

Documenting Denial:

Atrocities, Perpetrators, and the Documentary Interview

by

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DEDICATION

To Pamela and Vito

**In memory of
Emily**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: “UNPLEASANT TRUTHS”



Fig. 1.1. Eyal Sivan (left) and Marcel Ophuls in one of the Israel-occupied territories. Trailer for their film in progress, originally titled *Unpleasant Truths*, now re-titled *Let My People Go*

“In this film, Jerusalem should be like Clermont-Ferrand in *The Sorrow and The Pity*,” declares eighty-eight-year-old Marcel Ophuls, the internationally renowned German-French-American filmmaker and indefatigable fighter against official history and injustice, in a trailer for a documentary currently in production. Ophuls is co-directing the film, a self-reflexive interview documentary on the Israeli occupation of Palestine, with filmmaker and unabashed provocateur Eyal Sivan, an Israeli roughly four decades

younger, equally committed to countering official history, living in self-imposed exile in Paris.

This dissertation investigates the filmic interview as a device for documenting denial and revising official history. It places the films of Marcel Ophuls and Eyal Sivan side by side, tracing arcs, developments and shifts in their own opuses and highlighting reverberations between them. The study is bookended by a close reading of Claude Lanzman's *A Visitor From the Living* (1999, an outtake from his nine-and-a-half hour 1985 work *Shoah*) and a 2015 Israeli documentary by Mor Loushy entitled *Censored Voices*. When I began this project, Ophuls and Sivan had not yet publicly appeared together, although Sivan had often cited Ophuls, along with Jean-Luc Godard, as a significant influence and inspiration for his work. The directors share an interest in perpetrator testimony, a commitment to asking hard questions of history and contemporary political situations, and a deep suspicion of received truths. In 2013 Sivan and Ophuls appeared at a number of film festivals and events together, where they discussed Ophuls' *The Memory of Justice* (1976). It is perhaps not a surprise that Ophuls and Sivan would eventually make a film together on Israel and Palestine.

While I make reference to many other relevant interview and testimonial documentaries, I choose to make the works of Ophuls and Sivan the fulcrum of my study for numerous reasons. Ophuls' and Sivan's revisionist historical films circulate in a global context; likewise the filmmakers themselves occupy an insider/outsider status in relation to their adopted and native countries. Indeed the filmmakers often emphasize the importance that this insider/outsider status has on their filmmaking practice and on their

resistance to narrow nationalism or jingoism. Marcel Ophuls, son of famed German Jewish filmmaker Max Ophuls and German non-Jewish actress Hildegrad Wall, was forced by the rise of National Socialism to leave Germany and move to France; when France was occupied, he fled again, this time to the United States. The German-born naturalized US and French citizen, married, as he often points out, to a non-Jewish German woman who as a child was briefly part of Hitler youth, now lives in France. Ophuls has commented, “I don't have any roots... but I have ties...very deep ties to the Anglo-Saxon world and to America. I have traditional ties through my mother and father to Germany.”¹ Sivan grew up in Israel in an Argentinian Jewish family. He spoke Spanish at home and has stated in interviews that his family’s Latin American background always made him feel he was an insider/outsider in Israel. Sivan chose to leave Israel, and though he often returns, has adopted Paris as his current home.

Both directors have been deeply affected by the environment in France, where in recent decades, as Libby Saxton points out, “some of the most impassioned debates about film and the Holocaust” have occurred, and where “the place occupied by the genocide in French consciousness” has long been a contentious one.² I argue that the interview form in both directors’ works becomes a crucial site to study the positioning of the Holocaust as either unique or within in a relational framework. This is especially crucial when the films take on the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The interview also becomes a key site for considering the intricate negotiations between the particular and the general, the “I,”

¹ Cited in Susan Suleiman, “History, Memory, and Moral Judgment in Documentary Film: On Marcel Ophuls’ *Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie*,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol 28, No 2 (Winter 2002) 521.

² Libby Saxton, *Haunted Images: Film, Ethics, Testimony and the Holocaust* (London: Wallflower Press, 2008) 3.

“you,” “we,” “they” shifters and the assumptions which arise between subject, filmmaker and viewer within the politico-historical documentary film.

In the quotation cited at the beginning of the introduction, Ophuls invites an analogy between Jerusalem, as it will appear in the new film, and the French town Claremont-Ferrand, as it appeared in the director’s most famous work, *The Sorrow and the Pity*, about French collaboration with the Nazis during the Vichy period. As both Sivan and Ophuls are well aware, juxtaposing traumatic historical events can be risky as well as potentially productive. The directors have repeatedly emphasized that to compare is not to equate. Ophuls mobilizes his most famous film to make a structural comparison. Claremont-Ferrand was the town around which *The Sorrow and the Pity*’s investigation of French actions under Vichy revolved. Ophuls’ interviews conducted in Claremont-Ferrand and his strategic use of archival footage broke through the wall of denial about French collaboration with the Germans. Jerusalem, Ophuls implies, will be the city around which Sivan and Ophuls’ new film will unveil a widespread Israeli denial, partial blindness, or inaction around the occupation of Palestine.

Ophuls encapsulates, in the statement quoted from the trailer, the overall trajectory of my project, which moves from *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1969) to Eyal Sivan’s most recent interactive internet documentary, *Montage Interdit* (2012) and awaits the final cut of Sivan and Ophuls’ upcoming work. I attempt in my study to offer some ideas on the workings of the documentary interview, the significance of its genealogy, and the challenges that perpetrator testimony poses for the director and the viewer.

If Ophuls' comment explicitly juxtaposes French denial of the widespread collaboration under Vichy with the willful blindness of many Israelis about the realities involved in the occupation of Palestine, the original title for the film—*Unpleasant Truths*—adds another dimension to the comparison.³ The title refers to an exchange said to have taken place in 1969 between the head of the French national television station, ORTF, who would ban *The Sorrow and the Pity* from being broadcast, and Charles de Gaulle. De Gaulle asked what was in “this documentary,” and was told by the ORTF head, “Some unpleasant truths, General.” De Gaulle replied, “The French don't need truths; they need hope.” In choosing a working title that referenced this conversation, the filmmakers evoked not just the widespread collaboration under Vichy but also the active governmental suppression of these “unpleasant truths.” Ophuls and Sivan position their new film as one which, like *The Sorrow and the Pity*, will take on official history, combat denial, and unveil unpleasant national truths—and, significantly, will do so through extensive use of the documentary interview.

The film's new title, *Let My People Go*, introduces another turn on the comparative framework. An article on the website of the syndicate, Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), about the film in progress notes that, “although the iconic phrase resonates deeply with anyone who has attended a Passover Seder, Ophuls said he will use the familiar imperative to support the Palestinians.”⁴ The article does not provide any

³ A *New York Times* article entitled “Marcel Ophuls, Director of *The Sorrow and the Pity*, Wants to Tell Israelis Some ‘Unpleasant Truths,’” (December 10, 2014) about the film in progress discusses the film's original title and a January 2015 KissKiss BankBank (the French equivalent of Kickstarter) campaign launched by Ophuls and Sivan to seek additional funding for their film.

⁴ Lisa Alcalay Klug, “Famed Holocaust Documentarian Tackles the Occupation in New Film,” *Haaretz*, November 19, 2015.

additional information about the film's title. The title refers to the passage in *Exodus* in which God told Moses to go to the Pharaoh, who was enslaving the Israelites, and tell him that the Lord says, "Let my people go." For many people, especially Americans, the phrase also resonates deeply with both the spiritual, "Go Down Moses," sung by slaves and taken up by the abolitionist movement, and with the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s. The film's new title, while explicitly connecting the enslavement of Jews in Egypt with the current occupation of Palestine, also gestures towards moments in history when Africans Americans empathized with the suffering caused by contemporary anti-Semitism and identified with ancient Jewish enslavement, and when American Jews were active participants in the Civil Rights Movement.⁵

Ophuls' earlier works and his life-long fight against narrow nationalism and official history are, I would argue, excellent predictors for a documentary project about the Israeli occupation of Palestine, but the JTA article places the director's German-Jewish background and his Holocaust films in a different frame. "Given his track record," the article states, "news of the award-winning director's next film may come as a surprise." The comment goes to the core of fundamental historical, cultural and theoretical debates around how to position the Holocaust in history. Ophuls and Sivan, it seems, would agree with Edward Said's well-known declaration that Palestinians are "the

⁵ As if anticipating the multi-referential title *Let My People Go*, Stam and Shohat point out in *Race in Translation* that progressive French Jewish intellectuals, including Eyal Sivan, "do not see Jews as consubstantial with the West but rather as allied on some levels with the West's internal and external others. The identification, to put it in 'figural' terms, is with Jews as the slaves in Egypt and not, as with neoconservative Pentagonites, or with the modern 'Pharaohs.' Since the 1980s, Jewish-black and Jewish-Muslim collaboration has persisted through such groups as Perspectives Judeo-Arabes, the Black Jewish Friendship Committee, and Les Indigènes de la République, which have given concrete political expression to this coalitionary impulse." Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, *Race in Translation: Culture Wars around the Postcolonial Atlantic* (New York: New York University Press, 2012) 171.

victims of victims.” The suffering experienced by Ophuls and by Sivan’s family (Sivan’s mother is a Holocaust survivor) enhances rather than blunts their desire to document and fight against the suffering inflicted on the Palestinians by the Israelis. The JTA article opens by expressing surprise that a famed Holocaust documentarist would make a film on the Israeli occupation, and closes by reinforcing a separatist frame on Jewish and Palestinian suffering: “Applying an ancient *Exodus* narrative to the Palestinian cause, and accusing Israel of apartheid, may cause Ophuls’ Jewish fans no choice but to let him go—at the box office.”

The title of the JTA article is in keeping with its overall tone: “Famed Documentarian Making Pro-Palestinian Movie.” When the left-leaning Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* reprinted the story, it replaced the title with one that clashed with the article itself but precisely captured the point of the work: “Famed Holocaust Documentarian Tackles the Occupation in New Film.” The description of the director as a “Holocaust documentarian,” followed by the phrase “tackles the Occupation” powerfully suggests the connection between condemning one horror and criticizing another injustice.

I dwell here on the intricacies of this article and the way a few significant words re-frame an entire context in order to emphasize how complicated and potentially risky a comparative or relational historical framework can be. Situating the Holocaust within a broader historical context or frame violates the singularity and uniqueness that have defined it since the 1961 Eichmann trial, and can run the risk of relativizing the Nazi crimes. And yet, although the Holocaust continues to be viewed as singular and unique, the Holocaust and colonialism, as Robert Stam and Ella Shohat assert in *Race in*

Translation, “were metaphorically comparable in their demonizations of internal and external ‘others’ but also metonymically connected in historical and discursive terms.” Chillingly, in *Mein Kampf*, the authors point out, Hitler looked to “the large-scale murder of indigenous Americans, Tazmanians, and Armenians” as examples of exterminations “with impunity....” Shohat and Stam stress that “while the Holocaust, as the paradigm for exterminationist racisms, has its own horrific specificity, it also exists on a historical continuum with other forms of colonial racism.”⁶ Stam and Shohat place the “dynamics of race and coloniality” in Brazil, France and the United States “in a relational frame,” emphasizing that in highlighting “differences that connect” and “similarities that separate” there is a potential for mutual illumination.⁷

In recent years, French literary and cultural historians have also emphasized the relational and multidirectional workings of history and memory. Focusing on the postwar period in France, Michael Rothberg, Max Silverman and Debarati Sanyal situate Holocaust remembrance within a multidirectional, knotted, palimpsestic and migratory configuration.⁸ These authors turn to postwar French writers, thinkers and filmmakers, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Hannah Arendt, Albert Camus, Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire,

⁶ Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, *Race in Translation*, p.157.

⁷ Stam and Shohat, p.xix.

⁸ See Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Michael Rothberg, Debarati Sanyal and Max Silverman, *Noeuds (knots) de mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture* Yale French Studies no 118&119 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Max Silverman *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013); and Debarati Sanyal’s *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015). All three authors were working on the Holocaust and multidirectional memory in postwar France unbeknownst to each other before they met and co-edited a *Noeuds de mémoire*. That three scholars in French Studies were undertaking distinct but overlapping projects centered on the same period in France suggests a significant shift in approaches to Holocaust memory and French history.

and Alain Resnais, who “forged links between the Nazi genocide and colonialism in the immediate aftermath of World War II.”⁹ Like Stam and Shohat, Rothberg, Silverman and Sanyal are mindful of the potential risks of placing traumatic histories in a comparative relationship, but they also underscore the potential ways this relational frame can be a way out of what Rothberg calls the “zero-sum game” of competitive memory.¹⁰

France has a dense and complicated history with interrelated traumas and palimpsestic memory, which also mark the work of Ophuls and Sivan in significant ways. A few historical figures are emblematic of France’s position as an occupied nation under Vichy and as an occupier in Algeria. Maurice Papon was a police prefect during Vichy, who oversaw the roundup of French Jews to be sent to Nazi concentration camps. On October 17, 1961, during the Algerian war, he oversaw the infamous massacre of Algerians in Paris during a peaceful protest march. As Stam and Shohat recount, many “representatives of the Jewish community expressed solidarity with the Algerian Muslim community on the basis of a common memory of oppression.” Claude Lanzmann, who as discussed below, is today one of the most vocal spokesmen for the radical singularity and uniqueness of the Holocaust, signed and wrote much of a protest statement declaring,

If we do not react, we French will become the accomplices of the racist fury for which Paris has been the theatre and which bring us back to the darkest days of the Nazi occupation. We refuse to distinguish between the Algerians piled up in the Palais des Sport waiting to be ‘refoules,’ and the Jews parked in Drancy before being deported....¹¹

While this declaration marks a powerful moment of solidarity between French Jews and Algerian Muslims, the figure of lawyer Jacques Vergès acts as a kind of cautionary tale

⁹ Rothberg, Sanyal and Silverman, p.3

¹⁰ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*.

¹¹ Cited in Stam and Shohat, *Race in Translation*, p.159.

against abusing comparative or multidirectional memory. Vergès, deeply identified with the Algerian Independence movement and defended members of the FLN who had committed acts of terrorism. Later in life he disappeared for a few years and may have been linked to a Swiss Nazi who supported Palestinian liberation, sewing a dark link between anti-Semitism, support of Palestine and Nazism. Vergès became a well-known public figure as the lawyer for Nazi Klaus Barbie, known as “the butcher of Lyon,” who was charged with 341 counts of deportation of French Jews and Resistants. Vergès used the trial against Barbie, as Susan Suleiman points out, to put France on trial for its crimes of torture and murder in Algeria.¹² Vergès pitted Jewish plaintiffs against plaintiffs who had been part of the Resistance, seeking to stir up competitive memory between the victims. Barbie’s crimes against Resistants fell under war crimes, not crimes against humanity, and hence had expired under the statute of limitations. In Ophuls’ *Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie* (1988), Ophuls conducts a lengthy interview with Vergès. Ophuls also interviews Vergès’ earlier interviewer, a journalist, and corrects or adjusts some of the journalist’s claims. We are pre-warned of what the journalist calls Vergès’ “diabolical skill” before we “meet” Vergès, as if to inoculate us from falling under his thrall. Vergès is the subject of Barbet Schroeder’s *Terror’s Advocate* (2007). An interviewee with considerable suasion and charm, Vergès twists and contorts the juxtapositions of related historical memories for nefarious means.

¹² See Susan Suleiman, “History, Memory, and Moral Judgment in Documentary Film: On Marcel Ophuls’s *Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie*.” *Critical Inquiry*, Winter 2002. 509-541. Web.

My project is indebted to and dovetails in different ways with Stam, Shohat, Rothberg, Sanyal and Silverman’s scholarship on historical relationality and multidirectional memory. I focus on the documentary interview and zero in on moments where denial erupts in charged crystallizations of the personal and the political. I begin with a period, the late 1960s, when the interview came to prominence in the documentary genre. This moment coincided, as I will discuss below, with solidifying the Holocaust narrative as singular and unique, a rupture without precedence. After the 1961 Adolf Eichmann trial and the formation of the Holocaust as a narrative specific to the Judeocide, Sanyal notes that “comparative or metaphoric uses of Holocaust memory were largely forgotten or suppressed from the 1960s to the 1990s.”¹³ While I believe this statement accurately describes the general waning of the comparative structure after the formation of the Holocaust narrative, my dissertation highlights the important ways in which this comparative structure operates in one of the most significant documentary filmmakers on the Holocaust—Marcel Ophuls—whose films were made when the singularity and uniqueness of the Holocaust was a dominating conceptual framework. If juxtaposing the Holocaust with any other historical atrocities is controversial, conjuring up Holocaust trauma alongside Palestinian trauma can be viewed as incendiary and possibly anti-Semitic. And yet, though this juxtaposition might be deemed more provocative than other juxtapositions, it at the same time brings together two traumas

¹³ Debarati Sanyal, *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015) 3.

that, as Sivan, along with many scholars, has noted, are unequal but historically contiguous.¹⁴

One of the most vehement voices on the singularity of the Holocaust is of course French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, Lanzmann became the central character in a much-publicized anti-defamation case filed by Eyal Sivan against French intellectual Alain Finkielkraut, who called Sivan an “anti-Semite” and declared that Michel Khleifi and Sivan’s film *Route 181: Fragments of as Journey through Palestine-Israel* was a call to murder Jews. Lanzmann fervently eschews situating the Holocaust or the Nazis within any comparative or relational structure to other atrocities, and he denounces Sivan’s film *Route 181*. Although the influence of Ophuls on *Shoah* in terms of the interview seems indisputable, in a well-known acerbic exchange between Lanzmann and Ophuls in *Cahiers du Cinema*, Lanzmann denied any influence.¹⁵ Nevertheless, I argue that in their treatment of the interview and of the particular time/space that arises, these directors have produced works that are deeply connected. Lanzmann opens his film out into another time-space in the individual’s life—a time-space still contained in the same historical atrocity, the Nazi regime and the Holocaust—whereas Ophuls and Sivan open their films out onto other time-spaces in history. I argue that, despite the directors’ opposing approaches, the interview time-space in Lanzmann’s *A Visitor From the Living*, and in many interviews in Ophuls’ and Sivan’s

¹⁴ Speaking of the controversy provoked by a scene in *Route 181* that recalled the famous Abraham Bomba barber scene in *Shoah*, Sivan states, “This is what I call a forbidden montage, the fact of refusing to see....not accepting the fact that evens can be linked.” Cited in Neja Tomsic, “Montage Interdit. A Conversation with Eyal Sivan,” *Anti-Utopias* 2013. Online.

¹⁵ See the acerbic exchange between the two directors in “Replique: Response à Marcel Ophuls par Claude Lanzmann,” *Cahiers du Cinema* 4, 2002, p.54-55.

magnum opuses, share a common configuration. Inviting in other time-spaces, weaving matrixes of gesture, speech, mise-en-scene, aided by strategic editing and camera movement, these interviews offer complex micro-essays on the negotiation between the personal and the public, the specific and the general, and the inter-relation or isolation of politico-historical atrocities.

I begin with Lanzmann's *A Visitor From the Living* because within my study it serves as exemplum. In the film, Lanzmann interviews a Red Cross official, Maurice Rossel, who visited Theresienstadt, the Nazi camp and transportation center presented to the Red Cross as a "model" ghetto, and wrote a glowing report. Under Lanzmann's expert control, the interview becomes a site in which the official replays and reenacts his original blindness. On his visit to Theresienstadt, Rossel chose to see the Potemkin village created by the Nazis as real, and ignored all the signs that could have punctured the pernicious constructed reality. As we will see, in the interview with Lanzmann, Rossel eerily creates another ersatz environment and again attempts to seal off any intrusion of external reality. Because the Red Cross official replays a version of his original blindness, the interview becomes a site in which the past overlays the present, and the present repeats the past. Rossel declares that he would sign his name again to the report he wrote on his visit to Theresienstadt, thereby re-ratifying his blindness.

There are many moments in filmic interviews with perpetrators, or with those whose past actions are questionable, where we observe a similar repetition of blindness or

denial, coaxed out by an adroit director.¹⁶ In interviews in Ophuls' and Sivan's works, we often witness this type of replaying of a version of the past in the present. In sharp contrast to Lanzmann's work, however, a number of Ophuls and Sivan's films situate Nazi denial, or interviewee blindness, within a "relational" or multidirectional framework. Although the difference between these approaches could lead us to view the interviews in which the Holocaust and Nazi utterances remain in an enclosed historical framework (as they do in Lanzmann's works) in opposition to those in which they are placed within a multidirectional one (as they are in Ophuls' and Sivan's films), I see these interviews in relation to one another. In *A Visitor From the Living*, two time-spaces confront each other in the interview space—Rossel's visit to Theresienstadt, including his actions there, and his repetition of similar behavior in the interview's present. In *The Memory of Justice* multiple time-spaces and historical atrocities confront each other. Unrepentant Nazis often struggle to separate their past from the interview's present, whereas Ophuls strategically intercuts Nuremberg footage to overlay the present with the past. Ophuls also, through skillful montage, haunts war crimes testified to in Vietnam and the Algerian war with Nazi Nuremberg trial footage. In Khleifi and Sivan's *Route 181*, the interviews often become sites where Holocaust trauma and Palestinian trauma uncomfortably collide.

¹⁶ Linda Williams, comments in her well known essay "Mirrors Without Memories," that "we thus see the power of the past ... finally by finding its traces, in repetitions and resistances, in the present. ... Events of past register not in fixed past or present but in reverberations between." See "Mirrors Without Memories: Truth, History, and *The Thin Blue Line*." *Documenting the Documentary*. Ed. Barry Keith Grant. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1998.

Denial as Pentimento

In Max Silverman's book *Palimpsestic Memory*, and in the writing of many other scholars, the palimpsest is an evocative and productive trope for looking at memory and history as a multilayered, multidirectional construct. From the Greek, meaning "rubbed smooth again," "palimpsest" is defined by the New Oxford American Dictionary as "a manuscript or piece of writing material on which the original writing has been effaced to make room for later writing but of which traces remain." While I too find the palimpsest a fertile image for history and memory, the image I suggest for this specific project is the pentimento. With a meaning similar to that of "palimpsest," but within the visual rather than written realm, "pentimento" is defined as "a visible trace of earlier painting beneath a layer or layers of paint on a canvas." The root is from the Italian word meaning "repentance." I choose to describe the under-layers (or subtle over-layers) of time-space in the interviews I discuss as pentimenti for two reasons. I focus on the visual space of the interview as a dynamic site where histories, temporalities and identities meet and are negotiated. Hence "pentimento," with its basis in the visual, painting, seems fitting. The root of the word—repentance—is particularly significant for my project. In contradistinction to confessions (whether genuine, opportunistic, or patently performed, which act as forms of repentance for past crimes or venial sins) utterances of denial (whether prevarications, statements of deferred responsibility, or outright lies) reverberate with past denial and are a refusal to repent.

Perpetrator interviews, I argue, often have a dialogic relationship with the Nuremberg trials. These 1945 trials, which set a precedent for international criminal law,

also left their legacy on denial testimony in the documentary interview. In Nuremberg, before the court and camera, the Nazi war criminals repeatedly and consistently denied their culpability. Fragments of this Nazi testimony, first launched into circulation through newsreels at the time of the proceedings, continue to appear in numerous documentaries. Any succeeding documentary interview, in which a Nazi claims innocence or ignorance before a camera, has become on one level a re-enactment of the ur-declaration of Nazi denial at Nuremberg. Since the Nazi regime aimed to eliminate all traces of the Judeocide while the extermination was occurring and infused the regime's language with obscene euphemisms, the Nazi ur-declarations at Nuremberg are also already in some manner re-enactments of a denial concurrent with the genocide. We can also consider SS Heinrich Himmler's ban on the filming of extermination and Jean-Luc Godard's claim that cinema "neglected its duty" in not filming the camps and must repent for its guilt as adding another layer to these penitenti.¹⁷ Interviews with Nazis, viewed in the present, also reverberate with the vast number of documentary and fictional works featuring Nazis that came before them. Nuremberg Nazi denial testimony also haunts interviews with perpetrators of other atrocities. As we shall see, this haunting can be powerfully mobilized for various political objectives.

I argue that the visual space in these interviews becomes a canvas layered with past utterances of denial, or non-repentance. I aim, in the structure of this dissertation, to partially mimic the structure of the penitenti, beginning with interviews with Nazis,

¹⁷ Saxton, p. 48. Saxton's *Haunted Images* offers an excellent discussion on the debates surrounding the phantom film of the gas chambers, which have taken place between Godard, Lanzmann, and Georges Didi-Huberman and other French scholars. Libby Saxton, *Haunted Images: Film, Ethics, Testimony and the Holocaust* (London: Wallflower Press, 2008).

French collaborators under Vichy, and bystanders, and then centering on films that focus on the Israeli occupation of Palestine. I look at the way many Israeli perpetrator films overtly conjure up the Holocaust and Nazi perpetrators in their study of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and consider why only some films provoke controversy over this comparison, while others are embraced by international festivals and the more mainstream press. I examine how the filmic interview construct carries with it the imprint of Holocaust documentaries when it moves to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. I venture that, in addition to editing, the configuration of the mise-en-scene and time-space in the interview is an essential indicator as to how the controversial comparison is received.

