1. Julia Balazs  

**William Styron: Sophie's Choice**

The aim of my presentation is to provide a deeper insight into William Styron's highly acclaimed work, *Sophie's Choice*. The novel explores the way people tried to improve their lives after the Great Depression and World War II. The reader is introduced to the distorted world of three friends—Sophie, a Polish Holocaust survivor, Nathan, Sophie's lover and a schizophrenic Jew, and Stingo, a Southern writer in his twenties—who are supposed to have the best of times. The novel is less about the Holocaust than about how the Holocaust affects the ambitious but narrow-minded young Stingo. The narrator explores the connection between Auschwitz and everyday experience, and he opposes Stingo’s world view to a completely different reality to discover, in Steiner’s words, “the relations between those done to death and those alive then.” Through the novel the Holocaust is interpreted as the tragedy of humankind. Styron reminds us that the victims of the Holocaust included Catholic Poles, Romani, Soviet civilians, political and religious opponents alongside the Jews, just like the novel’s heroine Sophie Zawistowska, a Polish-Catholic survivor of the Nazi concentration camps. Styron exhibits not only how "absolute evil" is "at the core" of us all; he also illustrates how our destinies can depend on whether we choose to empower evil through evasion and apathy or to fight it.

In my presentation I would like to dwell on the meaning of ‘choice’, on the question of identity among the survivors of the concentration camps, on the forms of evil, lies and guilt, and on the pervading schizophrenic theme of the novel in which words, views and worlds clash. I am going to point out some interesting parallels between Poland and the American South, between their cultural heritage and inhabitants. A review of the mass deportation of the Polish population during the WWII-era is also necessary. The question, whether literary “intelligence” can ever “devise” forms “adequate to convey what the concentration camp experience implied for the contemporary now,” is also to be discussed by revisiting the views of Styron, Langer, Felman and Caruth.

2. Darcy Ballister  

**The Poetry of Dan Pagis: “Countermonument” in Post-Holocaust Verse**

I propose to write and present a paper that examines a particular "ingredient" in the process of Holocaust conceptualization. This "ingredient" is the activity of creative re-imagination, and it is first present in an artist's own creative process; more significantly, however, it is a necessary action, the responsibility to perform, which is passed on to the public who then views the object. Taking something very close to Herder's duel notions of "empathy" (Einfühlen) and "understanding" (Verstehen), I am interested in how the challenge of discussing the Holocaust, and presenting it as an issue for the public, through either civic memorials or pieces of contemporary art, has developed, at its best, into a demand for an active working through of the Holocaust's complex issues. At one extreme, we have the simple sharing of information, this is closer to dealing with the Holocaust through education. On the other, we have a disinclination to rely on the conveyance of facts, and instead, an encouragement of self-questioning and self-answering. It is a matter of coming to an understanding of the relevant "lessons" of the Holocaust (though there are no universal ones) by involving oneself completely: the creative, imaginative process that achieves real, and ideally lasting, empathy.

There is another element to this project, which in clearest terms, will probably amount to a close reading of several works of Holocaust memorial and art. This other element is a mindfulness to the contradiction often proposed by writers responding to the Holocaust. It is present in Dan Pagis's poem "Instructions for Crossing the Border,” when he offers these two contradictory statements: "You are not allowed to remember...You are not allowed to forget." Addressed to an "imaginary man," those instructions, I sense, are the essence of the dilemma actually responsible for the need for creative mental interaction with the Holocaust. From victim to community member, all are faced with balancing and
reconciling those two conflicting sentiments, though the terms are indeed different for each party. Works that, in the words of Horst Hoheisel, invite passersby "to search for the memorial in their own heads" are, in the least, an intriguing and moving response to the challenge ultimately presented by the legacy of the Holocaust.

