compare lived-experience and where resonance begins. The built understanding is one that, through craft, moves narrative through writing toward the work of art. Emig (1977) writes, "Vygotsky notes that writing makes a unique demand in that the writer must engage in 'deliberate semantics' - in Vygotsky's elegant phrase, 'deliberate structuring of the web of meaning'" (p. 125).

Care and Keeping: Phenomenology as Methodology

Van Manen (1997) describes hermeneutic phenomenology as a method with "no methods" and instead provides guidance that might help to inform a way of doing

phenomenological research. He writes, "The paths (methods) cannot be determined by fixed signposts. They need to be discovered or invented as response to the question at hand" (p. 29). Instead of signposts, he provides suggested guidelines for a methodology in hermeneutic phenomenology that may help to guide the opening of the life world of a phenomenon. These components help to render the phenomenon carefully in order for the pedagogical implications to be clearly drawn:

1. turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
2. investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
4. describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. maintaining a strong and orientated pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
6. balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. (pp. 30-31)

Being-In: "Turning to a Phenomenon Which Seriously Interests Us and Commits us to the World"

For the rendering of the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust, each of the research habits van Manen suggests require the researcher to work at inquiring of a phenomenon to which she is committed. What van Manen refers to as "interest" and as "committing us to the world," Heidegger (1962/1927) describes as "care." Heidegger writes, "The totality of Being-in-the-world as a structural whole has revealed itself as care" (1962/1927, p. 231). Van Manen requires caring through each of the habits he sets forth above. In each habit van Manen describes an aspect of attendance, of commitment to the phenomenon, the questions and the conversants. Van Manen wonders, "Aren't the most captivating stories exactly those which help us to understand better what is most common, most taken-for-granted, and what concerns us most ordinarily and directly" (p. 19)? These kinds of questions wonder about "Being-in-the-world" and are the questions that must be asked in human science research. The questions I've posed here of the lived

experience of life writing the Holocaust are those that explore the lived world of The Memory Project participants and come from my own caring stance. Heidegger

(1962/1927) describes actions of concern as:

Having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining All of these ways of Being-in have concern. (p. 57)

Because of my interest in more fully bringing forth the phenomenon, which is an act of concern; because of my desire to look after the stories written by survivors, the work is situated in the world and describes Being-in-the-world as it is *in the world*, through care. For this work too, care is necessary to challenge notions of history, writing, story and memory.

I choose to begin by asking questions that specifically focus on how participants describe the writing in which they are engaged. I believe that asking participants to name and describe the process they engage in when writing, may help to elucidate the meaning they make of the experience. I believe that through description of the personal process of writing that story and therefore meaning is revealed. Some questions I pose are:

- How do you describe the writing you do when you are discussing it with others? Do you use the term autobiography, memoir, testimony, history or something else? What does the term you use to describe your writing mean to you?
- How would you describe your specific impetus for writing? Where do your ideas for new pieces of writing come from? How does it feel to have an idea for a new piece of writing?
- Describe your specific process for drafting or revising the pieces you write? Do you read your pieces to others before you bring them to the group? Do you share them with others after you have shared them with the group?

I ask the participants questions about the experience of sharing their written work with others. I want to know how this aspect of the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust, is felt by survivor writers. I ask these questions:

- What's it like to receive feedback on your written work?
- For whom do you write? Who is your imagined audience? Recall a time when you had someone read your work. What was that like?
- What do you hope readers will experience through your writing?

Finally, I wonder how survivors see the work they are making contributing to an understanding of the Holocaust, and/or their own Holocaust experience. I ask these questions:

- What meaning do you see your writing having in relation to an understanding of the Holocaust?
- How would you describe the role of your writing, or the writing of others, in your understanding of the Holocaust?
- Are there topics about which you choose not to write? What does it feel like to purposely omit those experiences from your writing?

Moving Further In: "Investigating Experience As We Live It Rather Than As We Conceptualize It"

James Ingo Freed, the architect of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum intended that the physical building be a "resonator of memory" (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2012, "What Makes This Building Talk?" ¶ 1). And as the museum is also a memorial, the importance of memory, more specifically of remembrance, has been described to me by many of the survivor writers of The Memory Project. Many of these survivors have been engaged in life writing the Holocaust for over ten years; some have written for far longer than that. The sense that they write and speak so that we may "never forget" the Holocaust is prevalent in our discussions. How will the notions of memory as I describe it in previous sections, allow for us to parse, through conversation with the participants, what it means to remember the Holocaust? It is through

questioning in our conversations that we can get to "experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it" (van Manen, 1997, p. 30). Through the conversations as a group around how memory has been conceptualized, I hope to move toward a better knowing of how memory is lived by the survivor writers.

In an initial, informal conversation with Susan Warsinger, I asked her to describe her desire to write about her experience during the Holocaust. She relates:

Perhaps my children would want to read it some time . . . right now they are busy with their own lives and sometimes I say, *I need for you to listen to this story* and so they do it. I think maybe after I die . . . then maybe my grandchildren would like to know. Right now, while I am living . . . they tell me you've told us everything mom, what else is there? . . . I do want to write it for them. I want to write it for my great grandchildren, because I am not going to be around, so that is most of it.

In this one response, Susan describes her lived and finite body and her sense of lived time as she describes not being "around" to meet her great grandchildren. She also describes how she means to translate her own life to generations of her relatives to whom she has not yet "told everything." This complicated sense of what the survivors mean by telling the stories of the Holocaust through which they lived make this phenomenon one that must be opened while the survivors are able to describe what it means to them, to live write the Holocaust. Through further description from survivor writers, it seems possible to get to a fuller sense of the lived experience as it is lived, rather than conceptualized.

I ask the questions I have drafted to the assembled group of survivor writers during two or three of our monthly meetings. These conversations evince the places of divergence and convergence among participants' experience that help to describe the phenomenon more fully. The group discussions were recorded with two audio recording

devices. After each conversation, I transcribed the conversations to a password protected Word document.

Exposing The Structure: "Reflecting on the Essential Themes Which Characterize the Phenomenon "

During these conversations with the participants of The Memory Project, as a group, I bring forward the meanings made through the phenomenon. In van Manen's (1997) words, we "try to unearth something 'telling' something 'meaningful,' something 'thematic' in the various experiential accounts" (p. 86). Van Manen (1997) describes a "theme" as "experience of focus, of meaning, of point" (p. 87). His descriptions makes it clear that themes are a way of seeing into the phenomenon as it is described through the "experiential accounts" of participants. Van Manen continues, mindful that "theme formation is at best a simplification" (p. 87). Just as in my own turning to this phenomenon and naming the phenomenon there are many aspects of my experience working with survivors, which are *not* the phenomenon, which are *not* the focus of my questioning. So themes act also as a frame through which the phenomenon can be viewed, but as with the doorway, the frame necessarily obscures something else from view. Van Manen writes, themes, "are intransitive" (p. 87). And in that intransitive nature, are able to become gesture; in this way they are not tied to an object or subject, but existing in the shared space between and around these. This recalls my earlier use of the verb, *indication*, which is how experience is shared as a gesture; this gesture is what connects to experience. So the gesture, comprised of speech and silence, is a showing of oneself as much as a sharing of experience. Through this indication of experience, the essential themes can expand our understanding of the phenomenon as our understanding of the themes expands.

After transcribing the conversations with survivors, I listened several times to the conversations and read and re-read the texts made by our discussions. In these conversations, I sought to identify the themes that I have explored through turning to and naming the phenomenon. More importantly, I read looking for new themes to emerge, those that were not unearthed through my process of turning to and naming the phenomenon.

Heidegger (1951/1986) writes of Holderlin's poetry: "Since we have been a conversation . . . ' We – mankind – are a conversation. The being of men is founded in language. But this only becomes actual in conversation" (p. 760). So, it is through the transcribed conversation, through the describing of the phenomenon that "the transmutation of the world into word . . . real conversation, which we ourselves are, consists" (p.761). It is through the study of the we that are in conversation, that the phenomenon may open out to the world and become describable.

Building On: "Describing the Phenomenon Through the Art of Writing and Rewriting"

Just as writing is one of the essential themes of the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust, it is also a method of getting to a further understanding of the phenomenon. Writing that helps to dis-cover is writing as a building, a furthering process. It is a process that builds, tears down what does not suit, and rebuilds or builds on. This process is a learning process where a writer, in putting ideas into words, begins to learn through that utterance. Then through the text that is made and through its making, ideas are described, chosen and revised, always with an eye toward communication.

Revision in this process, allows for the re-seeing necessary for new understanding of the phenomenon. Revision happens both in the reading and re-reading of the texts

made from conversation with the survivors and in the reading and re-writing of the text that attempts to describe the themes and ideas brought forth in those conversations.

Heidegger (1951/1986) writes of the writing process:

The simple must be opened out, so that the existent may appear . . . The naming does not consist merely in something already known being supplied with a name; it is rather that when the poet speaks the essential word, the existent is by this naming nominated as what it is. So, it becomes known as existent. (pp. 761-762)

The writing and revision process is the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology where the phenomenon is opened through the other habits van Manen suggests. It is the habit through which language's searching nature allows for the real to be described. The phenomenon may be known and opened through the craft and making of language, through the writing and process of revision.

Once the transcripts of the conversations with survivors were transcribed, read and re-read, after themes were discerned, the work of writing and re-writing began. This bringing into being through language, though, is the work that runs through each of the other habits and back to the very questions that began the process of naming the phenomenon. Indeed conceiving of writing, thinking about getting ready to write, is already to be in writing; the linear steps I've described through van Manen's method did not happen in a linear way. I questioned and wondered through every step and continue to do so, as the text is made. This makes writing the thread, the coherence that questions and names, thematizes and describes the phenomenon as it is opened. It is made through searching, and settling on the best possible description, the most apt and intersubjective description of the lived-experience of the phenomenon.

The Well Built House: "Maintaining a Strong and Orientated Pedagogical Relation to the Phenomenon"

For the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust, the pedagogical stance is one that keeps the focus on the writers' being in the world, where the writing they make and the making is front and center. In this same way, van Manen (1997) describes pedagogy:

Pedagogy is something that a parent or teacher must redeem, retrieve, regain, recapture in the sense of recalling. Every situation in which I must act educationally . . . requires that I must continuously and reflectively be sensitive to what authorizes me as pedagogic teacher or parent. Exactly because pedagogy is in an ultimate or definitive sense unfathomable, it poses the unremitting invitation to the creative activity of pedagogic reflection which brings the deep meaning of pedagogy to light. (p. 149)

So, for this study, the questioning aspect in the caring stance of a pedagogue is the mindful practice required. In each interaction with the conversants, I return to form and reform the methods that guide the conversations throughout. This is revision of the how of research, to keep focused on the why of research, which is the pedagogical implication for what might be learned through the opening of the phenomenon.

Made Of and By: "Balancing the Research Context by Considering Parts and Whole"

Each member of our group is both individual writer and member of The Memory Project. Each description of writing done by a survivor is at once unique and part of a tradition of memoir and personal writing. The stories told by survivors are both emblematic of a collective understanding of the Holocaust and wholly personal. The group exists both in the finite time in which we meet each month and as experience that each of us continues to carry and build on into the future. The part to whole relationship that the researcher of lived experience must keep in mind is both the boundary of the phenomenon and the space in which the phenomenon overlaps the world. In this play

between the part and the whole of the phenomenon, description of the lived experience exists and is richer in that relationship.

Through this study, what can be told about the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust is also both limited to our group, and applicable to other groups, other kinds of survivors and other kinds of writing. In this sense too, moving closer to ourselves, allows us to move closer to the world.

A Plan To Build

The Memory Project writers are invited from a larger group at The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum of survivor volunteers. These volunteers donate time to the museum, engaging in work from translating documents to guiding tours. Volunteers may also speak about their experiences to groups within the museum or they may go out of the museum to speak to groups. All survivor volunteers are invited to attend The Memory Project meetings that are regularly attended by ten to fifteen people, all of whom volunteer, in some capacity, for the museum. The group meets ten times a year, monthly, for four hours, at the United State Holocaust Memorial Museum, usually in the Ross Office Buildings adjacent to the museum, in a conference room.

Participants of The Memory Project are survivors of the Holocaust, according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's definition. This definition describes survivors as:

Any persons, Jewish or non-Jewish, who were displaced, persecuted, or discriminated against due to the racial, religious, ethnic, social, and political policies of the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945. In addition to former inmates of concentration camps, ghettos, and prisons, this definition includes, among others, people who were refugees or were in hiding. (Who is a survivor? section, ¶1)

The members of the Memory Project have varied stories of survival, come from various countries in Europe, and write for varied audiences and purposes. Participation in The Memory Project is voluntary and I invited all members of The Memory Project to participate in this research. These members made up the participants of this research.

The Members Themselves

The participants of this research are 7 women and 6 men, all survivors of the Holocaust, all willing to discuss their writing process with me and all are members of The Memory Project writing group, of which I am the instructor. They are not identified by pseudonyms since I have used the actual title and site of our writing group, and each member agreed to be identified by name in this research. The information I provide about each writer is based on the biographical information readily available through the United States Holocaust Memorial Museums website, through the Office of Survivor Affairs (www.ushmm.org/remember/office-of-survivor-affairs/memory-project). In addition, I asked each participant to read these short biographical sketches and approve them. I made changes to each accordingly.

I include each short portrait to help readers of this research as they read this study comprised of the voices and texts crafted by these writers. I can't come close to describing each participant through these short portraits, but I hope to let them speak through my opening of the phenomenon further in the chapters that follow and through their writings I have included. Participants are listed here in alphabetical order.

Ruth Cohen was born in Mukachevo, Czechoslovakia and survived internment in a ghetto, Auschwitz, a labor camp in Nuremberg, Germany and a labor camp in Holysov, Czechoslovakia. Her mother, her younger brother and two adopted cousins were killed

immediately upon reaching Auschwitz with her family. She survived the Holocaust with her sister and eventually immigrated to the U.S. with her father and her sister. Ruth married in 1952 and has three children as well as eight grandchildren. Ruth has written and published several pieces of writing including “Freedom in Holysov” where she describes the days leading up to being liberated by the United States Army.

Marcel Drimer was born in Drohobycz, Poland, which fell under Soviet control until Germany violated the Soviet-German pact and occupied Drohobycz. Marcel’s family survived a ghetto, during frequent deportations in which much of his extended family was taken and murdered in *Belzec*. His immediate family hid in underground bunkers to avoid being deported, and eventually his father was able to bribe a guard to allow them to escape before the ghetto was liquidated. A family in Ukraine agreed to hide the Drimers and nine other Jews, at first in their barn, and eventually in a hole in the ground. The Drimers were liberated by the Soviets in August 1944, and lived in communist Poland. Marcel was able to immigrate to the United States in 1961. His published writing includes “The Diamond and The Cow” in which he describes his family’s survival.

Gideon Frieder was born in Zvolen, Slovakia. His father was part of Slovakia’s “Working Group,” a Jewish rescue organization. During the Slovak uprising in 1944, Gideon, his mother, and sister fled to the mountains and were caught in a massacre at Stare Horey. There, Gideon’s mother and sister were killed. Gideon was wounded but survived. Gideon was taken by a Jewish partisan fighter and placed with a Catholic Slovak family who took him in, keeping him safe until liberation. Eventually Gideon was reunited with his father who had also survived the war. After his father’s death,

Gideon and his stepmother immigrated to Israel in 1947 where he remained until 1975 when he immigrated to the United States. He is the A. James Clark Professor Emeritus of Engineering and Applied Science at the George Washington University.

Albert Garih was born in Paris, France. Albert's family fled Paris at the time of the Nazi occupation, but returned shortly thereafter, and lived under the new anti-Jewish measures imposed by the Germans. Albert's father was deported to a forced labor camp in the Channel Islands. Albert, his mother, and two sisters, were hidden by a French family for six months. Eventually Albert was hidden in a Catholic boarding school for boys, enduring until the Allied powers liberated Paris. He married, lived and worked as a translator and immigrated to the United States in 1976. He has three children and ten grandchildren.

Agi Geva was born in Budapest, Hungary. Agi, her mother and sister were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, and then to the Plaszow concentration camp, and subsequently back to Auschwitz. Later they were transported to a labor camp in Rochlitz, Germany and a factory in Calw, Germany. Agi, her sister and mother were forcibly evacuated from Calw. They were liberated by U.S. troops during this march. Eventually, Agi and her sister immigrated to Israel where Agi married. She lived in Israel for 53 years until coming to the United States to live with her daughter. Her published writing includes "Opera In Auschwitz" which describes some of her experiences while imprisoned there.

Louise Lawrence- Israëls was born in Haarlem, The Netherlands during Nazi occupation. After being ordered to move to Amsterdam, Louise and her family went into hiding to escape deportation. Louise's father acquired false identification papers. Unable

to go to air raid shelters, Louise's family was forced to take shelter during bombing raids on the staircase of the building in which they hid. Canadian forces liberated Amsterdam in 1945. Eventually, after marrying an American medical student, and receiving her degree in physical therapy in the Netherlands, she followed her husband to the United States in 1967. Her published writing includes "Light," a remembrance and reflection on her time in hiding.

Harry Markowicz was born in Berlin, Germany. His family escaped to Antwerp, Belgium shortly before Kristallnacht, following a warning from a policeman who was a friend of the family. When Germany invaded Belgium, they attempted to cross into France but were denied and eventually fled to Brussels. The entire family went into hiding. The children were hidden separately; Harry was hidden by several families and in a children's group home, and eventually by the Vanderlinden family. Only a few members of Harry's extended family survived. Eventually Harry immigrated to Seattle, Washington. He is professor emeritus at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. Harry's published writing includes "Liberation Day," a remembrance of Brussel's liberation by British forces.

Jacqueline Mendels Birn was born in Paris, France. When Germany invaded France her family fled to Deux-Sevres, but returned to Paris, and Jacqueline and her sister were able to go to local public school until the French government's Aryanization program was instituted in 1941. Her father was forced to sell his business to his non-Jewish partner. She fled with her family for Vichy-controlled southern France, where they were arrested and interrogated. They were allowed to settle in a small village and remained under watch there until Paris was liberated by Allied forces. Jacqueline learned

after returning to Paris that over 200 members of her extended family had been killed in Sobibor and Auschwitz. Jacqueline came to live to the United States in 1958 after marrying her American husband. She is retired from the United States Foreign Service Institute and has two children and one grandchild.

Halina Peabody was born in Krakow, Poland. Her mother was able to secure papers identifying Halina, her sister and mother as Catholics and they went into hiding in Jaroslaw, Poland. Halina's father had been sentenced to hard labor in Siberia. Before Jaroslaw was liberated by the Soviets, a bomb destroyed the house Halina, her sister and mother were living in, permanently damaging Halina's hand. Eventually Halina, her mother and sister were able to reunite with her father. Halina lived in London, England until she immigrated to the United States in 1968. Her published work includes "The Happiest Day in My Life" which describes her feelings upon seeing Israel for the first time while traveling there to represent England in the Maccabiah Games.

Esther Starobin was born in Adelsheim, Germany. Esther was sent on the *Kindertransport* to England, where she lived with the Harrison family from 1939 until 1947. Her sisters, who had also come to England on the *Kindertransport* were able to visit during this time. Esther's parents and her brother were deported to the Gurs camp in France; her brother was rescued and sent to live with an aunt and uncle in the United States. Esther's parents were sent to Auschwitz and were murdered in 1942. Following the wishes of her mother, Esther's sister Bertl arranged for Esther and her three sisters to immigrate to the United States. Esther is a retired public school teacher. Her published writing includes "The Last Letter," a piece describing the final letters sent from her

parents while they were interned in France and their donation to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Fred Traum was born in Vienna, Austria. After Germany annexed Austria, Fred and his sister were forced to leave their public school and were made to attend a school for Jews. Eventually, Fred and his sister were able to leave Austria on the *Kindertransport* to England, when Fred was ten years old. They survived the war in England, being forced to evacuate London due to heavy bombing. After the war, Fred and his sister learned their entire family had been killed. Fred served in the English and the Israeli armies, and later in the Israeli merchant marines. Fred and his wife and children moved to the United States in 1963. Fred retired from the Boeing Company, after a successful career there. His published writings include “Keep Off the Grass,” a description of events during his life in Nazi occupied Austria.