Testimony, Perpetrators and the Documentary Interview

The “era of the testimony,” in Annette Wieviorka’s well-known phrase, was ushered in by the 1961 Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. The birth of the Holocaust as we know it and the emergence of the era of testimony were simultaneous and indivisible. While a Holocaust written testimonial genre—written memoirs and first-person testimonies—had already been established in literature before the Eichmann trial (Primo Levi’s *If this is a man* appeared in 1947; the English translation of Elie Wiesel’s *Night* met with enormous success in 1960) it is hard to overstate the impact the Eichmann trial had on our current understanding of testimony and the Holocaust. With the explicit goal of establishing a *Holocaust narrative*—a narrative that the 1945 document-centric Nuremberg trials failed

to “transmit”¹⁸—the Eichmann prosecution team chose to call to the stand 111 live witnesses, survivors of the Nazi Judeocide. Crucially, since the Eichmann trial was the first to be filmed in its entirety and televised, countless people in the United States and Europe would hear and *view* the survivors’ testimonies rather than reading them or only listening to them. The visual medium is thus a pivotal third player in this point of origin for in transmitting through testimony Holocaust narrative. And if we find filmed testimony’s emergence wrapped into the formation of the Holocaust narrative—what Jeffrey Shandler calls “*cinéma vérité of due process*,”—we also find the Holocaust wrapped into a film genre’s emergence: *cinéma vérité*.¹⁹ As Michael Rothberg stresses, Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch’s groundbreaking *Chronicle of a Summer* (1960), a work coined the term *cinéma vérité*, was released the same year as the Eichmann trial and contains what is considered the first documentary Holocaust testimony.²⁰

The appearance of the Éclair 16mm camera and the Sony Nagra tape recorder, as numerous critics have noted, was inseparable from the emergence of *cinéma vérité* as well as its coeval American counterpart, direct cinema. With the capacity to conduct on-the-spot synched sound interviews without the encumbrance of heavy equipment, these two styles—one which stresses a truth that arises from the cinematic *encounter* between interviewer and interviewee and the other which eschews the interview and affects a fly-on-the wall stance—came into being. In *Chronicle of a Summer*, the ur-*cinéma vérité*

¹⁸ Shoshana Felman, identifies the inability to *transmit* the story of the Holocaust as one of the Nuremberg trials’ failings in *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002) 112.

¹⁹ Cited in Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, Chapter 6. [Kindle DX]. Retrieved from Amazon.com.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

film, the ur-documentary Holocaust testimony in question occurs in Les Halles and is delivered by one of the film's main subjects, Marcelline Loridan (soon to be Marcelline Loridan Ivens after her marriage to the great Dutch documentarist, Joris Ivens). Loridan, a Jewish survivor of Birkenau, recounts her traumatic past before the camera. The scene is both affecting and highly staged. As Rothberg notes, the *mise-en-scène* and speech soon take on a ghostly charge where past and present, here and there, public and private become indistinguishable. The scene, Rothberg states, links *cinéma vérité* "to the emergence of a new public form of Holocaust memory;"²¹ its "mixture of fantasy, staging and technologically mediated access to reality...constitutes an unusual context for thinking about the emergence of testimony, but one not without some suggestive ties to more canonical works of Holocaust representation." Marcelline's testimony has links to *Shoah*, where *mise-en-scène* and the director's relentless prompting of witnesses facilitates what Lanzmann calls a "reincarnation." It also connects to the testimonies of over a hundred survivors in the Eichmann trial, which were broadcast to thousands of viewers the same year that *Chronique* was screened. Finally, as Rothberg emphasizes, Marcelline's Holocaust testimony is positioned within a multidirectional historical frame, connected to colonialism. Just before the Holocaust testimony, Marcelline shows her Auschwitz tattoo to African students living in Paris, who do not know what it is.

The landmark witness-centered trial and landmark films, *Chronicle of a Summer* and *Shoah*, share a striking trait with *Sorrow*: at the moment they insert a new form of bearing witness into the public sphere they simultaneously deconstruct it. As I will

²¹ Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, Chapter 6. [Kindle DX]. Retrieved from Amazon.com.

discuss further in chapter three, the Eichmann trial was strategically choreographed, held in Beit Ha'am, Jerusalem's imposing theater, and staged for both the packed audience and the television cameras. Rothberg: "The trial thus shares with the film both a self-conscious aesthetic strategy and the use of the latest technology for vehicles for the dissemination of its truths."²² Arendt's searing deconstructive work, which peels away the trial's surface of cohesion to reveal the orchestrations and devices below, is a fundamental part of the narrative. Chapter 3 will offer an extended look at this groundbreaking text. For the moment it is important to keep in mind Arendt's specific criticisms of the Eichmann prosecution's handling of testimony at the trial since they single out essential issues we encounter repeatedly in testimony within the documentary interview: 1) *repetition versus originality*. Arendt argued that the testimonies had a rehearsed quality which reflected trial screening and earlier depositions; 2) *selection and representation*. Arendt was critical of the prosecution's favoring of Jewish witnesses who were well-known and/or well-to-do and thus more likely to deliver polished testimonies; 3) *context*. Arendt, in her most vehement criticism, held that witnesses whose knowledge had no direct bearing on Eichmann's sentencing should not have given testimony in the trial. The categories isolated here from Arendt's analysis are ones that cross over from trial to documentary. Whether the complications with testimony and witnessing are covered over or exposed depends on the filmmaker's approach.

²² Ibid.

Filmic Space and the Documentary Interview

The documentary interview has traditionally been concerned with communication. Essential to its ability to communicate is speech. Indeed without the verbal realm, the interview in its familiar form ceases to exist. And whereas we frequently listen to and read interviews, we rarely view silent ones. Hence the traditional documentary interview appears to push the image into a secondary or supporting role.

For the interview to perform its ostensible task—knowledge transmission—it is crucial that we trust the speaker. Visual conventions help to prop up the interviewee’s statements. In his influential essay, Bill Nichols notes that “iconic authentication (filling the background of the shot with evidence of the speaker’s status—bookshelves, laboratories, authenticating locations in general) heightens credibility.”²³ Along with these markers of identity, realist codes such as the medium close-up and the interviewee’s oblique gaze project a space that appears familiar and cohesive—a space that disappears behind the speaker’s words while imperceptibly supporting them.

Untrustworthy interviewees—those who lie or dissimulate, seem evasive, self-deluded or in denial—do not sit comfortably in a genre associated with truth, authenticity, revelation, transparency and knowledge. Their presence seems an affront to documentary’s tenets, and cries out to be contained by the film. The suspect testimony may be countered, explained or discredited, but rarely is it simply let be. Yet it’s not so easy to rein in wayward witnesses. Once unleashed, they throw into relief the codes that

²³ Bill Nichols, “The Voice of Documentary,” in Alan Rosenthal and John Corner, eds., *New Challenges for Documentary*, 2nd Edition (Manchester: University of Manchester, 2005) 36.

govern the traditional documentary interview and lead us to question whether speech can be stable in any interview.

When the interviewee appears unreliable or unforthcoming, the components that give rise to a cohesive space begin to atomize. The indirect gaze now appears to be hiding something. With speech under suspicion, gestures, facial expressions, and intonations move to the foreground, texturing the image. The iconic authenticators eerily begin to separate from their signifieds as the image loses its stability, revealing itself to be a plastic, unstable entity rather than a cohesive background that supports the interviewee's testimony.

This dissertation examines how the documentary landscape changes when the interviewees' credibility is at stake—as is the case with perpetrator interviews. In other words, what happens when the film leads us to distrust the interviewee? Or when, though the interviewee may claim to speak the truth, we think or know otherwise? When the testimony we are privy to is rife with prevarications, partial truths and denials?

I argue that to take on these questions we need a different way to analyze interview-based documentaries—through examination of the filmic space. The documentary interview's filmic space, as I am conceiving it, arises from a combination of the interviewee's words and performance, the interventions of the interviewer (questions, tone of voice, body language etc.), the choices made by the filmmaker (staging, camerawork, lighting, editing etc.) and the viewer's attitude and assumptions. These forces can work in concert to create an impression of unity when we trust the

interviewee; or they can pull in separate directions, giving rise to a space that we experience as ruptured, layered, fragmented, haunted or uncanny. These varying spaces can arise without the deliberate intervention of the filmmaker. They also can be used intentionally by a director to shape our perception of an interviewee. The filmic space of the documentary interview is always shifting as a result of the interplay between word and image. It bears resemblance to the profilmic, but is not the same. Rather, it comes into being only in its unfolding, requiring the viewer to complete it. In this process a new visual space is created, which differs from that of a face-to-face unmediated encounter.

While trustworthy interviewees tend to be filmic space unifiers (with them, the setting recedes to the background and appears cohesive), untrustworthy interviewees are potent space disturbers. Images that involve denial (denial images) create a paradoxical presence/absence—what we “see” when we witness denial is what remains veiled, unexpressed or disavowed. Denial in the interview thus creates a space in which truth and falsity, the visible and the invisible, voice and gesture, collide.

Capturing interviewee denial requires certain filmic techniques and aesthetics. Since denial reveals itself over time—extended duration is part of its make up—it links up with the long take and eschews the sound bite. Hence denial arrests the flow of images and the forward pull of narrative. The presence of interviewee denial raises questions about an assumption that is prevalent in the critical literature on documentary: the notion that without overt foregrounding of the text’s mediation, viewers will be unable to read documentaries critically. The presence of denial challenges the idea that the interviewee’s words and performance are fully within the filmic voice’s command. If

we consider the complex role the interviewee plays in the formation of the documentary space, we can return some agency to the documentary subject, and to the viewer.

A focus on the denial in the interviewee's body, words, and voice also stresses the interrelation between image and word in the interview and how they together shape the labile space. The disjuncture that denial creates between what is spoken and what we see drives us to read the verbal and visual registers separately, whether or not we are prompted to by the film. With speech destabilized and identification unsettled, the interview is no longer a vehicle for communication, revelation, information and truth. What we experience instead are unnerving shifts between cohesive and ruptured space. In documentary works featuring an extended interview with one untrustworthy subject, these shifts take place as the testimony unfolds. In films that consist of interviews with multiple subjects, often the alterations between unified and fragmented space occur between different interviewees.

In my study of interview documentaries, I focus on denial in subjects implicated in historical atrocities. Interviews with political perpetrators teem with disruptive potential; in the Western world the Nazi remains the ultimate perpetrator. Furthermore the testimonial form and the Holocaust have been intertwined since the Adolf Eichmann trial. I examine how the filmic interview space carries with it the imprint of Holocaust documentaries when it moves to other atrocities, most powerfully, the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

As Brian Winston has pointed out, the documentary genre has centered on the figure of the victim. Verisimilitude rules in interviews with victims—“the poor must appear properly poor” as Elizabeth Cowie notes—and we are made to feel human by the empathy evoked in the plight of the other; the interview space grounds us in a knowable world.²⁴ Encounters with perpetrators or dissimulating witnesses, on the other hand, offer radically different viewing experiences as we are not offered a comfortable subject with whom to identify. Without an interviewee who seems reliable and worthy of empathy, we are no longer grounded in a knowable world. As the film alternates between inviting us to share the interviewee’s world and blocking our empathy, the interview space begins to flicker between being comfortably familiar and disturbingly strange. Our oscillating feelings of familiarity and estrangement give rise to a feeling that we cannot know others’ minds. We come away from these interviews not with a reassuring sense of knowledge and understanding but with an unsettling sense of the strangeness inherent in everyday life—with what Stanley Cavell calls “the uncanniness of the ordinary.”²⁵ Once the uncanny has been summoned, it carries over into interviews with trustworthy subjects, contaminating what once seemed ordinary. Denial testimony hence urges us to question whether speech and image can be stable in any documentary interview.

The filmmaker, interviewee and viewer may be the main players who produce the filmic space, but intricate political and historical forces immanent in the space also play a

²⁴ Elizabeth Cowie, “The Spectacle of Actuality,” in Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov, eds. *Collecting Visible Evidence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) 22.

²⁵ Stanley Cavell, “The Uncanniness of the Ordinary,” in *In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

crucial role. The Nuremberg trial haunts documentary interviews with perpetrators obliquely. The actual juxtaposition in many historical documentaries of perpetrator trial footage with subsequent interviews with the same subject introduces a different question: How do the documentary interview space and the trial space differ from one another? When do the two spaces remain discrete and when does a trial begin to look like an interview, an interview like a trial?

I center on historical documentaries dealing with political atrocities, but alterations in filmic space occur in works that treat an array of topics. I therefore make reference along the way to a range of interview-based films in which denial manifests itself.

Documentary filmic space and interview mise-en-scene have received attention in the scholarly literature through various prisms, which have been valuable for my study. Stella Bruzzi's influential work on performance and documentary hoped to be a coup de grace on still lingering notions of documentary transparency. Bruzzi's underscores the centrality of staging, mise-en-scene and acting in the genre. New media works and interactive online documentaries, which manipulate the visual space, have brought renewed attention to documentary space. *Media Fields Journal*, an online journal launched in 2007, is devoted to "critical exploration in media and space," and many valuable essays have appeared in it. Bill Nichols' discussion in his 1991 book *Representing Reality*²⁶ of what he names "axiographics" centers on the shift from

²⁶ Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

“historical space” to “ethical space.” Nichols term “axiographics,” comes from “axiology,” the philosophical study of ethics and values. Nichols defines “axiographics” as the “attempt to explore the implantation of values in the configuration of space, in the constitution of a gaze, and in the relation of observer to observed.”²⁷ Nichols notion of “axiographic” has not received nearly as much attention as his documentary typologies, but is an important frame through which to consider documentary space. However, I believe it too rigidly links self-reflexive tactics with “good” ethics. It makes an *a priori* assumption that when the presence of the filmmaker is visible in the documentary space and when the viewer is alerted to the film’s mediation through overt foregrounding of the controlling textual voice, the documentary takes on an ethical charge. By contrast, masking the presence of the narrating voice and director’s hand is regarded as a marker of an absence of ethics in the film, or worse, as a deceptive manipulation of the viewer.²⁸

While my conception of the documentary interview space draws on Nichols’ discussion of axiographics, I see a less fixed equation between self-reflexive practices and ethics—the director’s presence in the space can be used in a facile manner or can even mark one kind of mediation and cover over other types of mediation or

²⁷ Ibid, p.18.

²⁸ The almost unvarying favoring of works that circumvent documentary’s pull toward enunciative disavowal through self-reflexive strategies is pervasive in documentary scholarship. Michael Renov, in his 1997 essay “Documentary Disavowals,” injects morality into his treatment of the subject. Distancing himself from Freudian disavowal, he asserts, “I wish instead to activate the moral charge attached to the figure of disavowal as a complex mode of refusal to acknowledge or to claim responsibility for the meanings and effects of documentary practices devoted to certitude—sober, certain knowledge—in all its epistemological violence and in all its illusions.” For Renov, a documentary that invites “radical doubt” and embraces “contingency rather than certain knowledge” is both “provocative in its refusal of individualist truth” and “profoundly moral in its call for, and reliance on individual moral responsibility.” In Renov’s thoughtful and nuanced scholarship we still encounter an underlying assumption that viewers need overt foregrounding of a documentary’s mediation to read a work critically. Michael Renov, “Documentary Disavowals,” in *The Subject of Documentary* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2004).

manipulation in the work. Furthermore, I see the viewer's perception of the interview's mise-en-scene as constantly in flux. The lability of the filmic space, as I view it, has more in common with Deborah Massey's study *For Space*. Massey's focus is not the visual medium, but geography; however her conceptions of space are germane and can migrate into a study of filmic space. Massey sees space as "the product of interrelations," a "sphere of heterogeneity," and as "always under construction."²⁹ Likewise, I regard the filmic interview space, marked, in addition to editing and camera work, by intrusions of different temporalities (the present, the past, an imagined future) and the changing relations between the interviewee and interviewer as "always under construction." As Robert Stam has noted, Jean-Luc Comolli, well-known theorist and documentary filmmaker, articulates sensitively the exchanges between filmmaker and filmed subject. Comolli's notion of "auto-mise-en-scene," where the interviewee's desire shapes the documentary mise-en-scene, connects closely with the way our perception of the interview space changes with the interviewee's testimony. Comolli also discusses the anxieties of the filmmaker and the interviewee in the documentary encounter where both "risk becoming other to themselves."³⁰

A series of filmed therapy sessions, much discussed in the psychoanalytic and counseling arena but little known in the film studies world, offer a kind primer to the approach I take in looking at the documentary interview. In 1964, Everett Shostram filmed *Three Approaches to Psychotherapy*, commonly known as "The Gloria Films."³¹

²⁹ Doreen Massey, *For Space* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013). Kindle Edition.

³⁰ Robert Stam with Richard Porton and Leo Goldsmith, *Keywords in Subversive Film/Media Aesthetics* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015). Kindle Edition.

³¹ I thank Zachary Model for introducing me to the Gloria Films.

Three well-known therapists, Carl Rogers (who was an early proponent of filming and analyzing therapy sessions), Fritz Perls, and Albert Ellis conducted separate 30-minute sessions with a thoughtful, articulate woman called Gloria. Though the Gloria films gained notoriety at the time they were made and are a canonical part of Counseling and Psychotherapy programs, little attention has been given to them within Film Studies. Made just a few years after the psychotherapeutically-inflected *Chronicle of a Summer*, they are an interesting companion to Rouch and Morin's film.

The filmed sessions are a fascinating study of the way the same person in the same space filmed by the same director can appear dramatically different depending on who their interlocutor is and how the session is framed. At ease and forthcoming in the first interview/session with Carl Rogers, whose "client-centered" approach placed empathy at the core of his practice, Gloria, when she enters into the session with Fritz Perls, takes on a demeanor, gestures and speech entirely different than she does with Rogers. What makes the session with Perls especially relevant for my study of the interview is the way Perls analyzes and segments the *mise-en-scene* for both Gloria and the viewer. Perls, founder with Laura Perls of Gestalt Therapy, demonstrates in a combative and often brutal way, how gestures and body language frequently are at odds with words and facial expression. As Gloria speaks, Perls (and the camera) zero in on parts of her body. "What are you doing with your leg?" Perls demands as the camera shows Gloria's foot twitching below the table. "You say you're nervous but your smiling. Why are you smiling? You're performing anxiety. You're not really scared." As the sessions proceed, the viewer, in addition to feeling empathy with Gloria for being

subjected to Perls' increasingly aggressive behavior, also scans the mise-en-scene continually, looking, as Perls does, for signs of contradiction between Gloria's statements and her body language, reading her face for expressions that bely an emotion in contrast to her words. Ironically, though Gestalt Therapy looks for fragments or signs of contradiction in the patients' narrative or body language in order to create an integrated whole self, the viewer of the film is left only with a visual space fragmented by discrete elements—an odd laugh, a stiff body position, a pitch an octave too high. The visual space of the therapy session seems to reflect the lack of integration which Perls zooms in on in Gloria's self presentation, all the while giving the viewer a primer not just for Gestalt therapy but, I would argue, for looking at interviews in the documentary.

“There are things the body ‘knows’ that the mind does not,” says Michael Taussig.³² We are especially driven to look to the body, to voice, intonations, affect, gestures when we suspect the interviewee may be hiding something. In “‘Getting to Know You...’: Knowledge, Power and the Body” (1993), Bill Nichols juxtaposes “embodied” and “disembodied” knowledge and argues that “some documentaries have begun to insist on the representation of experience, and therefore, the body as witness.”³³ Nichols investigates the way in which embodied knowledge takes precedence over disembodied knowledge in the works of Errol Morris, Marlon Riggs and Trinh T. Minh-ha, among others. He singles out these directors because their work reacts against what

³² Quoted in Jane Gaines, “Political Mimesis,” in *Collecting Visible Evidence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) 94.

³³ Bill Nichols, “‘Getting to Know You...’: Knowledge, Power, and the Body,” in Michael Renov, ed. *Theorizing Documentary* (New York: Routledge, 1993) 175.

he sees as the prevailing tradition of disembodied knowledge in documentary.”³⁴ In these works, the author asserts, “it is not simply the knowledge possessed by witnesses and experts that needs to be conveyed through their speech, but also unspoken knowledge that needs to be conveyed by the body itself.”³⁵ I would argue that interviews with untrustworthy interviewees privilege embodied knowledge over disembodied knowledge in numerous films, not solely in the works mentioned by Nichols.

The “era of the perpetrator?”

The power dynamics between interviewee and interviewer on display in the session between Perls and Gloria are a significant factor in any documentary interview. The empathy likely to be aroused in the viewer when we see an interviewee being humiliated or mistreated by an interviewer becomes much more complicated when we view interviews with perpetrators.³⁶

Eyal Sivan sees his own early films in a critical light as following a long tradition of victim-centric documentary cinema. Sivan argues that these wrenching portraits of victims make the viewer feel self-congratulatory for their empathy but ultimately can induce complacency. In a master class at IDFA, a documentary festival in Amsterdam, he stated that the viewer watching victim-centered documentaries thinks “I am able to feel the suffering of the other, compassion, like Jesus on the cross, so I am human. The documentary plays the role of this secular church, the relief from spectator

³⁴ Ibid, p.175.

³⁵ Ibid, p.178.

³⁶ I thank Richard Allen for emphasizing the importance of our conflicted feelings of empathy in seeing perpetrators humiliated or abused in interviews.

responsibility.” Sivan has been for many years one of the more vocal proponents of the political value of perpetrator testimony. He believes the burden of documentation should be on the perpetrator because he sees the discomfort perpetrator testimony can evoke in the viewer as potentially productive.

Many recent films have thrust the figure of the perpetrator into the spotlight. These include Errol Morris’s 2008 *Standard Operating Procedure* (interviews with soldiers who were part of the Abu Ghraib scandal), which followed his 2004 film *Fog of War*³⁷ (a sole interview with Former Defense Secretary during the Vietnam War, Robert McNamara), a number of Israeli films, Ari Folman’s 2008 *Waltz with Bashir* (about the 1982 Lebanon war and the Sabra and Shatila massacre), Tamar Yarom’s 2007 film *To See if I’m Smiling* (about female soldiers committing war crimes or acts of violence in the Israeli army), Rithy Panh’s films about the Cambodian genocide, *S21: The Khmer Rouge Death Machine* (2003); *Duch: Master of the Forges of Hell* (2011), *Missing Picture* (2013), and finally and perhaps most spectacularly Joshua Oppenheimer’s *Act of Killing* (where the murderers in Indonesia re-enact their crimes). Some commentators and critics, including Raya Morag, whose book *Waltzing with Bashir: Perpetrator Trauma and Cinema* was published in 2012, claim that we have moved out of the “era of

³⁷ In *Fog of War* we can think about misplaced contrition or tear. The film ostensibly seems to orient towards a confessional mode, in which McNamara is humanized and acknowledges wrongdoing, after thirty years of silence. Yet the moments of onscreen breakdown ironically underline the denial which figures throughout the interview. McNamara’s voice cracks and his eyes water in two instances, one which links him to public grieving and the other to private pain: his recollection of JFK’s assassination and his discussion of the impact of the war on his family. These instances may encourage viewer identification: JFK’s assassination is indelibly marked in the consciousness of most Americans, family strain is something any viewer has experienced. But the visible signs of emotion that punctuate the text serve to underline the larger denial on display. The tears “should” refer to the unimaginable pain of coming to terms with McNamara’s participation in the death of millions of lives. The intensity of Morris’ interview technique and the humanization of McNamara seem to promise that we will at long last receive this overdue confession, one which the film refuses.

testimony” and into the “era of the perpetrator.” These films in different ways underscore the challenges of filming and putting onscreen perpetrator testimony and inflect and inform my study. I however see many of these recent films as occupying a related but distinct category from the revisionist historical documentaries that are the focus of my dissertation.

A brief consideration of Errol Morris, an American director who is widely associated with the interview form and whose creation, the interrotron, allows interviewees to look directly at the camera, fixing the viewer with their gaze, helps to tease out the differences in Ophuls and Sivan’s revisionist projects and some of the recent perpetrator films. Morris’ auteurist marks—re-enactments, often flamboyant visuals and Philip Glass music—have left their imprint on many current documentaries. Morris, referring to his former job as a private investigator, has called his filmmaking an “investigation with a camera.” Morris’s films have covered an array of topics from pet cemeteries, topiary, and cosmology to the Holocaust, and the Vietnam and Iraq wars but what unites them is an enduring fascination with “what’s inside people’s heads.” Questions of knowing or not knowing others’ minds crop up in moments in films I discuss in this dissertation, but it is ultimately not the thrust of the revisionist historical films. In Morris’ politico-historical works, his interest in “what’s inside people’s minds” and his creative use of the form to investigate this question, takes precedence, I would argue over a revisionist historical project. When I saw Morris present *Standard Operating Procedure*, at the San Francisco Film Festival, he asked the audience after the screening if it was clear that the film was incriminating the higher-ups and not endorsing

the “few bad apples” theory. It is hard to imagine either Ophuls or Sivan asking an audience whether their political stance came through clearly in one of their films.

Numerous avant-garde and experimental films investigate the interview as a form in a more overt and self-reflexive manner than the films at the center of my dissertation. They magnify specific elements of the interview that exist in more subterranean form in the films I discuss. In Su Friedrich’s 1990 film *Sink or Swim*, written text appears on the screen while the director’s mother speaks. The text contradicts, adds nuance to, or voices the thoughts of the director as her interview subject gives testimony. In Hans Jurgen-Syberberg’s film *Winifred Wagner* (1975), which conducts interviews with Wagner in the house where she used to receive Hitler, the director similarly intercuts quotations and commentary while Wagner speaks, pulling the viewer out of Wagner’s narrative and adding an overt critical gloss over her testimony as we listen. While the works I focus on do not use the same self-reflexive strategies, they encourage us to remain aware of the text’s mediation while at the same time offering new narratives to intervene in official history.

Screening the self

It is befitting that a repeated motif in documentaries about perpetrators and unreliable witnesses is the image of a screen with previous testimony from the witness. This common self-reflexive device acts, I suggest, in a specific manner in these films. Since many of the witnesses have an uneasy relationship with their past, filmmakers, like prosecutors, often confront their interviewees with earlier statements they have made with or incriminating documents. These confrontations introduce an earlier moment in

time, a moment which the guilty or not-so-innocent party will often attempt to contain the past using various strategies. The video screen or film footage in the frame thus calls our attention, in an overt self-reflexive manner, to the struggle that often arises in these interviews between an earlier self and the current self-presentation. In *Memory of Justice*, Ophuls often shows Nuremberg trial footage while interrogating Nazis about their past. In *Duch*, Rithy Panh plays scenes to Duch, a high-level Khmer Rouge official under Pol Pot, of Panh's earlier film, *S21*, in which former perpetrators re-enact their crimes. Panh films Duch's response to the scenes.