3. Luisa Banki
The Limits of Representation: Holocaust Comedies

If the “unspeakable” is an unavoidable by-effect of speaking, as we might say axiomatically, then this is especially true and pertinent when speaking about the Holocaust. No representation of the Shoah can adequately reflect the reality of that lived experience – for the simple reason that every representation can render the experience only in the context of its own origin. The Shoah thus becomes the paradigm for the limits of representation (Friedländer). A first question is therefore: If all forms of representation are inadequate, is it morally and/or ethically correct to attempt representations? The implied answer of this paper is yes, and my concern will not so much be the question if one can or may represent the Holocaust but rather how it is done. This paper proposes an examination of the genre of “Holocaust-Comedies” whose starting point, it seems, is the admission of its failure to represent the horrors of the Holocaust. Paradoxically, the rise of Holocaust Comedy is thus directly connected to the positing of the Shoah as the ultimate traumatic point, at which both objective historic knowledge and explanatory interpretations fail.

Drawing on works of Alenka Zupančič, Slavoj Žižek and Giorgio Agamben, this paper will tackle some aspects of the ethics and aesthetics of Holocaust Comedy. Comedy’s paradox lies in the seeming indestructibility of life, it represents the triumph of phantasmatic life. In the context of the Lager and their emblematic figure, the Muselmann, however, it is no longer possible to differentiate between material and phantasmatic life so that one can speak of the sublation of comedy. The Muselmann represents the transition point between comedy and tragedy, the sublime and the ridiculous and one might say with that the “true” Holocaust comedy that could represent this sublation of hierarchic structures of authority and their reversal has not been seen on screen. As of yet.

4. Chiriac Bogdan
The trial of Marshal Ion Antonescu and the representation of the Holocaust in the courtroom

The trial of Marshal Ion Antonescu (May 1946), one the key moments of the larger wave of postwar criminal trials in Romania, was intended to prosecute the ‘collaboration and criminality’ of the deposed Antonescu regime and document the unspeakable crimes perpetrated against the country’s ethnic and religious minorities. Adding to the general challenges that any trial faces in the aftermath of mass atrocity, the prosecution’s task was greatly complicated by the fact that the treatment of the Jewish and Roma minorities during World War II had been neither consistent, nor uniform. On the one hand, the Antonescu regime (1940-1944) had enforced the racial legislation inherited from the previous regime, had unleashed a fierce anti-Semitic propaganda that incited a number of anti-Jewish pogroms, and between 1941-1942 had implemented an ethnic cleansing policy in the newly-liberated territories of the Soviet Union. As a result, large segments of the Jewish population from Bessarabia and Bukovina and Roma from the Old Kingdom were deported to Transnistria with disastrous consequences. On the other hand, the Antonescu regime distinguished between the acculturated Jews of the Old Kingdom and the non-Rumanian speaking Jews of northern Bukovina, Bessarabia and Transnistria, and it had altered abruptly its plans in 1943, halting the deportations to Transnistria and postponing indefinitely, for ‘reasons of state’, the deportation of the Jews of the Old Kingdom to the death camps in Poland.
This paper focuses on how these inconsistencies in the treatment of Jews and Roma during World War II were addressed and presented during the trial of May 1946. The prosecution’s opening statements and the cross-examination of the defendants played a decisive part in the reconstruction of the circumstances and the chain of decision leading to the persecution, deportation and destruction of ethnic minorities. Archival materials, such as the unabridged transcripts of the proceedings and the recollections of eyewitness will help me gain a better understanding of the ‘strategies’ employed by both the prosecution and the defendants to justify and possibly impose their interpretation of what had happened and who was to be held responsible.

5. Krisztina Burjan

Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* and its possible relations to literature reflecting on the Holocaust

It has now been 12 years since the holocaust survivor, doctor, and psychotherapists Viktor E. Frankl, the founder of the so-called “Third Viennese School of Psychology”, father of logotherapy and existential analysis, and man of exemplary, laudable wisdom passed away. Still, Frankl’s influence and sagacity have been persistent even after his departure, as it is clearly visible from the hundreds of books, studies, and articles inspired by his life's work. His theory has become part of the training of psychotherapists, and his views are discussed worldwide in the fields of philosophy and theology as well.