Susan Warsinger was born in Bad Kreuznach, Germany. Susan was forced to leave her public school after the Nazi’s came to power. Her father was forced to close his business. Susan’s family home was damaged during Kristallnacht, when Nazi thugs smashed the windows and broke down the door. Later, Susan and her brother Joseph were smuggled into France for their safety. She and her brother were deported from a children’s home when Germany invaded France and fled to Vichy controlled France where they were eventually able to receive permission to immigrate to the United States to be reunited with her parents and younger brother. Susan is a retired teacher. Her published writings include “The Interpreter,” describing her experience of being asked to translate the conversation between a Nazi officer and a French representative in Versailles.

Martin (Marty) Weiss was born in Polana, Czechoslovakia. During the years leading up to Marty's family's deportation to the Munkacs Ghetto, two of his brother's were conscripted for slave labor and sent to work on the Russian front. Marty's remaining family was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where most were killed immediately upon arrival. Marty, among a few family members, was selected for slave labor. Marty and his father were transported to Melk, a subcamp of Mauthausen concentration camp where he was forced to carve tunnels into the sides of the mountains. He was forcibly marched to another sub-camp Guns kirchen, where he was liberated by the United States Army. Eventually Marty was able to immigrate with a sister and a brother to the United States. Later he served in the United States Army during the Korean War. Marty and his wife have two children and four grandchildren. Marty has written and published several works including a reflection of life after liberation entitled, "Going Home: Liberation, May 5, 1945."

The group currently consists of these 13 regularly attending members. In order to be allowed to conduct research at the museum, during our meetings, I first contacted my supervisor, The Director of Survivor Affairs at The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Diane Saltzman, through e-mail (*Appendix A*). In this e-mail I asked to use class time to be allowed to record conversations with the participants. Since I am paid by the museum, Diane Saltzman contacted the legal department of USHMM in order to be advised on how to proceed (*Appendix A*). I received an e-mail giving permission for me to use time during an hour-long lunch break to record those who were interested in participating (*Appendix B*). Throughout this process, I revised my application for The University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board and I provided the release form that

would be signed by those Memory Project participants who consented to be audio taped (*Appendix C*). In addition, my IRB release form asks survivor participants to allow me to use written work produced through the group, as well as e-mail correspondence pertaining to the research as data for this study (*Appendix C*).

Diane Saltzman sent an introductory e-mail to the participants (*Appendix D*) in order to explain that the research was voluntary and that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was not conducting the research.

Through the conversations with participants I describe in the next chapter, I bring forward the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust. The survivors who share their description of process, who communicate experience, open the lived experience of our group. Because these survivors describe the importance of sharing their memory as a way of keeping the Holocaust most acute for others, this work is pointed throughout toward pedagogical implications and toward action whose purpose is to know our shared being more fully. As Wiesel writes:

Granted, our task is to inform. But information must be transformed into knowledge, knowledge into sensitivity and sensitivity into commitment.

How can we therefore speak, unless we believe that our words have meaning, that our words will help others to prevent my past from becoming another person's — another peoples' — future. Yes, our stories are essential — essential to memory. I believe that the witnesses, especially the survivors, have the most important role. They can simply say, in the words of the prophet, "I was there."

What is a witness if not someone who has a tale to tell and lives only with one haunting desire: to tell it. Without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no civilization, no society, no future.

After all, God is God because he remembers. (¶ 5-8)

CHAPTER FOUR:
DWELLING IN: THE SITE OF THE DEMOLITION

You had no occasion for knowing. (Marty)

The sense of the Holocaust as incoherence, as a breach in being able to understand the events of one's own life, came up many times in the conversations I initiated with the group of survivor writers, members of The Memory Project writing group. This breach, this time where there was "no occasion for knowing" as Marty describes it, becomes, through the project of memory, knowable in new ways through the writing, the re-membering, the shared experience of the writing group.

Participants describe the writing process as a mode of knowing and there are several ways that this building process takes place. First is the impetus to write and speak, and the sense-making required to do so. In this way these writers are building through the project of memory as evoked when participants describe their process, as "discovery" (Harry). This process is one where having questions about the past allows survivors a mode to seek out memory. The impetus to write begets further questions that writing asks, as crafting writing becomes the *reason* to seek answers. Merleau-Ponty (1968/1975) describes this:

Life becomes ideas and ideas return to life, each is caught up in the vortex . . . each is led on by what he said and the response he received, led on by his own thought of which he is no longer the sole thinker. (p.119)

In this "vortex," where conversation happens, the conversation of memory, as I've described it in Chapter Two, or in conversations with others, survivors come across and "fill in the blanks" of their memory for their writing through the *process* of wondering, the *process* of writing (Albert). These conversations described by survivors happen in

multiple communities, with historians of the Holocaust, with family and friends and in our group. In this way life writing, the experience of our group, the phenomenon itself, is described by survivors as reflexivity, one where writing is both the reason for seeking memory and a way that memory may be uncovered. It is being-in dialogue with the past, as it happens through conversations about the past with others.

The second way in which writing is a “dwelling-in” is in the re-connecting, through dialogue with details, facts of the Holocaust, as important for the kind of knowing, through the writing, valued by these writers. Survivors speak of consulting historians, doing research and looking for facts and figures that will also help to “fill in the blanks” of their memory (Albert). This desire for the structure of facts, the structure of narrative, true to the experience of each writer and to their readers (however audience is viewed) is achieved in multiple ways, often through building community with others. Survivors speak of relationships, being in dialogue with local historians, with historians at The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and of important ongoing conversations with siblings and other family members. These kinds of conversations occur also within the writing group, where confirmation of experience, dialogue and kinship are sought.

Survivors speak also about what happens when they cannot remember. Ruth says, “What I wonder about is what I can’t remember, what is not on the paper. If it’s not there, it’s because I can’t remember.” This sense of things not remembered becomes particularly poignant as participants, during one conversation, took up a name for their writing, “snippets of life.” This image of life as cut fabric or paper is evocative of the “holes” some describe in their memory, of crafting an understanding of a broken past

through bits of memory. But this phrase, “snippets of memory” was intended, I think, to evoke the idea that pieces of memory are laid down, in whole cloth, so to speak, as objective bits of the past.

In this chapter, I bring forth the ways in which participants describe being pulled to do life writing, the ways in which audience and purpose are experienced by these writers, how writers feel about the work they do, and how they describe their writing and themselves as both Holocaust survivors and writers. In the second half of this chapter I return to a discussion of the way in which writing and memory are methods of knowing for these writers. This mode of knowing experience, is built of and through community, and happens through being-in conversation with others: dwelling in the site of the demolition, as experiences are deconstructed and then reconstructed again. This dwelling in questioning allows these writers a place to do the thoughtful building of a more coherent sense of their own past, present and future.

No Place of Visitation: Inhabiting Air

The experience of survival is one that is described by questions and one that continues through questioning. The impetus to write and speak about personal experience of the Holocaust, is made through seeking to know and understand the nature of personal experience, in order to communicate experience to others. The Holocaust experience may not be unique in this regard, but the enormity of the event produces questions that seventy years later, remain unanswered and unanswerable.

In Manya Friedman’s (2006) text entitled “A Headstone in the Air,” her sense of the Holocaust as always unfinished, as always present, is expressed through her sorrow at the lack of a final resting place for the family she lost. She writes:

My thoughts went back to my own parents and my two younger brothers. How I wished that there was somewhere a marker indicating their place of burial. Instead, I can only envision the smoke from the chimney rising toward the sky and a handful of ashes from the ovens of Auschwitz scattered around in the fields and blown away by the wind.

How can I place a pebble, a sign of visitation, on this headstone in the air?
(p. 18)

Friedman expresses the continuity of her loss, of the Holocaust as ceaseless, in that she is left without even a place where she can express her mourning. Her expression of a “headstone in the air” evokes the idea of something ongoing as it is “up in the air.” The sense described by survivors as “filling in the blanks,” expands here, through this text, to mean the blanks that exist for Friedman, that remain unfilled, even in finding a way to memorialize the dead members of her family.

While the idea of the “headstone in the air” is one that makes the Holocaust experience unending for the writer, it also evokes a sense of the Holocaust as being all around her, as something can be “in the air.” It is this constancy, this presence, that leads to the writing done by survivors. In the poet Myra Sklarew’s poem, “Lithuania, Part 1,” the poet concludes with these lines.

. . . I name you tree,
for death. I name you, star, for death, you
grass, you earth, you sister, father. I
name you Christ, I name you Jew name you.
In the territory of the forbidden

like the green ailanthus which dares to grow
in the interstices of stone, they found
what home they could. They occupied air.
(1995, p. 287)

As expressed in each of these excerpts, Jews murdered by the Nazis become a people without a country in ever more monstrous ways. In Sklarew’s poem, the earth itself is

named for death, but still will not be a home for the dead of the Holocaust. In each piece, the writer refutes the idea to which I referred in Chapter One as a “finished miracle” of a final sense, a finished view of the Holocaust.

Incomplete Knowledge: Being Historically

That there might ever be finality for those who experienced the Holocaust, even as they continue to write, becomes unthinkable as it is described in each of these texts. Expressed here, by each author, is the sense that the air we breathe is inhabited by the murdered dead of the Holocaust, that this is part of the fabric of the being of survivors, and in Sklarew’s (1995) poem, it is part of all being.

This comes through in the written texts of the survivors of The Memory Project and is part of the experience of their writing. It is this recursive nature of the Holocaust experience that continuously provides questions that spur on the writing for the survivors of The Memory Project. It is the “blanks” that may never be filled that the writers seek to address through their writing, over and over again. It is this ongoing search for coherence after the Holocaust that makes this writing process pedagogical and never able to be complete, even after the death of the last survivor of the Holocaust. Gadamer (1975/2006) writes, “To be historically means that knowledge of oneself can never be complete” (p. 301). Then, too, “to be historically means that knowledge” of history, even as we are situated in it, can also never be complete. It is the nature of this incompleteness that frames questions that keep personal experience of the Holocaust ever present and ever open. It is this openness that leads to the writing and is continued through the writing done by survivors.

It is this incomplete and always partial knowledge of oneself and history that

allows for the building process of writing and memory. The unfinished self, with its unfinished historical knowledge, allows for the un-building rebuilding, and building of an ever emerging understanding. This echoes Merleau-Ponty's (1958/2005) refutation of an objective history, as he calls a house "seen from nowhere" (p. 77). Still, we long for one always true and static house. Merleau-Ponty writes:

But we still believe that there is a truth about the past; we base our memory on the world's vast Memory, in which the house has its place as it really was on that day, and which guarantees its being at this moment. (p. 81)

It is this kind of continual questioning by the writers themselves, and from those whom the writers imagine reading the works they make, that allows the writing process to be a pedagogical one. It is because of these questions spurring on the writing that it becomes a way of knowing. Then in turn, the questions each text brings up for a reader continue the conversation, as in the next section, where Harry Markowicz's writing led me to question, through my own writing, the meaning of his experience.

The Loss of Home: Denial of the Ordinary

In the poem I cite at the beginning of Chapter One, John Ciardi (1997) describes three propositions written by the fictional poet and Holocaust survivor Joseph Stein. I wrote about the third proposition in previous chapters, but the first proposition is one I have not yet addressed. Ciardi writes, "Hell is the denial of the ordinary." For survivors of the Holocaust, the "denial of the ordinary" happened first in the ways in which family life, everyday existence was in peril. In this excerpt from Harry Markowicz' (2014) "Remembrances of a Hidden Child," it is a "denial of the ordinary" that produces the story's central moment. He writes:

It was a sunny day and I was playing outside with Jean-Paul whose parents owned the butcher shop across the street. We were throwing his small rubber ball back and forth on the sidewalk. The droguerie was on the same sidewalk behind me. While waiting for Jean-Paul to throw the ball back to me, in the distance behind him, I noticed a woman walking in our direction. She was not a stranger. In fact, it was my mother. I realized she was going to the droguerie and she would have to walk right by us to get there.

When I first moved in with Mami and Papi I had been given some instructions. My name was Henry Vanderlinden; the Vanderlindens were my parents and their teenage daughter Florence was my sister. Also, I would always have to speak in French and never let anyone know that I could speak or understand German. On the other hand, I had not been given instructions on what to do in the unlikely event that I would see my mother on the street.

As my mother approached, we continued to throw the ball. She walked past Jean-Paul and she was getting closer to me. I returned the ball every time Jean-Paul sent it to me. Now she was next to me; I could have touched her if I had put out my arm. She ignored me completely as she passed by me and I did not even glance in her direction. (pp. 29-30)

In the story Markowicz recounts something small, something intimate, in the scale of the Holocaust, yet it is in this dissolution of the ordinary experiences of a childhood, where we can glimpse also the negation of our humanity. As Harry Markowicz loses his family, his language and his own name, the “denial of the ordinary” occurs. But most poignantly, the denial of the ordinary happens in the way he, as a child, figures out that he must not appear to recognize his own mother, that he should not put “out” his arm to touch her.

I continue to wonder about the questions the story Harry Markowicz wrote brings up. In my own poem, entitled “Passing,” I wonder what the experience he describes means to him, and I reflect on the moment he describes.

The woman he sees
is his mother.

What he remembers, is her passing
as he throws and catches a ball on the sidewalk,
how his mother walks past,

knowing that he must appear
not to know her.

Is it the moment itself, the averted eyes, the impassive
second that cause him to weep, sixty years
later as he tells of that passing?

Is it that,
having the memory of it, raising his own children
he feels what it cost his mother
to look beyond him?

Are his tears for the person he becomes when she passes,
saved, I mean,
and bearing it every
day from that
to this.

When I heard Harry speak about his mother passing as a stranger on the street, I felt that Harry must write about the experience and told him so. I could picture the scene he described in my mind. I imagined the way Harry's knowing of this event might have changed over the years. The poem asks, as it supposes, what it means to him as a child, what it means to him when he has his own children, what it means to him now? The verb tense I employed throughout the poem is the present, as the memory is always present in some always emerging understanding of it, as it is never fully past.

After reading the story he wrote, new questions arise. What does it mean to those who might perceive the Holocaust as a collective, monolithic history to read Harry's story? How is it that we may also (must also) know the history of the Holocaust in the incremental shifts, described by the survivors, away from these most ordinary human experiences? What does it mean for those who write these stories to tell about the loss of a name, a mother passing her child on the street, or the lack of a headstone to visit? How do survivors know these losses more fully through writing about them?

I asked questions through the poem also about what it means to have been “saved” in the way that the survivors of The Memory Project were. Whatever or whomever is responsible, each survivor, each writer in our group describes, in telling a life story, a story of being spared. In each story, where a survivor bears witness to being saved, there is also the bearing of this survival in the question of why he or she survived when so many others did not.

The questions help to describe life writing the Holocaust, as they are the purpose for life writing the Holocaust. These questions do not cause the end of questioning; they begin it and begin it again, as the Holocaust reverberates. One of the ways in which this questioning is continued through the writing of survivors, is through conceiving of an audience and sharing personal stories of the past with an audience.

On the Wide Front Porch: Audience as Expanding Purpose

Levinas (1981/1997) describes how questioning and audience, as an other, are related. He writes that questioning is necessary for being, and for understanding the being of our self and others and suggests that, “the question, ‘who is looking?’ is also ontological” (p. 27). The answer to that question, Levinas writes, “should be stated in the monosyllabic ‘Me’”(p. 27). He means that audience is an understanding of our self through trying to understand an other. We imagine an audience for our thoughts and ideas. We share what we think others may understand in the way we think they may be able to understand. We share what we ourselves are able to know in words we think will allow us to be comprehensible to others. Levinas writes that the answers to the question, “who is looking” might be, “ ‘me who am known to you,’ ‘me whose voice you find in your memories,’ or ‘me who could situate myself in the system of your history’” (p. 27).

This description helps us to see how important a sense of audience is to our crafting of expression through art or writing. It allows us to see how we work always from and within our own experience, our own understanding, in order to make ourselves understood by those we also are able to understand.

Audience is how we know that what we have shared *is*, but it is also a way of knowing ourselves and our being through that listening other. Further, it is a mode of knowing that other through communication of our self. Resonance happens through an audience, and questions continue because of audience. We rely on language, though not language alone, to convey the meaning we make of our self for another. As Levinas (1981/1997) writes, “It is on the bases of proximity that being takes on its just meaning” (p. 27). In this way, it is the other, as audience or colleague, group member, historian, family member or friend, who are both part of, and central to, any understanding or communication of this experience. There is no conceiving of audience without a better and clearer conceiving of yourself and of the work you will share.

Continuing in this thought, Levinas (1981/1997) surely does not use the word “just” without expressing that it is the “just meaning,” as in sharing a meaning that does *justice* to the other that he considers necessary for communication. When audience is described as Levinas does, as “Me,” it is his expression that justice resides in the real communication of one to the other. He believes that there is a transcending of one *and* other in that communication. Questioning, in this sense, is a mode of learning, and a move toward justice. I will discuss this more in Chapter Five as a pedagogy of questioning.

Gadamer (1975/1989), too, understands that even when what we make is not meant to be shared with “others,” it is in the making, even with no intention of performance, that the shared thing exists. He writes:

The requirement that the play itself be intended in its meaningfulness is the same for both (player and spectator). This is the case even when the play community is sealed off against all spectators, either because it opposes the social institutionalization of artistic life, as in so-called chamber music, which seeks to be more authentic music-making in being performed for the players themselves and not for an audience. If someone performs music in this way, he is also in fact trying to make the music “sound good,” but that means that it would really be there for any listener. Artistic presentation, by its nature exists for someone, even if there is no one there who merely listens or watches. (p. 110)

Here again, is the idea that the question Levinas asks, “who is looking?” (who is my reader) has an ontological answer. The making of anything is guided by those we are able to know, whose time we also understand. The writing is made with a sense of an audience we are able to understand, as we conceive of our self. I wonder, in my conversations with the survivors of The Memory Project, how they conceive of those voices, which answer “Me” in response. What does it mean to write for “ ‘me who am known to you,’ ‘me whose voice you find in your memories,’ or ‘me who could situate myself in the system of your history’ ” (p. 27)? It is already a communication of themselves, a sharing of their own being when they conceive of the writing to be shared.

Survivors of the Holocaust often have asked me why they should write if they have given testimony, recorded video testimony for various archives, or if they speak publically to groups about their experiences. Inherent in the question itself is a focus on audience as purpose for testimony, who will see it? Who will keep it and remember it? How might listeners be moved to action? These survivors feel drawn to speak, and initially to write, for the reason Gideon describes. He says, “I do it because I want to

prevent it (the Holocaust) from happening again.” It is the desire for “being to take on its just meaning” that drives survivors to speak, share testimony etc. It is a plea to the world to be more just, to remember and not repeat the events of the Holocaust. The “proximity of one to another” happens in this sharing of story.

But this initial sense of writing as testimony is parsed in the discussions of the survivor writers as I ask them to describe the differences between giving testimony and their writing. Gideon says:

There’s no parallel between presentation and this (writing). Presentation is partially assertive but mostly responsive. You look at your audience, you hear what they say, you evaluate it . . . and you react. Writing, you don’t have an audience.

This sense that in the writing there is no audience may be similar to the sense Louise describes when she says, in response or rebuttal to Gideon, “You are your own audience.” But, it is Esther who articulates a sense of audience as describing a purpose for speaking which is different from that of writing, when she says:

Testimony is public, writing is a very private kind of thing. It’s expanding, it’s expanding your knowledge for what it means *to you*. It’s much more of an expanding kind of thing.

Here, in these differing descriptions of audience, we may see the ways in which testimony and writing are so shaped by a sense of audience. Even in Gideon’s sense that there is no audience for his writing, we can see the writing as conversation that the writer carries on for his or her own fuller understanding of the past.