In Andre Heller and Othmar Schmiderer's *Blind Spot: Hitler's Secretary*, the filmmakers lay bare the split state of Traudl Junge, Hitler's former secretary, by playing back the footage of her interview and filming her reactions. Throughout the film, the 81-year-old Junge is repentant and denounces her willful denial as Hitler's secretary. However, when recounting anecdotes and details from the past, she appears to re-occupy the role of her naïve former self; in these moments her narrative seems untouched by hindsight. When Traudl Junge relays the details of her job interview with Hitler she recalls how, in her anxiety, she blundered the typing test. "Thank God...or unfortunately," she tells us, Hitler unexpectedly had to leave the room. She seized the moment to cover her mistakes and was hired soon after Hitler re-entered. This "Thank God...or unfortunately" falls on either side of the fault line between Junge's past and present. If we consider Freud's definition of disavowal as a split psyche, a "blindness of the seeing eye in which one knows and does not know a thing at the same time,"³⁸ then

³⁸ Cited in Stanley Cohen, *States of Denial* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Press, 2001) 29.

Blind Spot presents an interesting version of this double state and its unveiling. Rather than exhibiting onscreen the presence of denial through a gesture or intonation that conflicts with the verbal register, Junge instead displays to the viewer her split state verbally by moving between the perspicacious older woman of the present and the starry-eyed girl of her youth. Junge's slips into the past allow us closer access to significant historical information. Since Junge, in J. Hoberman's words, "witnessed the implosion of the Nazi cult," her onscreen first-hand account is crucial in documenting these final moments.³⁹

Chapter Breakdown

The chapters in this dissertation follow a comparative structure, each containing two lead films while referencing other works throughout. Chapter 2: The Plasticity of the Interview Space focuses on the strategic use of shifts in the filmic interview space. Through carefully crafted fragile unities, ruptures, fluctuations and reversals, a director may shape and radically alter the viewer's perception of an interviewee, conveying, through the interaction of word, image, gesture, and body language, information that would be unavailable if we were merely in the aural register. I will discuss two films, which demonstrate different methods of using this technique: Claude Lanzmann's *A Visitor From the Living* (1985, an outtake from his nine-and-half hour masterwork *Shoah*) and Marcel Ophuls' *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1969). Both works are profound

³⁹ J. Hoberman, "Secrets and Lies: The Cleric and Clerk Who Turned a Blind Eye," *The Village Voice*, January 21, 2003.

studies of denial: in the former, an official's, in the latter, a nation's. In each, the interview space becomes a site in which denial manifests itself, replays itself, and is felt in the film's present tense. The surfacing of this denial is a major source of disruption in the interview space. Through the fluctuation and changes in the interview space we are prompted to become aware of documentary interview stagings and conventions: the films begin by seeming to fulfill the traditional codes, then upend our expectations and draw our attention to the interview's construction. As these shifts take place, we are jolted out of our comfortable viewing experience and the interviewee is jolted out of the documentary codes to which they often cling. This process is played out in different ways in both films. In *A Visitor From the Living* the filmic interview space fragments gradually through a protracted conversation with a sole witness. Whereas in *The Sorrow and the Pity*, the most dramatic changes in interview space occur as the film moves back and forth among its numerous witnesses. Chapter 3: "I am here. I was there. The Filmic Space of the Trial and the Interview: *The Memory of Justice* and *The Specialist*," juxtaposes two films—Marcel Ophüls' *The Memory of Justice* (1976), on the Nuremberg trials (the first trials filmed) and their aftermath, and Eyal Sivan's *The Specialist: A Portrait of a Modern Criminal* (1999), on the Adolf Eichmann trial (the first trial to be filmed in its entirety and broadcast)—and argues that they marshal expressly cinematic devices to challenge testimony's fundamental statement: "I am here. I was there." In different ways, each film contains a pentimento of perpetrator denial. Upon their release, both *The Memory of Justice* and *The Specialist* generated considerable controversy. These two filmmakers wield the cinematic medium to challenge received truths and

official history. *Memory* and *The Specialist* haunt the filmic testimony with other times and places, bringing to the fore testimony's peculiar relation to temporality and unicity—it must be unique and exemplary, singular and repeatable. In doing so, the films also bring forward a fundamental paradox: testimony has been a privileged mode for narrating the singularity of the Holocaust but testimony itself relies on a movement *between* singularity and repetition. The link between the Holocaust and the testimonial form has been firmly established since the Adolf Eichmann trial, where over 100 survivors took the stand. Within Holocaust documentaries, space disturbers are Nazi perpetrators or bystanders and space unifiers are often Holocaust survivors. Chapter 4: Archeology of Denial: *Route 181—Fragments of a Journey through Israel/Palestine* and *Censored Voices*,” focuses on two very different treatments of the Israeli perpetrator. In Eyal Sivan and Michel Khleifi's *Route 181: Fragments of a Journey through Israel/Palestine* (2004), survivors and their descendants become space disturbers and Palestinians are granted the status of space unifiers. This four-and-half-hour film, in which the directors travel along what was once the 1947 UN Resolution 181 partition line, interviewing inhabitants of the area, draws on the historical linkage between filmic testimony and the Holocaust to amplify its political charge. I argue that *Route 181* enacts a Palestinian cine-archeology, filling in a missing stratum—the Arab presence—in the Zionist archeological project and at the same excavating interviewees psyche's. Mor Loushy's *Censored Voices* (2015), a film that reveals for the first time tape recordings of Israeli soldiers' conversations after the Six-Day War, is structured in a similar way to the Freudian archeology of the psyche,

moving toward a core trauma. I look at how the film's promise of full revelation conflicts at times with the gaps in the film's overall narrative.

In the scene from the 12-minute trailer of Sivan and Ophuls' upcoming film *Let My People Go*, from which the still that opens this chapter is extracted, the two directors stand in the Israeli-occupied territories. Sivan gestures toward two water cisterns and tells Ophuls that Israeli settlers get ten times more water than Palestinians in the territories. Ophuls responds, "There is injustice everywhere, not just here." The following exchange ensues.

Sivan: "But this is our injustice."

Ophuls, smiling somewhat ironically: "Not mine I have nothing to do with it."

Sivan, also smiling: Marcel since we speak here in the name of all Jews, you're mixed up in it.

Encapsulated in this moment are the wonderful possibilities that this at once common and strange form, the documentary interview, can engender. We see Ophuls, "famed Holocaust documentarian" beside Israeli filmmaker Sivan. There are specific associations with each director. But as always, the particular and the general, the I, we, us, them skitter around each other. In testifying to the injustices against Palestinians, Sivan and Ophuls speak as two well-known filmmakers, but also now [or in an imagined future] for all Jews. The filmmakers torque the interview device they know well to rearrange the particular and general: "We stand here as Jews," they state, but what they stand for is not what Jews are often expected to stand for. They thus de-link an expected connection made by the JTA article discussed earlier and make new links between the

general and particular. In this way the moment responds in advance to the JTA article predicting Ophuls' Jewish fans will "Let him go."⁴⁰

⁴⁰ In "Marcel Ophuls," *New York Times*, Sivan states "Maybe we are minority today, but maybe the traitors of today are the heroes of tomorrow, and the heroes of today are the traitors of tomorrow."

CHAPTER 2 THE PLASTICITY OF THE INTERVIEW SPACE

A Visitor from the Living and The Sorrow and the Pity

Claude Lanzmann's *A Visitor From the Living*—a sixty-five minute outtake from his nine-and-a-half hour work *Shoah*—is about Theresienstadt, a Jewish ghetto in Poland built by the Nazis for the precise purpose of being shown. This “model” ghetto, where thousands of Jews, including those of high social standing, were sent before extermination, was constructed to draw world attention away from the death camps. Lanzmann's specific focus is the “performance” put on for the visit, in 1944, of former Red Cross inspector, Maurice Rossel.⁴¹ During the interview between the filmmaker and the former inspector, the *mise en scene* gradually moves from ersatz cohesion to fragmentation, and concludes with a dramatic shattering.

As part of their famous “beautification” project, the Nazis re-paved roads, built fountains and nurseries, put up fake town signs and dressed, fattened, and rehearsed some of the soon-to-be murdered inhabitants, who under threat of death, were forced to act the part of contented Theresienstadt residents.

The Nazis, by forcing the Jews in the town to play their former selves, pervert and exploit a human tendency that many writers describe as the theatricality of everyday life. In subtle *mise-en-abyme* structure, *A Visitor From the Living* illustrates and embodies a

⁴¹ I thank Ivone Margulies for inspiring this section on *A Visitor From the Living*.

complex interplay between the “theatricalization of politics”⁴² in the Third Reich and the theatricality of everyday life.

The film begins with silent text scrolling down a black screen for several minutes. Lanzmann provides the viewer—who here becomes a reader—with “facts” about Theresienstadt. The scrolled text provides all the factual information about the village that the film will give us. Spectators occupy an epistemic position equal to Rossel’s in the interview, although the former inspector is *the* eye-witness to Theresienstadt. Lanzmann thus eliminates any element of “plot” suspense since we are endowed with all the information from the start. As viewers, we are asked to be readers throughout the film—first, literally, of the written text, then metaphorically, of Rossel. We are in effect asked, as Rossel was when he went to visit Theresienstadt, “to look beyond” what we see and hear.

Lanzmann introduces Rossel as “an important historic figure...in a strategic position....” As a Swiss (a citizen of a country known for its neutrality), an employee of the Red Cross (associated, at least theoretically with helping people) and introduced by Lanzmann as a key witness, Rossel has the markings of man we should trust. Early on in the interview, however, his words begin to arouse an uneasiness in the viewer, and cause the cohesion of the interview to begin to pull apart. Unsettling conceptions of class and nationality seep into Rossel’s description of war-time Berlin.

⁴² Phrase quoted from Brecht in Florentine Strzelczyk, “Fascism-Fantasy-Fascination-Film.” *Arachne* 7.1/7.2 (2000) p.97.

Lanzmann subtly lures Rossel into conveying some of his biases:

L: You Swiss stuck together?⁴³

R: We understood each other....shared the same mentality.

The obvious and disturbing link between this nationalist, xenophobic assertion and the exploitation of this notion by the Nazis goes unnoticed by Rossel. With similar obtuseness, Rossel describes the Red Cross's living quarters—ironically the former dwelling of a famous German movie star—as “a dream house... a haven for us between missions,” continuing with barely contained pride “we received all sorts of grand figures, including Scapini.” Lanzmann interjects with a clarification: “Petain's man?” and Rossel, failing to catch the implication, responds “Yes, yes, he was charming.”

In her penetrating essay on *Shoah*, Shoshanna Felman astutely remarks that Lanzmann's

tour de force as an interviewer is to elicit from the witness ... a testimony which is inadvertently no longer in the control of the possession of its speaker... Lanzmann's performance is to elicit a testimony which exceeds the testifier's own awareness, to bring forth a complexity of truth which, paradoxically, is *not available as such* to the very speaker who pronounces it... But the silent interviewer and the silent camera urge us not simply to see the testimony, but to see *through it*: see—through the testimony—the deception and the self-deception which it unwittingly displays, and to which it unintentionally testifies.⁴⁴

In *A Visitor From the Living*, the gifted interviewer/director affects an intimacy with his interviewee, but, from the start, he meticulously draws out Rossel's blindness, class prejudices and latent anti-Semitism. The “silent camera” urges us “to see *through*”

⁴³ A number of critics have pointed to Lanzmann's own problematic omissions in *Shoah*, omissions which include an over-emphasis on Polish collaboration/under-emphasis on Polish resistance, not discussing the non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust (gays, Gypsies, political opponents, Russians). Another omission is Lanzmann's decision to not address the issue of French collaborators—none of the interviews in *Shoah* are in French. It is interesting that the interview with Rossel, as far as I am aware, is the only one conducted in French, but Lanzmann here accentuates that Rossel is *Swiss*.

⁴⁴ Shoshanna Felman, “The Return of the Voice,” in Shoshanna Felman, ed. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Routledge) 263.

Rossel's testimony, and the scrolling text at the film's beginning arms us with an ability to view critically. The associations with the documentary labels—Red Cross, Swiss, Ally—begin to clash with Rossel's words, fissuring the interview space, but initially we may want to push aside our suspicions, since Rossel's position makes him a person we think we can trust. In *Shoah*, on the other hand, there is a built-in distancing between the average viewer and the witnesses who voice shocking anti-Semitic statements. In his famous opus, when Lanzmann interviews a Nazi, we expect the worst and look for it. We also distance ourselves from Lanzmann's impoverished Polish witnesses, whose anti-Semitism registers differently—though no less powerfully—than Rossel's. The convention of the documentary title—one that fixes identity and secures words and image in the interview—here begins to clash with what observe. In this way, Lanzmann draws our attention to the assumptions we bring to documentary titles and how they can cause us to be misled.

The viewers' experience in *A Visitor From the Living* parallels Rossel's experience of witnessing in that we are first given subtle cues—or warnings—of a disjuncture between the projected “reality”—the interview filmic space—and another reality, which threateningly hovers just below the surface. The viewer may at first engage in a degree of denial or disbelief, but the signs become increasingly blatant and difficult to ignore. Finally, expertly teased out by Lanzmann, the film assaults us at the end with Rossel's anti-Semitic accusations.

“...to get a look at Auschwitz”

Before discussing Theresienstadt, Lanzmann asks Rossel about his earlier visit to Auschwitz. In response to the director’s question of Rossel’s purpose, as a Red Cross representative, for going to Auschwitz, the former inspector immediately and succinctly responds, “I wanted to get a look at Auschwitz...” This seemingly straightforward statement encapsulates many of the multi-layered paradoxes that the film hinges upon. It implies that one *can* get “a look” at Auschwitz, that the sheer and ungraspable horror of the Nazi atrocities could be captured and reported from a one-time visit. Metaphorically, it speaks to issues of representing the Holocaust, voicing a desire in many viewers to “see” or to “know” the Holocaust. If, as Bill Nichols asserts, documentary spawns “epistephelia,” then this desire to know is all the more pronounced considering the difficulty of “knowing” the subject. Further, Rossel’s statement is painfully ironic given the blindness of the set of eyes sent to “get a look” at the Nazi extermination camp.

For Rossel, to get inside Auschwitz necessitated playing a part. He tells Lanzmann that he was a “naïve simpleton” when he arrived in Berlin to train for the Red Cross position. But, to obtain unauthorized admittance to the Auschwitz, he states that he was “*playing the part* of the simpleton.” This marks, in Rossel’s estimation, a shift from *being* a naïve simpleton to *acting the part* of one. But his role-playing does not put him in a position in Auschwitz where he can “look beyond”—the supposed purpose of his mission—it merely gets him *in*. He convinces the guards who patrol the boundary of the camp “to close their eyes” by bribing them with “nylon stockings for their sweethearts.”

The guards will close their eyes for a price to allow Rossel entrance, allow him to get a look. But it is *Rossel's* eyes that are closed; they see nothing.

In the interview, it is only at Lanzmann's persistent goading that Rossel mentions the Auschwitz prisoners he saw. His description of the victims who watch him from behind a cage-like barrier, however, betrays an out-of-character moment of chilling poetic sensibility: "those eyes...staring back at me as if to say 'there one goes, a visitor from the living.'"

In Rossel's description of Auschwitz, implicitly, "to get a look" at the death camp becomes synonymous with "getting in." While Rossel admits that he returns from Auschwitz "empty-handed," a paltry and superficial report the only tangible evidence of his "journey inside,"⁴⁵ he nevertheless recounts his experience at Auschwitz with a barely suppressed victorious glee. He jumps at the chance to tell Lanzmann about his encounter with a Nazi, describing him as "a very elegant man, with blue eyes, distinguished...who received me very correctly....He wanted to show off how he was of the social class of a man who bobs ... as a worker's son, I could never afford to...."

In his description of the meeting with the Nazi, Rossel's notions of class, hinted at in his discussion of Berlin, return and become an eerie forewarning of their association in

⁴⁵ I am borrowing this phrase from Felman's essay, "The Return of the Voice." In her section of the essay entitled "Between the Inside and the Outside: Jan Karski's Trip," Felman's discussion of the Polish courier's "journey inside" a Jewish ghetto to see it "with his own eyes so as to report on it to the Western allies" (p.232) provides an interesting comparison to Rossel's "journey inside" Auschwitz. Ostensibly, Karski and Rossel share a similar goal: to witness the "inside" of the ghetto or camp and to communicate what they observe to the Allies. However, their visits differ radically. Karski goes "inside" the ghetto not "to get a look" but to viscerally experience, even if for a moment, the terror and misery inflicted on the Jews by the Nazis. He succeeds in relaying this horror to the Western world, although his communication fails because his words are ignored and discounted. Conversely, Rossel, while he "succeeds" in getting *inside* Auschwitz, neither experiences nor sees anything and consequently fails in any communication with the Allies not because his words are ignored but because he cannot/chooses not to relay any of the horror of the death camp.

connection with the interviewee's final anti-Semitic statements near the end of the film. Rossel immediately catches the significance of the Nazi's bobsledding comment—an indication of the commandant's upper-class status—and translates it for Lanzmann and the viewer, exhibiting a sensitivity to this cue which lies in sharp contrast to his blindness in the face of other signs. He seems to experience an irrepressible enjoyment of “putting one over” on a Nazi of the upper echelons of society who receives Rossel “so correctly.” The irony of course is that precisely the reverse occurred.

R: It's amazing, we talked like the way you and I do.

L: Did you trust him?... The Nazis were champion liars.

R: Trust, Monsieur?... It was *une de theatre*.

A piece of theater but under whose direction? The Nazi, (“the champion liar” or professional actor) was clearly aware that the goal of the Red Cross inspector was to “get a look” at the camp. But the commander succeeds in revealing nothing to him. Rossel emphatically tells Lanzmann: “On the spot I saw nothing.”

“It depended on the wind...”

As many critics, and Lanzmann himself, point out, the director eschews archival footage of the Holocaust. Instead he relies on interviews, present-day images of the locations, and meticulously detailed and technical descriptions. Lanzmann comments, in relation to *Shoah* that “the film makes the imagination work.... Here one has all the power of evocation and of the word.” Jay Canter, in his discussion of *Shoah*, asserts “if

we cannot enter imaginatively into history—even this history—then our world will be a delusion and our history a spectacle...”⁴⁶

Rossel’s description of his meeting with the Nazi may trigger our imagination, but the former inspector provides no details of the camp since he shut his eyes to his surroundings. However, Lanzmann’s questions—almost all of which Rossel responds to in the negative—function as almost a parallel narrative, a counter-testimony, which conjures up what Rossel’s denial and latent anti-Semitism blinded him from seeing. Lanzmann provides a counter-narration for Rossel’s elisions and at the same time conjures up images in place of the director’s intentional elision of archival footage.

L: You went by *train*?

R: No, no by car.

L: Did you see the victims in their striped pajamas?... Did you see the famous sign?

R: No, I didn’t enter that way

L: You didn’t smell...

R: I saw nothing, I smelled nothing.

L: It depended on the wind...

“Now let’s turn to Theresienstadt”

As if reversing the deadly teleology which led the Jews from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz, Lanzmann moves the conversation from the smell of death in Auschwitz to the “model” ghetto of Theresienstadt. But through this reversal, the images of Auschwitz, conjured up through the discussion moments before, hover in the background, as palpable reminders to the viewer and Rossel of what lies behind the façade in Theresienstadt and awaits the Jewish captives when they are transported out.

⁴⁶ Jay Cantor, “Death and the Image,” in Charles Warren, ed. *Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1996) 27.

The Nazis invited the Red Cross to visit their “model” ghetto in the summer of 1944. Rossel states that the Red Cross knew that if they were asked to visit Theresienstadt, it must be a “special” ghetto. “I was told to go see what I was shown...I was sent to see past the facades to see what was beyond it...” he tells Lanzmann. This contradictory statement about his mission for going to Theresienstadt—was it to see what he was *shown* or see *past* it?—undergirds his entire narration about the visit. Rossel contradicts himself throughout. Moments after he asserts that he was supposed to “look beyond,” the façade, he defensively states: “I couldn’t invent things I couldn’t see.” Most disturbing, however, is the culmination of what the viewer has been sensing all along. The “cues” which haunted the earlier parts of the interview return here in an uncensored explicit form. “What I saw [when I ‘looked beyond’] was a passivity of the Jews which I couldn’t stomach....These Jews had an arrogance about them...their behaviour was quite unpleasant...These Jews thought of themselves as *prominenten* who didn’t dare risk deportation to make an allusion or remark....none of them said ‘this is a farce.’”

Rossel obsessively and repeatedly shifts the blame away from himself and his own failure to see, to the Jewish “actors” whom he calls passive because they do not give up their lives to *force* Rossel to see. By relentlessly accusing the Jews rather than himself, he engages in classic denial and transference.

The disruption

Rossel states that what “he could not stomach” was that “not one” of the Jewish “actors” winked at him, slipped him a note, indicated that “this is a farce.” In other

words, not one of the Theresienstadt prisoners broke character, acted outside their “feverishly” rehearsed role. Rossel encountered a completely falsified world, which he willfully chose to take for “reality.” Ironically, the reality he wanted the Jews to reveal by breaking character is the very reality that he himself keeps at bay. Repeatedly Rossel demonstrates his desire to fend off an outside world: he clings to the hermetically sealed “idyllic” environment in the Red Cross “dream house” in Berlin; he exhibits unflagging denial of the “world” he saw during the visits to Auschwitz and Theresienstadt and in his recounting of them to Lanzmann. Perhaps most jarringly, Rossel displays this tendency to block out an outside “reality.” In the midst of his and Lanzmann’s “warm-up” conversation, the sound of a child’s cough intrudes from off-screen. Immediately, Rossel looks up and peremptorily orders an unseen person to “take him away,” adding “Sorry, can’t have him coughing on camera.” Rossel then settles back, seemingly comfortably, into his interviewee role, taking a long pull on his cigarette before continuing.



Fig. 2.1. Rossel tries to eliminate a rupture of the constructed reality.

The cough pierces through the constructed reality on screen, rupturing the interview space's fragile unity. Hinted at here are the numerous layers of performance embedded in the film and the slippage of "realities." The cough is jarring both for Rossel, who immediately banishes its presence, but also for the viewer, since it fractures what we have taken for "reality" within the film. The interview space is revealed for what it is: an ersatz space carefully composed and sealed off from unwanted intrusions.

In *Looking Awry*, Slavoj Žižek cites a passage from a Robert Heinlein science fiction novel in which a couple is ordered to keep their car windows shut on a drive because a visitor from another world must make some changes to "our" universe. However, upon sighting a policeman, the woman rolls down the car window. She abruptly encounters an eerie nothingness outside. Instantly (in a way that recalls Rossel's reaction to the cough) the man in the story shouts "Roll up the window!" Žižek, drawing from this novel, continues to discuss the separation of realities embodied in the car metaphor.

To those sitting inside a car, outside reality appears slightly distant...We perceive external reality, the world outside the car, as 'another reality,'...not immediately continuous with the reality inside the car. The proof of this discontinuity is the uneasy feeling that overwhelms us when we suddenly roll down the windowpane and allow external reality to strike us with the proximity of its material presence. Our uneasiness consists in the sudden experience of the closeness...of what the windowpane...kept a safe distance....Safely inside the car...the external objects appear...fundamentally 'unreal'...in short, they appear as a kind of...cinematic reality projected onto the screen of the windowpane.⁴⁷

For the viewer of *A Visitor From the Living*, the cough on camera elicits an uneasiness, for it draws attention to another "reality" and makes the one we had taken for *the* reality seem unreal, contrived. Furthermore, implicit in Rossel's assertion of what *can't* be on

⁴⁷ Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry: an Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992) 14-15.

camera is a notion of what it means for him to be “on camera.” The rupture which the cough produces in the interview environment is thus doubly jarring for it marks a break not just in a “reality” but also because it momentarily snaps Rossel out of his “interviewee” role. The disruption of “reality,” which casts an eerie falseness on the interview, also causes a disruption in Rossel’s “performance,” which casts suspicion on his entire behavior.

Sociologist Erving Goffman⁴⁸ remarks that even a momentary *difference* in the performance of the self “forces an acutely embarrassing wedge between the official projection and reality, for it is part of the official projection that it is the only possible one under the circumstances.... A single note off key can disrupt the tone of an entire performance.”⁴⁹ Rossel’s abrupt, off-key response accentuates the fact that “the impression of reality fostered by a performance is a delicate, fragile thing that can be shattered by very minor mishaps.”⁵⁰

Returning to Rossel’s insistence that the Jewish actors should have broken role to communicate with him seems particularly ironic given his persistent denial of the “realities” in front of him. Paradoxically, I would argue that what seems to infuriate him is not so much that the “actors” refused to break out of their role, but that they were, in fact, not playing the right role: the role of the emaciated, powerless victim whose connection to life has already been severed. He seems to demand is that victims exhibit external signs to signify to that they are “sufficiently” victimized. Goffman cites an

⁴⁸ I thank Ivone Margulies for introducing me to Erving Goffman’s work.

⁴⁹ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959) 52.