Logotherapy asserts that the mental and spiritual health of human beings is highly dependent on finding a meaning in one's daily existence. Yet, you might ask, “How can one find meaning in a concentration camp?” Eliezer, the narrator of Elie Wiesel's momentous novel *Night*, cries out in despair in search for an answer for his brutal surroundings, only to give up his faith in God, the ultimate, abstract entity of all Meaning: “What are You, my God[?] (…) What does Your greatness mean, Lord of the universe, in the face of all this weakness, this decomposition, and this decay?” According to Frankl, however, “man should not ask what the meaning of his life is, but rather he must recognize that it is he who is asked. In a word, each man is questioned by life; and he can only answer to life by answering for his own life; to life he can only respond to by being responsible.”

Elie Wiesel's *Night* is not the only text that can participate in a discourse with Frankl's logotherapy and *Man's Search for Meaning*. Since “man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life and not a ‘secondary rationalization’ of instinctual drives,” Viktor Frankl insists, we can be certain that many, if not all, pieces of literature are at least partly concerned with this “primary motivation”. Obviously, literary pieces reflecting on the Holocaust are especially sensitive to the issue of finding meaning—in suffering, in alienation, in post-trauma, in everything. In my presentation I shall point out some of the possible points where literature and Frankl's proposal to man meet or conflict.

6. Benjamin Farkas

*After Visiting Auschwitz*
When discussing the translation of literary texts, especially in the highly moral context of the Shoah, it is inevitable to point out the performative problems arising from the nature of translation. Ontologically (I wasn’t there) and epistemologically (I cannot understand) any act of translating Holocaust literature must result in failure, for in principle we know that the original text is ultimately untranslatable. And although the underlying motivation for translation is to familiarize foreign audience with the target text, often the lack of adequate background knowledge results in the transmission of an inauthentic experience. Yet, could translation ever transcend the basic assumption of loss and alienation? Could the Hungarian translation of a book written in English by a Hungarian author ever re-connect to a Hungarian audience and re-articulate the essence of the message?

Translation, by definition is an act of relocation — a displacement. To proceed from this premise, the course of this book genuinely resembles the experience of those who fell victim to WWII. In this sense, the translation of Upon the Head of a Goat served to complete a course inscribed in a book aroused by the Holocaust experience: to be displaced, to be written and finally to be translated. And yet, could the displacing act of translation of a book rooted in displacement itself ever perform an act of restoration? Could it ever relocate to a place where one feels at home? I believe only those who survived the tragedy of the Shoah may give an answer to this question. All that we, the translators, may hope for is that the Hungarian audience will receive and shelter this displaced masterpiece with such a warm welcome as we welcome Mrs. Siegal here with gratitude for allowing us to witness her response.

8. Breanna Greer

The Holocaust as “Entertainment Media”

In the years following the Holocaust, many survivors have told their stories. Works of literature like Wiesel’s Night and Levi’s Survival in Auschwitz are regarded as some of the most important writings about the experiences of Holocaust victims. Yet, with a dwindling group of survivors, there are, naturally, very few of these types of responses being written today. With new generations have come new responses to the Holocaust, and the myriad moral issues surrounding it. However, instead of addressing many of the still unresolved subjects involved with these events, many recent films and books have used the Holocaust as a backdrop for telling other stories; they are using the Holocaust as simply the setting in which to craft new tales (recent American films Defiance and The Reader are examples). With the production of this emerging group of films and literary works, we are confronted with the question of artistry: whether the Holocaust can inspire art, whether this art is ethical, and who is allowed to be inspired and create. It is also important to explore the implications this type of work will have on future generations, who will grow up with no new first-hand accounts. These works, while still describing World War II and the Holocaust, treat in a very different way, and it can be argued, will lead to a very different kind of collective memory and remembrance, especially for the next generations, who will live in a time when there are no living survivors.
9. Zsuzsanna Haraszti
The representation of the Holocaust in Malamud’s selected short stories

In Malamud’s short story *The German Refugee* we meet a German Jew who has to come to terms with his own identity and his nation’s attitude towards its own citizens. He is on the border of two different worlds, the high culture of an intellectual and the common brutality of his era. Even though he has fled to America, he cannot leave his Old World behind. He merely vegetates in his new surroundings. This could surely happen to all intellectuals who cannot indulge in any other work than their previous mental one. This way Malamud presents unutterable moral torments in a time of unimaginable immorality of mankind. Moral values are so deeply rooted in the human being that they cannot be forced to be neglected even in peaceful American circumstances.