His sense, though, that his speaking is to keep the Holocaust from ever happening again is contrasted with his sense that in his writing that purpose is secondary; his writing, for a different audience, is informed by a very different purpose. It is in this purpose that Gideon is, in some sense, freed from the triangulation he describes

undertaking to impact an audience when he speaks. He is able to think about his experience through the writing, without reacting in any way to an audience he has evaluated.

This echoes an earlier conversation with Esther (from p. 72) where she says of speaking, “But it is a very public kind of thing, which is very different from the writing. I think in the writing, often things come up that I didn’t realize I’m saying. I might not say it, if I knew I was saying it.” Survivors and victims of the Holocaust have felt compelled, since before the hidden milk cans in the Warsaw Ghetto, cans filled with letters, diaries and written accounts of life, to bear witness to the atrocities (Langer, 1995), but these participants cast life writing as somehow different than this. The purpose for writing may have begun with the responsibility of “never again,” but survivors are, through their life writing with “no audience,” able to say things they “might not say” otherwise.

The Empty House: Detachment in Fact

In what ways is life writing experienced differently from giving testimony? In what ways are the different purposes for each experienced, and how are these purposes informed by a sense of audience? The word “testimony” can be a noun or a verb; the verb means “to bear witness, testify (to)” (“testimony,” 2014). The noun is defined as “personal or documentary evidence or attestation in support of a fact or statement; hence, any form of evidence or proof” (“testimony,” 2014). In this context, testimony can be understood as evidence, attesting to the fact *that* the Holocaust happened. If we understand “testimony” to mean to “declare that something exists or is the case,” then it is understood as providing more evidence *that* the Holocaust happened. But does the

giving of evidence in support of the fact of the Holocaust cancel out the necessity of the personal story, the human experience of the Holocaust? How do we understand a testimony of experience, and what does it mean to our understanding of the Holocaust? Beyond providing evidence of the fact of the Holocaust, how can we know the Holocaust, how can survivors understand experience differently when they are not required to “testify,” and are instead able to just tell.

Eaglestone (2004) writes that testimony, unlike other texts, does not encourage identification, that it instead, “aims to prohibit identification” (p. 42). Without this identification by the reader, what may be attested to through testimony is the experience lived by the survivor, the fact *of* the Holocaust. But if testimony just chronicles these terrible events, what is *unable* to be told through the use of this new genre Eaglestone describes? How can a survivor create the proximity that Levinas explains as an ethical relationship, without an audience’s identification? What if instead of identification, the goal of the writing, the work of the writer is intersubjectivity? What if, in moving away from testimony through the writing process, the personal story is being told and told again? That kind of writing would require an audience to move closer. That kind of writing calls out for identification. It seeks an audience that moves closer, that lives in the questioning stance of one to another. It would allow for identification on a human scale, but would never suppose *to know* the experience of another.

How is the objectivity described in the definition of testimony above, different from the writing of personal experience, different from intersubjectivity that I have described as a questioning of lived-experience? Levin (1989) writes:

At the same time that the rule of objectivity is *subjectifying* the Self by *detaching* us from our body of lived experience, nullifying the *validity* of personal

experience, and undermining our *trust* in what we actually experience, the rule of objectivity also *objectifies* the Self, reducing it to a machine and subjecting the once all-too-human subject to the terror of machines out of control. (p. 14, italics in the original)

When testimony, defined for the most part, as “attestation” or agreement *that* something happened, is the only purpose for the written works of the survivors of the Holocaust, the human experience becomes dangerously detached from the historical event. This can happen from two directions, both through identification *and* in objectifying experience; we lose the opportunity for readers and writers, hearers and speakers to create community intersubjectively. This intersubjectivity that Levinas (1981/1997) calls “sociality” exists in “the-one-for-the-other structure characteristic of proximity” (p. 26). Our being for another means gathering to hear, not in order to “identify,” and not in order to hear objective experience stripped of its beings, but to share, to listen. Bachelard (2004) writes, “We are never real historians, but always near poets” which puts us either in proximity with poets or means we are nearly poets ourselves in our telling of our personal story (p. 6). In either meaning, and in the dual meaning, the effect is the same. It is only through our ability to listen (as a poet listens) and move closer to the writer (as a poet moves closer), while knowing our limitations in sharing experience, (as a poet feels the weight of uttering) that the goal of justice sought by testimony can happen.

It is not until the third definition given for “testify” in the Oxford English Dictionary that the idea of sharing a belief or a feeling comes up. This definition, “To profess and openly acknowledge (a fact, belief, object of faith or devotion, etc.); to proclaim as something that one knows or believes,” allows for testifying to be a mode of sharing a belief, a felt truth, as opposed to reiterating fact, verifying the existence of a historical event. In this meaning, testimony is an affirmation of faith, a story meant to

change the mind, or feelings of the listener. In this understanding of testimony, which aligns with Gideon's description above of appraising an audience, the speaker gauges how he might best impact that audience's feelings about the Holocaust. It also aligns with the idea, put forth also by Gideon, that by not forgetting the Holocaust, through testifying, he may help to ensure it "never happens again." This is impossible without the intersubjective nature of sharing the story of his *own* survival.

The personal writing does not allow for the detachment described by Levin (1989) as the danger of putting forth objective fact about personal experience. This sense that what is shared in writing is different from testimony was expressed by Halina when I asked about the difference between the ID cards given to visitors at the museum which tell the biographical facts of an actual person's life. I ask what the difference is between those recorded facts and her story. She says, "Well these are just facts and the stories are also your emotions and your, your what you felt about it." I ask why it is important to share those things, those things that are beyond the facts, and Halina says, "Well I think the audience is more interested, it gives them more. It shows much more who I was, when this was happening."

Through the use of her personal story, and through the description of her feelings, Halina conveys something less detached, possibly less "objective," while it is more meaningful. What she describes is intersubjectivity; the audience is given more, she says, because she shows "who she was." An audience can never fully understand what Halina experienced, can never fully "identify," but through being in proximity, there is an approach toward intersubjectivity. What she conveys through her writing, she sees as giving "more" to an audience. This sense may be one of the important reasons that these

survivor writers describe the audience for their work primarily as family, our group, and others closely related to them. These are the people they wish to share more of themselves with. By moving beyond the attestation *that* the Holocaust happened which is the goal when speaking to an audience of school children, or police officers in training, survivors describe through personal story what the Holocaust was like for them. Through the writing, they are able to describe what it means and has meant through time, *to them*.

“Transformation Into Structure:” The Reciprocal Building of Story

Marty describes his sense of the writing process as an opening and expanding of his own experience, as he contrasts it with his experience of speaking in the United States

Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Oral History program entitled *First Person*:

You’re sort of guided and your response goes to what the questions are asked and what happens is that your scope is very limited to what he asks you, OK? And you have a certain amount, only a few sentences, and then he goes on to the next statement. It’s only one hour.

Now what happens with writing, I think, you have a chance to think about it and correct yourself, or you can expand on it, so the expression is different than just a recording, a spontaneous recording, even though you may get the same information, but it’s different.

Marty here describes that what is conveyed in the writing may contain the same information as in his speaking, but that in the writing he is able to convey something more. In a similar way, Gadamer (1975/2006) describes the movement of “play” in its becoming a work of art as “transformation into structure.” He writes, “It has the character of a work, of an *ergon* and not only of *energeia*. In this sense I call it a structure (*Gebilde*)” (p. 110). While Marty is telling about the events of his life during the Holocaust in either mode, the writing, as he describes it, allows for the making of an “*ergon*,” allows for the story to become a work of art. “A *Gebilde*” writes Arthos (2011)

“is a world that is closed in the sense that it never loses its context, or better, creates its own (expanding) context” (p. 130). Here Marty’s, and previously Esther’s, sense of the expanding process of their written work is one way that the writing, the story of a life, begins a conversation between writer and first reader, the “Me” that Levinas (1981/1997) describes. Through the craft Marty says he employs, there is a making of personal experience into structure, into a work.

In the margin of my copy of Gadamer’s (1975/2006) *Truth and Method*, next to the passage quoted above, I wrote, “It becomes to have a life of its own.” In my understanding, the making is a continuation of experience; it is “being” made in(to) a work. This way of describing the “work” of art is particularly important in that it is through each author conceiving of, choosing what to share as story (transformation into structure), that a conversation with and through the work may begin.

Just as Louise names herself as her own audience for her work, the sense is one of moving closer to her own voice, through the writing. As Heidegger (1993c) describes, “The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist” (p. 143). Through the thinking about it, the self-correction, Marty describes doing with his own work, this dialogue, this expansion, has already begun.

As Levin (1985) writes, “To move with compassion is to move *in response* to the calling - the suffering and needs - of other sentient beings. But when deep compassion is the motivation, to move and to *be* moved are one and the same” (p. 98). It is through this dialogue, the expanding process of the writing that this can happen. It brings the writer simultaneously closer to herself, and in that way, closer to the world, as Levin calls it “being moved *by grace* of Being as a whole” (p. 98). Here, where audience is the self

first (the “Me” Levinas describes), the expanding process of “transformation into structure” is the continuation of narrative consciousness made in (and into) a written work.

In sharing this experience to impact an audience, or to express their own being, these writers desire to create resonance. This resonance is the “proximity” Levinas writes about, and it is the purpose of the “being of a poetic image” (Bachelard, 2004, p. xvi). Bachelard takes this further in describing the “real measure of the being of a poetic image” as its “reverberation.” In his sense that “The poet speaks on the threshold of being,” we see how the “being of a poetic image” is part of making something wholly new, which in that making re-makes the world.

It is also important to describe this sense of making as a “transformation into structure” because of the sense communicated in our conversations, that the survivor writers of The Memory Project do not see themselves as making a work of “art” at all. In the same way that Gadamer (1975/2006) describes chamber music as attempting to escape, at least originally, the requirements of “art,” no survivor in our conversations, describes the work he or she makes as art. Further though, not one person, in any of our conversations, would even describe him or herself as a writer. I think of this as a definition, employed here by these survivors, of art as a finished product. These writers don’t see their writing as the questioning alive within the tension between “*ergon*” and “*energeia*” as Gadamer describes the “transformation into structure.” They certainly would not say that their writing was creating “the being of a poetic image,” though they seek resonance, and call out for proximity. How is it that ideals of form, perceptions of “history,” and notions of craft keep these writers from naming themselves as writers?

Building On: The Stifling Structure of Form

It might be that we are all tattooed savages since Sophocles. But there is more to Art than the straightness of lines and the perfections of surfaces. Plasticity of style is not as large as the entire idea . . . We have too many things and not enough forms. (Flaubert, as cited in Derridas, 1963/1978, p. 3)

I ask the survivors about their experience of themselves as writers. The answer, where not one group member calls him or herself a writer, leads to more questions about what it means to these survivors to articulate personal experience through their own writing. Further this conversation asks us, I think, to expand and question our sense of how the work of art is related to the maker and to the making of art. It asks us to question also the purpose of producing a work of art.

When I express surprise that no one in the group names him or herself a writer, Gideon says, “I think you pointed it out correctly, none of us thinks of ourselves as writers. We write, but I don't think we are writers.” This denial of naming themselves as writers is tied to a belief that emerged in an earlier conversation that writing is experience “set down” and that forms are fixed and immutable – in some sense impenetrable, for these writers.

When I began our conversation by asking how participants describe their writing, I was told by Harry, “I certainly don't call it autobiography.” In this answer he wants to be clear that the writing he is doing is not *an* autobiography, though it may be autobiographical. Others chime in that they also are *not* writing an autobiography. Here for the first time, this phrase “snippets of memory” is invoked to describe the writing done for the group, and eventually it gets repeated several times, until it is changed by Gideon and becomes “snippets of life.”

When I ask what it would mean to write an autobiography, a particular sense of a fixed form is described through the conversation that ensues. Marcel says:

It would have to be more structured, it would have to be, *I was born in 1934* and then go through the whole thing. I pick stories as they come to me. Oh, oh, first all from what I talk (speak about) and now I am going back to stories and now I'm talking about life in Poland and talking about how I came to America and talking about that. And these are just individual stories and they are not the time, they are not time . . .

Gideon chimes in to supply the word Marcel is searching for. He says, "They are not chronological – Exactly!" Several others agree, and Gideon provides a definition of biography. He says, "The phrase biography happens to be chronological, has to be structured, exactly what Marcel said."

In this exchange, the refusal to describe the writing as biography or autobiography seems tied to the refusal to call themselves writers, for what would it mean if they were writers? What would it mean if they wrote within this fixed form they think of as autobiography? What is the responsibility of creating, as writers of autobiography would, a literature of the Holocaust?

This reluctance, on the part of these writers, to call themselves writers, to name their work as autobiographical, to take on the telling of the Holocaust, exposes a way of thinking about historical events as objects, which might be able to be known "scientifically," chronologically, objectively. Carr (1986) writes, in critique of this way of viewing "society" as an object:

Individuals, so the argument goes, only represent so many fleeting, changing perspectives or subjective impressions. But to know scientifically is to attain to a single world, to arrive at nature as a set of universal and necessary laws. When you and I know a scientific or mathematical truth it is the *same* thing we know and thus the *same thought* we think. (p. 125)

Survivors, in our conversations, describe writing as expanding their individual voice, as Carr calls it, “an investigation which is methodologically anchored in the first person” (p. 124), but they still refuse to name themselves as writers. While they are telling individual and personal experiences, they are still concerned with the notion that “in individuality lies error; when we think the truth we are all one” (Carr, 1986, p. 125). Even without thinking that there can be “the truth” when survivors speak and write about the Holocaust, there is still the perception, expressed in these conversations, of the writing as a product that must fit the constraints of a fixed form and as produced through the proscribed steps of a uniform process.

Marty answers the question of what to call his own writing, with more questions:

In the beginning I tried to go, sort of, in terms of years, umm but I don't know if it is a biography, I think it's more of an experience of your life and I guess if you call it a biography it's more . . . reason what I wrote it's more experience and naturally it would have to be about me since I'm involved in it, it's my background. So, I don't know what, what would you call it? It's more about experience, or life you live . . . you live through.

In Marty's seeking to name his own writing, he describes it as being a departure from what he “tried” to do. These participants feel a call to describe their lives, to share what they have made with an audience, but feel separated from “writers” because of the perceived constraints of a “form,” and a prescription for writing that does not match the way in which personal writing from memory happens for them. Inherent here, too, is a rebuttal of the idea that the writing they do utilizes craft or technique. Instead, it is put forward again and again, as Marty implies above, that experience is simply recorded and put down on paper to be viewed, as in the multiple characterizations of writing as “snippets of memory” or “snippets of life.”

Ruth describes her sense of her writing process in this way. She says, “So, it’s here (points to her head) and I put it down so my family can read it.” With this conception of the writing as being simply ripped from memory and made visible for an audience, I think we see a description of life writing expressed through the groups’ sense of rejecting, or at least ignoring, how memory and language are part of the work they make. Here also is the sense that Ruth wishes to claim that her writing might somehow escape the human work of memory and writing, which is knowing in narrative and experiencing history as an ever-moving horizon.

Carr writes, “The world (was reduced to the contents of mind(s) . . . of having the status of a mental construct” (p. 125). In this same way, these writers may describe themselves as simply recording the facts of their experience, denying the interpretive, meaning-making processes of remembering and writing, and relying on the contents of a mind as memory stored and objectively retrieved.

Susan, though, does describe a view of her work as being made by her as she arranges the pieces she has written over the years. She says:

You have all these snippets, and after you have done maybe twenty and thirty of them and you are going to look at them, and this is what I did . . . So what I’ve done is, I’ve taken all these snippets and I got my granddaughter to help me, put them in chronological order, even though now they weren’t in chronological order when I wrote them.

So, in this sense through her own finished pieces, through a writer’s process, Susan begins to discern themes for herself, to describe a structure of a work of, if not art, something. She interprets the work she has made, discerning a pattern, which she sees as autobiographical, though she says she is still “not ready” to call it autobiography, and might instead title it simply, “Susan’s Stories.”

Harry also begins to describe a writer's process as less prescribed, as individual crafting and making of life experience, when he references a former Memory Project group member who has recently published her memoir. He says:

I was talking to Estelle and she asked me if I was going to write a book and I said no, no, *I'm just writing little texts*, or I don't know what word I used. But she said, *well that is what I did*. She said she never intended to write an autobiography; it just came to a point where it *was* an autobiography.

This way of describing writing, separate from a stilted form or an established set of steps for making something, belies a greater sense of some in the group, of writing as the "expanding" process that Esther describes above. But even within this description of writing as discovery, as uncovering – there is still no shared sense among the writers that they *are* writers or that what they are making are works of art or literature. This sense of measuring themselves and finding a deficit as writers is related to a belief in the Holocaust as un-writeable, un-knowable individually, even by its survivors, but it is also related to the ways in these survivors describe their own experiences of the Holocaust.

The Blueprint of the One Holocaust Story

There are people who were in the concentration camps, or people like Charlene who lived in the forest for two years. I was a sheltered child. My parents were alive. They tried to keep me away from all that. I suffered, I was hungry and so forth, but I did not have these terrible, terrible stories that the people who have, that were in the march and those things. But it (my story) is interesting, to me. (Marcel)

This description, defining a Holocaust experience according to what did *not* happen to him, is common in my interactions with survivors. The museum's definition of a Holocaust survivor describes a survivor "as a person who was displaced, persecuted, and/or discriminated against by the racial, religious, ethnic, social, and political policies of the Nazis and their allies between 1933 and 1945" (Who is a survivor? section, ¶1)

But the Holocaust story may always be seen as the story of the concentration camps. The story of survival itself is not the story we know of the Holocaust, though it was first from survivors, that we know the history at all. (Also if we did not know the Holocaust from its victims and survivors, who would tell that history, the perpetrators?) So completely have the horrors of the death camps, the death marches, the gas chambers invaded our collective consciousness of the Holocaust that other stories, lived by survivors, may be crowded out - even in the minds of those survivors. The millions who experienced the Holocaust, but were not interned in concentration camps, help us sound the scope of that whole history. It is the survivors' stories that help what we know about the Holocaust to grow and change over time.

Still, this one history of the Holocaust is the history against which survivors describe their own experience. Survivors of the Holocaust, even some who were in concentration camps, feel their stories dwarfed by the enormity of that history. Ruth says of her own writing, "I'm sure people who read it absorb it, different perspectives, but they're nothing, they wouldn't be interested in *knowing me*. Maybe they are interested in learning about history, but that's it." Auschwitz is a part of Ruth's own story, yet her description is that she is not that history, that her story is separate. Expressed by Ruth though, is a sense that her story, her individual story, is less "interesting" to an audience wanting to know more about the Holocaust. Articulated here is this awful sense that it is the camps themselves that hold the interest of an audience, and not the story of those individuals held and killed in them. This returns us to Carr's statements that when we know something scientifically, through the science of history, we all know the same

thing, and in this case it is the one story of the Holocaust we hold in our popular consciousness.

The one story of the Holocaust, the images that present themselves when we think of the Holocaust, the striped uniforms of Auschwitz, the lines of prisoners, cup in hand, photographs of stacks of bodies, are incomprehensible, and if we think of the six million who were killed, it is un-understandable. This is the importance of the individual story, but may also be why survivors find it difficult to see the importance of writing and crafting a unique story, beyond testifying to attest *that* the Holocaust happened.

This tension is described by Gideon and Marty and expressed through the importance each of them places on impacting an audience through giving testimony. It contrasts with Susan's portrayal of life writing, as a mode of self-understanding, as possibly more powerfully moving than the experience of hearing a speech designed to "impact" an audience. Susan says:

When you are writing the story you can go into much more detail, you can write and you can use words that you might not have thought of while you are talking. So, it is a piece that is more thought out than if you are just talking to an audience. . . . When we are writing our stories I think they are more thought out and they are more poetic and they are more vivid.