⁵⁰ Goffman, p.56.

extreme example of carrying out these expectations when “sympathetic patients in mental wards will sometimes feign bizarre symptoms so that student nurses will not be subjected to a disappointingly sane performance.”⁵¹

In his description of the victims in Auschwitz, Rossel is able to momentarily reveal sympathy. It seems hard to imagine that the same man who, with full knowledge of the Nazi atrocities, continues to blame the Jews in Theresienstadt for his own denial, could express such pointed pity for the Jewish victims in Auschwitz. But, at the notorious camp the observer is physically distanced from these “walking skeletons” through a jail-like fence. The line of demarcation places life on one side and death on the other. In Felman’s words, “the Other in the Nazi program is at once *enclosed*...and *framed*.”⁵² Rossel can thus feel nothing but “clean” pity, like Aristotle’s audiences of tragedy.

In Theresienstadt, the lines are blurred. If the jail-like fence in Auschwitz functioned as a perverse fourth wall to safely separate viewer and horrific spectacle—in the Nazi’s “model ghetto,” an equally perverse form of interactive theatre occurs. Although, as Lanzmann fiercely reminds Rossel, Jews had been sent from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz for extermination before his visit and would be sent after it, Rossel did not encounter the victims cordoned off and on the other side from the living. Instead, they appeared healthy, well-off and free in the town.

⁵¹ Goffman, p.18.

⁵² Felman, 241.

Inversions/Perversions

During Rossel's visit, the Jewish prisoners in Theresienstadt are forced to *enact* an idealized version of themselves. They live in atrocious conditions and most likely will soon be murdered in Auschwitz but must play contented role. In his prescient work, *The Mass Ornament*, Siegfried Kracauer stated that in Germany "the masses are forced...to gaze at themselves everywhere...made aware of themselves in the form of an aesthetically seductive ornament."⁵³ Parading the "*prominenten*" out to be seen, turning them into a spectacle also inverts, in Felman's terms, one of the essential elements of the Nazi scheme: to make the Jews "essentially invisible."⁵⁴

In one stroke, the Nazis find a way to doubly subvert the formerly established Jews: unlike Hitler's followers who gaze upon an idealized version of themselves proliferated through Hitler's favored medium, film, the prisoners must feverishly, endlessly rehearse for their live theater performance so that they can be gazed upon by others. Further, the Nazis also draw on and sully a tenet of human "nature" which Goffman reads as our "truer" selves: quoting Robert Park who points out that the first meaning of the word "person" is "mask," Goffman asserts that "in a sense, and in so far as this mask represents the conception we have formed of ourselves—the role we are striving to live up to—this mask is our truer self, the self we would like to be."⁵⁵

Since Theresienstadt was a ghetto where prosperous and prominent Jews were sent, however, many of the "actors" Rossel encounters uncannily re-enact a former self

⁵³ Siegfried Kracauer, "The Mass Ornament," in Stephen Bronner, ed. *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1989) p.316.

⁵⁴ Felman, p.209.

⁵⁵ Goffman, p.19.

and, willingly tricked by the hoax, Rossel reads the actors for their former role. What he mis-reads is not that these Jews come from an upper class. Instead he fails to key into the robotic behavior which, in Goffman's words, marks that "something is off key." In another perverse irony, it is partly due to their previous position in society that the prisoners can "return" to this role and re-enact it. Goffman, speaking of everyday psychodrama but with words applicable to Theresienstadt, states that "scripts, even in the hands of unpracticed players can come to life...their own past is available to them in a form which allows them to stage a recapitulation of it."⁵⁶ The Theresienstadt prisoners' "act" thus becomes both an idealized one—in terms of their present situation—and a degraded one—in terms of their former life.

The connection between class and performance too is reversed. Whereas before, what identified a number of the Jews sent to Theresienstadt was their success in areas of performance: acting, opera, music etc. here they instead are forced to *perform* their class, and it is only their class not their performance which Rossel can see with threatened, spiteful eyes. Rossel seems to gloss a statement of Goffman's with complex and contradictory anti-Semitic undertones:

paradoxically, the more closely the impostor's performance approximates to the real thing, the more intensely we may be threatened, for a competent performance by someone who proves to be an impostor may waken in our minds the moral connection between legitimate authorization to play a part and the capacity to play it.⁵⁷

Part of Rossel's accusation is that the Jews' performance, like the impostor's, was too "competent," that it bore too close a relation to the real thing, that no one broke out of

⁵⁶ Goffman, p. 72.

⁵⁷ Goffman, p. 59.

character to tell him that they were acting. But also at stake is the *societal* role that most of the Jews did in fact play before their deportation to Theresienstadt and Rossel's conception of who is legitimately "authorized" to play this part. Rossel's accusatory words that "these Jews paid their way to safety," that they "were arrogant" encompass the notion that though the Jews have the "capacity" to play the part of an upper-echelon member of society they are not, in fact, legitimately "authorized" to do so.

Film and theater intersect

Jews in Theresienstadt were forced to rehearse "feverishly" before Rossel's visit. The Nazis, infamous for their spectacular staging and sadistic "theater," also had numerous "dress rehearsals" for this performance staged to deceive the world. The narrator in Alain Resnais' *Night and Fog* describes a death-camp "hospital" where deathly-ill "patients" were given paper band aids, as "setup and scenes."⁵⁸ Performance for deception also had an antecedent in Theresienstadt and it would have an immediate successor: in 1942, before the "beautification project" of the ghetto, Jewish prisoners were forced to perform for the camera and after the film's completion, the Nazis exterminated most of the "actors" to ensure that no information would leak out about the production process. In 1944, Kurt Gerron, a famous German Jewish actor deported to Theresienstadt, was forced by the Nazis to make a propaganda film about the "model" ghetto entitled: *The Fuhrer Gives the Jews A Town*. The filming began just a month after Rossel's visit. Therefore the stage on which the Jewish actors performed for Rossel also

⁵⁸ Cantor, p.29.

doubled as a movie set for Hitler's upcoming hideous propaganda film. The irony of course is that the constructed movie set would insidiously masquerade as a document of "reality."

The re-enactment: "We talked...the way you and I do..."

Rossel's stepped on to a movie set and witnessed but failed to see through the sinister re-enactment of the Jews' former roles. In *A Visitor From the Living*, the former inspector re-enacts on screen his own blindness. Rossel invites a parallel between the conversation with the Nazi commandant and the one with Lanzmann. "Did you trust him?" Lanzmann asked, as if to implicitly also mean "do you trust me?" As he did when talking to the Nazi, Rossel seems to believe that he maintains a degree of control in the interview with Lanzmann, but his inability to look beyond turns him once again into the dupe. Like the Nazi, Lanzmann directs Rossel to re-enact the same blindness which the Nazi was able to manipulate.

Lanzmann, as has been extensively discussed, privileges survivor testimonies which "act-out" trauma on screen. Neal Ascherson comments "...he wanted people he questioned to relive the past...to be 'characters'." ⁵⁹ Although they recount their own history, Lanzmann transforms "these people into *actors*...who both *play* and *are* themselves." ⁶⁰ Yet victims who "act-out" trauma, as Dominick LaCapra points out, "bear witness to a past that was never fully experienced as it occurred. Trauma, that is,

⁵⁹ Neal Ascherson, "La Controverse autour de *Shoah*," trans. Jean-Pierre Bardos, in *Au Sujet de Shoah*, p.231. Quoted in Dominick LaCapra "Lanzmann's Shoah." *Critical Inquiry* 23 (Winter 1997) p.258.

⁶⁰ LaCapra, p.266.

does not simply serve as a record of the past but precisely registers the force of an experience that is not yet fully owned.”⁶¹ LaCapra continues a few pages later: “the initial ‘experience’ was a gap in existence typically producing a state of numbness and disorientation...[the re-enactment] allows re-engagement with life in the present”⁶², *re-experiencing* a traumatic event involves, in a sense, experiencing it for the first time, without the shock or numbness usually present when it occurred.

In *A Visitor From the Living*, a variant form of re-enactment occurs. Through Lanzmann’s goading, Rossel re-plays on screen the blindness, denial, and latent anti-Semitism which obscured his vision, his ability to be a witness. But, whereas in re-enactment of *trauma*, the gap, or numbness disappears, allowing the victim to feel, to see, to *witness* the experience for the first time, the paradox here is that what Rossel re-enacts is a replica of his blindness from the first time he witnessed it. Acting out trauma hinges on a difference—while replicating the event the re-enactment eliminates the space present at the time of the trauma. Rossel’s re-enactment, in contrast, repeats the distance present during the original event.

In a statement which bears affinity to Goffman’s conception of the “theatricality of everyday life,” Gerturd Koch asserts the paradox that “...through acting, each person becomes once again who he or she really is. That is *Shoah*’s criterion of authenticity, and the basis of the film’s tremendous power.”⁶³ In Theresienstadt, the Nazis staged a perverse subversion of this paradox, forcing the Jews to “become once again” who they

⁶¹ Ibid, p.244.

⁶² Ibid, p.255

⁶³ Gerturd Koch, “The Angel of Forgetfulness and the Black Box of Facticity: Trauma and Memory in Claude Lanzmann’s Film *Shoah*,” in *October* 38 (1989) p.131.

used to be through acting, and thus inauthenticating their very selves. Yet Rossel, through his re-enactment reveals an “authentic” self to the viewer, one of denial and blindness.

“Reincarnation”

the analyst knows that only if the false world is properly and thoroughly destroyed, not nihilistically but slowly, meticulously, piece by piece; and only if one acknowledges its destruction, and so the destruction of one’s false self, can the world given by the past be even in part returned to you...⁶⁴

Near the end of the interview, Lanzmann appears to realize that his careful, meticulous treading has earned him what he needed. The intricately entwined false worlds of Theresienstadt and Rossel’s constructed world on screen become exposed. Lanzmann’s directorial control, so expertly disguised throughout the film, emerges in full force to counter the equally undisguised surfacing of Rossel’s anti-Semitism.

Rossel offers a verbal “testimony” for the camera but his words have a textual precedent, an original signed document which he submitted as his report to the Red Cross. Rossel is thus asked to re-testify for Lanzmann, over three decades later, but he insists that “he would sign his name to the report again.” Rousseau “makes the claim that only the individual’s confessional discourse—the discourse of the self on the self—can be taken as perfectly authentic.”⁶⁵ Ironically, part of Lanzmann’s final assertion of his authority involves becoming the master of Rossel’s text and reading it back to the former inspector—reminding him of what he wrote and interrogating him on the meaning of his disturbing assessments. Rossel’s signed—and verbally re-signed—testimony becomes,

⁶⁴ Cantor, p.47.

⁶⁵ Peter Brooks, *Troubling Confessions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 19.

in Lanzmann's hands, inauthenticated, and the director extracts an unwitting and unacknowledged "confession" from the former inspector.

There is a sense in which Lanzmann metaphorically takes back or appropriates some of what the Nazis usurped and perverted in Theresienstadt. Lanzmann calls *Shoah* a "reincarnation" and, fittingly, in *A Visitor From the Living*, he grants the final words to Dr. Epstein, the man who was forced to play the role of mayor during Rossel's visit and was executed a month later.

Lanzmann's *A Visitor From the Living* and Marcel Ophuls' *The Sorrow and the Pity: Chronicle of a French City Under the Occupation* (1969) are profound studies of denial: in the former, an official's, in the latter, a nation's. In each, the interview space becomes a site in which (historical) denial manifests itself, replays, and is felt in the films' present. In *A Visitor From the Living*, the filmic interview space fragments gradually through a protracted conversation with a sole witness. Denial surfaces early on, eventually shattering the ersatz cohesion with which the film begins. *The Sorrow and the Pity* confronts France's refusal to recognize the widespread support for the Vichy Regime during the German occupation. The four-and-a-half-hour work centers on Clermont-Ferrand, a small city near Vichy that takes on the power of the example. Through a combination of interviews with Clermont-Ferrand residents, political figures with links to the city during the war years, and strategically placed archival material from the period, Ophuls' epic film powerfully debunks the reigning postwar myth that France was united in its resistance to the occupation. As opposed to *Visitor*, where the viewer is immersed for the film's duration in one mutating interview, *The Sorrow and the Pity* subjects us to

multiple witnesses whose memories collectively draw a less-than-heroic image of the occupied nation. Although we are often taken into a variety of spaces within a single interview, the most dramatic changes in interview space occur as the film moves back and forth among its numerous witnesses. As these transitions take place, we experience shifts between ruptured and unified spaces.

Looking Backward and Forward: Testimony, the Holocaust, and *The Sorrow and the Pity's* Filmic Forebears and Heirs

In *The Sorrow and the Pity*, as in many great works, content and form are inextricable. Consequently Ophuls' film forcefully intervenes on two fronts: French history, by demythologizing the war years, and the documentary genre, by its use of the interview. As one of the first historical interview films, *The Sorrow and the Pity* was highly influential on subsequent interview-based documentaries—its imprint on Lanzmann's great work *Shoah* is unmistakable.⁶⁶ Following *The Sorrow and the Pity's* release, the interview film became a predominant style in the documentary genre. While Ophuls' inventive use of archival footage is crucial to his study, "it is the interview" as Vincent Lowy emphasizes in his book on the director "and not the use of archival materials, which for Ophuls dominates the relationship to the past."⁶⁷ Critic Marc Ferro, cited by Lowy, credits *Sorrow* (perhaps unduly) with singularly changing the emphasis of the historical documentary: "...the witnesses will henceforth be more important than the

⁶⁶Lanzmann, however, denies that *The Sorrow and the Pity* had any influence on *Shoah*. See the acerbic exchange between the two directors in "Replique: Response à Marcel Ophuls par Claude Lanzmann," *Cahiers du Cinema* 4, 2002, p.54-55.

⁶⁷Vincent Lowy, *Marcel Ophuls* (Lormnot, France: Le Bord de L'Eau, 2008) p.50. All translations mine

archives in the cinematic discourse of history.... The interview would become the veritable matrix of historical reconstruction.”⁶⁸ And Henry Rousso, in a section entitled “Pitiless Sorrow” in his path-breaking book *The Vichy Syndrome* (1987) comments, “For the first time, eyewitness testimony is given precedence over archival footage. In a total of 260 minutes of film, clips from French newsreels and German propaganda films account for only 45 minutes. The rest is devoted entirely to interviews with witnesses... ”⁶⁹

Of course *what* history and *what* memory *The Sorrow and Pity* tackles through the documentary interview is highly significant. Ophuls’ work centers on Vichy France during WWII, juxtaposing the memories of Resistants, bystanders, French and British politicians and German Wehrmacht members. Together their voices shatter the myth of a unified French resistance under German occupation. Still smarting from this severe blow to the nation’s sense of identity, the viewer sympathetic to France then must face the ugly truth accompanying the revelation of widespread collaboration: the country’s active participation in the deportation of French Jews almost all of whom who would be exterminated, and notoriously including over 4,000 children, none of whom survived. In its movement from a study of a nation under occupation to one that rounded up its Jewish citizens, the film powerfully demonstrates the impossibility of separating the Holocaust from France’s wartime narrative. It thus tightens the already close tie between the Holocaust and testimony.

⁶⁸Cited in Lowy, p.?

⁶⁹ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) 101.

In addition to being a key work in establishing the documentary interview as a primary tool of historical investigation, *The Sorrow and the Pity* also—and at the same time—deconstructs the very same form. Indeed, the film functions as an essay, or a series of mini-essays, on the documentary interview even as it sets up traits for an emerging generic mode. While films that followed treated the interview with varying degrees of self-consciousness (ranging from transparent to highly reflexive) *The Sorrow and The Pity* firmly embeds the interview and simultaneously investigates the form. By attending to, rather than covering over, the peculiar space/time of *both* oral testimony and film, *The Sorrow and the Pity* directs our attention to the alchemical merging of these two modes.

What sets *Sorrow* apart from its predecessors in terms of the interview is that, along with archival footage, it uses the interview device expressly to analyze and revise history. Ophuls tells of an executive at the television station ORTF who “criticized us for asking questions thirty years after the fact. Had I been able to respond, I would have said: ‘If you had invented a time machine and offered to rent it to us, I’m not sure that we would have accepted.’ For us, in fact, the interesting thing was to compare the historical reality—and all its attendant ambiguity—with the memory of people today.”⁷⁰ In contradistinction, history enters through the back door in *Chronicle of a Summer* where the work’s focus is, ostensibly, daily life in contemporary Paris. The *cinéma vérité* encounter situates itself in the present even as the film demonstrates the impossibility of keeping temporalities separate. Ophuls’ treatment of testimony and use of the interview is

⁷⁰ Quoted in Rousso, p.112.

no doubt informed by the Eichmann trial and *Chronicle*. Additionally, having spent a number of years working as an investigative journalist for French television and having grown-up in Hollywood, Ophuls brings to the interview a unique blend of influences.⁷¹

We also find a number of resonances in *Sorrow* with a work which takes the history of the Nazi extermination as its subject and is regarded as the first Holocaust film: *Sorrow's* venerable predecessor, Alain Resnais' 1955 masterpiece *Night and Fog*.⁷² *Night and Fog* and *The Sorrow and the Pity* differ extremely in duration (32 minutes and 251 minutes respectively), in focus (Resnais' film takes us to the heart of the horror, the extermination camps, Ophuls' keeps us a step removed, centering on Occupied France) and in form (*Night and Fog* combines brutal archival material and present-day scenes of the grown-over camps with Hanns Eisler's haunting score and Jean Cayrol's poignant, poetic narration; *Sorrow and the Pity* finds its foundation in the interview and contains no images of the Nazi extermination). There are however important parallels between the two works. Both, in distinct ways, transpose to film what had previously been largely relegated to the written realm, and in doing so underscore the medium-specific problems of bearing witness, acknowledging that film introduces new complications to the already vexed relationship between history, memory, testimony, temporality, word and image. Both juxtapose still and moving images and unnervingly blur the distinction between the

⁷¹ Thomas Waugh, in his discussion of Emile de Antonio calls the interview a "basic artifact of television culture" Thomas Waugh, *The Right to Play Oneself* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011) p.110. I will add in the introduction a consideration of how de Antonio's use of the interview differs from and connects to the films I'm discussing. I also will consider Waugh's and Kahana's discussion of the interview and de Antonio.

⁷² Although *Night and Fog* has retrospectively been called the first Holocaust film, the term "Holocaust" was not in circulation at the time of the film's release. Furthermore, the film makes only one reference to the Judeocide, otherwise leaving unsaid any specificity of the Nazi genocide.

two as a way to rethink the past, present and future. Highly significant contemporary events—the Franco-Algerian War and May 1968—bear on each film, inviting parallels between the ostensive historical subject and the present-day circumstances. In a striking moment in *Sorrow*, the screen reverberates with multiple histories when Georges Bidault—former Resistance leader, exiled in 1962 for paramilitary activity in France against Algerian independence, granted amnesty in 1968—discusses the Occupation. Finally and critically, both *The Sorrow and the Pity* and *Night and Fog* self-consciously display an acute and distressing awareness of the cinematic apparatus’s own collusion in the dark, ugly history they tell. Yet, “in spite of it all,”⁷³ they persist in bearing witness through sounds, words *and images*.

As Hallas and Guerin trace in their introduction to *The Image and the Witness*, iconoclasm has not disappeared today, the glut of images in our society notwithstanding. Born of the Jewish prohibition against graven images, this age-old iconoclasm took on renewed charge when the twentieth century witnessed Nazism’s and Fascism’s horrifying abuse of images (still and moving). Iconoclasm also infused the May 1968 protests, steeped as they were in the post-structuralist intellectual current.

As Hallas and Guerin stress, images are particularly suspect when it comes to bearing witness. The widely-circulated dehumanizing footage taken by the Allies of survivors upon liberation of the camps led to a movement for survivors to take control of their own narratives. The testimonial literary genre arose in the fifties as a way for survivors to tell their own stories. Since writing and speech are regarded as active, and

⁷³ Reference to Georges Didi-Huberman’s *Images in Spite of All* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

seeing as passive, the verbal realm for testimony has often been favored over the visual one. Words, Hallas and Guerin emphasize, “particularly those of oral testimony, are still connected to the body of the sufferer while the material image implies a separation (spatial, temporal or both) from that which it captures.”⁷⁴

For documentary, an audiovisual genre linked, however tentatively, to truth and reality, a still-extant suspicion of the image poses a particular quandary. If, as Thomas Waugh remarks, “the enemy hides behind the image,”⁷⁵ how does one use images to take on the enemy?⁷⁶ Numerous scholars maintain that the documentary genre privileges word over image.⁷⁷ However, when examining the documentary interview we don’t want to lose sight of the image’s fundamental role.

Critics including Marc Ferro and Francois Niney who are highly attuned to documentary’s visual construction allow the image to recede and focus on the spoken word when attesting to Ophuls’ innovative use of the interview. Francois Niney’s wonderful description is an example: “The films of Marcel Ophuls are entirely based on the virtue and the perversion of the word, the word which searches itself or which refuses itself, which explains or denies, which explains or betrays, accuses or excuses.... those who know more than they say and those who in speaking say more than they wanted or

⁷⁴ Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas, *The Image is the Witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture* (London: Wallflower Press, 2007).

⁷⁵ Thomas Waugh

⁷⁶ Hallas and Guerin refer to Martin Jay’s who statement “the task of the critic is inherently iconoclastic: it is to police and expose false images.” (Hallas and Guerin, p.9).

⁷⁷ Bill Nichols notes that “documentaries rely heavily on the spoken word.” Thomas Waugh distinguishes French *cinéma vérité* from American direct cinema through their relationship to word and image: “the French *cinéma vérité* movement...led by Jean Rouch used the spoken word as an essential material and structural principle....In contrast, U.S. filmmakers reacted to their heritage of the authoritarian voice-over with an affirmation of the supposed objectivity of the unmediated image, creating a predominantly visual documentary form.” (Waugh, p.96).

believed they were capable of saying.”⁷⁸ Ferro’s statement is another example of privileging word over image: “the recording and organization of speech which helped inscribe social history is at the heart of [Ophuls’] project.”⁷⁹ Centering on speech and words often at the expense of the image loses sight of the fact that the documentary interview is, in its combination and continual interplay between word and image, gesture, tone of voice and facial expression, a *sui generis* form.

What *The Sorrow and the Pity* allows us to see is the way in which the interview space can powerfully and productively inscribe and re-inscribe memory and history. The composition of the interview space, its plasticity, its alternations between unity and rupture, its continual mutability, its refusal to delimit time and space here, as I will be arguing, plays against the fixity and pastness of other forms of memory inscription in the film: photographs, war monuments, memorial plaques. And as we will see, there is a highly intricate matrix of word/images at work in the film and a combination of shattering and re-inscribing, of iconoclasm and iconophilia.

False Memory-Image

France is the only country in all of Europe whose government collaborated and voted laws which were even more racist than the Nuremberg laws.... It’s not something to be proud of. I understand that history books only present the positive side, but historically speaking that’s wrong.

Claude Levy in *The Sorrow and the Pity*

[The Sorrow and the Pity] destroys myths that the people of France still need.

Jean-Jacques de Bresson, former Resistant, head of ORTF⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Quoted in Lowy, p.50.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Lowy, p.49.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Rousso, p.110.

CRS [France's riot police] equals SS
May 1968 slogan⁸¹

When General de Gaulle became the leader of liberated France in 1944, he recognized immediately the need to construct a heroic image of the nation's wartime years. His speech before the newly freed France, as Susan Suleiman notes, *presupposes* the proud memory of the war years he wishes to instill in France.⁸² With words he creates an image, a screen memory to cover over the dark years from which the country has just emerged. As Rousso argues in his psychoanalytically-driven model for *The Vichy Syndrome*, de Gaulle provided the French people with a "unitary and unifying mirror" of the Vichy period. In this Gaullist version of the country's recent history (later called the "resistancialist myth"), France, apart from a few traitors, was united in its resistance to the German occupier. Collaboration would remain a vigorously "repressed memory." The repression required to maintain the false image finds its materialization in the actual repression of a screen image. An infamous photograph in the original version of *Night Fog* showed a French police officer, wearing a telltale *kepi*, the cap worn by the French army, at a guard tower in Pithiviers, a transit camp near Paris where Jews were held before being deported to Auschwitz or other extermination camps. The censors demanded that the photograph be excised. Rather than removing the photograph, Resnais altered the image, concealing the identifying French army cap with a superimposed beam.

⁸¹ Quoted in Rousso, p.98.

⁸² Susan Suleiman, in *Crises of Memory and the Second World War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006, p.17) comments: "de Gaulle not only called for unity in his speeches, he rhetorically *presupposed* it. When he spoke of 'true France, eternal France,' unanimous in its resistance to the occupant, he was expressing a wish not describing an actual state of affairs. In rhetoric, presupposition is a means of persuading your interlocutor that something exists, without empirical verification."

The incriminating image hence remains just below the surface, a pentimento covered over by another image, present but absent. Through a combination of active censorship and willful amnesia, the *resistancialist* myth persisted through the 1960s. No significant critical history of the Vichy period appeared in France that challenged this myth. *The Sorrow and the Pity*, as Rousso and numerous historians have stressed, would change the way France looked at their recent past and usher in a new phase which Rousso calls “the Obsession.”

It was a time where we were all annoyed by the linear and totally unreal aspect...of historical films, by this conception that consisted of attaching History to the wall with a nail, like a butterfly, and inviting people to look at it.

André Harris, co-producer of *The Sorrow and the Pity*⁸³

Ophuls met co-producer André Harris at ORTF, the national French television station, and the two collaborated on *Munich*, which explored the prewar years and aired on ORTF in 1967. *The Sorrow and the Pity* was envisioned as a sequel, one that would break with the conventional historical films of the period and take on official history. The expectation was that, like *Munich*, it too would be broadcast on the station. However, May 1968 arrived. Harris and Ophuls participated in the strikes against the station’s censorship policies and ultimately resigned in solidarity with the movement. Once the work was complete with funds by Swiss and Austrian television funding, ORTF, not surprisingly given its content (dismantling the Gaullist myth) and the director’s recent history with the station, refused to buy the film. Hence a potential audience of millions was prevented from seeing the film. However, with the help of his friend Francois

⁸³ Cited in Lowy, p. 21.