The historical events happening parallel in Europe keep on intervening with the characters’ mind. After being informed of his gentile wife’s conversion to Judaism which leads to her immediate annihilation by the Nazis, Gassner chooses suffocation by gas. This can be interpreted as an act of feeling community with his people’s doom. Suicide might mean homecoming and the end of feeling like a refugee.

The role of language is also dominant in the short story since there seems to be no hope for development in the main character’s language skills for a long time. Composing his university lectures proves to be a constant failure since he can no longer write in his most hated mother tongue. He has to distract his mind from the tormenting questions of self identity. When he manages to get back to his old self again as a literary critic the proper words are found immediately.

10. Michele Lanae Henrey
The Goldhagen Paradigm: Reinvigorating the Field

Daniel Goldhagen’s book *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* attributed a vicious “eliminationist antisemitism” to the entire German population before 1945. Why, then, was this book so well received by the German population when it hit bookstores in August 1996? Many scholars felt that Goldhagen had a negative impact on contemporary scholarship, returning the Holocaust debate back to the “all Germans are guilty” rhetoric of 1945, and that they would have to start afresh to convince people that not all Germans were exterminationist-minded antisemites.

Why, in this case, was the German public’s reaction so different from the German scholar’s reception of the book? Was Michael Zank right when he stated “Goldhagen’s narrative implied that Germans once were evil and now are good, no longer dangerous and paradigmatically democratic, a story tailor-made for Germans desiring, however unconsciously, to bury the past by overcoming it”? If so, then Goldhagen’s work supports 65 percent of Germans who would like to stop dealing with the years 1933-1945. Contemporary Germans did not need to reflect too much on their past because they were not like their ancestors.

Though Goldhagen’s thesis may seem like an old and outdated thesis to those who kept track of the ongoing debates of the 1970s and 1980s, he nonetheless reinvigorated the field by providing a simple monocausal explanation (and one that resonated among the world populace) forcing a new generation of historians to find new evidence to discredit his grand vision.

As educators, we should use the Goldhagen paradigm not as a tool that enables us to cease conversation on the Holocaust but one that helps us to refocus the discussion on the human capacity for good and evil. In this sense, educators can use Goldhagen’s sensationalist approach as a starting point within the Hegelian method to teach students how to find a synthesis in their own Holocaust research.
Sasnal belongs to a generation of artists who were born in the 70’s and grew up in the 80’s, a politically very unstable time in Poland. It was the time of the Solidarność movement, an economic crisis, and general instability in the Polish society. Sasnal is an artist who is interested in history rooted in the daily life. He paints and makes films about his little hometown, Mościce, the Polish Partisans in the Second World War, and the Holocaust. He is not as interested in presenting historical facts or narrative, so much as challenging the current views on recent historical events. He tries to find an individual approach to taboo topics such as the Polish collaboration with the Nazi regime and enduring antisemitism in Poland. In an interview with Andrzej Przywara the artist admitted that he constantly gets the feeling he is not living in the post-1989 but the post-1945 period. That statement could result from the fact that the Second World War, the Holocaust, and Polish-Jewish history in general were rarely mentioned or treated in art or literature before the year 2000.

I want to present three of Sasnal’s works which reflect the artist’s attempt to find his own language to express the Holocaust. Sasnal uses already existing images, like Claude Lanzmann’s movie *Shoah* or Art Spiegelman’s comic *Maus*, to create his own paintings, acknowledging “that the original message is inaccessible and incommunicable” to someone from his generation. In respecting the Bilderverbot (Adorno) on one hand and having the courage to present his own view on the matter, Sasnal confronts the viewer with a new mindset about Polish history. He is making a statement by merely dealing with the subject of the Holocaust, which still provokes many reactions in a country that sees itself as the victim, first occupied by the German Nazi regime and then the Soviet Union.