This idea of the "poetic" as unrelated to the Holocaust is immediately taken up by Ruth who says, "But that's not what people want, the poetic is beautiful." In this exchange the personal story that Susan describes as more "vivid" and "poetic," is refuted as an acceptable way of communicating a Holocaust experience. The famously misunderstood and often quoted, and echoed statement by Adorno (1967/1983) that "poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," is still present in the thinking of these survivor writers. Weisel's (1989) complaints after the Holocaust mini-series that fictional representations

of the Holocaust were “insulting the dead” are present certainly when even survivors feel unfit to craft experience of the Holocaust in personal writing, beyond testifying, though they do.

There is a responsibility, survivors feel, to attest to *the fact* of the Holocaust, as a means to ensure that “it never happens again” as Gideon expresses, as well as the conflicting desire to tell the personal story of their own experiences. In this dichotomy, described by Gideon and Marty, a certain kind of testimony is named. Here the written personal story is described as both lacking in its ability to impact an audience *and* as being an unacceptable way to do so.

It is a relationship with an audience that a speaker can see, an audience that shares the room with a speaker, that becomes necessary through Gideon’s and Marty’s descriptions of how an audience might be impacted - to ensure that the Holocaust never happens again. Marty describes the importance of the “feedback” he gets from an audience and Gideon says, “But everything you said, you have it in writing, you have it in writing but what you DO NOT have in writing, is the facial expression, the pausing between the sentences, the tone.” Marty adds that what is missing in the writing is, “the emotion.” This sense that there is a responsibility to tell not the “poetic” but instead to tell, as Ruth says, the story that “people want” illustrates how the one story of the Holocaust is one that stands in the way, somehow, of the individual story. More than that is the sense, shared by these survivors that the poetic image is merely beautiful. Gideon says, “I am changing according to the audience, because my duty is to get the audience to understand, not to (for) me.” The purpose Gideon describes for his speaking shows that the responsibility he feels is to make his audience understand, and in this way to attest to

the fact that the Holocaust happened. His purpose for speaking, he says, is not to add to his own understanding of his experience. Yet it is in this wish for understanding, this desire to be heard and understood, and Gideon's desire to produce action, that the "poetic image" Bachelard (2004) describes lives. Bachelard writes, "The poet does not confer the past of his image upon me, and yet his image immediately takes root in me" (p. xvii). He describes the poetic image's "being" existing between hearer and speaker, reader and writer and as the relationship of resonance, the very thing Gideon conceives to be the purpose of his speaking.

How, then, does the story that Susan describes, the one that is more "thought out" and more "vivid," fail to convey the "emotion" that Marty and Gideon say is missing without the physical presence, the reciprocity of a speaker before an audience? Certainly, the physical body of a narrator makes a difference to an audience hearing a speech, but what about the body's presence in the written work?

From Door to Door: The Body Telling

We were all sitting outside, numb with despair, when Lili stood up and started to sing a beautiful aria. At first her voice was unsure from lack of use, but as she continued to sing, her voice became more confident and strong. It was hard to believe that such a beautiful and powerful voice could emerge from such a tiny, frail young woman.

Our bodies had been pushed to their limits. We were all starving, our heads were shaved bald, and we were weak from exhaustion, but when Lili sang she seemed powerful, strong, and beautiful. Words cannot describe how her simple act affected me so deeply. I was mesmerized by the music. It replenished my supply of hope, the most precious commodity one could have in Auschwitz. (Geva, 2008, p. 13)

Geva's description is one that could never be understood without the body's own understanding. Even "hope" is itself embodied as we say we feel it. The living vibration of singing, we feel not only with our ears; we feel it with our skin, the breath made

resonant moves through us. Geva's story is one we feel through and from description of the experience, our own body's experience of singing or of hearing song. In what ways is this different from hearing a survivor pause while telling, as Gideon and Marty describe above, from seeing a survivor's face when he tells, from hearing and seeing the tears that come when a survivor speaks? In both Geva's story of a song in Auschwitz and in Gideon's description of speaking to an audience – the facial expression, the tone, the emotion, in each the body is the medium and mode of the communication.

Merleau-Ponty (1955/1964) who describes the body as the locus and generator of perception, writes, "It is thus necessary that, in the perception of another, I find myself in relation with another 'myself,' who is, in principle, open to the same truths as I am, in relation to the same being that I am" (p. 17). Just as Levinas (1981/1997) describes audience as always "Me," Merleau-Ponty here switches the point of view to the person who perceives. Still the relationship is the same. There is communication when there is a sharing of what is common (human) in the understanding of perceived and perceiver – this is intersubjectivity. This is true whether it occurs with an audience of listeners or with a writer imagining, and writing for, an audience of readers. In other words, the proximity Levinas describes exists even without the speaker's body physically standing before an audience.

Merleau-Ponty (1955/1964) writes, "Associated bodies must be brought along with my body. The 'others,' not merely as my congeners, but the others who haunt me and whom I haunt" (p. 161). These "others" Merleau-Ponty describes are not those who are merely *like* us, who share our genus, they are those who inhabit us, whom we inhabit

– as haunt is understood as both an action and a place. And it is a sharing in common, inhabitation that is sought by each “associated body.”

The Oxford English Dictionary describes the parallel nature of haunt: “From the uncertainty of the derivation, it is not clear whether the earliest sense in French and English was to practise (sic) habitually (an action, etc.) or to frequent habitually (a place) (“haunt,” 2013). Further, a haunted house is inhabited by spirits, spirits that are disembodied, but for the structure of a building they haunt, or through other body’s noticing of them. In this way, the “associated bodies” of the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust are all manner of audience.

Survivors tell of the response they get when they speak to an audience, the letters they receive thanking them for sharing their experience. I have been surprised to see scenes of adulation when I accompanied a survivor as she spoke to high school students; audience members clasped her hands, wanted to hug her, cried about her experience in front of her. Marty describes his experience of speaking publicly:

It is unbelievable, *unbelievable* the response you get from the kids and they could be young kids, like early high school or into college. What amazes me . . . is places where they never met a Jewish person in their lives, and they could go through their whole lives and never meet a Jewish person – yet they care! And that is what spurs you on, that is the humanity of it and it is really what comes across for me and that is why speaking is so important.

Yet, Harry describes, as others have, his sense of his speaking, in contrast to the writing he does for the group:

Well, I think it’s very different, very different. One reason is that when you are talking, I’m sure most of us don’t say, won’t talk about, certain things that are too painful or you know would trigger you to lose your composure. So you avoid those things and you just talk in general terms. When you write, you can be more intimate, express feelings that you don’t normally.

Notice the purposes illustrated here. Each man is talking about sharing something with an audience. Each is translating the Holocaust he experienced, to an audience. In each expression, the audience defines the purpose of the work. For his *writing*, Harry describes translating his feelings. When he *speaks*, he chooses *not* to share his feelings, talking “in general terms,” he says, for a live audience. He describes intimacy in his writing for an audience that, while imagined, is closer to him than people he may speak to in the same room. Marty describes the response, the audience’s “care” for his experience, his surprise that they seem to care.

In each communication there is a body telling; in each there is a language shared from body to body. It is the purpose of both of these modes of communicating to enact a haunting of these “associated bodies,” and it is the nature of the word “haunting” that it be habitual, an experience of continuation.

Built or Building: Process As Product

‘To bear’ means ‘to give,’ to ‘bring forth,’ ‘to make appear.’ Thus the bearing of thought must be understood in relation of our skillfulness (*technē*), and our capacity for practical activity in general (*phrōnesis*), but also, and more deeply, in relation to the primary experience of truth as an event of disclosing (*alētheia*). (Levin, 1985, p. 91)

What would it mean for the survivors of the Holocaust to *have* written, rather than to *be* writing? The answer depends on the purpose we choose for a “literature” of the Holocaust. If survivors are writing as a mode of self-discovery, when then, does the process become the product? Inherent in Gadamer’s (1975/2006) description of the work of art as “transformation into structure” is the dual sense of art. It can mean that a person’s transformation becomes a piece of art, as in a product, or it may mean that the transformation itself becomes the art, where the process *is* the art.

In some sense it, the work of art, has a rich life of its own in the “disclosing” described, through the process, the making, the being-in the making of writing. This work is brought forth through technique, which is always growing, and honed in the impetus of “bearing” witness, which is living on the earth in a “poetizing way” (Levin, 1985, p. 91). The work, the final product, from my point of view as pedagogue, for my purposes as facilitator of story, may be just the latest incarnation of process, Carr’s (1986) “continuation” of experience. And if resonance is the expanding experience of the work of life writing, the audience, both real and imagined, are those whom writers seek to effect, the “associated bodies” they haunt. Though even with no audience, the disclosing process itself, the uncovering of being, is resonant.

Levinas (1969/1991) describes language from one to another as “the incessant surpassing of the *Sinngebung* by the signification” (p. 296), writing here that the meaning of what we convey is always surpassed by *what we mean*. Levinas’ description is that in speaking to another we reveal our own being, our own meaning. In this same way, in conceiving of audience, in sharing with an audience, in planning to tell or write personal experience each writer is, in disclosing being, opening being to others. This is intersubjectivity and comes through the writing as questioning, which spurs Carr’s “investigation which is methodologically anchored in the first person” (p. 124). Bruner (2004) also describes this process, and the importance of examining how it works. He writes:

Autobiography (formal or informal) should be viewed as a set of procedures for “life making.” And just as it is worthwhile examining in minute detail how physics or history go about their world making, might we not be well advised to explore in equal detail what we do when we construct ourselves autobiographically? Even if the exercise should produce some obdurate

dilemmas, it might nonetheless cast some light on what we might mean by such expressions as “a life.” (p. 692)

What we can know from studying the construction of autobiography translates to what we can know about “a life” illustrates how Bruner sees these processes as intertwined. In his illustration, the construction of one mirrors the construction of the other.

“In the Unity of *Geschichte*”

What is it, though, that is “allowed,” according to these survivors, when it comes to describing a history, anchored in the “first person?” What is allowed when we describe autobiography of the Holocaust as “life making?” How do these participants deal with the telling of history in which personal story is enmeshed? Esther and Gideon explore their perceptions of audience and reveal further questions about how *what* they write is often guided by for *whom* they are writing. Each describes their hopes to affect an audience, albeit different kinds of audiences.

Esther asks, “But, are you writing a book to give factual history or are you writing for your family to know your reactions, your experiences, and how you remember it?”

Gideon responds to Esther’s conception of her writing:

Let us take your approach, you are writing for your family, what you remember and what you say is totally subjective and therefore, by definition, correct, but if you do mention facts like . . . *Vlasovci*, that's not your personal part, that's part of the background.

Esther goes on to say that she doesn’t write “factual history.” She says, “I never write a fact. Ever!” Here Esther reveals several questions related to this writing: how does an audience you “gauge,” as Gideon describes in an earlier conversation, require a story very different from the story required by “no audience” or by an audience of friends and family? This desire to tell personal experience separate from the responsibility of

verifiable fact, from telling “factual history” as Esther describes it, impact the writing she does. These forces outline, in many ways, what survivor writers may feel they can make of and through their writing.

But how is it that the Holocaust as “background,” as Gideon describes it, is separate from the “personal” story Esther is writing; how could they ever be separable? The “background” of the Holocaust is part of the time, space, body and community that shaped her experience, and it is most certainly “personal.” The loss of her family, the town she fled on the *Kindertransport*, are these not *all* background? And what about the facts she disavows writing? She has written of her voyage to the United States on a certain boat, her experience of living in a certain town; are these “facts?” Are these facts part of a “factual history?”

In this tension between what is personal and what is background or factual, the importance of these writers’ sense of audience is seen. What is written by survivors, is tied irrevocably to whom each writer imagines might read their stories. Esther describes her audience as her family, and claims there are no facts in what she writes, freeing her writing from the necessity, the responsibility, of telling the facts of the Holocaust, allowing her to tell her own story as person and survivor.

Still, how is the “background,” both the background of the Holocaust and the background of lives before and after, always enmeshed with the personal story of these survivors? Merleau-Ponty (1968/1975) writes: “We situate ourselves in ourselves *and* in the things, in ourselves *and* in the other, at the point where by a sort of *chiasm* we become the others and we become world” (p. 160). These “things,” these “others,” are context, or “background” of experience, but don’t stand in back of the writer, the

survivor, or any audience. The conversation, dialogues carried on with these “things,” these “others,” is always already part of the experience of “being” and certainly already part of the experience of writing.

Carr (1986), writes, “Yet Husserl himself wrote that the ego, ‘constitutes itself for itself, so to speak in the unity of *Geschichte*’; or as one could say, in one possible translation of *Geschichte*, the unity of story” (p. 74). The personal story is somehow more allowable to Esther if she is writing for her family, and if she says she is not writing a “factual history.” Others look for resources, historians and others, to lend credence to the personal story enmeshed in the “background” of the Holocaust. The process of this writing in both cases, is this important making of a recursively more coherent self, a more coherent understanding of a terrible past. It is to seek communication of a self, while working toward impacting an audience. It is memory’s project, happening in the unity of *Geschichte*.

Returning to the participants’ refusal to call themselves writers, this beautifully describes the importance of the on-going process I’ve described. When Gideon says, “I think you pointed it out correctly, none of us thinks of ourselves as writers. We write, but I don't think we are writers,” he names this. Here he describes the process of writing and eschews the title, the final naming, of writer. In what he says, it is the *writing*, the continuation, the *project* of memory, which is affirmed. This, too, is the “expanding” Esther describes her writing as being. This work is the balancing of part to whole; present, past and future; self and audience (other) and is “expanding” in its reflexivity. It is as Levinas (1981/1999) writes, “The relationship with a past that is on the hither side of every present and every re-presentable . . . is included in the extraordinary and

everyday event of my responsibility for others” (p. 10). It is this “relationship” where conversation and questioning live, and it is in these dialogues where the writing happens and then where resonance occurs.

Building On: Remembering as Project

While I’ve already begun to discuss the dialogue that these writers carry on with the facts, details and historical record of the Holocaust, these are only some of the important dialogues that describe this phenomenon. In the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust, the dialogue of memory, the conversation with history, the always emerging narrative that is written and experienced recursively is carried on without end and begins in conversation with lived-experience. This conversation begins with questions that these survivor writers have about their own personal histories, their “backgrounds” and with stories that ask to be told.

Also, as I’ve described, often life writing the Holocaust begins with the purpose of “never again.” Participants describe the questions that present themselves when they try to write about personal experience. They describe the process of seeking information or talking about those experiences with others, as a means of remembering, as a means of crafting coherent life stories.

It is this process, writing’s (or the writer’s) dialogue with memory, which I ask about when Ruth describes her writing. The answer she gives, “It gets out your memory; it sparks a memory” helps me to see the discursive relationship of writing and memory within the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust. This description is one where the writing acts as both *impetus* for remembering and as *mode* of memory. Is it the memory getting “out” that “sparks” memory, or the other way around? It is both, as it is

reciprocal. It describes a phenomenology, a conversation with lived-experience and echoes Merleau-Ponty's (1955/1964) description:

A phenomenology therefore has a double purpose. It will gather together all the concrete experiences of man which are found in history – not only those of knowledge but also those of life and of civilization. But at the same time it must discover in this unrolling of facts a spontaneous order, a meaning, an intrinsic truth, an orientation of such a kind that the different events do not appear as a mere succession. (p. 52)

It is in this double purpose, also the purpose of life writing, that the dialogue is able to happen between the “concrete experiences of history,” “the unrolling of facts” and the meanings, “the order” made from that history. In this sense, Ruth's conception of writing as getting a memory “out” and as sparking a memory become steps in a building, meaning-making process. And whether it is the “facts” that call for a writer's attention first, or the questions of meaning that call for the “facts,” these survivor writers, through the questioning and writing of personal experience, seek out both the facts and multiple ways to make meaning of and through them.

Getting It Out: A Project Complete

Some participants, though, *do* seem to describe writing as putting memory to rest, of getting it “out” without the returning spark, the meaning making. For example, Albert says, “It is a great satisfaction.” Halina says, “It feels like I have never been able to talk about it and now it's coming out.” And Louise says, “the relief is that you finally write it down and you make sure that . . . it will not die with you, because it's written.” But even in this description where the writing is “out” of the writer, it is not the end of anything. Marcel describes his own process in this way.

When I write, it usually takes me awhile and sometimes I can't sleep because things are coming to me. Then I write it and my wife reads it and says, *is this true?* And I say, *of course it is true* and then she says *well you never told me that*

and I say, *well I just didn't tell you that*. By writing you also bring certain facts you never talked about, you never told anybody about.

Through the process of writing, what Marcel describes as “things . . . coming to him,” happens here in dialogue with memory. The conversation with memory, then, spurs the conversation that he has with his wife. This conversation is only one example of how memory may be “out” of a survivor, yet never put away, never done with. Through sharing the memories he has uncovered *in order* to share, they come back to the world through his writing, expanding Marcel’s experience of them.

Other participants describe writing’s conversation with memory also. Gideon says, “Probably the first things you write are the kinds of things which . . . burn in your heart the most.” This kind of memory may be the impetus for writing in the first place, but it is not ever the final step of the process. Still it recalls a spark turning to a fire, burning to be written about – gotten out, but not put out. Others in the group echo this feeling of being unburdened by writing. Jacqueline describes writing as, “It’s a relief! It’s a relief, a relief! When you write something down and you think . . . yeah! That’s right, that’s what I lived, that’s what I felt. It’s a relief!” This sense she describes is of making herself understood, as having made herself understandable, of saying what she meant to say, and the feeling of relief it brings.

Levinas (1981/1997) describes this process also. He writes, “In all cases, in asking ourselves, with regard to truth: ‘who is looking at being manifesting itself in truth?’ (p. 28), the welcoming of manifestation of being could not take place outside of the being that manifests itself.” He means also that the writer is made in the writing; the rememberer made in remembering, through the “regard to truth.” This experience of

saying what she meant to say is what Jacqueline describes as her being, being communicated.

This regenerative process is one where memory acts as a reason for writing and as *the place* where writing, in its requiring of memory, *makes* remembering happen. It is a building on, a furthering of understanding, but it is not the final word. As Marty says:

I just write it because I started in the class, but a lot of times I hear people say that it's euphoric for them, it's like you know you write down what you think or what you say (as if) it's supposed to help you. And I don't find that, I don't find that it cleanses me more now, it's not a release. *You know my memory is still my memory, ok?* I don't dwell in my memory, because in order to do this, once you pass it you have to go on with life so I'm a big believer in that, but at the same time, *I don't forget.*

Even in Louise's description of "getting out" a memory, so it "will not die with her," she names a way in which memory may continue to live beyond her, to have a life of its own in the expanding process of remembering, writing and sharing with others. Levinas (1981/1997) calls this "hollowing out the fold of inwardness, in which knowledge is deposited, accumulates and is formulated" (p. 27). The questions that bring about dialogue with memory are the beginning of many other dialogues as well, and it is to these dialogues I turn now.

Constructing The Past: Gathering Necessary Members

First, I turn to describe the dialogues survivor writers of The Memory Project carry on with the historical record of the Holocaust and with historians. Next, I discuss conversations participants describe having with family members and friends as part of their process for writing and remembering. Finally, I discuss being in dialogue with our group, The Memory Project writers and myself, as an important aspect of building, writing and remembering.

Morter and Brick: Re-membering and History

O.K. So, if you are . . . um . . . why does it matter to know the date that the paper happened? And how is it that the story is also . . . so it is not just a story of a boy sitting on his father's lap reading the paper. There are complications that are there that have to do with the facts that you want to find out. It's not really a question, it is more of a . . . I can't really form it into what I am asking. But, why is it different, how is it different from writing . . . another person writing about their experiences, how is it that the facts have so much to do with it? (Maggie, personal reflection)

To return to the theme of the Holocaust as a site of demolition, as a breach in knowing and understanding, for those who experienced it, the breach, the incoherence of when there is “no occasion for knowing,” becomes the questioning stance of these writers. The important questions of understanding, of knowing, of remembering, lead these participants back to the experiences themselves. This is described by Marcel:

When I am writing about Drohobycz, I want to know how many people lived there in '39. I don't remember these things. I want to know the exact date when the Germans came in. I want to know the exact date when we were liberated. I know it was August 1944. Now I know it was Aug. 5th. I just, I read and also I read some and translate some memoirs about people that wrote about life in the Holocaust.