Truffaut, Ophuls was able to obtain theatrical release at a Left Bank theater. The filmmaker describes his pride and delight when, after fearing no one would show up, he spotted on the rainy day of the premiere a sea of black umbrellas in a nearby alley awaiting tickets.⁸⁴ *The Sorrow and the Pity* went on to play to packed audiences internationally. But it was not shown on French television until 1981. For years it was only available dubbed in the United States; Milestone at last acquired the rights and released a subtitled DVD in 2000.

As numerous critics have noted and the director has himself stressed, the film is not only about the Vichy period but also about the time it was made. A powerful revisionist work, one that forcefully takes on official history and debunks a reigning myth, Ophuls' film very much reflects the May 1968 zeitgeist. *The Sorrow and the Pity* accomplishes this powerful undoing of Gaullist *resistancialism* by moving between cohesive and fractured interview filmic spaces, some of which offer us access to truth, others that obscure the truth in a skein of denials. All the while, that false and fragile image of wartime unity, propagated by the Gaullist regime, clung to by the nation, hangs over the film until its final shattering.

Like *A Visitor From the Living*, *The Sorrow and the Pity* begins by immersing us in a space both intimate and strange. Church bells ring as a bride and groom process towards us followed by their guests, one of whom seems to smirk at the camera. A title,

⁸⁴ I need to find the citation.

“A Wedding in Germany, Fallingbostal May 1969” flashes up on the screen. From a doorway a hand raises over the young couple; the gesture at first resembles a Nazi salute, but is the beginning of a Christian blessing. Upbeat extradiegetic music accompanies the church bells as we move inside with the wedding party; the possessor of the hand, a priest, leads the way. Questions immediately arise—Whose wedding is this? Why are we here? How did we obtain an invitation?—and are met not with answers but with inklings. The film’s first words, in German, are uttered by a voice severed briefly from its body. The camera passes over two German military caps, and only then joins voice to speaker, who we realize is the father of bride. “Thirty years ago when your mother and I married,” he tells his daughter and son-in-law as the camera pauses on a photograph of the 1939 wedding, zooming in on youthful faces, groom in German uniform, adorned with the Nazi Iron Eagle, “the sky was blue but dark clouds were already looming on the horizon, the clouds of World War Two.” The speaker is now formerly identified by a title: Helmuth Tausend, Former Wehrmacht captain.

Recalling Hallas and Guerin’s remarks that oral testimony generates belief and trust in the receiver because words “are still connected to the body of the sufferer” and that the material image as testimonial object can generate suspicion because it “implies a separation (spatial, temporal or both) from that which it captures”⁸⁵ it is especially striking that the first testimonial voice in *The Sorrow and the Pity* is separated from the body of the witness. And that it is the voice, not of a Resistance fighter, survivor or war hero but, as we belatedly realize, of a Nazi. When the marriage of voice and image

⁸⁵Hallas and Guerin, p.7.

occurs, a sense of false unity accompanies it, adding an additional layer of strangeness over a scene whose eeriness will only continue to grow as it proceeds. (We gradually realize in later scenes that Tausend has agreed to be interviewed during his daughter's wedding.)

Michel Chion, among many other scholars, has challenged image-centric film scholarship, reminding us that cinema is not a visual but an audiovisual medium. However, Chion's focus is fiction film; documentary scholarship, as discussed above, often suffers from the opposite problem, emphasizing the word and voice at the expense of the image. In traditional documentaries the image is often positioned as secondary to expository voiceover or testimony but the interaction even in conventional documentaries between word and image or archival footage is often much more intricate and less seamless than the works themselves would have the viewer believe. Provenance of images and footage are often not given, for example, and archival images are asked to at times uncomfortably stand in to visualize verbal commentary. *The Sorrow and the Pity* draws our attention from the start to the discrete tracks of sound and image, and their intricate interrelation. Subtle at the start, this attention to the voice/image relationship in testimony becomes more pronounced as we move deeper into the "prologue" (the film's first half hour, which culminates in Petain's armistice).⁸⁶ If the opening scene deprives

⁸⁶ In its troubling of the sound/image relationship and its destabilizing of temporality, *The Sorrow and the Pity* reflects an overall trend in post-1968 film. Jonathan Kahana points out that critics, like D. N. Rodowick, have argued that 1968 and after saw a proliferation of films which upset sound/image relations and linear temporality. However scholars have centered on narrative and art films, overlooking documentary. But, Kahana notes, "the goal of many Movement filmmakers and organizations was to infuse the present time observed by documentary with a sense of impossibility, the sense of a time out of joint. In this way, the concept of dissonance might be taken as an epistemological principle, extending to the historical analysis of documentary and its periods." (Jonathan Kahana, *Intelligence Work: The*

us of any comfortable orientation, immersing us instead in an increasingly uncanny space and pricking our critical receptors in regard to testimony, the following moments take this approach to testimony further, through filmic devices, doublings, and defiance of time/space linearity, and by blurring the ontological levels of our witnesses.

Images: Frozen // Space: Alive

The young German couple having been toasted by the former Nazi father of the bride, a slow fade takes us out of this strange space, away from Germany and into the center of Clermont-Ferrand. Church bells provide a sonic link between the two spaces and a voiceover replaces Helmuth Tausend as the verbal enunciator, telling us a few features about the town, the film's exemplar for wartime France. Then, as we did before, we meet our next witness first by a bodiless voice. With the camera lingering outside a stately building, we hear "In 1939, I was 27 years old. I was the father of a large family so I hadn't been sent to the front." Moving up the building, inside, through a glass door we come upon another family gathering. A title tells us that the speaker is Marcel Verdier, a pharmacist in Clermont-Ferrand. Another patriarch, this time of a French family. As he discusses the wartime era, his daughter asks "Was there anything other than courage in the Resistance?" Verdier responds "Of course. But the two emotions that I experienced" —suddenly his voice continues, but hauntingly he and his daughter freeze;

Politics of American Documentary, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008; p.144). While Kahana here centers on American documentary in the 1960s there are a number of shared concerns with *The Sorrow and the Pity*.

over a stilled image we hear the completion of the sentence—“most frequently were sorrow and pity.”

For whatever else such obtruded visual declarations [freeze frames] acknowledge...they tend to wrench loose the image track from the temptation, the very possibility, of sound synchronization. You cannot freeze a word without losing it. (Garrett Stewart)⁸⁷

A cut returns us to the moving image—Maurice Chevalier on stage performing before French prisoners of war—doubly animated because it is live footage but also, as the first archival material, marked with pastness. Another freeze frame: the film’s title, *The Sorrow and The Pity*, appears for the first time. Already a doubling of Verdier’s comment, it overlays the immobile faces of the prisoner-audience. Chevalier’s singing continues but he is stopped mid-dance before “Un Film de Marcel Ophuls, Part 1 The Collapse.” A series of interviews follows, intercut with archival footage. We are introduced to two brothers, farmers, uncompromising former Resistance fighters, who went off to war in 1939 and who, the narrator tell us, “have many memories of the Occupation.” Next, over a frozen close-up of a man, “This politician also has reasons to remember” and Pierre-Mendes France, Former Prime Minister of France, an Air Force Lieutenant in 1939, comes alive in the space. Emile Coulaudon, the Former head of the Auvergne Maquis, now manager of Philips company “has reason to remember too” we are told. The freeze-frames will be echoed again at the prologue’s close when the film details Marshal Petain’s armistice. We will hear the voice of Petain delivering his infamous speech and see archival footage of French citizens gathered around a radio or outside presumably listening to the speech. Then there is a remarkable cut to footage of a

⁸⁷ Garrett Stewart, *Between Film and Screen: Modernism’s Photo Synthesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) 126.

recording studio where, on a raised platform the apparatus is bared, and in the background below we see the back of Petain, dramatically de-acousmaticized (Chion's term for revealing the speaker of an initially disembodied voice) as the French leader makes the well-known utterance "I give France the gift of myself." With Petain's speech continuing, the camera holds on close-up portraits of key witnesses spanning the spectrum of players during the Occupation: Left wing journalist, bourgeois bystander, ousted Jewish politician turned member of Free France, working class Resistant and Nazi occupier. Echoing the freeze-frames in their stillness but remaining part of the moving image, another repetition with a difference, these figures appear to be listening to Petain's speech across time, along with the people seen in the archival footage.

What to make of these freeze frames, which hold 'live' and archival witnesses of all different stripes under their petrifying gaze? They are nothing if not the ultimate space disturbers, cutting into the interview's flow and our illusory sense that the witness is before us, interrupting our speakers, turning them into images—flat and lifeless. The interviewees stand captured by the filmmaker and the apparatus, not unlike the butterfly encased in glass and displayed for the beholder in Harris' figure for traditional historical films. They remind us of film's power to animate and immobilize, to give life and take it away. The film's first spoken words cued us to a sound/image tension by separating the speaker's voice from his body. The freeze frame escalates this tension by stilling the image while the witnesses' voices continue. Significantly, the first freeze frame occurs at the precise moment when the pharmacist, Verdier, utters what *will become* and *already is*

the film's title. Hence the unsettling sense that not only are sound and image out of synch, time is too. The moment undoes any hope we had of upholding a firm boundary between the past of archival footage and the present of contemporary interviews. The blurring of temporalities (and levels of mediation) continues when the film catches Maurice Chevalier, seen in archival footage performing for the French prisoners, in its petrifying grasp. The credits roll as we continue to hear Chevalier singing and gaze at his stilled image. Finally, when the witnesses become virtually motionless hearers themselves of Petain's speech, after the glimpse of another apparatus which records the leader's voice, the already flimsy boundary between past and present seems to give way altogether as does any illusion of access to an unmediated reality. Rousso refers to the witnesses as characters in a drama, and indeed by freezing and re-animating the figures in both interviews and archival footage, the witnesses appear like stop motion figures. With past and present, sound and image, interview and archival material, stillness and motion destabilized, we are confronted with what is often suppressed during viewing: the uncanniness of film, as a double or shadow of the world that surrounds us. However, as much as these devices may draw our attention to the filmic apparatus and away from the content of the work, the *feeling* of uncanniness they give rise to paradoxically dovetails with the film's subject. As Rousso has famously pronounced, what erupts in *The Sorrow and the Pity* is the return of the repressed.

Garrett Stewart devotes his dynamic book *Between Film and Screen: Modernism's Photo Synthesis* to cinema's relationship to the photographic imprint, or "photogram;" more specifically, to how to read the photogram's "suppressions" what he

terms “the specular unconscious—of image reception.”⁸⁸ Stewart holds that the photogram “makes it tacit appearance” generally in one of two ways: the ‘quoted’ photograph or the freeze frame. Snagging on the apparatus, the freeze frame reveals the “suppressed specular unconscious” and “highlights not the image as world picture but the image as imprint.”⁸⁹ With Ophuls’ use of the freeze frame, form and content powerfully converge. We are struck at once with the film’s specular and the nation’s collective unconscious. The convergence of form and content goes further. As we remember, what was projected by De Gaulle was a false image of unity, of a single France, banded together against the occupier. What was repressed: the collaborators, the swath of indifferent bystanders, the factions within the Resistance. All these fractures in Vichy France, covered over by the illusion of cohesion and unity, erupt on the screen in Ophuls’ work. Hence the freeze-frame, by acknowledging the photogrammatic fragmentation under the illusion of unity analogizes *The Sorrow and the Pity*’s relationship to the Gaullist projected false image. It marks a refusal to replicate cinematically what the film opposes thematically. But it is also a reminder to keep our critical faculties sharp: even in this moment of baring the photogram, that usually suppressed fragmentation, our eyes betray us. As Stewart stresses, the freeze frame, formed by a series of identical moving images, only gives the *impression* of stasis since it a freeze frame is actually the repetition of the same moving image.

The freeze frames will recur periodically throughout *Sorrow*, surging up as if to remind us of the photogram’s presence in case we have tamped it down again, lulled back

⁸⁸ Stewart, p.5.

⁸⁹ Stewart, p.135.

into the illusion of unity and wholeness. Memorably, at the end of Part One, archival footage shows jubilant crowds cheering Petain in Claremont-Ferrand and then freeze-frames the leader of Vichy as he receives flowers from a fan. Here the blending of form and content virtually merge into one: the freeze frame brings the photogram, the specular unconscious in Stewart's terms, into view; the image the freeze frame highlights is one which the nation has collectively repressed, Petain's enormous support.

Words Carved into Stone/New Inscriptions in Space

The freeze frame is arguably the most dramatic of a number of devices used in *Sorrow's* prologue to upset the time/space continuum in linear history—and in varying ways it brings our attention to testimony's temporal and spatial qualities. *Sorrow* simultaneously exposes testimony's fragmented temporality and intervenes in history, becoming a valuable archival document itself. The date 1939 holds constant across the prologue's disparate testimonies, seeming at first to be a temporal anchoring point, a fixed year upon which the speakers' divergent memories—marrying in Germany, looking after a large family, going to the front, joining the air force—can accrue. However, any sense of temporal or spatial fixity is undone by the various filmic devices. Again and again in the prologue we are brought back to testimony's and film's medium-specificity.

The freeze-frame highlights “the image as imprint,” drawing our attention to the photogrammatic inscription. Rewatching the opening scenes, however, we realize what confronts us is in fact an array of inscriptions—stone-carved, mnemonic, photographic, textual, as well as filmic. The interview form, as I have argued, contrasts with these other fixed memorial and historical inscriptions. The interviews in particular, and the film as a

whole, I argue, act as a counter-monument, which is perhaps much of the reason for its enduring power.

For James E. Young, the counter-monument is built in reaction and relation to the traditional monument.⁹⁰ Where the traditional monument is inert, embodies official history and does the memory-work for us, the counter-monument resists stasis and encourages active interaction between beholder and memorial. Coining the term in reference to German architects of the 1990s whose memorial works were “brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being,” Young identifies these artists as “heirs to a double-edged postwar legacy: a deep distrust of monumental forms in light of their systematic exploitation by the Nazis, and a profound desire to distinguish their generation from that of the killers through memory.”⁹¹ For Young, who writes exclusively of architectural memorials, a paradigmatic example is the Gerz and Gerz 1990s “Monument Against Fascism” which the artists themselves referred to as a “counter-monument.” Strategically placed in an unceremonial part of Hamburg, the counter-monument was designed to eventually disappear. Visitors were invited to inscribe their names on the pillar and as the names filled a section it was lowered into the ground. As Young points out, “the more actively visitors participate...the faster the monument will disappear.” I borrow from James Young the concept of the counter-monument and I pose that in *Sorrow* the documentary interview is wielded as a kind of counter-monument, in direct opposition to the monumental history challenged by Ophuls. The interviews, as Ophuls conducts and

⁹⁰ I thank Ivone Margulies for suggesting James Young’s work.

⁹¹ James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale, 1993) 57.

stages them, resist stasis, like Young's counter-monuments, and, importantly, require an active role of the viewer, like the beholder before the counter-monument.

Let's return to the wedding, which begins the film. As we moved inside with the newlyweds, a striking but rapid and initially enigmatic montage follows, easily overlooked on first viewing as we struggle to get our bearings in the scene. A zoom moves from a close-up of the bride, outside and onto a stone monument, which fills the screen. The writing on the monument, un-translated, will elude the non-German speaker, but the displayed date—1914-18—is all we need to know to understand what is memorialized: WWI. A quick montage pictures the monument from different angles, and before leaving the memorial to re-join the celebration inside, closes in on an image of the iron cross. Carved in stone here, the memory of Germany's humiliating defeat was no less firmly inscribed in the nation's memory. With this brief series of shots, Ophuls lays down the first track on the multi-tiered memory matrix of WWII and its aftermath. He alerts the attentive viewer to the pernicious potential of ossified official history. Holding to their role as victims of WWI, German witnesses will later refer to their defeat by France as an underlying driver in WWII and the Occupation. Later in the film we will see chilling German propaganda footage of a triumphant Hitler standing before a giant monument. The voiceover will tell us: "This stone is a reminder of the humiliation of Germany on November 11, 1918." For a moment the stone will fill the screen, in silence, and display the engraved French words: "Here the proud, criminal German empire died, conquered by the free people they had claimed to enslave." WWI of course looms large

for the French, some of whom cling to the image of Petain as a heroic General of the first war, blinding themselves to the man who stands before them as a collaborator.

After we have left the German wedding and just before we meet our next witness, the bourgeois pharmacist Verdier, the camera discovers another memorial, this one a placard, which reads “SQUARE DE LA JEUNE RESISTANCE,” and honors the young Resistance fighters who died in the war. The memorial acts as an embedded visual rhyme alongside the parallels discussed earlier, which link Verdier to Tausand formally (by his voice, at first separated from his body) and structurally (by repeating another family gathering with a patriarch at the head). Suddenly the freeze-frame’s revelation of the photogram, that inscription that “cuts no groove,” in Stewart’s suggestive phrase, comes into view not just in contrast to the fluidity and movement of the documentary space and the moving image, but also alongside various memorializing devices that attempt to fix memory.⁹² And film’s power to remember, its distinct status as a mnemonic technology⁹³ here inserts itself amidst the other forms of memory inscriptions, monuments, photographs, plaques, we see in the film. And what comes into view, finally, is a struggle at the base of Ophuls’ work between static memorial inscriptions and new, more fluid ones, which inscribe themselves in the documentary interview space. In the play of word and image in its numerous permutations, the monument represents it at its most static. A monument, words engraved in stone, becomes emblematic of immobile memory and history, fixed and hostile to change. The plastic documentary space comes

⁹² Stewart, p.5.

⁹³ Malin Wahlberg, in *Documentary Time: Film and Phenomenology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2008, p.ix) stresses that film is a “technology of memory.”

to emblemize the monument's polar opposite, alternative memories and histories, ones not frozen but open to change. Where carved words anchor the monument's immobile stone, in the interview, spoken words act to shift the unstable filmic space. Where the monument embeds official history into the public spaces, the interview here unhinges fixed memory inscribing new narratives, new histories into the filmic space. *Sorrow* repeatedly juxtaposes fixed monuments to fluid filmic spaces; indeed the work is galvanized by a productive tension between the two inscriptions, underscoring throughout the risk of monumental history.

Two scenes later in the film stand out where the monument, rather than representing official history, will mark forgetting and un-official history respectively. It will take the interview to inscribe the memory into the nation's conscience. In the first, Ophuls interviews two teachers outside their former school. They profess to have forgotten the names and details of students arrested under Vichy. Ophuls and Harris gesture behind the teachers to a prominent black placard: "you have some examples there." A close-up reveals a memorial entitled "Our Dead, Former Students (1939-1945)" with names of students killed during Vichy. One of the teachers remarks "Aren't those the students who died in World War I?" When told it says World War II, he responds "I'm trying to remember but I can't."

In the second scene, former Resistant leader Gaspar takes Ophuls to an area where fighters hid out in the forest. Ophuls spots a monument and asks what it is. Gaspar states that it memorializes the first person in their group to die, a 17-year-old whose name, Gaspar, he has to confirm with a friend. Makeshift and hidden away, as if

sheltered from official history, the monument here stands as antithesis to state-imposed memories. And through the interview with Gaspar, Ophuls inscribes the memory of the young boy into the film. In the following section, I will look at Paul Ricoeur's conceptualization of inscription and the memory imprint and suggest that Ricoeur's discussion, drawing on Plato, can help us position the documentary interview as a powerful way to revise history and imprint new memory. I contend that in *Sorrow*, images of monuments and plaques act metonymically to stand in for the official Gaullist history that Ophuls eventually shatters. These visual signs of fixed, official history contrast with the interview, a device that Ophuls manipulates to imprint new, more fluid memories and history.

Socrates: "Now I want you to suppose, for the sake of argument, that we have in our souls a block of wax, larger in one person, smaller in another, and of pure wax in one case, dirtier in another; in some men rather hard, in others rather soft, whole in some it is of the proper consistency."
Theaetetus: "All right, I'm supposing that." Socrates: "We may look upon it, then, as a gift of Memory, the mother of the Muses. We make impressions upon this of everything we wish to remember among the things we have seen or heard or thought of ourselves; we hold the wax under our perceptions and thoughts and take a stamp from them, in the way in which we take the imprints of signet rings. Whatever is impressed upon the wax we remember and know so long as the image remains in the wax; whatever is obliterated or cannot be impressed, we forget and do not know."

Plato, *Theaetetus*⁹⁴

Memory, in Plato's beguiling metaphor, is a block of wax within our soul, imprinted with those things we wish to remember. Like a signet ring pressed into wax, certain experiences or thoughts, of the many that pass us by, leave an image, a trace of themselves. This image or *eikon* is fragile however, and can fade, be distorted, overlaid

⁹⁴ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) 13.

with new impressions, or obliterated and forgotten. Further, as an image of what once was, memory encompasses a fundamental aporia: the presence of absence. Aristotle's declaration that "all memory is of the past" adds the dimension of pastness, temporality, to the absence, making the image a representation of that which is removed in time and space. It is the memory-image's fragility and aporetic status, which undergirds Paul Ricouer's monumental work *Memory History Forgetting*. In his meticulous study, Ricouer traces the passage from memory to history, with testimony as the fulcrum. He notes that history inherits from memory the presence of absence aporia in the form of representing or standing in for that which is past and no longer there. For Ricouer, his careful attention to the *eikon* and memory-image notwithstanding, history is exclusively written, and its precursors, memory and testimony, move only from oral to written. Writing in 2004, with the proliferation of visual archives, filmed testimony, and immersed as we are in an image-culture, Ricouer remarkably does not consider the visual medium as a means for transmitting memory and history or as part of the archive. Anyone familiar with Bazin would be hard pressed to read Plato's famous passage without thinking of film and photography. Like the signet ring, which leaves an imprint (*tupos*), a trace of itself in the wax, the object before the camera imprints the film with an image. Malin Wahlberg, noting Ricouer's bias for the written, but arguing for the value of his work for her study of time and the trace in documentary, elucidates the many meanings of the trace and points to a slippage between indexicality and trace. The problem of the trace preceded film by millennia, and centers on the phenomenological

aporia of memory and the image, presence of absence. Film, on the other hand, as an indexical medium, refers more narrowly to the trace as index, semiotic sign. Wahlberg:

In film the trace has the complicated status of referring to the inscription of images and sounds, to the uncanny presence of the past invoked by photographs and archive film, as well as to the banal sense employed by historians and documentary filmmakers, according to which the trace is the source material, the fragmentary texts or images, out of which events in the past may be reconstructed as narratives. Originally, the trace has less to do with the materiality of the vestige than with the uncanny presence of absence—inscription of the past within the present.⁹⁵

The trace of course takes on an extra charge in works dealing with Nazism. The express purpose of the Nazi genocide was to leave no trace, either of the victims or the crimes. Furthermore, the crimes and extermination were under erasure as they occurred, through a language of denial that never explicitly referred to mass killings or victims. *The Sorrow and the Pity* as we have seen calls attention to film as an archival and testimonial medium, one that records sound and image on two different tracks whose merging is not always harmonious.

Ricouer posits distinct phases in the passage from memory to history. In his delineation, declarative memory becomes written testimony and divorced from the speaker, enters the archives as document awaiting the researcher's grasp; finally it is transmuted to history. *The Sorrow and the Pity* is a remarkable text to study alongside Ricouer's work. Referenced along with Rousso's *Vichy Syndrome* in *Memory History Forgetting*, it appears on one level to enact the very passage from memory to history, through testimony, that the philosopher sets forth. At the same time, it introduces a number of medium-specific issues passed over by Ricouer because he does not consider film and video in his analysis. *Sorrow* crystallizes the differences between filmic and

⁹⁵ Wahlberg, p.35.

written treatment of testimony, memory and history and demonstrates the simultaneity film allows, at once acting as vehicle for declarative memory, archived testimony, historical object or short circuiting all stages to enter the public sphere as a complete and discrete film. We can trace this out on the micro to macro scales, moments in a scene to the film as a whole, from the way the film itself as archival object surfaces in new historical narratives, and finally, as these narratives install themselves into official history, or as official history co-opts and appropriates them.

“These two brothers have many memories of the German occupation.” “This politician also has reasons to remember.” “The manager of the Philips company also has reasons to remember.” Incantatory-like as if to raise long-buried memories, the repetitions which introduce us to key witnesses at the film’s beginning immediately announce memory’s primacy. At the director’s prompting, interviewees offer what Ricouer calls “declarative memory” which, in its recording and replaying becomes both “testimony” and “archival material,” divorced from the speaker as it unfolds before us through shadows of the witnesses themselves, and yet connected to the speaker through these very shadows in a way distinct from Ricouer’s notion of the written testimony. As I have discussed, Ophuls draws our attention to the medium’s present tense and the past of the witnessing, and of memory itself, in a number of ways by separating voice from body, and freezing upon the witness while their voice continues speaking. And we see in the spaces of individual interviews a spectrum of memory Ricouer identifies, the way the past can continue to adhere to the present, piercing the surface of the interview space as psychic repetition or acting out, or how it can appear deep and distant, worked through

and cohesive. As a whole, the film as *historical* object intervenes in the history of the Vichy period, replacing the heroic image with one that is more reflective of the array of behaviors during the Occupation. Finally, as *archival* object it resurfaces in later historian's works, shaping histories to come.