I believe that there is a potential risk for the true humanitarian effect of the Holocaust to be diminished as the last of the living survivors meets the natural end to their lives. Therefore there is a responsibility that falls squarely on the shoulders of our generation, as we are the last group that will be fortunate enough to personally speak to the survivors about their experiences. There is a necessity to perpetuate the notions of not only the atrocities themselves, but the bigotry that set the stage for those atrocities. A civilization without a detailed and critical account of its history is doomed to repeat its past mistakes, and subsequently, without a responsible generation who can keep that narrative alive through this critical stage (the loss of the first-hand account), we will not be able to recognize the signs of future atrocities in the making.

Since the Stockholm Declaration in 2000 a Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research has been active, gathering today 26 member countries. Every year since 2006 the United Nations has been observing an International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust on January, 27. Today, Holocaust memory seems to be internationalized and even globalized.

Why is that? How did this come about? An international and transnational history of Holocaust memory could not fail to mention the TV miniseries "Holocaust" (1978), neither Steven Spielberg’s "Schindler's List" (1993) nor the “United States Holocaust Memorial Museum” (opened also in 1993).
What scholars Simone Schweber and Debbie Findling suggest for the American case—namely that it is the moral power and a seeming clarity of its actors’ roles that have made the Holocaust become a moral reference point and let it gain a powerful position in American imagination – among Jews and non-Jews alike – might be true beyond the US as well. One way thus to explain the popularization of Holocaust memory in many countries during the last 30 years would be to stress its universal character, conceiving it as generally accessible to anyone.

“Holocaust Education” – no matter if done in schools, at memorials or elsewhere – is based on the assumption that there are messages that can or should be learned from the Holocaust, that dealing with it is worthwhile. Whereas ‘making sense’ of the past is inherent in probably all writing and teaching of history, the question at stake with regard to a ‘universal’ Holocaust memory as sketched above might be, however, how this memory translates to very concrete various political, social and religious contexts, and how it is used and abused. Being myself not a teacher, but working as a tour guide at two prominent memorial sites in the centre of Berlin – the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (opened in 2005) and the Topography of Terror (existing since 1987 on the terrain of former Gestapo- and SS-headquarters) – I would like to take the chance to reflect critically on my own work there, with groups of students and adults both from Germany and abroad. Can one teach Holocaust memory? What is learning about at a monument to the Jewish victims and an exhibition about Nazi-perpetrators: knowledge, awareness, sensitivity… ? What are my own implicit and explicit messages?

14. Agnes Kende
The Significance of the Holocaust in Present Day Students’ Lives

“How ridiculous. They were just teasing you! There are wood ovens, but there are no people ovens. Putting people in ovens creates too much smoke.”

Guido, La vita e bella, Roberto Benigni

“Today is history. Today will be remembered. Years from now the young will ask with wonder about this day. Today is history and you are part of it.”

Amon Goeth, Schindler’s list, Ralph Fiennes

“This list... is an absolute good. The list is life. All around its margins lies the gulf.”

Itzhak Stern, Schindler’s List, Ben Kingsley

Oh, Fatherland. Fatherland / Show us the sign / Your children have waited to see / The morning will come when the world is mine / Tomorrow belongs, tomorrow belongs, tomorrow belongs to me!

Song sung by the Hitler Youth, as seen in Cabaret

“I think the world may be going through a phase, the way I was with mother. It'll pass. Maybe not hundreds of years, but someday. - I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are really good at heart.”

Anne Frank, The diary of Anne Frank, Millie Perkins

These are quotations from films that have had a huge influence on my classmates and on me over the years. We are possibly the last generation who will have the opportunity to hear stories from survivors of one of the most terrible period in history: the Holocaust. Unfortunately these are unknown quotations for the most recent generation who have no experience of the Holocaust, not from stories told by family members or elderly family friends, not from films, and probably not even from school.
The aim of my presentation is to find answers for why children are not interested, or why they do not have enough knowledge to understand their recent history. More importantly, I would like to find out why they do not care about this horrible event. I also want to try to introduce some possible opportunities for interpreting the topic of Holocaust within the framework of school. I would like to raise awareness about how important it is to find ways to teach students and our children that we are all equal members of mankind, and to teach them how much they could learn from history. I strongly believe that it is our responsibility to make sure that events like this will never be forgotten and to make sure that all children learn about tolerance and the meaning of being human.