Albert also describes the process of returning to the place where he was hidden as a child:

You know, I was in hiding in a Catholic boarding school and I remember the headmistress. I was the youngest, and she – I was her protégé. And I suspect 68 years later, that she was probably the one that accepted me in this school as a hidden child. But I don't know her name.

I went, about ten years ago, I went. I was in Paris, and I rented a car, and it was in a suburb of Paris. And I went and I found the school, but all the people there, there were young people there, in their thirties and I said, you know I was here as a child, as a boy, and they looked at me like I was coming from another planet.

And they had no idea, you know? And I would *love*, I would have *loved*, . . . you know I had recognized two families as Righteous Among the Nations; I would have *loved* to have been able to recognize the name of that headmistress, but to tell them . . . You know, we have a lot of blanks like that, you know it is very hard to fill them.

Albert describes not knowing the name of the headmistress instrumental in saving his life; he describes also, not being able to praise her, to recognize what she did. He stresses the word “love” here, suggesting that his loss of this woman’s name does something important to his experience. But, along with the “loss” of the headmistress, there is a further loss he describes. He talks about how foreign he seems to the thirty year-olds to whom he speaks, when he returns to the school in the suburbs of Paris.

The Holocaust experience understood in this way is not just a child hoping to remember the past. It expresses his distance from understanding, a loss of shared culture and experience, a shifting identity, a loss of memory – where memory acts as the “coherence of life.” The writing both *requires* a return to context and *becomes* that return to context, through his continued questioning, an attempt to describe the facts within which personal experience unfolds. It is the search for the headmistress’ name that returns Albert to the Catholic boarding school; it is the questions about his own past that bring him, bodily to the school where he was hidden as a boy.

Carr describes this search for understanding of the past as autobiographical, in the sense that *the search itself* defines us. He writes:

We may think of autobiographical reflection as being conducted in the present and being directed entirely toward the past . . . however, it is concerned with the past in order to render it coherent with or comprehensible in terms of a present and future. (p. 75)

This expression that what is searched for is an understanding for the present and the future, casts this backward look as a way of moving forward, in questioning. If the writing is one of the ways this questioning is fostered, it happens through the desire these writers have to “fill in the blanks” of memory. Through searching for the places they have been, returning to them, they seek to know them again. Through the questioning

aspect, the active seeking, survivors are working to answer questions about their pasts, for their present and future and for their writing.

For Marcel, knowing the exact date of his liberation, the experience of others from his former town, is a return to context, as well. It is a return that helps him to understand the events of his life better, and yet provides more questions. He seeks to learn the details of that town, reads and translates letters from the people of that town. It is the context he seeks in these records to help him understand and describe his own personal experience more fully.

In being in the things of his own memory, Marcel is able to *be* again in that background. This recalling of the past is, as Casey (1987) writes, not “merely ‘translating’ private memories into public artifacts” (p. 113). The experience of recall is already enmeshed in the background of facts, language, things and others. Casey writes that while we often think of memory as “pre-linguistic and pre-social,” we are always in remembering with others, things and language. “We sense ourselves to be fully engaged in the autonomous activity having its own formative, indeed transformative, power” (Casey, p. 113). And it is in this, often social, experience of recalling the past that we make the past clearer and more coherent for our present and future.

What may be returned to, then, in their need to fill in the blanks of memory, for the project of writing? What can be recovered; what may be uncovered in this search? Albert begins with the idea of doing research to “fill” in the “blanks” in his memory, but eventually he seems to question what he may be able to find. He seems to understand that there are only certain “things” that might be found in a historical record. He says:

You know that is one of the reasons, you know my children always tell me, *Dad you should write a book about your story*. I said, *I don't know how to write a*

book, because I have a lot of blanks that I could not fill. You know, how would I do that? I could conduct some research, but it would take years and I am not sure I would find the answers.

Still, it is the questioning of his being, along with the facts, details and things of his life from which the questions continue to spring, whether there are ever answers, or not. But in the questioning of his being he is in dialogue with the facts, details and things of his life; it is these dialogues that keep experience open, that supply more questions. As Ruth says, “It gets out your memory; it sparks a memory.” The process is continuous.

This reflexivity is described clearly in Harry’s description of his writing process:

I feel I'm just putting down memories. But then after I do, there's always, most of the time, there is a discovery . . . I talk about my experience. The result is more than just a memory, but it starts that I am just putting down a memory.

This sense, described by Harry where he begins by just “putting down” a memory, but ends with “discovery” describes a process that is the building process of the project of memory.

Carr (1986) writes that in our ongoing personal narrative we are invited “to look in it for principles of unity, coherence and structure” (p. 75). This deciphering process, this process of meaning making, begins in questioning and clarifying the past for communication and continues through the writing and the reading by others. But this seeking of coherence is not just a way of ordering the past. In the deciphering, remembering and writing processes, a projecting toward the future is the project of memory where remembering the past is not only a “projection of the world and my surroundings” but are instead “projections of my own being.” The writing, the discovery in writing, is a description of continuation of experience, a resonance of remembering, made in dialogue with language facts, things and others of a personal history.

The Story of the Wheat: Personal History

These participants describe the dialogue personal experience carries on with the historical record and with historians. It is in this dialogue where the historical record intersects with personal history, where survivors both ask for clarification from the historical record and where they add to it. Marcel describes his experience in this conversation:

I wrote that there was an *Aktion* that was August 1942 and gave it to one of the people here, one of the people upstairs that wanted that, that needed it (a museum historian). She calls me back and says, that *Aktion* was in March. And I said that we hid in the wheat field and it was brown, it was ripe wheat when we were hiding there, it must have been August . . . I am telling you right now that the wheat was high and it was the color of the, you know it was the color of ripe wheat, so I Googled that and obviously there was an *Aktion* in August where 600 people were killed and two and a half thousand people were taken to Belzec . . . But I remember what happened to us . . . you want to put the proper date that happened because it has something to do with your story . . . Because I am writing that mother had a coat that she covered us [with] and it was the color of the wheat and it was August, when the wheat was ripe.

How could Marcel tell the story of this *Aktion* where his mother hid his sister, and him in a field of ripe wheat, without the lived time, place, body and relationship of that experience? Contextualized, not simply as a date, but as the season, where a coat and a field of ripe wheat allows Marcel, his mother and sister to go undetected; the time, place, the season are vital to the story. In this case, the date of the *Aktion* suggested by the historian does not make sense in the clear memory Marcel has of his own experience.

Here, as I have also discussed in Chapter Two, we see Heidegger's "*Historie*" and "*Geschichte*" or as translated, the "science of history" and "to happen in a historical way" (Macquarrie & Robinson, 2008, footnote p. 41) in dialogue with one another. The German word *Geschichte* means "story," "story line" and "history" (*Geschichte*, 2013), as Carr (1986) describes, "Geschichte" and "life story" are enmeshed (p. 74). How is the

history that happens to Marcel, his “life story,” experienced within these dialogues with history and historians, and what does the writing have to do with it? Here the historian, to whom Marcel speaks, suggests to him that the date of the *Aktion* he describes could be in March, but Marcel *knows* the experience differently.

While the context found in and through the “science of history” is important to survivors when they are looking for information to “fill in the blanks” of memory, the “life story,” lived by these survivors makes up the coherence, the lived history of their own lives, and it is in the writing. Marcel knows the experience of his life within the context of the seasons, the town where he lived, the changing color of the wheat. It is this context that makes another date impossible and unfathomable to him. It is his lived contexts that help him to understand and know the story that happened.

Again it is context or background, the things and facts, the others and language of the remembering which make the memory possible and understandable to Marcel. Levinas (1981/1997) writes, “Truth is rediscovery, recall, reminiscence, reuniting, under the unity of apperception” (p. 29). He calls this “precisely re-presentation” where “the present of truth *is* already or *still is*. This understanding of remembering makes the whole of his perception (including his memory), the coat, the field, the wheat, the season, the hiding; all of these are the present of “truth *is* already or *still is*.” There is no past separable from context, no past communicable separate from the background it *is*.

For Harry’s memories a bit of background provides more confusion for him when trying to answer questions of when, where and how. He seeks answers to questions where memory doesn’t contain enough of the past’s context to be fully coherent to him now:

I'd like to give you an example of where I do research. I have a memory, uh we went into hiding in '42. I have a memory of sitting on my father's lap, I don't know what I was doing there, I was already in hiding - and he's holding a newspaper and there is a picture, a map and he's telling me uh, the *Allies*, I don't know what I understood by that, had landed there in Italy and he said, *see looks like a boot*. So, I always remembered that about Italy. So that's my memory. So then, I wanted to make sense of this, why was I there and when was this? So I look it up, when did the Allies land in Italy? In 1943. But why was I at my parents, with my parents at that time? I was already at the Vanderlindens, in hiding, but did something happen? I don't know. I have no idea.

Knowledge of the date the Allies landed in Italy only provides more questions for Harry.

He is not sure how he could have been sitting on his father's lap, knowing that he was separated from his parents, in hiding, by 1943.

This useful dialogue between the facts, dates and information of the Holocaust, and the life story of survivors, call up questions that for Harry, with no one alive to ask, lead back to life story and to the writing that both asks about it and tells it. Through attempts to make coherent events of a lived-life, survivors work within both "*Geschichte*" and "*Historie*," but it is, of course, personal history from which they make meaning and through which they experience the historical record of the Holocaust.

Further, the writing itself is a return to place and time; it is a return to background. How else could survivors return to places and people who are lost through any mode other than memory? Even questions about the past are a return, of sorts, a dwelling there. When asking a question of those who don't answer, there is a turn toward the past, the people who inhabit it. The writing both requires and allows for the question, as it allows an author to dwell in that questioning. Carr describes his concept of narrative as involved in both "a series of (human) events unfolding in time" and "a prospective-retrospective grasp which holds together that unfolding and constitutes its structure" (p. 85). The "prospective-retrospective grasp" is how we are able to describe the unfolding and

constitute its structure. In seeking to name the past, to know it, we dwell in it, interrogating it again and again.

Here, the past is Harry sitting on his father's lap looking at the newspaper. This is experience he dwells in through the questioning. It is experience he is able to share with readers, who in a smaller measure are able to dwell within their own understanding of this memory. Does a reader remember the feeling of another body, the feel of a lap beneath her? The memory experienced by Harry is dwelled in, in questioning it, in calling it back again and again. The questions it evokes calls for Harry to write about it, to research it, dwelling in that experience further. In this way the experience remains open and openable.

This is different from the work of historians. In Halina's case, personal history from survivors changes what is known by historians and becomes a part of the historical record itself. Halina says:

I argued with a historian here, because he did not believe that my father escaped from Russia, which he misunderstood because I said he escaped from the prison to join the General Anders Army. He said it was impossible to escape Russia. And I said no, he didn't escape Russia, he escaped the prison.

In this relationship between the historical record and life story, might there be an expansion of what is known about survivors' lives after the war, from what Halina tells? When a true dialogue happens, there is discovery for *Historie* as well as for those who lived it. In this conversation, survivors describe the play between the knowledge they have of the Holocaust and history's changing perspectives.

But what you said about historians, if it is a really good historian, they say – for the moment this is what we know, but we learn something every day. But if they talk about Halina's story, they said well it was not possible. Then all of a sudden they come across something that there was somebody who did escape from Russia and a good historian will always pull back a little bit and say, *this is what we*

know now, but tomorrow we might have some more information. It is not a cut; you know it all depends on what they know and hear. (Louise)

The point of view changes too. I mean if you read old history, American history . . . you know, but now it is different. (Esther)

This description of a changeable knowing and understanding of “*Historie*” is echoed in Heidegger’s (1927/1962) description of historical being. He writes, concerning the relationship of time and being, that being is known through time and vice versa:

Only on the basis of such ‘historizing’ is anything like ‘world history’ possible or can anything belong historically to world-history. In its factual Being, any Dasein is as it already was, and is what it already was. It is its past, whether explicitly or not. And this is so not only in that its past is, as it were, pushing itself along behind it and that Dasein possesses what is past as a property which is still present-at-hand and which sometimes has after effects upon it: Dasein ‘is’ its past in the way of *its* own Being, which, to put it roughly, ‘historizes’ out of its future on each occasion. (p. 20)

In this sense, without the life story or personal history of each being, the idea of a shared “world history” could not be possible. The sense that “beings” “historize” meaning “to happen in a historical way” is how life story, and life writing remain in dialogue with the historical record. This allows for a representation of a whole, and describes a pattern from the sum of personal experience.

The personal experience of survivors is not separate from the “science of history;” their knowing is informed also by the work of historians of the Holocaust, as many of them began reading these historical accounts, because they concerned events through which they had lived. Jacqueline describes working for the Foreign Service and reading many books on the Holocaust as she began to think of herself as a “survivor.” Her research into the historical record helped her to learn more about her own experiences. It, too, helped to provide missing context.

In this way, the historical record is one of the places in which these participants seek coherence, meaning for the personal histories they have lived. The note from the translators, in my edition of *Being and Time* (1927/1964), describes the word “historize” to help to understand that it, too, is a meaning making experience, in conversation with the past, for the future. The translators write:

‘*Weltgeschichtliches Geschehen.*’ While the verb ‘*geschehen*’ ordinarily means to ‘happen’, and will often be so translated, Heidegger stresses its etymological kinship to ‘*Geschichte*’ or ‘history’. To bring out this connection we have coined the verb ‘historize’ which might be paraphrased as to ‘happen in a historical way’; we shall usually translate ‘*geschehen*’ this way in contexts where history is being discussed. We trust that the reader will keep in mind that such ‘historizing’ is characteristic of all historical entities, and is not the sort of thing that is done primarily by historians. (Macquarie & Robinson, p. 41)

To paraphrase Heidegger’s sense of our own historical selves, he describes that we *are* our pasts, whether explicitly or not. It is the questioning of personal history, the dialogue with the historical record, among other dialogues, that aids in making personal history explicit. Life writing aids in our understanding of our standing, within the horizon comprised of past, present and future. Earlier I have discussed the translation of Heidegger’s *Geschichte* as both history and story, and here *geschehen* carries this dual meaning as well. It is not simply “historizing,” that may happen, but “storying” of lived experience that lends coherence to, that makes explicit ways in which *dasein* is its past. This was made clear to me through the answers these survivors gave to the question of what personal experiences they choose to speak about when speaking to an audience. I was interested in what details would be shared in a speech that might be different from what could be written about. In each answer to the question, what do you tell about *your own life* in every speech, the answers were based on a personal historical consciousness. Gideon wanted the audience to know that the Holocaust could happen again and about

the important role of collaborators. Fred wanted an audience to learn that Great Britain took in 10,000 children and that no other countries were doing that at the time. Agi said she wanted the audience to “*believe* that it happened” and that, she said, was “the most difficult.” Each of these answers, what I took at first, to be misunderstandings of my question, show further the ways in which the “*Historie*” and the “*Geschichte*” are intertwined in personal experience of the Holocaust and they inform one another. Fred was one of the 10,000 children saved by Great Britain through the *Kindertransport* program; Gideon experienced the role of Ukrainian collaborators, hidden during the war in Slovakia. This sense of being, being its past, allows us to see life writing further as continuation of knowing, as understanding from and through experience, as dialogue with communities present and past *for* continuation of knowing.

Further, it allows us to see, once again, how important the conception of audience is to the speaking and writing of these survivors. Each audience, as conceived by these writers, is comprised of some who may be “moved” by hearing personal experience, who might act differently if they can be moved.

The Community Built of Asking

Dialogue with others, apart from historians and the historical record add to the making explicit of understanding that happens in life writing of personal experience. Dialogues described by participants are those that happen with family, friends and others who ask about their lives, or with those whom survivors ask to help “fill in the blanks” of their own personal history.

In each case, questions about personal history become a stimulus for writing. In this description from Jacqueline, the close relationship of the processes of conversation with her sister, her memory and her writing are:

I am lucky that I have a sister that is twenty months older than I am and she and I, I have been talking to her for six years. She doesn't live near, but we talk on the phone and on the computer almost every day. *Do you remember that? Do you remember that?* And she remembers or I remember. Anyway, I have almost 200 pages, I have lots of photos and documents from the archives and in a month or two my book is going to be published . . . And so, I've been reconstructing.

When I ask her if it is the writing that spurs the conversation or the conversation that spurs the writing she says:

Both ways. Sometimes she remembers something. Sometimes I remember something. I remember my mother saying she had cyanide for us and she was going to kill us, the family. But we both had forgotten that and it was only by going back to the village and seeing those little kids that are my age now. And saying, *you know Jacqueline, what you told me . . .* and my sister and I have been discussing it. *Do we remember, do we think we remember, nah, nah, nah.* It is a difficult process to remember.

Jacqueline describes her process here in reference to her memory and her writing and the process she and her sister are involved in together. She also highlights the process of writing, when she says at the end of this statement, "I am not a writer, but I am writing." The processes described here cast memory, writing and the questioning through conversation with others as important to the phenomenon of life writing. Beyond this is the relationship strengthened and maintained through this daily conversation Jacqueline describes. She and her sister work together to make the memoir of the Holocaust she writes.

Others in our group describe the importance of audience for the writing they do, and describe audience more fully as those who respond to the writing they read with more questions for the writers. Often this audience is family. Survivors are spurred on

by the questions from family to write, to create a record. Susan describes the questions from her granddaughter who is helping her to organize the pieces she has written. She says, “*Grandma what are going to call all this? And I said, I really don't know and she said, well call it Susan's Stories. So that is what it is called now.*” Even in asking for a title to the pieces of writing Susan is compiling; her granddaughter is asking for information from her, asking to know more about the meaning she makes from her life story.

Through the writing there is dialogue, too, with family and loved ones who’ve died. Jacqueline has written about her love of music, her appreciation to her mother for finding cello lessons for her just as the war was ending. Here she describes how wishing to speak to her mother spurs on her writing; the dialogue furthers the writing, the writing spurs on this dialogue. She says:

For me it’s about music, because music is such a big part of my life and I think one of the first pieces I wrote, it was about my mother. And Uh I’m sorry I start to cry, because I wish my mother were alive so I could thank her for letting me learn to play the cello at the time when it was just after the war and she said . . . you know it means so much in my life.

Even through her wishing to thank her mother, and through her writing, she has communicated something she might not have been able to do otherwise. This dialogue with friends and family continues from and through the writing, but still marks the Holocaust as a breach in knowing.

Esther describes her role as, “I’m writing for my extended family, my grandkids and my nieces and nephews; I am the collector of all the information for the family.” This role falls to Esther because she and her sisters survived the Holocaust, while none of the older generation of her immediate family did. But beyond that, Esther has many

questions she employs in her writing, and her writing is seeking to address these questions. Through research, through conversations with family, and a friend who is a German historian she is guided to more questions and further writing and interpreting of the past.

Within the community of family and friends, these writers share remembering, collaborate in the meaning making process of life writing the Holocaust. Through the questioning process, the interplay of memory, the role of having to remember, these survivors are within the making of the work of art that begins to have a life of its own through what is shared and written. They make, whether they will call it this or not, a “poetic image.” Bachelard (2004) describes this as “a direct product of the heart, soul and being of a man apprehended in his actuality” (p. xviii). Harry describes this when I ask whom he envisions as the audience for his writing:

You, everybody here, um, my friend Robert, a few relatives who ask for copies. I don't know why I write, but it's a way of affirming or validating my experience, when people react to it, which makes me feel great, and when I can express it, when I can write clearly or in the way that I think communicates.

Harry finishes this thought by addressing another community, the community I turn to describe now, when he says, “and I, I wouldn't do it, if I wasn't in this class.”