The unstable, mercurial documentary spaces in which new history, new narratives, are formed push back against the static, rigid, unchanged official history—the stone monuments which sear Germany's humiliating defeat into the nation's minds, the proud memorials which honor the Resistants while simultaneously obscuring darker realities of the wartime years, the photographs of weddings and celebrations which freeze a glorious moment, glossing over what lies behind or comes after. Keeping us off-balance, insecure in our footing, they refuse to fix memory or impose upon it a procrustean narrative. It is thus both a triumph and an irony when in 1993, French president Jacques Chirac at long last recognized France's role in the deportations. And on the seventieth anniversary of the Vel d'Hiv round up, Francois Hollande marked the beginning of his presidency standing before the Vélodrome d'Hiver, where over 4000 French Jewish children were confined in 1942 before they were deported and exterminated, boldly declaring the impossible: "For the Republic, there cannot and will not be any lost memories." Achieving what Ophuls aimed for—no longer is there pervasive denial about the Resistance or the Judeocide—comes with a risk. History has shown us that once narratives and memories are co-opted by power, becoming part of official history, abuse often shortly follows. We focus on one memory we obscure

another, Ricouer reminds us. And forced memory can be as pernicious as forced forgetting. Ophuls, a constant fighter against official history recognizes this and seems to also note the paradox of remembering. He comments in an interview that as important as upholding the memory of the Holocaust is, it cannot be used “to justify Gaza.”⁹⁶

There is a double movement in *The Sorrow and the Pity*, one of shattering, one of imprinting anew, a dual impulse of destruction and construction, iconoclasm and iconophilia. Though continually at work, the demolishing impulse dominates much of the first three hours, the (re)inscribing dominates the film’s final hour. The *resistancialist* image suffers puncture after puncture until it eventually bursts apart. French and German witnesses testify to the speed with which the Germans defeated the French, to the widespread mingling between Germans and French, to the extravagant parties in Paris many of the nations’ well-to-do enjoyed; British underground fighters tell of the support and heroism exhibited by France’s working class, of the fear and passivity of its bourgeoisie; members of the Resistance reveal the schisms between opposing factions of the movement—Monarchists, Socialists, Communists, Free French de Gaullists; and, perhaps most damningly, as Lowy notes, the film bears witness to a pervasive complacency under Vichy.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Jean Sébastien Chauvin and Charles Tesson, “Sans chagrin ni pitié,” *Cahiers du Cinema* 3 (2008): 52.

⁹⁷ Lowy, p.25.

Deep Space/Processed Memory

Amidst the thirty-five interviews interspersed throughout the film, there are a few which offer resting points as we make our way across the film's varied terrain. In these interviews, we can to a certain extent relax our critical faculties. We are cued that we can watch and listen without suspicion. The first, which takes up the most screen time in Part One: "The Collapse," is with former prime minister Pierre Mendes-Frances, who suffered extreme anti-Semitism, was jailed by the Vichy government as a deserter and managed to escape and join de Gaulle in England. We sense from the start of the interview with Mendes-France—an articulate, thoughtful and intelligent man who reveals no bitterness for the trials he endured—a great affinity with the director, who also suffered from anti-Semitism and dislocation during the war. Our horizon of expectations, to borrow Hans Robert Jauss' term, is fulfilled as the conversation between the two men unfolds.⁹⁸ Mendes-France's appealing manner and documentary title (indicating a left-leaning ousted leader) positions him as someone whom we expect to find sympathetic. The interview does not produce unexpected turns or ruptures and hence fulfills our expectations.

The second interview with Christian de la Mazière which, in terms of time, dominates Part Two "The Choice," entirely reverses our initial horizon of expectation. I returned to this interview again and again in the early stages of thinking about documentary space, wondering what it was about this particular testimony that engendered an overwhelming sense of depth in the image.

⁹⁸ See Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

With regard to documentary interview codes, it operates in an inverse manner to *A Visitor From the Living*. Lanzmann's work played with the assumptions set by the documentary identifying label "Maurice Rossel, Former Swiss Red Cross Inspector," slowly undoing and eventually demolishing the associations of neutrality and trust the title brought with it. In the interview with de la Mazière, Ophuls similarly draws our attention to the powerful effect documentary titles have on creating different types of filmic space. The interview begins with a close-up of a dazzling chandelier. A cut takes us to another close-up, this time of a handsome man. As he begins to speak, the title, "Aristocratic Former Nazi, Veteran of the French Division of the Waffen SS" appears on the screen. With this identifying label—the most condemning of any for a Frenchman—we await the fissures and ruptures within the space that perpetrator or collaborator interviews commonly give rise to. However, each time we return to the interview, a sense of cohesion and depth in the image becomes more pronounced. Ricoeur singles out the "conquest of temporal distance" as one of memory's primary problems. Experiences can thus be arranged "relative to temporal depth" along a "gradient of distantiation" from the event, "beginning with those in which the past adheres, so to speak, to the present and continuing on to those in which the past is recognized in its pastness as over and done with."⁹⁹ What gives the space its striking depth is de la Mazière's relationship to the past he recounts. Unlike Rossel, who merely repeats in the presence of Lanzmann the very denial that blinded him to the Nazi crimes in Theresienstadt, de la Mazière appears to have worked through his former actions. The "I" who testifies before Ophuls is not the

⁹⁹ Ricoeur, p.25.

same as the “I” about whom he speaks. And the distance between the two selves produces depth in the space. Susan Suleiman, drawing on Freud’s categories of acting out and working through, differentiates between traumatic memory, where one is “locked into a repetition that abolishes the difference between past and present” and narrative memory, “essentially active, able to situate the traumatic memory in the past and therefore to gain some emotional distance.”¹⁰⁰

It is significant that this deep processed memory emerges where we least expect it, from “An Aristocratic Former Nazi.” We could read this interview as a figure of hope for the nation: guilty but facing down their collusion, neither denying it nor repressing it, nor remaining paralyzed by it. A call to accept the past, a hope that this acceptance will lead to better decisions in the present and future.

The interview culminates in an astounding moment where the *mise-en-scene* externalizes what we have been perceiving all along. In the armory of Sigmaringen Castle, as de la Mazière advises caution in the face of ideology, the camera cuts from a medium close-up to a long shot. Our final view is of the former Nazi in the foreground with the cavernous armory stretching back behind him, like the recesses of a mind, a repository for processed past.

¹⁰⁰ Suleiman, p.139.



Fig 2.2. Armory as repository for processed past. Former French Waffen SS Christian de la Mazière stands in the Sigmörens Armory. *The Sorrow and the Pity*.

With Space Ruptured, the Holocaust Rushes in

To insert new memory, as we will see in the following discussion, spaces must be ruptured. Intervening in history often involves effacing an *eikon*, smoothing the wax before pushing another signet ring in to leave a new imprint. In *Sorrow*, when lies or denials fracture the interview space, an opening for new memory arises. Into the fissures, rushes the Holocaust. It lodges there and remains.

The film successfully demolishes the *resistancialist* myth—revealing the nation’s overall complacency and the schisms within the Resistance. It also unveils another denial lurking behind the Gaullist screen memory. “When we fix a gaze upon an aspect of the past—the Occupation—” Ricouer remarks in reference to what Rousso calls the

“Obsession” phase, “we blind ourselves to another—the extermination of the Jews. Obsession is selective, and the dominant narratives consecrate the obliteration of part of the field of vision.”¹⁰¹ The film traces this very obliteration of part of the field of vision. Part One centers on the Occupation, and while powerfully debunking the myth of a united nation, it all but elides the extermination of the Jews. For many viewers, the question, “What about the Holocaust?” grows increasingly urgent as the film progresses. And, I would argue, Ophuls’ decision to make the viewer wait until almost halfway into this four-and-hour film before the Holocaust is directly addressed is precisely in order to induce in us this very question. The association between testimony and the Holocaust established by the Eichmann trial makes the Holocaust’s relative absence all the stranger in this interview-based film. It eventually becomes clear that the impetus to press the imprint into the wax was not forceful enough for many in France. The film, after demythologizing de Gaulle’s myth, must therefore inscribe the memory of the Judeocide into the nation’s wartime history.

There are a number of interviews late in the film in which the witness manifests denial of France’s complicity in the Holocaust. Arguably the eeriest interview is with Count Rene de Chambrun, Pierre Laval’s son-in-law. The encounter with de Chambrun is framed by period propaganda footage of Laval in Châteldon and Vichy—a nauseating “day-in-the-life”-style portrait of the former president. Hence our suspicion of the image is primed before meeting de Chambrun. The interview begins with the Count at his desk defending Laval. And then, abruptly, he seems to take over the scene, as Ophuls

¹⁰¹ Ricoeur, p.452.

temporarily affects a more passive, cameraman role. De Chambrun takes Ophuls into a nearby factory where he summons a man who appears to be in a managerial role. “You knew my father well,” the Count says, feeding him words and leaning imposingly into the frame. “Yes I knew him well” the man responds, looking from de Chambrun to Ophuls offscreen, as if unsure who in fact is directing this scene, “we knew each other well during the period of 1936-44... We never discussed politics.” The Count is held in medium close-up, dominating the man, watching carefully as if to ensure he gets his lines right. Cut to a female worker positioned in the right side of the frame as de Chambrun asks “Why did the whole of France condemn [Laval] at that moment?” In a stagey, forced manner the woman asserts “Not all of France condemned him, certainly not.” Cut to another female worker, framed almost identically as the previous witness, medium close-up, right side of frame. “Sometimes I’d visit him in the castle,” she states woodenly, “and appeal to him on behalf of my prisoners.” The Count then takes us outside where, in the background, he spots an older male worker: “Would you come here?” he calls to him. The worker approaches and de Chambrun hovers menacingly this time on the left side of the frame as the camera holds the two men in medium close-up. “These gentleman are in Châteldon making a film on the Occupation,” he tells the worker and then, steering and controlling the conversation, he asks the worker a series of questions related to the war:

de Chambrun: How old were you when the war began?

Worker: 25 years old.

de Chambrun : What regiment were you in?

Worker: The 28th Artillery Regiment.

de Chambrun: And what happened?

Worker: We were taken prisoner on June 20...

de Chambrun: (*encouraging*) Yes?

Worker: and then, after some hard times, as a favor from the President, Mr. Laval, I had the privilege of being repatriated to Châteldon. (*Humbly*) And I thank both him and the Countess.

de Chambrun: And what year did you return?

Worker: On October 17, 1941...

The camera then cuts to a close up of the worker, excising de Chambrun from the frame.

Worker (*continuing*): it certainly was a big favor because (*now departing from the script*) some had to stay until '45 or longer

The Count's emphatic yeses now shift to quiet mutterings as Ophuls, not one to miss an opportunity, pipes up: So it was lucky to be taken prisoner if you were from Châteldon?

Worker: (*with proud smile*) We were the privileged few, Monsieur.

The camera pulls back to bring de Chambrun back into the frame, this time no longer domineering but cowed. Shame-faced, he turns to meet the camera's gaze and ours before a cut returns us to the sanitized scenes of Laval "at work."

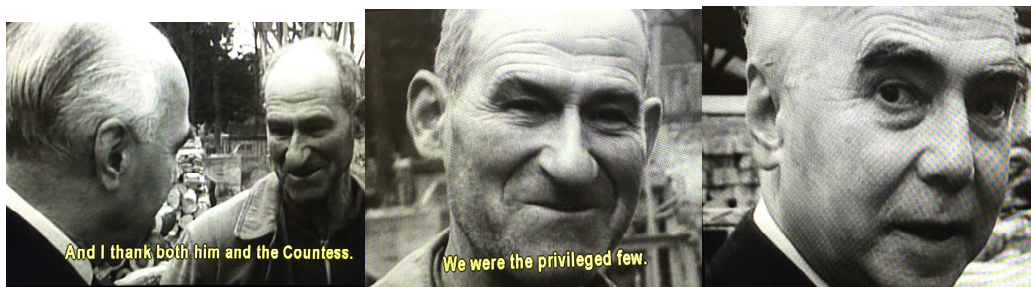


Fig. 2.3. Count de Chambrun's worker, at first a model interviewee, goes off script, and the Count reacts. *The Sorrow and the Pity*.

What we have just witnessed here is remarkable on many counts. As noted in the beginning of the chapter, *The Sorrow and the Pity*, like *Night and Fog*, implicates itself in the history it tells. Ophuls reminds us of film's complicity in the Nazi regime throughout the work, most obviously through his re-contextualizing of archival propaganda newsreels and films, notably scenes from the French production of Viet Harlan's anti-Semitic spectacle *Le Juif Suss*. More subtly Ophuls, in his treatment of the interview, encourages suspicion of the image, even as he pursues historical truth through the very same device. What strikes us immediately in the scenes described above is the overt staging and the power imbalance. They seem a mockery of the interview form and filmic testimony. Testimony's "I was there"—the specificities of time and date—are wrenched out of the witnesses by the Count as proof of authenticity. His imposing presence either in frame or offscreen as stage manager and prompter, brings the documentary interview's often latent power dynamics to the fore. At the same time, Ophuls' strategic framing of de Chambrun, further emphasizing the Count's control over the witnesses, reminds us of another ever-present level of enunciation or voice—the camera's. Ophuls metaphorically lends de Chambrun the camera during this episode, yet he does so knowing he is giving the Count the means to indict himself. Sooner or later a fissure will appear in the already strained, unnatural interview space. And it does, fantastically, when the worker goes off script; with this final *coup de grâce* Ophuls takes the reins and steers us back into another artificial world, the propaganda footage of Laval.

The crudely staged and controlled interviews under de Chambrun cast the Count in a highly unfavorable light and lead us to be extremely suspicious of the witnesses'

testimony. But this suspicion these interviews stir does not confine itself to these scenes; it extends to the entire film, a work that places the interview at its core. It ripples through the film, retrospectively glossing earlier interviews and hovering over ones yet to come. To what extent, we may wonder, did Ophuls prep the witnesses he chose for the film? How did he select them? In what ways as director does he, like the creator of Laval's 'day in the life' film, which frames de Chambrun's interview, or like the Count himself, shape and mold the material before us, pushing us to see things from one perspective, shielding us from others? As bystander, perpetrator or Resistance fighter how representative in fact are the witnesses? And does Ophuls, himself hardly a shrinking presence, force from his witnesses, as did de Chambrun, certain things while suppressing others?

The issues Hannah Arendt articulated with the treatment of testimony in the Eichmann trial eight years earlier resurface in a filmic context. A canny filmmaker and thinker, Ophuls is far from oblivious to the far-reaching effects of suspicion once unleashed. Indeed he speaks in many interviews of his belief in fostering a critical, intelligent viewer. And he forcefully rails against the notion of objectivity in documentary, stressing subjectivity as part and parcel of any project. However, he walks a thin line between what he deems acceptable and unacceptable in terms of interview staging. More recently, the director has expressed disdain for Errol Morris-style re-enactment while readily acknowledging that in his films he *creates* scenarios—such as the Verdier family gathering at the beginning of *Sorrow*—to *provoke*, in *cinéma vérité*-style, an authentic encounter. While Ophuls distances himself from Errol Morris, he

shares with the American director a suspicion of grand truths as well as a firm belief in what Linda Williams has famously called “a receding horizon of truth.”¹⁰² Yet without the extratextual information, the viewer would not know that the Verdier gathering was staged. Unlike filmmakers such as Nick Broomfield who in *Aileen: Life and Death of a Serial Killer* reveals to the viewer behind-the-scenes machinations such as contractual and monetary deals required to secure some of the interviews he conducts, Ophuls sometimes covers over an interview’s staging. Other times, however, the setup is patently obvious and comical.¹⁰³ Ophuls, in mischievously pointing to his legerdemain in interviews rather than hiding them, seems to delight in keeping the viewer slightly off guard.¹⁰⁴

A scene in Ophuls’ later film *Hotel Terminus* induces a sense of discomfort in the viewer about Ophuls in a manner similar to the scene with de Chambrun. When asked about Klaus Barbie and the upcoming trial, an older Bavarian man comments he’s not interested in Barbie’s past and tells Ophuls “You’re selling pictures.” A gas station attendant accuses Ophuls of making the film on Barbie just “for the sensationalism.” Suleiman comments that the Germans may look bad in this scene but “in a telling way, the accusations hit home. Ophuls *is* making a picture, and he will sell it.” Ophuls, Suleiman remarks, is “not innocent and neither are the French, yet Barbie and his henchman are guilty.....However one turns the phrase, the truth is uncomfortable. But it

¹⁰² See Linda Williams, “Mirrors Without Memories: Truth, History, and *The Thin Blue Line*” in Barry Keith Grant, ed. *Documenting the Documentary* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1998).

¹⁰³ Ophuls states, “In *Hotel Terminus*, the only moments where there is staging it’s comedy, and it’s so obvious that I hope people will be amused by it.” Cited in Suleiman, p. 528.

¹⁰⁴ I thank Richard Allen for his input on this section.

is the truth we are asked to grapple with here.”¹⁰⁵ In an interview, Ophuls al, with dark humor, draws parallels between himself and Barbie, stating that both are cosmopolites, one because of victimhood, the other because of criminal acts, and noting that, like Barbie, who used his knowledge professionally to torture subjects, Ophuls uses his knowledge professionally to interview subjects.

In *The Sorrow and the Pity*, the simultaneous belief in and deconstruction of truth occurs in Châteldon before the film’s most significant *inscribing*. I contend that this double stance, which we assume during one of the film’s pivotal moments, paradoxically allows for a particular type of memory inscription to take place. We are at our most aware of the medium’s potential for manipulation and fabrication when we receive crucial facts about France and the Judeocide. And I believe that we are encouraged by the film to inhabit this critical and yet receptive position in the face of all history.

Let us look closely at the final part of the interview with de Chambrun. We return to de Chambrun’s stately office where the interview began. Despite the earlier moment with the worker, which severely blemished the image of Laval that de Chambrun wished to paint, the Count persists in protecting his father-in-law. He cites a false insidious statistic, which claims that in all other European countries under Nazism, only 5.8% of the Jewish population survived, whereas in France only five percent of the Jewish population did *not* survive. As he speaks, we hear Ophuls, in disgust, clear his throat. *Whatever is impressed upon the wax we remember and know so long as the image remains in the wax; whatever is obliterated or cannot be impressed, we forget and do not*

¹⁰⁵ Suleiman, *Hotel Terminus*, p.535.

know. With the heroic image of France as a nation of resisters shattered, a new memory needs to be impressed into the filmic space and the nation's collective conscience.

France's memory of the Judeocide, obliterated or never imprinted, forgotten or never known, referred to only elliptically in the film's first quarter, more emphatically in its second and third, now appears in its stark horror. Ophuls presses the signet ring forcefully into the resistant wax. In doing so he revises his film's great predecessor, *Night and Fog*, which left the specificity of the Nazi genocide almost entirely unmentioned.

Ophuls: "Monsieur, excuse me for interrupting but the statistic which you quote, and which I know well, refers to non-denaturalized French Jews." Close-up on the Count's now slightly quivering face. Ophuls continues, "However there is another statistic which is fatefully similar to yours, that of the non-naturalized Jews, the foreign Jews. Only five percent survived, the same average as in other countries. So I am asking you if a statesman, even if he is a Frenchman and a great patriot, has the right to make such decisions concerning other human beings?"

The interview that follows is perhaps the most straightforward one in the entire film, offering vital information about France's complicity in the Judeocide. Fittingly, the interview space is at its most cohesive. Claude Levy, a French Jew, first imprisoned in France and then forced on a train for Dachau, from which he escaped, identified as an author and biologist, sits in an office surrounded by books and microscopes and lucidly lays out factual details for the viewer: France was the only country in all of Europe to collaborate with Germany; the country instituted more racist laws than Germany's

Nuremberg laws decreed; it was full of concentration camps; and denunciations were widespread, often motivated by a desire to eliminate competition from fields like medicine. Briefly accompanied by Ophuls' explanatory voiceover, we cut away to archival photos of Rafle du Vel d'Hiv, the day the Paris police organized a series of arrests of Jews. Back to Levy, who explains further that, without order from the Germans, the French police zealously arrested children as well as adults. Four thousand fifty-one children were held in the Vélodrome d'Hiver as the French police awaited orders from Eichmann. During this waiting period, Laval sent a telegram, a copy of which Levy provides. On it was the following statement: "The children must be deported too."

The Sorrow and the Pity ends with footage from de Gaulle's triumphant visit to Clermont-Ferrand at the end of the war. These victorious scenes are now indelibly recast with the knowledge of what will come. Before cheering crowds, the new leader reaches out to shake the hand of a supporter and, mid-movement, freezes, transformed into a stilled image. De Gaulle: about to create the false memory-image already shattered by the film, the future anterior at its most paralyzing. Most damning perhaps is the visual rhyme with Part One's closing frame, the frozen image of Petain, himself before cheering crowds in Clermont-Ferrand only years before. Yet in this rhyme, this doubling with Petain, a suffocating demonstration of history's repetition, there is also a look to the future. The doubling implies an unsettling tripling: tomorrow's hero, who will inscribe new myths in a yet-to-be-written official history. And indeed, invoked in this image too

are the atrocities and torture de Gaulle will preside over in Algeria, ones which echo France's actions under Vichy. However a glimpse of one future, where history is doomed to repeat itself, holds within it the potential for an alternative one, a possibility to thwart the trajectory which will otherwise inexorably lead to an endless chain of visual rhymes. In this way, like its venerable intertext *Night and Fog*, *The Sorrow and the Pity* sounds a powerful warning and a plea for action. And also like *Night and Fog*, the director and cinematic apparatus are not let off the hook; there is another doubling at work here. Like de Gaulle, Ophuls too is a maker of illusions: film, whether documentary or fiction, leads us to see unity where there are in fact fragments. The freeze frame reminds us one final time of those still images covered over by the moving image—while at the same time making us see stasis where there is in fact movement. With this closing gesture, Ophuls both unmask and participates in these tricks of the eye, which are film's very being. For after all, it is with screen memories that Ophuls shatters the *resistancialist* screen memory.

CHAPTER 3
“I AM HERE. I WAS THERE.”
Haunted Testimony, the Trial and The Interview

The Memory of Justice and The Specialist

Claims that “just following orders” or “doing what one is told” is justification for participating in state-sponsored atrocities often awakens the specter of Nazis making not-guilty pleas at the Nuremberg Trials. In December, 2014—more than half a century after the end of World War II—the ghost of Nazi denial again arose shortly after the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence released what became known as “the torture report”: the Committee Study of the Central Intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogation Program. Although heavily redacted, the report, among its many horrors, provided detailed information on the CIA’s use of waterboarding, stress positions, and “rectal feeding” during interrogations. In the publicity that followed the report’s release, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s words, in response to a question at the Council on Foreign Relations in June, 2014 (before the report was released) resurfaced: “I didn't want people to be criminally prosecuted, people who were doing what they were told to do, that there were legal opinions supporting what they were told to do.”¹⁰⁶ Although Clinton had stated moments before that she strongly supported the senate report’s release, it was her turn on the “just following orders” defense that caught the attention of some

¹⁰⁶ Transcript from Council on Foreign Relations: <http://www.cfr.org/united-states/hillary-rodham-clinton-strategic-interests-values-hard-choices/p33101>.

bloggers and commenters on online news sites.¹⁰⁷ Severe criticism in the anything-goes comment section of some sites included remarks such as, "... almost every Nazi concentration camp planner and worker shared the same excuse: We were only following orders..." and "Clinton should have been a lawyer for the Nazis at Nuremberg, if she takes that view."¹⁰⁸ While the link between Clinton's defense of the CIA operatives and the Nazis' defense at Nuremberg is extreme, what is striking is how quickly and easily we hear the echo of Nazi testimony at Nuremberg in political situations today. Moreover, popular familiarity with words and images of Nazi not-guilty claims derives largely from film footage—documentaries, clips from documentaries, or re-creations in fiction films.

This chapter argues that the originary statements made by Nazi defendants in Nuremberg continues to haunt perpetrator testimony in documentaries about state crimes committed in many parts of the world. More specifically, it examines how this haunting can be powerfully employed by filmmakers in their cinematic study of perpetrators and atrocities. Haunting—in this context, a ghost-like echo of the Nuremberg trials, where the guilty repeatedly disowned any responsibility for one of the greatest atrocities in human history—can arise seemingly unintentionally in works featuring denial testimony, and can be used deliberately as a tool to probe, discredit or unsettle testimony. This type of filmic haunting contaminates the individual testimony, inviting in voices from other times and places, interconnecting various historical and political events to give a sense of the

¹⁰⁷ Many journalists pointed out that Clinton's view set her apart from other Democrats who argued for a special prosecution of the CIA operatives. A *Salon.com* article stresses that, in contrast to Clinton, "Martin O'Malley calls for 'accountability' after release of Senate torture report." See: Luke Brinker, "Potential Hillary Clinton challenger calls for special prosecutor on torture," *Salon.com* (December 11, 2014).

¹⁰⁸ Reader comments on: <http://readersupportednews.org/news-section2/318-66/27454-focus-where-is-hillary-clinton-on-torture>.

co-presence of the past, present, and even future, creating an uncanny feeling that history is almost being repeated. Deliberate haunting can be produced through multiple means such as montage, cutting between distinct historical-political footage to encourage juxtaposition and comparison, staging mise-en-scene that overlays an interview with filmic intertexts, or inclusion of verbal or sonic echoes within an interview. What haunted spaces share is a co-presence of temporalities, a loosening of an image's tether to a particular time and place and a disquieting layering of the interview filmic space with other space/times.¹⁰⁹

The haunting I am proposing is a close cousin to allegory in the way that Debarati Sanyal and Ross Chambers, among others, have recently—drawing on Walter Benjamin—understood the trope. Haunting however operates in an inverted mode to allegory. To function, allegory or “speaking otherwise,” must hollow out its object, on one level turn it into a lifeless body, a corpse.¹¹⁰ While allegory traffics in devitalized

¹⁰⁹ Haunting has been discussed by a number of scholars, each with a particular understanding of the term. Jacques Derrida, in *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994) draws on Marx's famous statement that “a specter is haunting Europe, a specter of communism,” and introduces the neologism “hauntology.” While Marx sees communism's eventual realization as means for putting the ghosts to rest, for Derrida, haunting is an essential part of justice. In *Echographies of Television*, Derrida states “as soon as one calls for the disappearance of ghosts, one deprives oneself of the very thing that constitutes the revolutionary movement itself, that is to say, the appeal to justice, what I call ‘messianicity’ ... which is a ghostly business, which must carry beyond the synchrony of living presents.” (Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television*, Trans. Jennifer Bajorek. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007, 128). In *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, Avery Gordon argues that the past always haunts the present and we ignore our societies' ghosts at our own risk. (Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2008). Of course any consideration of haunting can find its way back, however circuitously, to Sigmund Freud's work on the uncanny and the return of the repressed. My use of “haunting” is both indebted to the many previous scholars' work on the topic and distinct in the way I am understanding it in documentary.