15. Szilvia Kiss

*Sylvia Plath’s Identification with Victims of the Holocaust*

As German philosopher Theodor Adorno famously pointed out "writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric…" Having no direct relation to the Jews or to the Holocaust itself, Sylvia Plath still dared to write about Auschwitz, making it an essential and central theme of her oeuvre. However, to many her usage of such theme, even metaphorically, might seem abusive, especially if we note that these poems were written at such a personal level though without immediate connection or experience of such kind. We can ask the question “Does any writer, does any human being other than an actual survivor, have the right to put on this death-rig?” In order to attempt to answer this question it is important to study why and how the Holocaust appears in Plath's poetry.

16. Benjamin Kurc

*Language as a vector of Jewish Identity and self-representation in the Polish society*

After a Congress in Bialystok I noticed that all the people with Polish-Jews origins who were present had an odd relationship with their identity, which reflects in their use of the language. Most of them grew up with Polish as their Mother Language but had adopted the language of the country where their family moved after the war. I wondered how identity formation and language could be related, and I came to the conclusion that the use of a different form of language serves to reinforce the cohesion within the "in-group" and to sharpen the distinction with the "out-group".

In the second republic of Poland the Jews represented a large minority in society (approximately ten percent of the population was Jewish). But they only had a thin room to maneuver and were players in a game in which the different social roles had already been predefined. This predefined game regulated, amongst other things, relations between the minority group – the Jews – and the majority group – the Polish.

Language plays the role of differentiation both within the minority group itself, and between other minorities. In the following paper, I will analyze the role which language plays as a differentiating factor amongst the Jewish minority group in Poland. We will see the meaning of language among the Jews in Poland and how it became an important component of integration. Moreover, the use of the Polish language reflects the will of integration in a national community, even if this process was not uniform.
Krisztina Molnár
The Faith-keeping Role of Traditional Religious Music (and other Hebrew-Yiddish-Ladino Musical Arts) in the Life of the Hungarian Holocaust Survivors

From the very beginning of religious life, the Jewish liturgical music has had its absolute, unqualified, unique attributes. Its own roots are in the Tanach. Many of the ritual specialties came directly from the Torah (the five books of Moses). The "how to do" and "what to do" was written and the generations that followed were always very committed to keeping the old, traditional rules: the cantors, prayer-leaders, and rabbis looked back to the past, and they were always searching for the written law and the rabbinical knowledge of their beliefs. Of course this is also true of their musical traditions. The uniqueness of the Jewish liturgical music comes from the specialties of the Jewish liturgical ceremonies and the uniqueness of this religious life, which is both very personal and very communal. The Jewish religion works like a daily routine—from the blessings, to the personal prayers—and it works also like a community-life—in big biblical feast where the entire community worships together.

Since 70 A.D Jews have been persecuted in every territory they have settled in. The time they were allowed to live in each European nation was relatively short, never more than three or four hundred years. As a consequence of this diaspora, they absorbed many new customs and songs, as enrichment to their liturgical music, from each new realm. Yet they maintained their traditional prayers and the tune of their ancient songs; they always tried to preserve what they already had, but also to incorporate new customs from culture they came in contact with. Thus, the European, Middle Eastern and South African Jewish communities were always connected in several ways. Through the centuries the Jews maintained the trinity of law, religion and tradition, and this trinity kept them in God's saving grace.

These traditions and this lifestyle continued into the 20th century. However the Shoah was without precedence and it brought such destruction: not persecution, but the real trial of the evil's ruination; not for persons, but for the whole community; not for bodies, but for souls. "After the Shoah how could it be possible to write poems?" asked Adorno. The question is a painful and living sentence. Supposedly after the Shoah almost everybody lost their faith. But is this really true?!

While working in a charity hospital where numerous Holocaust survivors live, I found beautiful treasures! Some of the survivors shared their thoughts, feelings, memories, and beliefs with me. I discovered some very interesting but common ideas about faith and the task of "keeping the faith", especially with liturgical music as the focus point. After discussing some short historical points of view and some important details of the history of music, I will try to tell some of these extraordinary stories of faith.