The Dwelling of Writers

Marcel says that he will self publish whatever he writes and says, “I don't consider myself a writer worthy of real publishing on somebody else's money. I'm going to publish, you know, maybe a hundred, maybe two hundred-fifty copies to give it away to whoever wants to take it.” When I ask who he will give these copies to, Ruth chimes in, saying “us, us.” The “us” Ruth names is our group of writers. The time, body, place and relationship of this group is named in multiple ways within the research

conversations and is, of course inseparable from the phenomenon. This group meets 10 times a year, each month, for four hours. Within that time and space, the group has been shaped by the writers who convene each month and by my own evolving sense of my role as a writing instructor, facilitator, workshop leader. My presence as this group's facilitator, since its inception, has affected the writing produced by participants, the people who have chosen to persist as members, and my own view of the purpose of the writing and the group.

During one of our conversations Susan asks about advice I had given years before. In this conversation, my own purpose for the writing made by these survivors emerges. Susan asks why I questioned her use of a reference to the ship that brought her to America being as long as a "football field." I don't know that I made my own thinking clear to her then, but I know that I felt that comparison came from a different part of Susan's life. Did she know, I wondered, how long an American football field was as she left her childhood home in Germany? The comparison seemed, and seems, not simply anachronistic. It seems not apt for Susan's own experience. The Susan I know from her writing would not measure the ship that will reunite her with her parents in football fields. The phrase she employed lacks the ability to convey something more about her, or it conveys nothing about her. My own goal as a teacher has been to ask each writer to get, as close as she is able to communicate, to the heart of personal experience in ways that convey that experience to a reader. I answered, in part, that what I want from each of the stories written by survivors is more personal.

This desire on my part has been mostly ahistorical, in terms of addressing the science of history. As a teacher, I have this motivation because it seems the only and best

way to foster the questioning aspect of the writer, but also because I'm drawn in to a community where I want to know, as the students who come to the information desk in the museum, to ask the survivors, "how WAS it?"

Louise describes this interaction:

Kids go through the permanent exhibit and if there is a survivor in the museum they go downstairs in front of the big desk and they want to ask questions, and the biggest question is *how WAS it?* And I look at them. They have just gone through the permanent exhibit and I have learned to turn it around to them and say, *Oh right, you've just gone through the permanent exhibit, how do you think it was?* Because they see a face and they want that interaction, and I think it is the same as reading a story, if you have seen the face and you have *spoken* to a person the rest will stick with you.

This question, clumsily as I, and the school children may have been asking it, is what I have wondered from the beginning. Though Louise may be annoyed at what she perceives, I believe, as an intellectual laziness on the part of the children who ask this question, to me it is the most important question they could ask. They have seen the striped pajamas, they have seen the replica of the gates of Auschwitz, models of the camps, sacred scrolls thrown out on the ground, but the highly personal question they ask is, "how WAS it?" Implied in this question is the unspoken; what they want to know, to understand better is how WAS it, *for you?* This question has been the pedagogical goal of my work as a "writing instructor" at the museum and is, I believe, one of the reasons our group has continued, why the writers keep writing, even as their work veers now from the subject of the Holocaust, to what it means to survive the Holocaust and to live a long time after it.

This dialogue, begun in a question, is as much pedagogical as it is personal. It is one of the conversations that happen in, and because of, our group. This dialogue occurs in our group, is made of the people of this group, is made from the frequency, the

longevity, the relationships of this group of people. The community is one where those who have a desire to write about personal experience gather to read and share their writing with one another. It is the questions, their own and mine, that bring the writing out.

In order to be a part of the community, each member contributes to the writing being made and feels a sense that they must contribute through their questions and through their bringing work to be shared. The meetings themselves become a reason to write. Fred describes the groups' meeting as his impulse to sit down and write something. He says:

I don't have anything that I need to get out on paper. I have the feeling, that I've got lots of memories in my head, but it's like Thursday's coming up, I haven't written anything for a long time. I've got to sit down and I pick something out from . . . my memory and just write it.

In this sense the community of writers, the fact of an impending meeting, are the reason that Fred sits down to pick something from his memory to write about. This echoes Harry's sense that his participation in the class, the meetings themselves, are necessary for the writing, that he "wouldn't do it" if there were no group.

The shared experience of the group, their commonalities even before the group was formed (all are Jewish, all are Holocaust survivors, all are immigrants to the United States) allow for a sort of short hand of reference between the members. Our meetings are punctuated by side conversations in French or Polish; often translations are offered for English expressions or idioms. Only I must ask, and request clarification in the writing, for terms I don't understand, for history I don't know and haven't experienced. My status as always outside the experience of these writers is one that allows me to ask for clarification, to act as an audience for their writing that won't know what it means to

be *Amcha*. It is part of the dialogue of our group, me as its instructor, the fact of the group, the shared experience of the members, which help to describe more fully the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust for these survivors. It is one of the many questions, asked of and by these writers, which inspires the writing to continue, that requires the ongoing making of meaning through and because of the writing.

The Expanding Thing: Building On and On

Through the conversations with the members of the Memory Project writing group, through the multiple voices and thoughts of the participants, a description of the phenomenon emerges. Writing after the breach of understanding that was the Holocaust acts as a way of making more coherent the events of a lived life for these survivors. The phenomenological process of compiling through memory and interpreting through writing happens within and because of the writing process. The work of making, the dialogues of the process, dialogues that happen within the multiple communities made by these survivors are the “expanding” Esther describes her writing as. These dialogues, these texts made from and through dialogue, are personal knowing and they are pedagogical, as described by van Manen (1997):

Dialogically constructed texts allow us to recognize our lives in the mimicry of stories and conversational anecdotes. Thus dialogic texts allow for a certain space, a voice, which teaches by its textuality what the sheer content of the text only manages to make problematic. (p. 144)

It is to these pedagogical meanings I turn in the next chapter, to ask what can be learned and understood through the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust. What might we learn more fully through the dialogues occurring within the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust? What can we learn from the opening of this phenomenon that might help us to better know the expanding processes of history, memory, writing and story?

CHAPTER FIVE:
BRINGING IT HOME: TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF QUESTIONING

Being in Question

I think the audience when it reads or hears it, the audience, the people think of questions. (Esther)

The questions that Esther describes are those that continue our dialogue with the survivors of the Holocaust, and in that way, continue conversation with and about the Holocaust. The texts made by survivors are work made in dialogue, where dialogue is continuous, where interpretation may be ongoing. The texts are made from questioning, and ask questions that may add to our understanding of history, of memory, and of story.

How may the “questions” Esther describes survivor’s stories eliciting, add to ongoing understanding of the Holocaust? In what ways do these questions allow the Holocaust to remain open, not filed away as history? Most importantly, what does it mean for the stories to cause a continuation of understanding toward a more humane, more just future, as van Manen (1997) describes Human Science research as “critically oriented action research?”

As van Manen (1997) states, pedagogy is “an ongoing project of renewal in a world that is constantly changing around us and that is continually being changed by us” (p. 3). It is in this reflexive relationship that we see the dialogic texts of life writing the Holocaust as pedagogical texts. These written works, as well as the *doing* of the writing, further a continuation of life experience, and of surviving the Holocaust. The crafted, individual stories from these survivors of the Holocaust allow us a conversation that teaches about the Holocaust in ways that cannot be done through the themes on which a

science of history is focused, or through the dates and figures upon which testimony as evidence relies.

What can we learn from the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust about the importance of the individual, personal story, about the importance of writing because of and through the questioning aspect? What are we able to know about *being* pedagogically *in* life stories of survival? Van Manen (1997) describes “learning to understand the essence of pedagogy as it manifests itself in particular life circumstances” and the way in which that understanding “contributes to a more hermeneutic type of competence: a pedagogic thoughtfulness and tact” (p. 143). This sense of pedagogic thoughtfulness “may be grasped,” van Manen writes, “through the dialogic type of text of human science discourse” (p. 143). In this chapter I describe the texts made by these survivors as dialogic texts, that ask for an intersubjective reading, and intend to teach toward justice. I describe these texts and the writers’ descriptions of their writing process as providing the pedagogical implications that lead us toward a pedagogy built on questioning.

Stands For: Opening the Phenomenon Through Story

I have focused on one group of Holocaust survivor writers and have written from conversations with them. These writers create crafted writing in a writing workshop setting; this workshop is designed around the survivorship of its participants and happens in the context of a memorial museum that has as part of its mission, remembrance. While the work they have done is a re-membering, what can their work, the ways in which they describe it, add to our understanding of writing and remembering? What can we learn

from this one group? What greater understanding of writing from life, from engaging in memory in this way, can we glean?

Hermeneutic phenomenology is not research meant to be generalizable to other populations, but rather to give us understandings that can be applied to the ways in which we understand related phenomena, ways in which we understand related work, ways in which we can understand our own being in the world better. So, what meaning can be made from knowing the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust *in the ways we are able to know it?* We are able to know this phenomenon through story, through the descriptions of it and through the texts produced by the survivor writers.

We could not know this phenomenon, or what it means, through an objective questioning, where we might ask what the writers learned through writing. Objective questions might lead us to ask if writing had improved through the workshop process, utilizing one kind of measure or another. A positivistic approach to the questions surrounding life writing might ask how much more often the writers write after being members of the group, or if they report feeling happier after writing. None of these questions, or the answers they might yield, could describe the phenomenon or provide us with pedagogic implications of any use. None could approach the complexity of opening the phenomenon through narrative. And each objective answer hoping to categorize or name for all time a part of the phenomenon, brings us to tell only a small bit of a larger story, while allowing that small bit to stand in for the whole. To stand in for the whole and larger story means to characterize it, to represent it. To stand for something means to stand up for it, to defend it or bring it forward. Intersubjective understanding happens through this standing-for, as what they tell stands for their experience; it is not the

experience itself but stands for it. As Carr (1986) writes, “It seems that their accomplishment (literary narratives) is but a recapitulation of the structure of everyday experience and action” (p. 65). He writes further, “Narrative form is . . . the structure inherent in human experience and action” (p. 65). Since we know our being through narrative, as we are narrative beings, we are able to take meaning from the phenomenon only *in* story and *from* story. In Carr’s conception knowing in and from story “is the organizing principle not only of experiences and actions but of the self who experiences and acts” (p. 73). Our narrative, intersubjective knowing does not stand *in* as an objective naming of experience would; it stands *for* our own being, making being more comprehensible, allowing us to make meaning.

Built Better: In Questioning

The writing done by the survivors of our group is forged in questioning and the texts produced are dialogic in the space they afford for questions. Further, these texts are made from questioning, created through dialogue with others, written and re-written through dialogue and understood as being in dialogue with history. They contribute to “a pedagogic thoughtfulness and tact.” They do this through the dialogues they are forged from and through, the dialogues they prompt. They are written, as the participants have described, with the desire to translate experience, to tell about life through telling the particulars of an individual life story. We are meant to understand something about living through our reading of them.

Through questioning, through being in dialogue with history, these texts allow a better building of our historical knowing. Gadamer (1976/2006) writes, “Time is no longer primarily a gulf to be bridged because it separates; it is actually the supportive

ground of the course of events in which the present is rooted” (p. 297). Gadamer refutes “historicism” which assumes that only through removing ourselves (impossible as this certainly is) from our own times might we be able to understand the past. Gadamer writes that the naïve assumption of historical studies,

Has led to the idea that objective knowledge can be achieved only if there has been a certain historical distance . . . that the permanent significance of something can first be known objectively only when it belongs to a closed context – in other words when it is dead enough to have only historical interest. (p. 297)

Without the open context necessary for opening being, the phenomenon in question and being in dialogue with the texts made by survivors would be impossible. What makes these writers’ writing important is the questioning aspect, the dialogue begun, the “expanding” process the writing facilitates. A finished text does not end this dialogue; it continues it, asking for a mimetic reading.

Through this dialogue and through the habitual dialogue of these texts and through being in this questioning, there is a pedagogic knowing brought forth through the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust. These are all described by these survivor writers. Each of these illustrates van Manen’s (1997) sense that “poetic texts” “practice a certain textuality that asks for a mimetic reading. Dialogic text can teach indirectly what monologic text fails to achieve” (p. 144).

Further, pedagogic implications, what we might learn through uncovering a phenomenon are meant to move us toward an understanding that *does* something. We are meant to learn, what Levin (1988) calls a “recollection” toward “deep experiential change” (p. 350). This change is at the heart of what makes hermeneutic phenomenological research, action sensitive and lies in the writers’ expression that they are writing to remember the Holocaust, so that it will never happen again.

In order to describe the pedagogic implications of the phenomenon as it is opened here, I describe some of the questions brought forth in dialogue. These questions ask us to trouble accepted meanings of history, story, memory and narrative and the interplay of each. It is my sense that these questions lead to a greater understanding of what it means to write memory, and of what it means to write history, while working in narrative within and against an objective paradigm of history.

These descriptions, as dialogic texts, are meant to further the questions that keep the phenomenon “worthy of questioning” and “worthy of thought” (Heidegger, 1993a, p. 362). Continuation of questioning defies the finality implied in words like Holocaust or *Shoah* that literally translates as “the catastrophe,” which is defined as “the *final* event of the dramatic action especially of a tragedy” (my emphasis, Webster online). These names seek to express the scope and horror of the Holocaust, but belie the kinds of continuation through reverberation that makes the Holocaust unfinished and unfinishable. The idea that the Holocaust was the “final act” belies the continuation defined by and described by these survivors, as does the continuing creation of texts and scholarly work about the Holocaust.

More than this, the Holocaust was not the final act in human endeavors toward genocide, not the last instance of mass murder of innocents. What we may learn about the Holocaust from the questions surrounding life writing the Holocaust have more to do with how we may learn to understand ourselves as humans in light of, and in the face of, catastrophe. This learning happens in conversation with one another, with conversation brought about by texts, and through questioning.

Amidst Our Dwelling: Intersubjectivity

It belongs to every true conversation that each person opens himself to the other, truly accepts his point of view as valid and transposes himself into the other to such an extent that he understand not the particular individual but what he says. What is to be grasped is the substantive rightness of his opinion, so that we can be at one with each other on the subject. Thus we do not relate the other's opinion to him but to our own opinions and views. (Gadamer, 1989, p. 385)

What Gadamer describes is not agreement between people; it is intersubjectivity.

As I describe it in Chapter Two, intersubjectivity is, at the very least, the first step toward a more just future. Gadamer's description here lives fully in the relationship he provides as an example. He describes taking the "other's opinion" and relating it to ourselves. Intersubjectivity might be described as empathy, but Gadamer describes seeing the "substantive rightness" of the other's view. Again, this does not describe agreement with the ideas or thoughts of others, but in valuing fully the "substantive rightness" of their knowing. This view of intersubjectivity is expressed in each of the dialogues that describe the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust. The conversations between memory and writing, writer and audience, memoir and history, are comprised of relationships of intersubjectivity. Gadamer also describes being "at one with each other on the subject." It is within a shared space for understanding a subject where being is questioned and brought into being. In this way, it is the texts written by survivors and the questions they bring forth, in dialogue with memory, in dialogue with others and in dialogue with history that provide us with the pedagogic implications of this study. It is to these texts I turn now.

What Does it Mean to Write Memory? Building The Home We Grow Up In

Writing this piece has provided an occasion for my sisters to try to remember things about Adolf Rosenfeld, our father. I have to depend on their memories because I was just two years old when I was separated from our parents. I never

saw them again after I went to England on the *Kindertransport*. Bertl spoke to a cousin in Florida to ask her some questions. I have e-mailed Reinhart Lochmann, the man who has been collecting information about the Jews of Adelsheim and the surrounding area, to ask if he can find answers to some of the questions that have arisen in my writing of this piece. I don't think I have found my lost father yet. (Starobin, 2006, p. 47)

What does it mean to write memory in the ways it is described through this text by Esther Starobin? Starobin describes memory in ways that once again ask us to expand on the notion of memory as an objective process of collecting and “storing” information. In this one excerpt, Starobin describes memory as being made collectively and shared. She describes relying on the memory of others. She also asks questions of others in order to come to answers that will help to create a clearer shared memory of her father. Carr (1986) names memory as collective and important for furthering a group identity. He writes, “Such a story can be told by an individual or individuals on behalf of a we . . . by placing it in a story with a past and future, a myth of origin or foundation, a glimpse of a future” is seen (p. 156).

Starobin (2006) describes memory as narrative, when earlier in this same text she describes trying to know her father through the stories she has heard about him. He made the bread for the family; once he pulled a phone from the wall when it rang at an inopportune time. She tells these stories as a means of describing/knowing him (p. 46). We as readers, even without knowing it explicitly, experience as she does, that each story means more than the sum of its parts. We are aware that the story stands *for* Starobin's knowing of her father, helping her to expand her understanding, helping her to continue learning through questioning. These are dialogic texts she is working from; they are leading her toward something, as well. As Carr (1986) describes this, it is “in the relation

between formulating and communicating” that a “reflexive self-awareness” happens (p. 156). It is in the narrative of memory that understanding emerges.

Memory here is narrative also in that she seeks out this information, in dialogue, in order to write a clearer story of her father. She seeks out information to write a narrative that makes sense to her, one that will describe her father more clearly. Finally, she treats memory within this text as something to make toward the future. She describes that she has “not found” her lost father “yet.” Through this phrase, she infers that by having a whole sense of him, it will help her *in the future* to make sense of him as her parent and as a person related to her now. Heidegger (1962/2008) opens this further. He writes, “Primordial and authentic temporality temporalizes itself in terms of the authentic future and in such a way that in having been futurally, it first of all awakens the Present” (p. 378).

This one text helps me to describe memory in ways that provide pedagogic use. Understanding memory as an objective process lessens the richness and simplifies the complexity of the way memory lives in humans, the way humans live in memory. Understanding memory within an understanding of human knowing, casts memory as a process for having and building understanding for the future. In the sections that follow I open the description begun here in Starobin’s (2006) text further, of memory as narrative, memory as collective and memory as future making. Within each section I describe the pedagogic implication of knowing memory in each way.

Memory as Narrative

Recollection is a search in something bodily for an image. (Aristotle, 1972/2007, p. 15)

The memory that Starobin (2006) seeks in the text above is one that will help her

create an image of her “lost father.” It is the signification, an image that stands for him that she seeks through her writing and remembering. And while she describes trying to recollect a person she did not know, memory is always seeking an image, a signification that narrates. Carr (1986) writes that perception is narrative and that we understand history (our own and others) narratively. In this way if memory is narrative, we see that we not only structure perception after the fact, but understand in new and emerging ways through changing and growing story. Carr writes:

The concept of narrative involves not only a series of (human) events unfolding in time, according to a structure, but also a prospective-retrospective grasp which holds together that unfolding and constitutes its structure. It is this grasp which lends to the various phases of action and experience their status of beginning, middle, or end, and thus constitutes a whole from which the parts receive their significance. (p. 84)

Our knowing in story is not merely a sequencing of events to make a narrative structure; it is how we come to understand the meaning of experiences we live through. Our narrative knowing is how we come to understand the significance of experience.

“Significance” means also what the story we have perceived and lived signifies – *how* it means.

In memory, we are making and re-making an understandable narrative, one that allows us to maintain coherence for the present and future, and we are doing it within a narrative structure, as well as with the signs that tell stories. These things, or symbols, that inhabit and help us describe our memories are also narrative in that they mean far more to us than they merely are.

The Stuff of Memory

In Starobin’s (2006) text cited above she gathers stories about her father that she hopes will help her to understand/describe who he was. She writes, “If my siblings were

playing away from the house, he would stand in the front and whistle for them to come home. The entire neighborhood knew that whistle” (p. 48). The whistle itself stands for something, and in Starobin’s text, she does not come to a definitive answer about what. Still, the questions about what it means to her are in the text as she describes not having found her “lost father.”

My own father used to be able to whistle so loudly he could be heard all over the neighborhood. In my own perception it marked him as the only male in our family of five daughters. He was the only one of us who could whistle like that, a jarring sound that meant come home *right now*. The whistle, in my memory, stands now as a sign that my father has grown older; he can’t whistle the way he did then. Also, he has no children that need calling in that immediate way. The whistle means differently to me now. My father has lost his ability for such immediate action; he moves slowly, and I don’t think he could summon the breath to make that sound now. The whistle, once the sign of his power to summon me, has come to mean something else to me, now.