¹¹⁰ For provocative, illuminating essays on how allegory must displace and disfigure its object to gain its political efficacy see Ross Chambers, “The Long Howl: Serial Torture” and Debarati Sanyal “Crabwalk History: Torture, Allegory, and Memory in Sartre” in *Noeuds de mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture*, *Yale French Studies*, 118 & 119 (2010).

bodies, haunting awakens and gives life to ghosts. Both devices destabilize time and space, blur here and there, and layer what is before us with other histories, but they do so differently. Whereas allegory asks us to see past or beyond the object before us, in this way undermining the image's specificity, haunting instead adds layers, or pentimenti—voices, atrocities, histories from elsewhere and beyond. Arguably, this type of haunting, in its way of operating, is more intrinsically filmic. In fact, we could argue haunting mimics film's fundamental form. In "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form," Sergei Eisenstein discusses cinematic mechanics in language that haunting metaphorically echoes:

Placed next to each other, two photographed immobile images result in the appearance of movement...mechanically...each sequential element is perceived not *next* to the other, but on *top* of the other. For the idea (or sensation) of movement arises from the process of superimposing on the retained impression of the object's first position, a newly visible further position of the object.... From the superimposition of two elements of the same dimension always arises a new, higher dimension.¹¹¹

Like the previous photogram that layers the preceding one such that we perceive one on *top* of the other, filmic haunting, by mobilizing earlier testimony, adds another dimension to the interview or footage before us. In doing so, it lays bare the spatio-temporal complexities intrinsic to the testimonial form.

For Paul Ricoeur, the witness's fundamental phrase is the triple deictic, "I was there." This three-word statement captures the particular space-time of testimony. As Ricoeur notes, the "imperfect tense indicates the time, and the adverb marks the space."¹¹² To "I was there" we can add "I am here." Someone cannot testify in your

¹¹¹ Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, trans. Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt Press, 1969), 4.

¹¹² Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2004), 163-4.

place, as Paul Celan declared: “No one bears witness for the witness.”¹¹³ Additionally, the specific date, location and identification required of legal testimony, and customary of any testimony, establish a particular time, space and identity. The witness’s oath to speak the truth, in theory, binds testimony to veracity.

While these testimonial codes attempt to fix time, space, identity and truth, testimony’s very being relies on a paradoxical relation to temporality and unicity: it must be, as Derrida has articulated, both unique and exemplary, singular and repeatable, non-substitutable and replaceable. Furthermore, testimony’s veracity is contingent upon the instant—testimony must be enunciated in the here and now—but it becomes believable through its capacity for reiteration.¹¹⁴

When testimony is filmed, further complexity is introduced. For isn’t “I am here; I was there” as much the fundamental phrase for film—its indexical contract—as it is for testimony: the promise that a person (or thing) once stood where there is now a flickering shadow? If this is true for film in general, it is all the more so for documentary, whose tie to the “once was” remains one of its primary components. Bring together testimony and film and you have a double entreaty. “Believe me” the witness implores us; “suspend disbelief” the moving still images exhort us. When testimony moves into film, the temporality and ontology particular to testimony encounters the temporality and ontology particular to film. Traditional documentaries tend to seal over the breaches that filmic witnessing opens up in a space/time continuity; some works, however, opt to lay them

²Paul Celan cited in Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, eds. *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 3.

¹¹⁴See Derrida, *Demeure*, p.41.

bare. These films blur, complicate or expand the seemingly discrete spatial and temporal particularities of testimony and challenge the unicity of the testifying “I.” Through montage, strategic haunting, and comparison, these films contest two unities: the testifying subject becomes fragmented and the unique event becomes a part of an iterative pattern.

I will juxtapose two films which are exemplars of this type of haunting: Marcel Ophuls’ *The Memory of Justice* (1976), on the Nuremberg trials (the first trials filmed) and Eyal Sivan’s *The Specialist: A Portrait of a Modern Criminal* (1999), on the Adolf Eichmann trial (the first trial to be filmed in its entirety and broadcast). These works are part of a group of films, a documentary subgenre in its own right, which investigate state crimes and focus on perpetrator testimony. Directors within this subgenre, including Errol Morris, Marcel Ophuls, Eyal Sivan, Avi Mograbi, Barbet Schroeder, Joshua Oppenheimer, Hans-Jurgen Syberberg, Emile de Antonio, and Michael Moore, eschew the transparent, seemingly objective style of many conventional documentaries, instead drawing our attention to the director’s hand. Films in this subgenre may or may not include trial footage but they reverberate with Nazi denial testimony. They share a particular epistemology, one distinct from that of the trial film genre identified by Carol Clover in her well-known essay “Law and the Order of Popular Culture.”¹¹⁵

Clover finds that the Anglo-American adversarial system pervades a “broad stripe of American popular culture.”¹¹⁶ Indeed, she argues that the particular narrative, and

¹¹⁵ Carol Clover, “Law and the Order of Popular Culture,” in Austin Sarat and Thomas R. Kearns, eds. *Law in the Domains of Popular Culture* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.109.

epistemological structure of the trial “are so deeply embedded in our narrative tradition that they shape even plots that never step into the courtroom.”¹¹⁷ This narrative, which both the trial and many mainstream American movies follow, consists of a long examination “ended” by a “paratactic” opening and closing, with the verdict, or film ending, as a coda. The prosecution’s story (X) generally dominates the first half of the film, while the defense’s narrative, what Clover calls “not-X,” dominates the latter part of the film. As viewers, Clover maintains, we are positioned as jury members, “rhythmically pulled back and forth, in the almost machinelike alternation of direct examination with cross-examination.”¹¹⁸ The trial films’ underlying epistemological structure is summed up in Clover’s memorable sentence as: “fragmented, evidence-examining, forensically visualized, back-story driven, X-not-X-structured, polygraphically photographed, intricately plotted, doubt-cultivating, and jury directed.”¹¹⁹

As Jennifer Peterson has pointed out, Clover describes cognitive mode of reception, which of course is only one of many possible modes. Many scholars have argued that numerous trial documentaries position the viewer as jurors asked to sift through evidence and piece together conflicting testimonies. While this cognitive model, drawing on the detective film, is a productive one for many works fitting into the “trial documentary” category, state-crime, perpetrator-focused documentaries do not adhere to this underlying epistemological structure. The guilt of perpetrators of state-sanctioned atrocities is a foregone conclusion. As Martha Umphrey has noted, the very term

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.109.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.116-117.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.127.

“perpetrator testimony” announces the difference—and change in temporality—between the documentary testimony and the actual trial.¹²⁰ Whereas in court the perpetrator is always referred to as “the accused,” directors and scholars, when discussing documentaries, use the term “perpetrator.” The audience of these films is not hailed as juror but instead pulled into an unnerving and uncanny encounter. We move out of the juridical mode and into a phenomenological and ontological mode. Furthermore, Ophuls’ and Sivan’s films underscore what I argue are fundamental epistemological differences between interviews with perpetrators and interviews with victims.

The films also serve to highlight a crucial difference between filmed trial testimony and documentary interviews with perpetrators and victims. Clover asserts that “trials are already movie-like to begin with and movies are already trial-like to begin with.”¹²¹ Both *The Specialist* and *The Memory of Justice* speak to the interpenetration of trials and documentary, yet a basic difference between the trial and victim testimony-based documentaries—which make up the vast majority of interview documentaries and have received the most attention in the critical literature—is that in the trial, victims, if put on the stand, are cross-examined, whereas in interview documentaries they rarely are since that technique, in the context of an interview, would seem to be cruel and out of place.¹²² This encouragement of viewer belief in documentary interview testimony (largely because of the lack of cross-examination and adherence to conventional documentary realist codes) has prompted critics like Bill Nichols to be highly critical of

¹²⁰ Martha Umphrey, comment made at “Trial Films on Trial” conference held at Amherst College.

¹²¹ Clover, “Law,” p. 108.

¹²² As Ticien Sassoubre pointed out at the “Trial Films on Trial” conference, victim impact statements can be presented in court at the time of ruling to avoid placing the victim on the stand and subjecting them to potentially brutal cross examination.

the interview mode. One of Nichols' main objections to interview films is that they induce too much credibility in the interviewees (who have been carefully selected for their performance): "The film says, in effect, 'Interviewees never lie.' Interviewees say, 'What I am telling you is the truth.' We then ask, 'Is the interviewee telling the truth?' but find no acknowledgement in the film of the possibility, let alone the necessity, of entertaining this question as one inescapable in all communication and signification."¹²³ Nichols sees the blurring of "the voice of the social actor ... and the voice of the film" in interview-based documentaries as highly problematic.¹²⁴ For Nichols, our "reliance on testimony and commentary by witnesses and experts ... raises problems of belief or credibility.... Our willingness to agree with what is said relies to a surprisingly large extent on rhetorical suasion and documentary convention." We are encouraged to "trust those who speak to the camera unless given reason to do otherwise."¹²⁵ Interviews with perpetrators, regardless of the directorial interventions, immediately put pressure on these documentary conventions and frustrate our desire for what Nichols has called "epistophilia." Since credibility is immediately at stake with perpetrators, speech and testimony are destabilized in these documentaries. This destabilization also doubles back on conventional documentaries that present testimony as transparent and unmediated.

Importantly, in the courtroom both victims and perpetrators are subject to this destabilization if they are put on the stand because of the structure of cross-examination, but the documentary genre, more than the law, often fixes victim testimony as truth.

¹²³ Nichols, "The Voice of Documentary," in Bill Nichols, ed. *Movies and Methods* Volume II (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 266.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.266.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p.280.

Interviews with perpetrators also lead us to rethink identification in documentary. Elizabeth Cowie and Brian Winston¹²⁶, among others, assert that interview films encourage our empathy and belief in the witness and ground us in a knowable world. Encounters with perpetrators, on the other hand, offer radically different viewing experiences, as we are not offered a comfortable subject with whom to identify. Interviews with perpetrators often flicker between conveying a sense of the world as knowable and as unknowable. They also shift between inviting viewers to imagine themselves in the interviewee's world and dramatically blocking empathy. Documentary perpetrator testimony challenges the interview mode as one of communication, information, and revelation and as a vehicle for testimonial truth.

Interestingly, Clover sees the state of believing and disbelieving simultaneously as “the heart of the jury experience” yet doesn't remark on the doubling, which occurs with the film viewer as juror. When we as viewers are confronted with haunted perpetrator testimony, as with the group of films I am discussing here, we move out of the cognitively satisfying fact-finding and evidence-weighting mode of juridical spectatorship and into the viscerally discomfiting arena of the uncanny. As Austin Sarat suggests, this filmic haunting can double back onto actual trials themselves. Martha Umphrey has described actual trials themselves as “productions of the uncanny,” sites of performance¹²⁷ where the “real” is often eminently elusive.¹²⁸ As the number of

¹²⁶ See Elizabeth Cowie, “The Spectacle of Actuality,” in Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov, eds. *Collecting Visible Evidence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) and Brian Winston, “The Tradition of the Victim in Griersonian Documentary,” in Alan Rosenthal, ed. *New Challenges for Documentary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

¹²⁷ Jennifer Mnookin notes in “Reproducing a Trial: Evidence and its Assessment in *Paradise Lost*,” that the fact that “trials, too, are ‘productions’—elaborate staged dramas whose relation to the real is very far

perpetrator documentaries mount and Nazi denial testimony is strategically mobilized in both fiction and nonfiction films for various ends, the echoes and images of Nazis in Nuremberg can invade the courtroom, particularly in recent events such as International Criminal Tribunals on Rwanda and the Extraordinary Chambers on the Khmer Rouge.

Upon their release, both *The Memory of Justice* and *The Specialist* generated considerable controversy. Ophuls and Sivan, a generation apart, both wield the cinematic medium to challenge received truths and official history.¹²⁹ Both filmmakers investigate testimony as a mode and emphasize their own presence within their films; at the same time they use the testimonial form to intervene politically and historically. Ophuls' *The Memory of Justice* strategically mobilizes previously unavailable newly synched Nuremberg footage to haunt interviews with Nazis and perpetrators of subsequent atrocities in Algeria and Vietnam. Sivan's *The Specialist* uses different cinematic techniques to achieve a sense of haunting. A filmic adaptation of Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, *The Specialist* reconfigures the Eichmann trial footage to place the perpetrator, not the survivor-witnesses, at the center of the trial. Haunted by the cinematic past and future, Eichmann's testimony becomes a palimpsest, acquiring multiple layers of uncanniness. Both *The Memory of Justice* and

from indexical—almost goes without saying.” In *Law on the Screen*, Austin Sarat, Lawrence Douglas, Martha Merrill Umphrey, eds. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 157.

¹²⁸Austin Sarat and Martha Umphrey, comments made at the “Trial Films on Trial” conference.

¹²⁹Not surprisingly, Sivan cites Ophuls as an inspiration for his work. The directors share an interest in perpetrator testimony and a willingness to ask hard questions of history and contemporary political situations. In 2013 Sivan and Ophuls appeared at a number of film festivals and events together to discuss their work and screen *The Memory of Justice*. Their conversation at the Courtisane du Gand festival was filmed and is available on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/65969200>.

The Specialist marshal expressly cinematic devices to interrogate testimony's fundamental statement: "I am here. I was there."

The Holocaust/Testimony/Unicity

To hear the echo of Nazi denial at Nuremberg in the testimony of a witness discussing atrocities committed in Algeria and Vietnam, as in *The Memory of Justice*; to conjure filmic depictions of Nazis and images of corporate criminals as we watch Eichmann speak, as in *The Specialist*, is to dilute the specificity of the testifying "I," to challenge the absolute uniqueness of the event. When dealing with the Holocaust this can be especially complicated because the singularity and uniqueness of the Holocaust has long been "critical doxa."¹³⁰ The Holocaust's singularity has been wrapped into its narrative since the Eichmann trial and the Holocaust narrative's mode sine qua non since the Eichmann trial testimony. In other words, as I discussed in the previous chapter, it is *through* survivor testimony that the narrative of the Holocaust, with its uniqueness, is developed and transmitted at the 1961 Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem.

To invite analogies between the Holocaust and other atrocities, to haunt other testimonies with echoes of Nazi denial, is frequently regarded as means of diminishing the Holocaust's singularity and engaging in facile comparison. However, what is often overlooked is the paradox embedded in the choice to have testimony as the Holocaust's primary narrative mode. For as we have seen, testimony itself subsists on a tension between singularity and exemplarity, uniqueness and repeatability. Furthermore, the Nuremberg trials and to a lesser extent the Eichmann trial—points of origin for

⁹Michael Rothberg, Debarati Sanyal, and Max Silverman, "Editor's Note" in *Noueds de mémoire*, p.1.

documentary testimony as filmic mode—directly addressed these contradictions in the pre-trial planning. *The Memory of Justice* and *The Specialist*, by haunting testimony with other times and places, bring to the fore testimony’s complexity, which the law and conventional film often disavow. They draw our attention to the layered temporality and paradoxical nature of testimony—in court on film—that Derrida has laid bare.

Here and Elsewhere

A 26-second montage culled from footage of the Nuremberg trials opens Marcel Ophuls’ *The Memory of Justice*. In rapid succession, we watch five high-ranking Nazi defendants (unidentified by the film) stand and make their statements before the court. “Not guilty” declares the Chief of Staff of the German High Command, Wilhelm Keitel; “Absolutely not guilty,” states Chief Nazi Philosopher and Reichminister for the Eastern Occupied Territories, Alfred Rosenberg; “Not guilty as charged,” proclaims President of Reichstag, Hermann Goering. “That will be entered as a plea of ‘not guilty’” states a voice from the court. Echoes resound in this less than half-minute sequence, which begins Ophuls’ study of Nuremberg and its aftermath. In each Nazi’s statement following the first we hear an echo of the former one. Together they combine to create a chorus of denials, denials that will echo through the four-and-a-half hour film about to unfold and reverberate through subsequent perpetrator testimonies in documentaries to come. This Nuremberg Nazi denial sequence points backward in film history as well as forward.

More than two decades earlier, we watched another chilling montage of Nazi denial marked by rapid editing. In Alain Resnais’ *Night and Fog* (1956), we saw silent footage of statements given by two men in a trial of lower-ranking Nazis. As the men’s

mouths move, the narrator in voice-over speaks their words: “‘I am not responsible’ says the Kapo; ‘I am not responsible,’ says the officer. I am not responsible.” Haunted by this unforgettable sequence in *Night and Fog*, the opening moments of Ophuls’ *The Memory of Justice* will itself haunt the interviews throughout Ophuls’ film. *Memory’s* Nuremberg “not guilty” sequence also is overlaid with the fictional recreation of Nazi pleas in Stanley Kramer’s *Judgment at Nuremberg*, made the same year as the Eichmann trial, 1961. Moreover *Memory’s* opening mini-montage is part of a larger montage, which constitutes *The Memory of Justice’s* preface, a preface which rapidly moves among three historical moments: the Holocaust, the French occupation of Algeria, and American bombing in Vietnam.

Immediately following the series of Nuremberg Nazi denials, we cut to an interview with violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who states “You see I proceed from the assumption that every human being is guilty, by degree, by association, by being human. If they did it here it is not that it could not happen in America. It is not that it could not happen elsewhere.” As Menuhin speaks the final word of his statement—“elsewhere”—the camera cuts to an image of a young Vietnamese man, who at first appears dead but then slowly moves his head as we hear the voice of NBC reporter Arthur Lord stating “What happened here is an accident of war.” Cut to notorious footage of a Vietnamese woman carrying in her arms her dead child, killed by an American attack. We listen to her agonizing lamentations and untranslated words as Lord continues, “Somebody made a mistake.” The devastating footage is immediately followed by a clip from an interview with former paratrooper in Algeria, Noel Favreliere, who states:

I think, maybe I'm finding excuses for them, but I must say what I think, and I think it was an accident, an accident because it was a little girl. The fact that someone was killed was no accident; that was deliberate. One of our units was approaching a village and a shape, a white shape or rather a bush moved. Then without even knowing what was in the bush, man or animal, the captain gave the order to fire, and out of the bush sprang a small white shape and started to run.

While Favreliere speaks about this incident in Algeria, we cut back to Vietnam, again to atrocity footage, here showing a naked little girl, her clothes and skin incinerated from napalm, fleeing with a male child from an American attack. Quick cut to Anthony Herbert, identified by his title as "the Most Decorated U.S. Soldier in Korea," who, we later learn, was forced to leave the army for his refusal to cover up crimes in Vietnam. Back to the former paratrooper in Algeria, who closes his narration by telling us that the captain jokingly offered to pay one of his "crackshot" soldiers to shoot the small, white running shape. The soldier complied; the little girl died in his arms; and the shooter later went mad.

The closing of *Memory*'s introductory montage includes clips from several interviews that are expanded later in the film. A U.S. Army deserter explains his motives; Chief Nuremberg Prosecution Council Telford Taylor states that "most of these things are not done by monsters; they are done by very ordinary people, people very much like you and me.... I guess I did think before that Americans had been somewhat immune to these pressures...I guess I still think we try to obtain the higher values...and succeed less often than I thought before." A survivor and key Nuremberg witness, Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier, discusses the mixture of joy and sorrow that another survivor felt at the birth of her daughter after so many had died. At this point, the title, *The Memory of Justice*, the film credits, and "Part One: Nuremberg and the Germans" appear for the first time, over

footage of a bombed-out German city, presumably Nuremberg. The preface has ended and the rest of the film begins.

In this opening salvo, cinema's particular power to generate links between events separated by time and space comes to the fore, its ability to connect here and elsewhere, to superimpose one image over another and in doing so create a "new dimension." The string of Nazi "not guilty" pleas that begins Ophuls' film were plucked from fifteen hours of newly-available Nuremberg footage. By choosing to edit them with quick cuts, which recall the sequence from *Night and Fog*, Ophuls immediately overlays the footage with a cinematic heritage distinct from its original context in the Nuremberg courtroom.

Temporality is destabilized from *Memory*'s start. This Nazi Nuremberg testimony, which I call the "ground zero" of filmic denial testimony, was filmed in 1945. However, when it appears in Ophuls' *Memory* (1976), it is haunted by a film that had not yet been made: Alain Resnais' masterpiece from 1956. Furthermore, the denial montage in *Night and Fog* is itself overlaid with other histories, other temporalities circulating in the film. Jean Cayrol's words spoken by the narrator at *Night and Fog*'s closing, ripple through the Nuremberg denial sequence that opens *The Memory of Justice*. "Who among us" asks *Night and Fog*'s narrator,

is on the lookout from this strange tower to warn us of new executioners? Are their faces really different from our own? Somewhere among us, there are lucky Kapos, reinstated officers and unknown informers.... we pretend to believe that all this happened only once, at a certain time and in a certain place and we refuse to look around us, we who do not hear the endless cry.

Resnais urges us not to "pretend to believe that all this happened *only once, at a certain time and in a certain place*" (emphasis added); remarkably, in the final plea of this 1956 film—considered, after the liberation newsreels of the camps, the first Holocaust

documentary—we are urged to defy the *very* codes of specificity (“on this day, at this time, in this location”), which govern testimony. The Nuremberg sequence in *Memory*, mobilized to haunt war crimes committed in Vietnam and Algeria, carries with it the endless cry of future atrocities resounding from *Night and Fog*. What’s more, in a vertiginous mise-en-abyme, *Memory*, a film that refuses to lend a deaf ear to the endless cry and consistently challenges testimony’s unicity, embeds within it references to *Night and Fog*. Resnais’ oft-cited statement about *Night and Fog*—“the whole point was Algeria”¹³¹—has been subject to numerous interpretations. It is perhaps in this final appeal to the viewer—to recognize ourselves in the faces of the new executioners and to hear the endless cry—that the implied reference to Algeria looms largest. In *The Memory of Justice*, implied reference to atrocities committed by France in Algeria turns to direct engagement. Significantly, *The Memory of Justice*’s final image cites *Night and Fog* as well. Ophuls concludes with a close-up on the now infamous photograph of a Warsaw ghetto boy with his hands up, an image first brought into circulation by its appearance in *Night and Fog*.¹³² The director of *The Memory of Justice* thus bookends his four-and-a-half-hour study of Nuremberg and its aftereffects with references to *Night and Fog*.

¹³¹ Sandy Flitterman, “Documenting the Ineffable: Terror and Memory in Alain Resnais’ *Night and Fog*,” in Barry Keith Grant and Jeannette Sloniowski, eds., *Documenting the Documentary* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1998), footnote 11, p.215.

¹³² The photograph of the boy in the Warsaw ghetto has an interesting history. As Sylvie Lindeperg points out, it resurfaces in many documentaries as a metonym of the Holocaust, although it documents a ghetto not a concentration camp. The photograph also has a complicated multidirectional history. (Lindeperg, p. 55). In 2005, during the retreat from Gaza, Israeli settlers had their children confront Israeli soldiers posing with their hands up in direct reference to the Warsaw boy. Michael Rothberg discusses an interactive photograph by Alan Schechner which shows a Palestinian boy with his hands up holding something in one hand. A zoom in reveals that the Palestinian holds a photo of the Warsaw boy. A subsequent zoom in reveals the Warsaw boy holds a photo of the Palestinian boy. Rothberg argues that Schechner reverses the affective charge from antagonistic competitiveness to empathy...placing the suffering onto both the Israelis

As I have argued earlier, Ophuls, in his most famous film, *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1969) not only echoes but *revises* Resnais' *Night and Fog* by firmly inserting the Judeocide into France's collective memory of the occupation where *Night and Fog* had all but elided its direct reference.¹³³ Only after emphasizing the specific targets of the Nazi genocide in *Sorrow* does Ophuls, in his later film, *The Memory of Justice*, seem to respond to *Night and Fog*'s final plea, as if the specificity of the Nazi genocide must first be firmly imprinted in the collective consciousness before Ophuls can feel ready to juxtapose Nazi crimes to other atrocities. Former Nuremberg prosecutor Telford Taylor's statement "most of these things are not done by monsters; they are done by very ordinary people, people very much like you and me" seems to answer the narrator of *Night and Fog*'s question "Are [the executioners'] faces really different from our own?" Yehudi Menuhin's comment "...if they did it here, it is not that it could not happen in America. It is not that it could not happen elsewhere" pushes back against the denial Resnais' narrator warns us we fall prey to if "we pretend to believe that all this happened only once, at a certain time and in a certain place."

In *The Sorrow and the Pity*, as I suggested, *Night and Fog* was an implied intertext that Ophuls' work seems to both draw upon and revise. In *The Memory of Justice*, the reference to *Night and Fog* is more overt though not direct. *Memory's*

and the Palestinians" as victims. Rothberg, "From Gaza to Warsaw: Mapping Multidirectional Memory." *Criticism*. Fall 2011, Vol. 53, No. 4., p.535.