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Gábor Moskovits
Express the Inexpressible: The Impact of the Holocaust on Jewish Identity

My presentation investigates the literary influence of the Holocaust, more precisely the changes in Jewish identity as a result of experiencing death camps. The basis of my study is a distinction between identity and identification, two phases of Holocaust narratives that are detectable in literary texts. While the first part of my presentation gives a brief introduction to the notion of the Holocaust, the second part deals with two short stories: Rebeccca Goldstein’s The Legacy of Raizel Kaidish and Elie Wiesel’s Night. Although my study focuses mainly on the literary impacts of the Shoah, psychological and theological approaches to the works mentioned above will also be discussed.
And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour (Rev. 8:1)."

Theodor W. Adorno as well as Primo Levi initially considered silence the only appropriate response to the tragedy of the Shoah. Speechlessness, however, is not merely a reflection of integrity in Dan Pagis’s poem, but the acknowledgment of our defective language, that is, the words lacking to express the core of the offense done to mankind. The ellipsis, a mark that indicates an intentional omission in communication, rooted in the Greek *elleiptikos*, meaning “defective”, would beautifully express the nature of this shortcoming. But what happens when even this mark is omitted? What will be the significance of the absence of such an indicated gap?

The seal that Pagis applies in his poem is the absence of ellipsis, which, once opened, will inevitably result in silence. Through the analysis of Pagis’s poem, this paper attempts to emphasize the responsibility of our generation, which by the enormity of the Holocaust is propelled in two directions: to have the ear to hear the message of the silent seal, and to become sealed messages ourselves, obeying a request poetically expressed in Song of Solomon 8:6—“Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm.”

This paper discusses some of the complexities of representing victims and the use of art and imagery in the work of W.G. Sebald. The paper attempts to consider Sebald’s polemic against postwar German literature in the context of what he says of Rembrandt’s famous painting, *The Anatomy Lesson*, shown in *The Rings of Saturn*. While Sebald implies that art’s overarching purpose is to allow the viewer to identify with the victims of history, he also casts great suspicion on forms of learning and study relevant to issues facing the Holocaust.
22. Eszter Rimar

**Emily Dickinson Is Jewish: Analysis of a poem by Sarah Sarai**

Most people are probably familiar with the poetry of Emily Dickinson. Most people have probably read many of her poems. They probably also know what a secluded, lonely life she lived. However, what they do not know is that this woman of 19th century New England, raised by a strictly Puritan father, was Jewish. At least this is what Sarah Sarai, a contemporary poetess, states about her.

Published in 1997, the poem “Emily Dickinson Is Jewish” compares Emily Dickinson to the Jews of the 20th century, more exactly, to the Jews that lived and suffered in the Second World War. How is that possible? By taking a closer look at Sarai’s poem, I will analyze what common traits this American poetess found between these two seemingly different worlds. Although the comparison drawn might sound daring at first, by diving into Emily Dickinson’s soul, by discovering her inner feelings, thoughts and fears, and by examining the pictures Sarai uses when describing the hiding poetess, the readers will be able to understand the parallels.

By placing Emily Dickinson far from her own world, among seemingly foreign objects and sounds, Sarai also manages to create a strong, psychological link between the past and the present. In my opinion this link, this connection, shows how human qualities do not change, how fears and doubts are present in every era, under all circumstances.


23. Teri Szűcs

**The 'Blasphemous’ Language of Art and the Discourse of Theology**

**Paul Celan: Tenebrae**

Paul Celan’s *Tenebrae*, a fundamentally important text of late modernist poetry, addresses the vital issues of Jewish-Christian theological tradition. Unlike many of its critics, I do not ask whether this poem is “blasphemous”; I point out that Gadamer’s famous reading of the poem places it in a theological tradition basically unchanged by the Holocaust. My aim is to explore how Celan’s poem, by provoking and re-interpreting basic notions of the Jewish-Christian tradition, reveals post-Holocaust theology’s urgent need of renewal – since after the Holocaust our theodicean concepts have to be re-evaluated. I consider *Tenebrae* the poetic challenge of theodicy, in this respect.