Starobin’s father’s whistle didn’t have this chance to change over time for her. She summons it in story to know something about him, through remembering that signifying thing about him. It acts as less of a signifier in the story than it might in her own memory, which describes meaning for itself. Still in story, the symbol tells about this man in ways that signify him, which stand for our own knowing of him. The story itself, brought forth through the narrative of memory, attaches to our own experience, our own meaning making in memory and narrative.

Pedagogic Implications of Memory as Narrative

What does it mean for a pedagogical knowing to understand memory as narrative? Bruner (2004) writes that narrative alone can communicate “lived time,” and that we create implicitly and sometimes explicitly the narratives that structure or “purpose-build” our “life story,” by which he means, our life (p. 694). Bruner goes further in describing the narrative and sense making processes that guide our perception and our memory. He writes, “Autobiography (formal or informal) should be viewed as a set of procedures for ‘life making’” (p. 692).

Pedagogically, this means that in the space where we are in the “project of renewal” as van Manen calls pedagogy, we must act within a questioning stance toward our own story and toward the autobiography told to us by others. Taken for granted, the symbols and signifiers in the life story of others can come to a closed meaning, a singular owning of meaning. They can, as Steeves (2006) describes, move away from intersubjectivity and “put too much me in the we” (p. 4). So, the whistle of Starobin’s father is not my father’s whistle; I know it through my own experience. But it is through my own always beginning understanding of the other, Heidegger’s notion of “concern” (*Besorgen*), that in questioning I begin to wonder what it *means* to her.

Memory as Collective

Because Being-in-the-world belongs essentially to *Dasein* its Being towards the world [*Sein zur Welt*] is essentially concern. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 84)

Heidegger describes our questioning (among other ways of Being-in the world) as one of the ways we are “towards the world” in “concern.” He writes, “Dasein happens to be proximally” (p. 83). Through the ways of Being-in-the-world Heidegger describes what this means:

Having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining. (p. 83)

We commit ourselves to the world by asking what it is. This understanding of questioning (concern) as pedagogic knowing also aligns us with the world as our memory; understanding of ourselves is collective. Made in and with others, in concern for what others *are*, memory understood in this way commits us to (toward) the world.

In Starobin's (2006) text above she describes an effort through friends and family, made in questioning, to find and describe "something" about her father. She writes that she asked her sisters what they could remember, that one of her sisters spoke to a cousin, and that she contacted a German historian. In this example, and in the conversations with the group of survivor writers, this describing of memory's collective nature is prevalent.

If memory is our perception over time, layered with our evolving knowing, how could it *not* be made from the interactions and conversations, the new experiences and knowledge with which we continually add and edit memory's narrative knowing? Narrative memory is made for (and in) communication.

Starobin (2006) writes that she uses the community of friends and family to answer "questions that have arisen in my writing of this piece" as I describe in Chapter Four. Here again, the impetus of questioning is the writing. The written piece is not the end of the questioning, not the answer. The reason to seek community, to share collectively in memory, happens so that Starobin can share her story, in the making and once it is written.

Sharing Memory

The beyond being, being's other or the otherwise than being, here situated in diachrony, here expressed as infinity, has been recognized as the Good by Plato. (Levinas, 1981/1997, p. 19)

If memory is a sense making process for an individual, done through the community of others, it is also for the others and by the others that this sense making happens. It is memory's calling up the multiple and shared pasts that make it collective. The stories of her father Starobin (2006) is able to relate are those that come from others' understanding of him. They are passed down as story from memory and create story that can influence memory. How will the author's children, who will at some point have no one living to ask about their grandfather, know him except from the stories Starobin has related and written?

It is this "Being-towards-the-world" that commits us to the world, that moves between past and future. Through the shared memory, present also as tradition and historical consciousness, we share in the "life-making" Bruner (2004) describes, and more than that, toward the making of a world. It is this remaking of the world that van Manen describes as pedagogical; it happens through the shared sense, the being for another that Levinas puts at the heart of his ethical stance.

Pedagogic Implication of Memory Making as Collective

What does it mean for pedagogic knowing to understand memory as collective, as shared as a shared sense of the world? Steeves (2006) writes:

The 'we' behind 'our story' is richer and more complex than some may wish to believe. Within this 'we' lives a multitude of subjects – the 'human' and the 'animal,' the familiar Other and the feral Selves of our collective experiences. Unpacking the 'we' is telling a new story – a new chapter in an old tale. (p. 47)

It is to this complexity that our pedagogy of questioning must turn, our “unpacking the we” that Steeves describes is a motion toward what he would call “intersubjectivity,” toward what Levinas (1981/1997) would call the being for “being’s other.” Levinas sees this experience not as one where the other is subsumed to be like us, but where the other retains “otherness” and in that otherness creates responsibility. Levinas writes, “It is not because the neighbor would be recognized as belonging to the same genus as me that he concerns me. He is precisely *other*. The community with him begins in my obligation to him” (p. 87). Pedagogically being with others, our responsibility for others means doing justice to those others in the narrative, collective memory that stands for tradition, history and our making of a world.

Carr (1986) describes the collective nature of memory as necessary for communal action, for world making. He writes, “In our view such existence would require that a ‘story’ be shared by the members of the group, such that its formulation and eventual reformulation would be constitutive of the group and its common undertakings” (pp. 155-156). Carr’s shared memory is described as a mode for “group stock-taking” where individuals as group members and as constitutive of that group decide what they stand for, what they will build. This collective world making through writing is memory’s making of a future.

Memory as Future Making

Memory itself is already in the advance position. Not only because remembering is at all times presupposed, but also because it is always at work: it is continually going on. (Casey, 1987, p. ix)

In writing that memory is “continually going on,” Casey evokes that it is always happening, as well as that it is always moving forward. It is both of these ways of

thinking about memory that allow us to understand memory as making the future. Along with understanding memory as narrative and collective sense making, memory is always making sense of our past and present *toward* our future.

In Starobin's (2006) text above, she describes the "lost father" she has not "found yet." She engages in the writing through memory, the storying of her own past, as a way of providing an image of this father for her future understanding. She describes memory as future making. She knows precious little about her father, Adolf Rosenfeld. She writes, "Bread-baking was done by our father. He prepared the dough, which then had to be taken to the communal oven to be baked. Ruth remembers having individual small challah made by our father" (p. 48). In the world of the text each detail becomes important, significant, even if the author is not sure what each signifies to her.

But why try to remember? The question makes no sense to us, or it seems ridiculous, because it is so common to human experience that we would try to reclaim these memories, to piece together a part of the past lost to us. The question is important because this work to re-assemble bits of the past causes, and is caused by, the world-making we engage in, always toward the future.

Memory: Building the World

Memory, related to forgetting, as I discuss in Chapter Two is cast by Bernard-Donals (2009) as the connection that Levinas (1981/1997) makes from the "irrecuperative, immemorial event," (p. 19) the Holocaust, and Levinas' description of ethical being. Levinas' sense of our ethical responsibility, Bernard-Donals argues, comes from the attempt to share a memory, that through saying, memory becomes "the said," and then is not a memory at all, but something separate, and in that separateness,

communicable. This illustrates further the play between “saying” and “the said” that both makes us responsible for the other and keeps him/her always other.

It is this tension/play between “saying” and “said,” between “Self” and “Other,” that makes memory narrative and collective. It is in this tension that we are also able to understand memory as future building. Bernard-Donals (2009) describes this: “What Levinas offers is an idea of memory in which the moment of saying – of the event prior to knowledge and immemorial – compels human activity and discourse and founds ethics” (p. 19).

The way I am able to understand this relationship is through the use of a metaphor of a game my father, my sister and I used to play. My father would put his hand, palm down, on a table, and I, or my sister would put our hand on top of his. Then he would put his other hand on top, until we had made a stack of all of our hands. Then, whoever’s hand was on the bottom of the pile would move his or her hand to the top and so on. We were building and rebuilding the structure of our hands, and that action helps me to understand the relationship of ethics (future building) to memory that Bernard-Donals (2009) ascribes to Levinas.

Each hand represents how we are always other. No hand looks the same; my father’s brown hand, my sister’s bitten fingernails are separate hands, always other. Each hand represents otherness. In our proximity, our hands touching, a desire to be touching, we “approach” the other, as Levinas writes (1981/1997, p. 5). In each of us trying to cover the other’s hand, to be the one, in effect, holding all the hands of the others, we enact a motion representative of ethics through that intention, through our care. Memory is the movement of each hand, as it slips from the pile and returns to cover it,

restructuring as it goes and returns. The pile of our hands seem to grow as the bottom hand became the top hand. In this same way we see how memory builds a future.

Heidegger (1968/2004) describes the hand and its uniquely human and embodied work. He writes:

But the craft of the hand is richer than we commonly imagine. The hand does not only grasp and catch, or push and pull. The hand reaches and extends, receives and welcomes – and not just things: the hand extends itself, and receives its own welcome in the hand of others. The hand holds. The hand carries. The hand designs and signs, presumably because man is a sign. Two hands fold into one, a gesture meant to carry man into the great oneness. (p. 16)

This is what we mean when we say that memory is *handed down*, that tradition and history are *handed from generation to generation*. The metaphor of the simple game I played with my father and sister is, as all metaphors, bigger than the image of it. The sign means that I have a father who played games with his daughters, a father who wanted to be present with us. It all happened in specific time, at a time in the history of the world, in spaces, in our relationships and through the bodily experience of our hands together on a table.

Memory understood in this way becomes a future building of a world through the ethical intention to the other. It may be, as many have argued (Davis, 1996; Meskin, 2000; Eaglestone, 2004), that Levinas' philosophy of ethics comes from the disaster of the Holocaust. But wherever it came *from* it is moving and building a future made from memory, constructed with others, narrative in its making and in first perceiving. It is an ethical care for the world handed down through memory.

Pedagogic Implication of Memory as Future Making

It is this ethical building of the future as responsibility to the other that makes memory, as a making of the future, pedagogical. The implication of a pedagogy of

questioning means that in making this future through memory of the past, there must be memory as intersubjectivity, not a general or monolithic history (not objective memory), but memory which builds a future that “does justice to the whole” (Steeves, 2006, p. 7).

This way of seeing memory, knowing memory as narrative, as collective, and as future making resides within a pedagogy of questioning where the opening of an understanding happens in questions that wonder about the nature of knowing our lives, our selves and our time through memory. As Carr (1986) writes, “The present is only possible for us if it is framed and set off against a retained past and a protentionally envisaged future” (p. 60).

What Carr describes is a being-in process. This way of knowing our being, and questioning the process of being and becoming, is certainly pedagogical, as van Manen (1997) describes it as “pedagogic thoughtfulness and pedagogic tact” (p. 154). Its implication for learning is the expression of our knowledge of learning and being as ever in process. The word tact is related to the word tactile, and in one sense means “the act of touching or handling.” Tact also means to have a “ready and delicate sense of what is fitting and proper in dealing with others” (“tact,” 2014). This describes being with humans in human ways that allow for us to learn through and for one another. This implication, brought forth in the writing and remembering processes of the survivor writers, I turn to now, as I describe the pedagogical implications of being-in process as historical beings writing the Holocaust.

What Does It Mean to Write Personal History? Narrative Within History’s Paradigm and Context

Historians, scholars of the Holocaust, and the world in general consider them among the six million Jews murdered in Europe. To me, they were my uncle (my

father's oldest brother), my aunt and my cousins. Each one of them had a name, and each had a face, which I recall often among my haunting memories. After my memory is gone, and I can say *kaddish* no more, do not forget them. (Friedman, 2011, p. 17)

Through this excerpt from Friedman's (2011) text entitled "Do Not Forget Them," we see the author describing differing ways that the dead of the Holocaust may be known. She describes a historical sense of her family members and then a personal one, and finally she asks the reader to continue her remembrance. This remembrance is an ongoing process, in that in this text Friedman names some of her family members murdered during the Holocaust more than seventy years after the fact. The process of memory is ongoing in this text, as well, in that Friedman mentions that she will not always be able to remember them and instructs the reader to take over saying *kaddish*, extending the remembrance of her relatives into a future beyond her. In what ways is writing a personal history, where memory of the Holocaust is enmeshed with knowledge of the study of history and the historical record itself, understood by these survivors? This personal history becomes part of the historical record of the Holocaust, just as Friedman names it as personal history. What does it mean to write personal history from memory within the context and paradigm of a science of history?

The description here is of personal history as a building process toward the future as it is enmeshed in the process of writing and knowing the past. It is only through knowing memory and writing as process, the on-going project, that a pedagogy of questioning can act as "world-making" toward a more just future. And if Friedman's (2011) request that we, as readers, say *kaddish* means nothing else, it is a call that our remembering her murdered family might be for some use toward building a better world.

It names her personal history as memory, but calls for a kind of historical knowledge that will remain open and openable.

This is related to a pedagogy of questioning, in that for historical knowledge to remain open, the writing of history must remain in-process. This allows for a questioning that is on-going. A pedagogy of questioning happens only in thoughtful, question filled movement forward. This way of being allows for the building process involved in writing and remembrance as knowing the past in always emerging ways. Indeed, if we view writing and remembering as determinate functions, we put a stop to the possibility for pedagogical processes of renewal. Through what would amount to a view of the world, a view of history as an object, and as therefore finished, we could only view the product of writing and remembering the past as finite and unchangeable things. For a pedagogy of questions, as pedagogical implication for this study, we must describe being-in process as the only space for historical learning. As Lyotard (1983/2002) describes this, “Reality is not a matter of the absolute eyewitness, but a matter of the future” (p. 53).

In Friedman’s (2011) text too, where she asks for the reader’s action toward the future, she connects herself and the story of her murdered family members to that future, as well. She reminds the reader, the six million killed in the Holocaust are comprised of unique individuals, and some of these are her family. She writes that “historians” know them in one way and argues for their specificity. Her wish, expressed in this text, is that her family members not be subsumed by a general “historical” sense. She projects her personal historical writing toward a better world, a more just world than the one they knew.

Through the next sections, I describe being-in process through writing and remembering personal history as pedagogical. I will evoke again van Manen's conception that pedagogy is "an ongoing project of renewal in a world that is constantly changing around us and that is continually being changed by us" (p. 3). Process, as I describe it here, is the act of being in questioning and is imperative for being pedagogically with, and for, others.

Building In: History as Both Paradigm and Context

Whether personal or collective, memory refers back by definition to the past that continues to be living by virtue of the transmission from generation to generation; this is the source of a resistance of memory to its historiographical treatment. (Ricouer, 2004, p. 398)

The "historiographical treatment" that Ricouer describes here is one that he sees as an attempt to resist memory, a way that disallows memory's "living." But even history, seen as Heidegger's "science of history," or this "historiographical treatment," remains constantly useful to the participants of this research and interacts with memory of the Holocaust in integral ways. Remembering personal experience of the Holocaust, for these survivors, happens in deep connection with its "historiographical treatment." Still, a "historiographical treatment" is often experienced by these participants as objective, as a truer truth than memory, even by those who live that history. This tension casts a science of history for these survivors, as both a paradigm in which memory is less valued, and as a context in which memory is informed and remade by the still growing historical record. What does this mean for a pedagogy of questioning, for our learning from and through this phenomenon?

Gadamer (1976/2006) writes, "Historical coherence must, in the end, be understood as coherence of meaning that wholly transcends the horizon of the

individual's experience" (p. 508). His meaning, that a historical consciousness connects past and present, self and others, individual and community, means that what may be known through a science of history comprises one aspect of this coherence. In what ways may historiography inform our pedagogy of questioning?

Pedagogical Implication of History as Paradigm and Context

Heidegger (1962/2008) writes presaging Ricouer's (2004) description above, "Only because it is 'historical' can an era be unhistoriological" (p. 42). He works here to describe a sense of "tradition," as a better knowing of being than to know a "historiography" or his own "science of history" would allow. Heidegger sees "historiography" as outside of "Being" in that, "it has no ground to stand on" (p. 42). And he describes a science of history's interpretation as "philologically 'objective' ['sachliche']" (p. 42). His meaning here is that historical interpretation means nothing to being and does nothing to help us better understand being. In fact, it does the opposite in that it stands in for our real conversation with the past through memory and tradition. A "historographical" knowing is one that can never be an understanding that helps us to understand our own being in the past, or one through which we might discover meaning from that past.

Heidegger (1962/2008), though, also writes that when we do not examine or question traditions that "come down to us," what tradition "transmits is made so inaccessible that it rather becomes concealed" (p. 43). When either historiography or tradition

block our access to those primordial 'sources' from which the categories and concepts . . . have been . . . quite genuinely drawn. Indeed it makes us forget that they have had such an origin, and makes us suppose that the necessity of going back to these sources is something which we need not even understand. (p. 43)

As a pedagogical implication for the phenomenon, a questioning of what we are able to know within the “science of history,” as well as seeking sources for our understanding of tradition, is necessary to keep meaning of the past possible. This possibility means that both memory and any useful historical knowledge, must be, as Ricoeur describes, “*living* by virtue of the transmission from generation to generation” (p. 398). If we can name what this living transmission is, it must be – if it is to be pedagogic – intersubjective; it must remain a human communication.

Gadamer writes, “Historical knowledge is interwoven with historical events” (p. 508). Gadamer’s sense is that understanding of one is necessary for knowledge of the other. This is at the heart of how we may understand the relationship between historical events and historical knowledge, or a historical consciousness that may be pedagogical. Gadamer writes that we must move away from an objective sense of history that “defends its methodological clarity by a classificatory system . . . and leads to a great systematic survey of the world of historical experience” (p. 509). Nothing general, nothing that takes human experience of history as established, can lead us to greater knowing of the historical contexts in which our being is immersed.

Taken together, the pedagogical implications for this phenomenon have described a pedagogy that “lives” in questioning. It is a pedagogy that asks what memory does and is *for* as a mode of human knowing. It queries what kinds of meaning might be made from thinking of writing or historical knowing as finished. This pedagogy of questioning asks how we might learn from our knowing of the past, and what use that knowledge has for constructing a world for the future. Finally, I turn to compare how being in-process

as in the writing process, the building process, is useful to help us understand how historical knowledge must be always in-process.

Being-In Process: Personal History

I think that in the writing process you discover a lot of things that you are not necessarily aware of, or you make connections, things come up through the writing process itself. (Harry)

The Oxford English Dictionary defines *process*, as a noun, as “the passing or lapsing of time, years, seasons etc.” and “the fact of going on or being carried on, as an action or series of actions; progress, course” (“process,” 2014). Process helps to describe one of the ways we may be *in* time, and therefore in history, as well as how we may know historically. It describes forward action, *doing* something.

The definition the Oxford English Dictionary gives for *process* as it relates to philosophy helps to define historical knowledge as being-in process more aptly, “the course of becoming as opposed to static being” (“process,” 2014). This definition, though I could not even begin to imagine what a “static being” might be, helps us to understand that when Harry describes writing as a process of discovery, he is describing the process as an act of “becoming.” It is this emphasis on the movement inherent in process *toward something* that Harry names discovery. It is only in being forward looking that historical knowledge can come to have a human use.

Heidegger (1962/2008) describes our being as “essentially futural,” and describes that being in the present, “in the sense of making present” happens only through our “taking action in such a way as to let one encounter what *has presence*” (p. 374). This, he writes, “is possible only by *making* such an entity present” (p. 374). In “making” something “present” Heidegger says that we have “anticipatory resoluteness.” This is the

meaning he ascribes to time, which is care. Heidegger writes, “*Temporality reveals itself as the meaning of authentic care*” (p. 374). This “making present” or caring, being concerned toward the future is, in Heidegger’s conception, the way that we are able to experience time. This is, it seems, a being-in process, a concern that is also a “becoming” and is also for the future.

In this same way, care for the future with knowledge of historical events allows a historical event to have “presence.” Carr (1986) calls the “presence” of historical events a knowledge of history that is “pre-theoretical,” as in theorizing we may name and be done with history. Carr writes that when historical knowledge is reduced to an understanding of the “‘big subject,’ it is necessary for us to drop back to individual experience and interrogate it” (pp. 153-154). A pedagogy of questioning, then, allows any historical knowledge to remain alive, to be brought to “presence” through this interrogation of personal and particular lived experience.

Heidegger’s (1962/2008) sense that time, known in this way through lived experience, is “primordial and authentic.” He describes this as the way we experience human time, through “care.” It is how we, and our historical knowing, are always in the process of “becoming.” And it is in this sense of time as care that we may understand that our historical being is always in-process. As a pedagogical implication of this work, we are able to know being in-process historically, as identical to the always becoming of memory and writing.

Always Becoming: Personal History

Memory, writing and historical knowing, understood here as processes, are for the future, and happen in an always happening present. Only if we understand memory,

writing and history in this way, can they be pedagogical. The past tense of these processes is not possible, as it provides no possibility. So, even when these particular rememberers and writers are gone, remembering and writing and historical knowing may remain in-process through communication with others. As in Friedman's (2011) piece above where the author asks for a reader to pray for the dead that they may "meet" only through her story, the process continues through communication.

This illustrates though, once again, the constant problem of telling anything about the Holocaust. The memory of Friedman's (2011) family, even our remembering of them, does not approach them. We are able to approach through the story she tells of them, through the story she tells of their loss. Still, it is being-in process toward a future that every survivor of the memory project describes as his or her reason for writing. The reason to tell, they repeat, is for the future. Our own being in questioning, where our questions are focused on world making is pedagogical. It is the prayer that Friedman asks for us to continue.

This focus on process, on questioning that is ongoing, defies a closing down of being, or a closing down of history as finished, as object. If we are able to see being-in process as always becoming, as toward an always emerging world, it is necessary to describe knowledge of our past as also always in-process.

In What Ways Must a Pedagogy of Questioning Trouble the Pedagogical House?

In Chapter One, I referenced the biblical quote, "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind," and began to open the notion that a house, a structure, a paradigm that stands "untroubled" is a house that requires more questioning through dwelling in. As in Heidegger's sense, we dwell in questions. I return to trouble the house of

pedagogy; to begin to describe a pedagogy of questioning and the ways in which it must trouble and interrogate any pedagogical dwelling. Palmer (1997) writes:

If we want to grow as teachers – we must do something alien to academic culture: we must talk to each other about our inner lives – risky stuff in a profession that fears the personal and seeks safety in the technical, the distant, the abstract. (p. 3)

It is only in refuting the abstract and the distant, that we can begin with our pedagogy of questioning. And if it is to be truly pedagogical, it must be made of questioning that moves toward intersubjectivity. So, while Palmer may have meant that teachers must speak about their inner lives, he writes that they must “talk to each other;” inherent in this directive is that in order to do this, talk must ask *and* answer.

In this questioning, in order to be intersubjectively with one another, pedagogues must ask the questions most rooted in the personal. A pedagogy of questions asks about being, seeks existential nature of being together, concerns being and furthers it collectively. A pedagogy of questioning interrogates being through temporality, spatiality, corporeality and, most importantly, through relationality (where an ethical being for another begins). I turn to open pedagogical questioning and to the tensions that help to describe it.

Dwelling Pedagogically

To dwell pedagogically must mean to dwell intersubjectively. The questions of what it means to have a body, to experience space, to be in relation, are pedagogical questions in that they seek to understand experience, through asking about experience.

Heidegger (1962/2008) applies questioning to being. He writes, “In formulating the question about the meaning of being” through knowing something about being, we are “laying bare the grounds for it and exhibiting” it (p. 28). He writes further, that there

is a “remarkable ‘relatedness backward or forward’ which what we are asking about (Being) bears to the inquiry itself as a mode of Being an entity” (p. 28). He means that we are able to wonder about being when we are able to formulate questions that ask about it. Heidegger conceives of our questioning of being as an enterprise that brings us closer to our own being and in that way closer to all being. In a pedagogy of questioning, we must dwell in questions that ask about being and the beings we teach.

After Heidegger, Levinas (1972/1996) describes that there is “a *lag* between the *fact of being themetized* and the fact of *being made manifest in intelligibility*” (p. 98). The difference between these ways of knowing another is where teaching and learning begin. In the same way that Heidegger sees that in simply formulating the questions of being we are bringing being to light in questioning, Levinas sees that in asking we are able to manifest being “in intelligibility.” In merely coming up with the questions, each of these philosophers brings forth, we are already in the process of learning about being.

Through “*being made manifest in intelligibility*,” a pedagogy of questioning seeks to gather together “the truth correlative to being” (Levinas, 1972/1996, p. 99). Levinas describes this truth as that:

in which the subject, a pure welcome reserved for the nudity of disclosed being, effaces itself before that which manifests itself, and in which effort, inventiveness, and genius are all just the means, ways, and detours by which being is discovered, by which its phases come together and its structures are secured. (p. 99)

In a pedagogy of questioning we seek to teach in ways in which being is “dis-covered.” Already in that seeking, we move closer to our own being through which we experience all being.

In pedagogical settings this disclosing of being happens when we take up the questions that engage our being in bodies, in space, in time and with and for one another.

This means, most simply, that when we question experience, the questions already suppose the shared human experience. Levinas writes:

The truth resulting from the subject's engagement in the world and history through labor, cultural creation and political organization, whereby the subjectivity of the subject shows itself to be humanity, finitude, care for its being thrown in anticipation of its end - this truth remains the truth of disclosed being. (p. 99)

This way of conscientiously moving toward the disclosure of being is a pedagogical move that I see happening in teaching reciprocally and through interrogation of being. It calls for dwelling thinking and requires being in dwelling with others.

The Project of Memory

Recently Susan wrote about the oldest relative she remembers knowing. This resulted from an in-class writing prompt where I asked each writer to describe as much as he or she could remember about the oldest family member that they'd met, or were told about by someone who knew her/him. Susan describes her great-aunt, "Tante Anna" and her great-grandmother, Hulda. She writes:

We called her "*die Hexe*" because she had such a witchlike appearance. She was a quiet witch and allowed us to stare at her in amazement. She never reprimanded or scolded us for such behavior. She was Tante Anna's mother and my grandmother's mother. Her name was Hulda. She was always there in the morning when we got up for breakfast and still there when we went to bed.

Susan goes on to describe the cooking of *bulbenick*. During the conversation several of the members of our group described how delicious the *bulbenick* they remembered eating was. When I expressed my ignorance of the dish, Gideon described that the flavor was like dying and going to heaven. Susan remembers the ingredients and names them in her writing: potatoes, "eggs, yeast, oil and flour." I wondered if *bulbenick* was potato bread or a kind of *kugel*. There was considerable discussion about this in the group. I thought

that there should be some translation of *bulbenick*, so that an audience of readers, unfamiliar as I was, could have more of a sense of the dish. I wanted to know, was it sweet, savory? Was it eaten on special occasions?

Later, when I got home there was an e-mail from Marcel, saying that he had Googled *bulbenick* and that it was actually “potato kugel.” I haven’t yet heard from Susan to know if she agrees with this description. There are so many aspects of this experience that help me to describe my sense of the writing made by these survivors and what we are able to learn from their doing it.

We will never eat the *bulbenick* Susan describes. Even if we were able to find the exact recipe, we could not cook it in the large cast iron oven that “die Hexe” guarded in that kitchen. We will never sit in that kitchen, before the Holocaust, with the family that Susan describes, the women peeling “huge piles” of potatoes. Even as members of our group describe eating *bulbenick* in other places, differences in the *bulbenick* itself emerge. Now, there is no way to tell whether what Marcel’s family ate in Poland was the same; certainly it was not, as the *bulbenick* Gideon remembers.

Along with this is the fact that Susan’s Tante Anna and her great-grandmother, along with many of her other family members, were killed in the Riga Concentration Camps. She found the record of this at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Susan never learned to cook *bulbenick* herself and came to the United States where her children were raised never eating *bulbenick* and without an extended family.

In our meeting, as I asked what *bulbenick* was. I searched for something in my own memory that would approximate what Susan describes, made with potatoes but crispy on top, made with yeast and flour. Nothing came close. Susan’s memory, written

and shared now with me, and with the other readers of Susan's writing, will not ever get us closer to eating the *bulbenick* made in that kitchen by German Jews before the Holocaust.

But our knowing the story Susan writes, and indeed Susan's writing of it, helps us to know the Holocaust in ways that without this story would be as impossible as getting to taste the *bulbenick* made that day. This story, how the women in her family cooked together is only just now a topic that a historian of the Holocaust might seek to learn about. And if history as a discipline sought to know, its goal is still most often to thematize these experiences, to show how people lived. What Susan tells is how *her* people lived. She does this with specific details, specific language, because we have talked often about the ways in which these personal details, the cast iron oven heated by wood, the old woman sitting next to it, make her memory of that time resonant. These details connect us to the story; they allow us as readers, a place to stand, so to speak, among these things Susan describes.

What does it mean that Susan, who was there, writes her own remembrance of her aunt and great-grandmother as they lived then, in that house? Susan recalls those times and describes them in her writing. Maybe she has a conversation with her brother and asks for confirmation of what they had called their great-grandmother as children. She writes this memory as a story, choosing what is important to include. She reads it to our group and later she will read it to her children; it may be published on the museum's website. Others in our group, who hear what she has written, remember eating *bulbenick*, remember those who made it for them, share the memory in conversation with one another. *Bulbenick* and the people who made it, the rooms where it was made and eaten,

the taste of it, even the time when it was made, is in the room with us, for just a moment. For one instant, we all share our sense of it, dissonant as those senses may be.

Without Susan writing, how many of these interactions would not happen? In what different ways would the world know the Holocaust, without these stories? In what other ways would they remember those who were murdered, the cultures that were destroyed? These personal stories, authored by these writers, expand what we are able to know, add to what we can feel. They, in first person voice, give us a more whole view of the past, and allow us to feel more fully, more acutely, what was lost. Through the individual story, through the particularity of loss, each writer's project of memory allows us to move closer and petitions us to move forward.

Dwelling In: Further In

Being in the work of asking about the lived experience of life writing the Holocaust, in ways similar to the survivor's writing about the past, has allowed me a way to dwell with these writers and with their work. It has allowed me a space in which to dwell with them and to question that dwelling. In trying to open the phenomenon of the experience lived by these survivor writers I have engaged with them, and the texts that surround the phenomenon, and I have engaged through my own writing. The writing of this work has caused me to do what being engaged in writing does. Writing, as impetus, as desire to communicate, has helped me to move closer in questioning. Writing has allowed me to seek to show "being made manifest in intelligibility" (Levinas, 1972/1996) These meanings I have tried to know, and I have tried to articulate our being together in order to share this meaning making with others.

This is also the work the survivors do through writing their own stories. Through communicating a past, they enable that past to continue to live amongst us. And it is in this narrative human act that they continue also to be in the making of story, this thing we have of/for the future. These writers help to call up a prospective world and describe our better action toward it. This is the project of memory, and as I've tried to capture poetically here, it is the powerful work of making a world.

The Dream of America

Hidden in a chateau in France,
 each child dreams the dream of America
 tells the younger ones they will all eat candy there.

When these children perish
 the oven's smoke fills with that dream,
 other hunted children
 fill lungs with it, breathe it in,
 speak it

exhale the dream in the form of stories,
 their smoke breath taking the shape
 of the silver Chrysler Building, the shining Empire State.

When the Statue of Liberty's golden torch burns –
 there is America,
 there are the lights, they say.

These lights are powered by this, you know.
 Maybe by nothing but this.

Appendix A
Initial Letter Soliciting Permission

On Mon, Nov 5, 2012 at 4:10 PM, <magpete@comcast.net> wrote:
Hi Diane and Rachel,

I hope your week is starting well. I am getting to a point in my graduate career, finally, where it seems that they may actually let me do the research for my dissertation. Since my research concerns survivors, my work at the museum and therefore, Survivor Affairs, I thought I would lay out what I am hoping to do and ask for your guidance and permission moving forward.

Being aware, that I am employed by the museum for the purpose of running The Memory Project, (and happy about that fact) I would like to ask for permission to use the first hour of two class sessions to have survivors (in lieu of in-class writing) describe their writing process. I would ask them questions about the impact of the group on their writing and their sense of what their writing means for a history of the Holocaust, as well. As a teacher, I see this as being beneficial to the participants as they think through what the writing means to them. As a museum employee, I can see it as being beneficial to an understanding of the program, as well as providing insights into what a person can learn from writing about his or her own life experiences after the Holocaust. I would provide transcripts of the conversation, so they might help provide insight into the value of the program for the museum's mission, if you think they might be valuable too. This research would be read by the members of my committee but I don't have plans to publish it, and I would ask to use survivor's actual names.

Thinking through the research I'm hoping to conduct, I decided against meeting with survivors one on one, because I feel the nature of the group is so important to the kind of discussion I want to have with survivors. How the survivors interact with one another is at the heart of our "writing group" and seems important to capture for my research. I can't imagine another way that I would be able to assemble the survivors in a separate setting, given the logistics of getting everyone together, transportation etc. So, I'm asking for permission to:

1. Spend about ten minutes of our December 20th meeting explaining the methods and purpose of my research.
2. Provide consent forms so that they can agree to being recorded during the hour-long conversation. These forms would be anonymously collected and anyone not consenting to the use of his or her name would have his/her voice removed from the audio files when they are downloaded to computer. It would be made clear in the consent forms that their participation, in the research, is completely voluntary and that their non-participation would have absolutely no effect on their membership in The Memory Project.

3. Conduct the first one-hour focus-group conversation. I would ask them questions such as:

A. How do you describe the writing you do when you are discussing it with others? Do you use the term autobiography, memoir, testimony, history or etc? What does the term you use to describe your writing mean, to you?

2 B. Where do you get the ideas for the pieces you write? How would you describe your specific impetus for writing?

C. Describe your process for drafting or revising the pieces you write? Do you read your pieces to others before you bring them to the group? Do you share them with others after you have shared them with the group?

D. What kind of feedback on your writing do you value most? What kind of feedback is most useful to you?

E. Do you see the writing you do as having a role to play in the history of the Holocaust? If so, how would you describe that role?

F. For whom do you write? Who is your imagined audience? How does the group act as an audience, how does the group effect your writing

G. Has the writing you have done caused you see your experiences differently? If so, how would you describe the role of your writing, or the writing of others, in this change?

9. H. Are there topics that you choose not to write about? Why?

I. What do you hope readers who do not know you will understand about you from your writing? What do you hope readers will understand about the Holocaust from your writing?

4 4. Conduct the second focus-group conversation during our January 31st class, following up with any of the questions we did not address in the first focus group.

I don't believe that these discussions are separate from the work the survivors usually do in our group, but I know that you have to put the needs of the survivors and the museum first in any decision you make, so I appreciate you considering the possibility. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

I'm happy to come in and talk to you in person, if that would make it easier for you to ask questions you might have.

Thanks so much,
Maggie

Appendix B
Letter of Conditional Permission

From: "Diane Saltzman" <dsaltzman@ushmm.org>
To: "Maggie" <magpete@comcast.net>
Cc: "Rachel Wagner" <rwagner@ushmm.org>
Sent: Tuesday, November 20, 2012 3:05:21 PM
Subject: Re: Research with survivors

Maggie,

I spoke with our lawyer and, in general, your request is fine, with a couple of comments:

1. Because we're paying you to conduct the class, we cannot pay you to conduct your own research during class time. Either, we/you can ask the survivors to come in at 10:00, stay until 4:00 or they can be asked if they're willing to have the discussion over lunch.
2. We'd like to review the release form that you will ask them to sign.
3. Once you have written up the parts of your work that reference the Museum, we'd like to review it, as we do with anyone who wishes to use the Museum's name in their work.
4. Once you have a completed project, can we receive a copy?
5. It's important to reiterate the "opt out" option and also to give the survivors advance notice. A note should come from me informing them about this project and letting them know this is for your research and not an official project of the Museum's.

Let me know when you'd like to "announce" it and how you want to work out the timing.

Thanks.
Diane

Appendix C
Consent Form

University of Maryland College Park

Project Title	The Project of Memory: The Lived Experience of Life Writing The Holocaust
Purpose of the Study	<i>This research is being conducted by Francine Hultgren at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are a member of The Memory Project writing workshop. The purpose of this research project is to describe the phenomenon of life writing the Holocaust.</i>
Procedures	<p><i>The procedure involves two, one-hour discussions in our regularly scheduled group meetings at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on December 20th and January 30th 2012 that will be audio taped and transcribed. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is not conducting these discussions and is no way affiliated with this research.</i></p> <p><i>If you choose not to participate in this study, your contribution to the conversation will be audio taped but will not be transcribed to be used in the research. Your voice will be removed when the audio files are uploaded to computer. Examples of the types of questions that will be asked include: How do you describe the writing you do when talking about it with others?</i></p> <p><i>If permission is given, follow-up conversations may be scheduled at the mutual convenience of the researcher and the participant. These conversations will also be recorded and transcribed. In addition, you may be asked to give further written permission, for the credited use of your unpublished written work, including e-mail correspondence.</i></p>
Potential Risks and Discomforts	<i>There are no known risks for this study. Participants will describe their practices and experience of writing about surviving the Holocaust and so doing may require introspection that may cause participants to experience unpleasant memories. As members of a group of writers who describe memory of the Holocaust regularly, these risks are not a product of the research. The researcher will encourage participants to ask questions at any time during the process as well as maintain their awareness of the option to drop out of the study at any time.</i>
Potential Benefits	<i>There are no direct benefits to participants. However, possible benefits include a greater understanding of how personal writing impacts an understanding of the Holocaust. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of personal/autobiographical writing around the Holocaust.</i>

Confidentiality	<i>If you consent to participate in this study, your real name will be used; the actual name and purpose of The Memory Project will be described through the research. As information about participants and the group exists in several public formats, anonymity will not be possible. The audio tape files and transcripts will be stored in password protected files on the researchers computer and will be destroyed January 1, 2014.</i>
Medical Treatment	<i>The University of Maryland does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Maryland provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.</i>
Right to Withdraw and Questions	<p><i>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.</i></p> <p><i>If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigators:</i></p> <p>Dr. Francine Hultgren 2311 Benjamin Bldng. College Park, MD 20740 301.405.3324 fh@umd.edu</p> <p>Margaret Peterson 3061 Shad Place Riva, MD 21140 443.744.0773 magpete@umd.edu</p>
Participant Rights	<p><i>If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678</p> <p><i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human</i></p>

	<i>subjects.</i>	
Statement of Consent	<p><i>Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</i></p> <p><i>If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.</i></p>	
Signature and Date	NAME OF SUBJECT [Please Print]	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT	
	DATE	

Initials _____ Date _____

Appendix D
Letter of Invitation

Dear Memory Project Writers,

It has finally come to the point in my graduate school program for me to begin my doctoral research. As most of you know, my research will focus on what it means, what it feels like to you, to engage in personal writing, as Holocaust survivors. The research questions I have posed wonder about the role of memory, writing, narrative and history in the way you perceive the writing you do. I have questions about your sense of the group we have made, your sense of the way your writing impacts an understanding of history and how you experience it all.

I am asking each of you to participate in the research study. If you consent to participate, we will engage in 2-3, one-hour discussions during the lunch break of our meetings in January and February. During these discussions I will ask questions, that I hope will elicit discussion in our group around the themes I mentioned above. Secondly, I may ask several individuals to meet for follow-up conversations, one on one, or in smaller groups. I may also ask that you give written permission for me to use your unpublished written work and cite it in my dissertation.

You are not obligated, in any way, to participate in answering questions, or in being recorded. If you choose not to participate in the research, you might decide to leave the room during the discussion section, though I believe the discussion will be similar to many we have had before in our group. Or, if you choose not to participate in the research, and you still want to engage in our discussion, I will not transcribe your contribution to the discussion for my research and your voice can be removed from the audio recordings.

I am conducting this research under the guidance of my advisor, Dr. Francine Hultgren. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is not conducting the research. The museum has kindly allowed me to use the space, during the time we normally meet, during a lunch break, in order to have the whole group assembled.

I look forward to describing the research and discussing it with you, should you have questions or concerns. I am excited to begin to explore my research questions with all of you.

Sincerely,
Maggie Peterson

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