Using Zachary Braiterman’s and Steven T. Katz’s comprehensive works, I point out the shift of post-Holocaust Jewish theology’s focus in the oeuvre of its major thinkers: Richard Rubenstein, Ignaz Maybaum, Eliezer Berkovits, Lévinas, Hans Jonas, and Emil Fackenheim. The most important changes are: doubt of providence and of the covenantal relationship, re-evaluation of the function of prayer, and renunciation of the concept of reparation. We also find that concepts about the “hiding”, “withdrawing” or “weak” God are gaining importance. A similar shift takes place in post-Holocaust Christian theology – I represent it through the ideas of Jürgen Moltmann and Dorothee Sölle. Their works stress the community of the suffering ones in and with Jesus. Together with the idea of the weakening God the concept of man’s infinite responsibility emerges, which is understood as the only means of preventing “another Holocaust”. *Tenebrae* questions this concept, though it speaks most radically about God’s “dependence” on man. The poem is able to speak about (or speak to) God in a way that the experience of suffering it contains does not blend into a theological horizon.
24. Philipp Tolios

The late remorse of the first victim – the effects of the 1986 Waldheim affair on Austrian policy towards the Holocaust

Dr. Kurt Waldheim, United Nations Secretary General (1972 – 1982) and president of the Republic of Austria (1986 – 1992) was a member of the so called “Einsatzgruppen E”, stationed in the Balkans and involved in several war crimes during their hunt for Yugoslav partisans. He was also stationed in the Greek town of Thessaloniki in 1942-1943 when over 40,000 Jews were deported from that area. This piece of information caused a major political crisis during the 1986 presidential elections, but it could not hinder the candidate of the Austrian Peoples Party (OEV) Dr. Kurt Waldheim’s run for the presidency. In the following years Austria faced diplomatic isolation and the start of a broad domestic discussion about its past involvement in the cruelties of the Second World War and the Holocaust.

The Moscow declaration (‘Declaration of the Four Nations on General Security’, October 30th, 1943) identified Austria as the “first victim” of Hitler’s aggression, a view that had been highly controversial but not questioned by political leaders in Austria. The laws and processes of denazification were executed half-heartedly (the registered 536,660 members of the NSDAP accounted for a huge voter potential none of the big parties could afford to lose), restitution of stolen goods constituted a financial and mental endeavor many survivors were not able to take, and professors, politicians and local representatives were not questioned about their past but accepted as knowledgeable and experienced.

The revelation of Dr. Kurt Waldheim’s past, his election as president of the Republic of Austria, and the following political isolation and outcry all over the globe triggered the so called Vergangenheitsbewältigung policy (mastering the past). In 1991 former Chancellor Vranitzky admitted Austria’s joint guilt in Nazi crimes. In 1992 Gedenkdienst (Remembrance service) was accepted as a legal alternative to the domestic Präsenzdienst (mandatory military or civil service), thereby sending young Austrians to Holocaust Memorial sites or Research institutions. In my paper I will present the effects of the Waldheim affair on Austria’s Vergangenheitsbewältigung policy (1986-present), the political debate that surrounded the affair, and the young generation’s involvement in accounting for the past.

25. Viktoria Weisz

The Role of Language in Cynthia Ozick’s Rosa

Unlike other Holocaust short stories, Cynthia Ozik’s Rosa takes places 35 year after the Second World War in Miami, USA. The protagonist is Lublin Rosa, “a madwoman scavenger”, who experienced the horrors of war, and although she survived she continuously recalls the devastating vision of the Holocaust. Cynthia Ozick uses different languages and styles to indicate the misery caused by the loss of “real life”. The writer emphasizes the emptiness of the present and future through the words of Rosa. The use of sublime Polish reflects on Rosa’s attitude towards Magda (her dead daughter) while the use of everyday English describes her feelings towards Stella (her niece) and Persky (an elderly, wealthy Jewish man who escaped the war). Thus, Polish represents the life before the war, the truth, the purity of human beings, whereas English stands for the hypocrisy of the present life and future.

In my essay I am going to analyze the role of language in Rosa. It is amazing how the writer mediates feelings, thoughts and values with the assistance of various languages. Cynthia Ozick has a perfect sense for using and mixing languages and styles in a way that the text remains coherent, smooth and alive.