¹³³ Numerous scholars have discussed *Night and Fog*'s lack of specifying the Jews as the Nazi's genocidal target, many contextualizing this surprising omission in the postwar France context and pointing out that the Holocaust as a narrative was only formed in the 1961 Adolf Eichmann trial. See Debarti Sanyal's riveting essay on *Night and Fog*'s lack of specificity and use of allegory in "Auschwitz as Allegory in *Night and Fog*" in *Concentrationary Cinema: Aesthetics as Political Resistance in Alain Resnais's Night and Fog*, Griselda Pollock and Max Silverman, eds. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011).

opening montage echoes *Night and Fog*'s montage of Nazi Kapos "I am not responsible" utterances. The photo of the child in the Warsaw ghetto in *Memory*'s closing uses the same image made famous by Resnais' film. In *Hotel Terminus: the Life and Times of Klaus Barbie* (1988), *Night and Fog* is directly mentioned twice and scenes from the film are extracted. In an interview, French resistance poet Rene Tavernier recalls the affect the powerful affect Resnais' film had on him when he first saw it. After Tavernier speaks, Ophuls inserts an excerpt from *Night and Fog*. In another scene, an unrepentant German Nazi sympathizer recalls seeing what she calls a "propaganda film" about the camps. "*Night and Fog*?" Ophuls suggests. The woman can't remember but we do, as we have just viewed a clip from Resnais' film. The path we can trace of *Night and Fog*'s presence in Ophuls' Holocaust trilogy (*Sorrow*, *Memory* and *Hotel Terminus*) offers a fascinating look at the differing contexts Resnais' film can move in. Looking at *Night and Fog* as intertext in Ophuls' trilogy also draws out different ways that Ophuls situates the Holocaust within history. Resnais film, "revised" to emphasize the Judeocide in *Sorrow* and acts as intertext for haunting other atrocities in *Memory*. It returns in *Hotel Terminus*—at a time when negationism, the term for Holocaust denial in France, was at a height and actually gained traction through Robert Faurisson—not as implied reference but as extract to affectively move the viewer as well as poet Tavernier, and to counter the statement of a Nazi sympathizer who called it a "propaganda film." *Night and Fog*, here functioning as legal evidence of the extermination camps, was shown in its entirety to Eichmann during the trial. Leo Hurwitz filmed Eichmann watching *Night and Fog* during the trial and filmmaker Chris Marker drew from Hurwitz's archival footage to focus on

Eichmann's face during the viewing. Eyal Sivan has discussed the Marker film extensively in relation to *The Specialist*.

Just as *Night and Fog* opened out onto other atrocities even as it brought the horrors of the extermination camps to many viewers for the first time, *Memory* both documents the precise horror of the Nazi crimes as it simultaneously mobilizes these crimes to haunt other atrocities. Looking more closely at *Memory*'s preface, we can see how Ophuls uses techniques specific to film in order to prevent spatial and temporal isolation. The visual references for the shifters "here" and "elsewhere" rapidly change in the moments after the Nuremburg footage. As we hear Menuhin say "elsewhere," a cut to a severely injured Vietnamese man transports us from Germany to Vietnam. Then quickly this "elsewhere" becomes "here" when we hear Alfred Lord's American voice say, "What happened here is an accident of war," and we cut to the famous image of the woman carrying her dead child. Now the word "accident" is picked up and carried over from American acts of violence in Vietnam to French atrocities in Algeria. The former paratrooper, Noel Favreliere, begins his interview testimony stating that a murder of an Algerian girl by a French squadron was an "accident" only in the sense that the shooter couldn't see exactly what type of "game" he fired on. Favreliere's words are now attached to a new image. While he describes the Algerian girl as "small white running shape," a cut takes us back to Vietnam: we see the horrifying footage of a small naked pale Vietnamese girl, clothes and skin seared from a napalm attack, running down a road

with her back to the camera. In a further disturbing displacement, the “crackshot” shooter is now the cameraman, shooter of the film footage, whose point of view we share.

Through montage and sound bridges, the space/time of three distinct atrocities—the Holocaust, Algeria and Vietnam—have been juxtaposed not, as Ophuls has repeatedly stressed and as his own fight with his producers attests, to create facile equations but to interrogate the efficacy of international law established at Nuremberg.¹³⁴ Ophuls also here foreshadows through sound the upcoming insertion of the personal—himself and his own family—into the political. Over archival photographs of Jewish concentration camp detainees and Vaillant-Couturier’s narration about children born to survivors, we hear lovely but at times hesitant piano music. The music at first seems to be extradiegetic, but its source is revealed a moment later—a young blond girl at a piano. Only after the opening credits, when we are “included” in Ophuls’ birthday party, do we learn that the girl is the filmmaker’s daughter. The birthday party includes talk about the experiences of the family during the war, of Ophuls as a German Jew forced into exile, and of his wife as a German child with “unexceptional” parents. After the preface, the next two hours, which constitute “Part One: Nuremberg and the Germans,” leave Algeria and largely Vietnam behind; however the violence perpetrated in these countries by

¹³⁴ See for example *Film Comment*, September 1, 1977: FC: At the press conference after the screening of *The Memory of Justice* at the New York Film Festival last year, some of the questions seemed to me to indicate that there were those who felt you had equated American conduct in Vietnam with the worst excesses of the Nazis. A wrongheaded conclusion, of course, but did you ever think it might be better if you spelled out your meaning to avoid misinterpretation in so serious a matter?

MO: I have a stock response to that. The nuance is what's important and to compare is not to equate. I don't like narrow analogies. There are those people, you see—and they are often overtly and consciously political—who believe that truth is very simple. And they feel an urgent need to convey it to what they consider "the masses." I'm not like that at all. As to the general reaction to the film here...well, it's too early to tell, but I think it might well parallel the French reaction to *The Sorrow and the Pity*.

former Allies hovers over the interviews and trial footage on Nuremberg—specters from the future invited in by the preface.

But there is more to say about this 26-second opening “not guilty” Nuremberg montage. In the first place, how did it get “here?” As Christian Delage has traced in his book, *Caught on Camera: Film in the Courtroom From the Nuremberg Trials to the Trials of the Khmer Rouge*, Justice Robert Jackson made a landmark decision before the Nuremberg trials began—he would use film as evidence and he would film parts of the proceedings for newsreels and as an archive. This “double jurisprudence,” as Delage calls it, would of course have profound impact on future trials and the documentary genre. While researching for a never-made film, an imagined “Sorrow and the Pity: Part Two” about postwar Western Europe, Ophuls, as he stated in an interview, “discovered from a French journalist that there were fifteen hours of footage done by the United States Army Signal Corps during the Nuremberg Trials, which had been used in various documentary films since the war but never with synchronized sound and picture.”¹³⁵ With the release of *The Memory of Justice* in 1976, viewers for the first time heard the voices of the Nazi criminals while viewing their images. What I have called the ground zero of filmic denial testimony makes its first appearance as synched sound film footage in Ophuls’ film. Our first exposure to the synched footage however is in the highly-edited opening “not guilty” sequence where we are confronted not with the illusion of raw footage but rather with the imprint of three filmmakers—John Ford, who was hired by Jackson to shoot the original Nuremberg footage; Ophuls, who created the quick cuts in

¹³⁵ Quoted in “A War Over Justice: An Interview with Marcel Ophuls,” Frank Manchel, *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 6, No. 1 (Winter 1978): 27.

the preface; and Resnais, whose sequence in *Night and Fog* was evoked by Ophuls. It is befitting, since the Nuremberg footage was the first to be filmed in a courtroom, that the cinematic medium itself is foregrounded. Furthermore, since the Nuremberg footage will haunt the subsequent interviews about Vietnam and Algeria in *Memory*, the multiple temporalities in this opening footage presage the layered space to come.

A comparison with Christian Delage's 2007 documentary *Nuremberg: The Nazis Facing Their Crimes* highlights the very different ways the Nuremberg footage can be used in film. After the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum transferred the twenty-five feet of Nuremberg trial film,¹³⁶ Delage drew on the archive to make his film. Billed as the "first documentary to tell the story of the Nuremberg Trials from within the courtroom," *Nuremberg*, narrated by Christopher Plummer, spends much of its screen time showing the newly restored trial footage, with a special emphasis on the moments when, for the first time, film was shown as evidence in the courtroom. *Nuremberg* intersperses the trial footage with brief interviews with several people who were directly involved with the trial. The DVD booklet explains:

Director Christian Delage wanted to reproduce the full impact of the proceedings filmed in Nuremberg, so the commentary complements and accentuates the highlights of the trials, rather than overshadowing them.... In terms of technical details, all of the original optical soundtracks of the film were replaced by the better-quality audio recording.... Damaged images were restored. Editing helped to give the feeling of continuity throughout the proceedings. For the interviews, only key figures present at the trial were selected in order to avoid reducing the archive to a mere parade of general declarations.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ As Christian Delage points out in the booklet accompanying his documentary *Nuremberg: The Nazis Facing Their Crimes*, there are in fact twenty-five feet of Nuremberg trial film, which were transferred to video by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. It seems likely that when Ophuls was making *The Memory of Justice* the footage had not all been compiled in one place.

¹³⁷ *Nuremberg: The Nazis Facing Their Crimes*, Lions Gate, 2007.

In contradistinction to *The Memory of Justice*, made over a quarter century earlier, *Nazis Facing Their Crimes* grounds, or locks, us in the space-time of the trial. Documentary filmic tools—narration, interviews, music, sound/image links and editing—are marshaled to secure a linear temporality and allow the archival footage to come forward as historical document. While the precedents for international law set at Nuremberg are emphasized, there is, unlike in *Memory*, no gesture outwards, no invitation to make comparisons with subsequent atrocities. Although in his scholarly work on the Nuremberg trials, Delage stresses the multiple temporalities filming the trials introduced, in his own documentary on Nuremberg these complicated temporalities are submerged and instead a coherent space-time is projected.

Thinking about *Memory of Justice* in relation to Delage's *Nuremberg* helps to draw out some of the differences between the more traditional, historical documentaries and those that I see as incorporating penitenti, layered with traces of disavowals, blindness, or denial from the past or future. In a similar vein, Joshua Hirsch positions posttraumatic cinema in contrast to the realist historical film. In an essay on *Night and Fog*, Hirsch juxtaposes Stuart Schulberg's 1946 film *Nuremberg*, commissioned by the United States Government to be shown in tandem with the Nuremberg trials but banned soon after during the Cold War in a wish to keep good ties with Germany, to *Night and Fog*. Whereas as *Night and Fog*'s use of flashback, rather than creating a divide between present and past, instead unnervingly "seems to hover in a kind of timeless no man's land of anxiety," *Nuremberg*, Hirsch argues, uses the flashback to convey mastery over the past and "the traumas of concentration camps and genocide were thus contained and

assimilated into the master narrative of the Allied victory.”¹³⁸ Both Hirsch, in his discussion of posttraumatic cinema, and Max Silverman, in his study of palimpsestic memory, cite a lesser known concept of trauma theorist Cathy Caruth. Caruth considers “the way in which one’s own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way in which trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another’s wound.”¹³⁹ In an inverse manner, when perpetrations from different historical atrocities are linked or put into dialogic relation to one another a productive response can be triggered—as Lanzmann himself, as we remember, demonstrated by linking in a protest statement the French collaboration in deporting French Jews to the 1961 massacre in Paris of Algerians 1961.

Fungibility

Towards the end of part 1 of *The Memory of Justice*, we watch an excerpt from Chief Robert Jackson’s opening speech to the Military Tribunal on the criminality of the indicted Nazi organizations:

These crimes with which we deal are unprecedented first because of the shocking number of victims; they are even more shocking and unprecedented because of the large number of people who united their efforts to perpetrate them: a thousand little *führers* dictated, a thousand imitation Goerings strutted, a thousand Streichers stirred up hate, a thousand Kaltenbrunners tortured and killed, a thousand Speers administered.

In this remarkable moment, camera and speech seem to unite in perfect harmony. As we hear the words “a thousand imitation Goerings,” the camera pauses on the minister; with “a thousand Streichers,” it holds the publisher in a medium shot; with “a thousand

¹³⁸ Joshua Hirsch, “Night and Fog and Posttraumatic Cinema,” in *Concentrationary Cinema: Aesthetics as Political Resistance in Alain Resnais’s Night and Fog* eds. Griselda Pollock and Max Silverman (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011) 191-2.

¹³⁹ Hirsch, p.197.

Kaltenbrunners,” there is a cut the Security Chief; and at the sound of the words “a thousand Speers,” the camera looks up and the architect appears before us. The film’s focus on each Nazi criminal affixes individual image to word, fastens name to face, but even more powerfully, it underscores not the image’s specificity but its fungibility. As we gaze upon each high-ranking Nazi’s face in all its unnerving particularity, we are told that there are a thousand others just like him. Here, in a series of single moments, we observe the delicate negotiation, in which both the law and documentary partake, between the particular and the general, the individual and the representative. It is striking that this gesture towards exchangeability exists in the original Nuremberg trial footage, long before excerpts will be mobilized within *The Memory of Justice* to haunt subsequent atrocities. Even as Goering, Streicher, Kaltenbrunnenr, Speer appear before us; even as the camera encourages us to look closely at the Nazi defendants’ particular expressions and movements, we are simultaneously asked to look past the image, to transpose other faces, other bodies into the film footage.

Agonistic Space

...the longer I was confronted by the task I had chosen for myself, the more aware I became that I had no right substitute myself for trial by law.

Marcel Ophuls on *The Memory of Justice*¹⁴⁰

I told them that I was not a prosecutor and that my movie was not a tribunal.

Rithy Panh, on *S21*¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Cited in “A War Over Justice,” p.30.

¹⁴¹ Press release, *S21: The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine*, cited in Delage, p.231.

The spatial and temporal particularities of testimony—whether on film or in court—are especially pertinent when considering the Nuremberg trials because of Jackson’s critical decision to film the trials and show filmic testimony. While the “double jurisprudence” seems to be born from a belief in the power of moving images, the two rulings in fact draw on different attributes of the medium. In a discussion of archival footage and *Night and Fog*, Andrew Heberd observes, “The status of the visual archive as a form of evidence in the war crimes trials was one that stressed the indexical quality of the medium. As evidence, the visual archive allows one to definitively state ‘that all this happened only once, at a certain time and in a certain place’...”¹⁴² On the other hand, as Delage stresses, the decision to film the trial—to create a visual archive—means turning an eye (or multiple cameras) to future viewers, opening the possibility of links and connections between this trial and others, shifting somewhat away from unicity and singularity. This tension between fixing testimony and allowing for its association with other times and spaces is, as I stated above, intrinsic to testimony whether mediated through film or not. In *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony*, Jacques Derrida captures testimony’s contradictory impulses: “the singular must be universalizable; this is the testimonial condition.”¹⁴³ Using language that conjures up film though discussing verbal or written testimony, Derrida comments “The moment one is a witness and the moment one attests, *bears witness*, the instant one gives testimony, there must also be a temporal sequence—sentences, for example—and, above all, these sentences must promise their

¹⁴²Andrew Heberd, “Disruptive Histories: Towards a Radical Politics of Remembrance in Alain Resnais’ *Night and Fog*,” *Concentrationary Cinema: Aesthetics as Political Resistance in Alain Resnais’s Night and Fog* eds. Griselda Pollock and Max Silverman (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011).

¹⁴³ Jacques Derrida, *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony* trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 41.

own repetition and thus their own quasi-technical reproducibility.... As soon as the sentence is repeatable, that is, from its origin, the instant it is pronounced...it is already instrumentalizable and affected by technology.”¹⁴⁴ The landmark decision to allow film into the Nuremberg trials—as evidence and as recorder of the proceedings—relies on a number of contradictory impulses in the law’s relation to film, impulses that continue to this day. As Jessica Silbey has emphasized, the law at times treats film as transparent (infallible evidence) and at other times as an ideal witness who is not subject to cross-examination.¹⁴⁵

Bringing film into the courtroom also underscores an attribute that the law, documentary, and testimony all share: a delicate negotiation between the particular and the general, the specific and the representative. As mentioned earlier, this topic is perhaps most fraught when dealing with the Holocaust. As Laurence Douglas has pointed out, the Nuremberg prosecution, struggling with a new legal category, “crimes against humanity,” and a postwar fear of igniting anti-Semitism by focusing on the Judeocide, squeezed the Nazi’s targeted extermination of Jews into legal categories of aggressive war and conspiracy.¹⁴⁶ As I will discuss further in the second part of this chapter, the Eichmann trial, the first trial in history to be filmed in its entirety, sought to narrate and transmit the specificity of the genocide—the Holocaust—which had been in the

¹⁴⁴ Derrida, *Demeure*, p. 70.

¹⁴⁵ See Jessica Silbey, “Judges as Film Critics: New Approaches to Filmic Evidence”, *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform* 37 (2004); “Videotaped Confessions and the Genre of Documentary,” *Fordham Intellectual Property, Media and Entertainment Law Journal* 16 (2006); “Cross-Examining Film,” *University of Maryland Law Journal Race, Relations, Gender and Class* 8 (2008) (Symposium Issue); “Evidence Verité and the Law of Film,” *Cardozo Law Review* 31 no.4 (2010).

¹⁴⁶ Lawrence Douglas, *The Memory of Judgment: Making Law and History in the Trials of the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 55.

Nuremberg trials. However, while the Eichmann trial makes the specificity of the Nazi Final Solution its primary goal, it nevertheless explicitly and implicitly shuttles between the particular and general, the individual witness as *stand-in* for a larger group or concept. As David Ben Gurion, Prime Minister during the Eichmann trial said, “It is not an individual that is on dock at this historic trial, and not the Nazi regime alone, but anti-Semitism throughout history.”¹⁴⁷ Or as Gideon Hausner, Chief Prosecutor at the Eichmann trial proclaimed, “Rivka Yoselewska symbolizes the entire Jewish people.”¹⁴⁸

The cross-fertilization—and its attendant complications and misunderstandings—between documentary film and the law has been extensively and productively explored by legal and film scholars including Jennifer Mnookin, Bill Nichols and Jessica Silbey. Documentaries have famously freed unjustly imprisoned men (Errol Morris’s *The Thin Blue Line* and the West Memphis 3 documentaries by Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky); and “raw” footage has equally famously indicted men (the George Halliday footage of the Rodney King beating). In different ways, both *The Memory of Justice* and *The Specialist* urge us to consider the movement in documentary from the courtroom to the interview and back again. Interviewers, like prosecutors, often confront their subjects with court testimonies or incriminating documents from their past, and interviewees will also draw on the law and their sentencing or acquittal to expiate themselves. Interview-filmmakers like Ophuls and Rithy Panh, whose extraordinary film *S21* orchestrated harrowing encounters between victims and torturers in the former Khmer Rouge prison,

¹⁴⁷ Cited in Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 120.

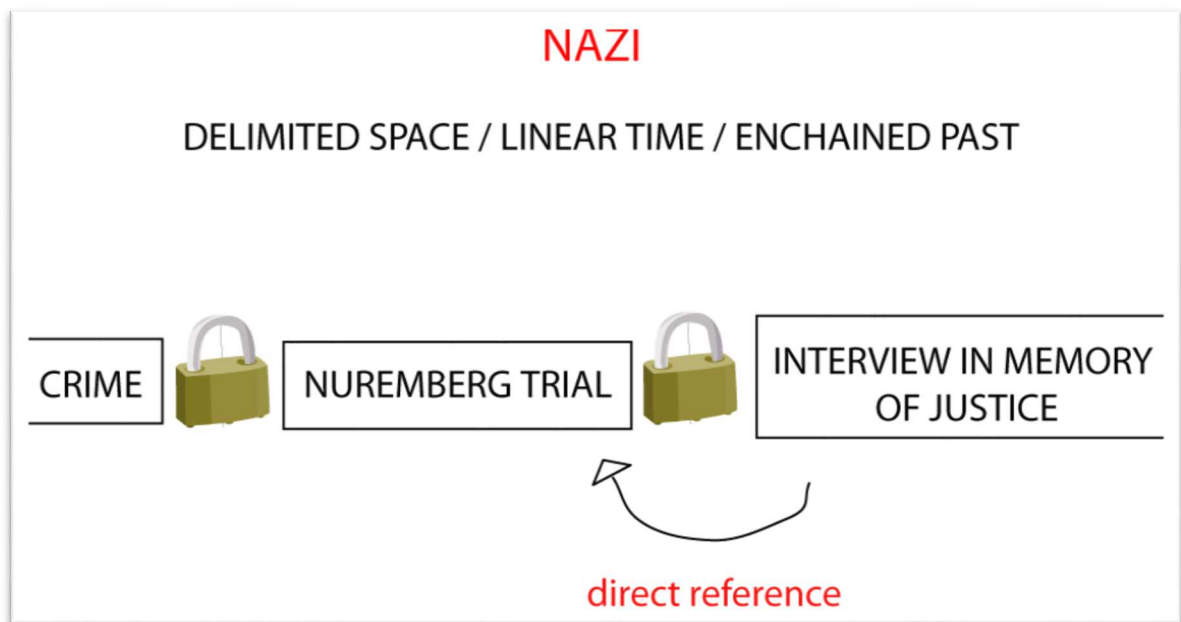
¹⁴⁸ Douglas, *Memory*, p.121.

are often compared to prosecutors. At the same time, as the above quotations attest, both Ophuls and Panh take pains to distinguish themselves and their work from the law; Panh, as Delage points out, refused to offer his footage from *S21* to the Khmer Rouge tribunal, arguing it was a “personal work” not “documentary material.”¹⁴⁹ What I would like to look at in *The Memory of Justice* is the opposing ways the law is staged by Nazis and Ophuls. In a number of moments in *The Memory of Justice*, Ophuls confronts former Nazis with documents from Nuremberg. The director also visually interrupts interviews with former Nazis by cutting to Nuremberg trial footage showing the interviewee as defendant. In doing so, *Memory* replicates a strategy used in the trials. At Nuremberg, the Nazis were repeatedly confronted with their cinematic images (often Nazi-made propaganda films); their reactions were carefully studied by trial attendees and written about evocatively by trial reporters. Even the courtroom architecture, as Delage notes, was strategically altered to allow a view of both the Nazis, illuminated by spotlight, and the films.¹⁵⁰ At times in *Memory*, former Nazis refer back to the trials to iterate that “they served their time” or “they were found innocent” as if the legal filmic space and the documentary interview spaces were interchangeable. However, the filmic interview space is a plastic entity not ruled by juridical codes. And in *The Memory of Justice*, the interview space often becomes an agon, with Ophuls and the interviewee pulling in opposing directions, struggling to impose different frames. The Nazi, clinging to an imagined legal frame of closure and a linear temporality, points back to the trials in order to close the door on the past. Ophuls, on the other hand, *reaches* back, *unlocks* the

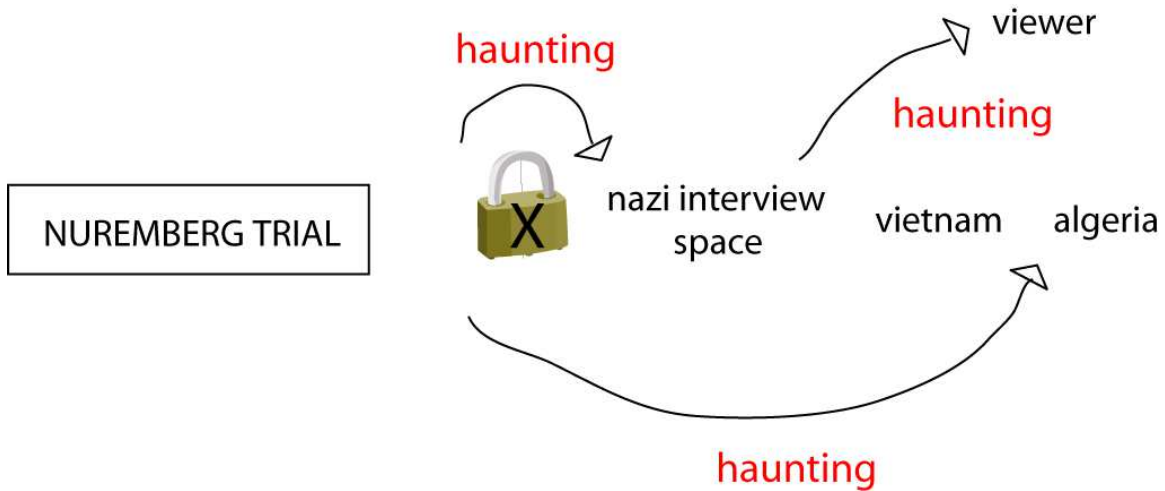
¹⁴⁹ Delage, *Caught*, p.233.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.112.

footage from the chain of the past so that it contaminates and haunts the interview filmic space, thus blurring past, present and future. By additionally intercutting atrocity footage from Vietnam as the Nazi speaks, Ophuls also charges the United States of violating the very codes they established at Nuremberg. (See diagrams below)



OPHULS' HAUNTED SPACE *MEMORY OF JUSTICE*



Although some cultural scholars, notably Shoshanna Felman, have drawn sharp distinctions between art and law, arguing that the law is a mode of closure and distance and art is medium of open temporality and intimacy, *The Memory of Justice* brings this diametrically opposed paradigm into question. For it is not “the law” but the Nazi who attempts to impose a linear temporality onto the interview, one where adjudicated crimes remain in the past and do not haunt the present. Ophüls seizes on the trial footage—created in Nuremberg precisely with an eye to the future—to bring the past into the film’s present.

While *Memory* does not explicitly discuss Nuremberg’s groundbreaking use of film (as evidence and witness), Ophüls’ work addresses the difficult relationship between the Holocaust and film. Paradoxically, although the camp liberation footage, along with

Nazi propaganda, was used as filmic evidence against the Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg, these same images left a stain on the moving image, one that has not fully lifted even today. *The Sorrow and the Pity*, as I have argued, implicates itself in the history it tells of French collaboration. Ophuls reminds us of film's complicity throughout his famous work, most obviously through his re-contextualizing of archival propaganda newsreels and films, notably scenes from the French production of Viet Harlan's anti-Semitic spectacle *Le Juif Suss*. More subtly Ophuls, in his treatment of the interview, encourages us not to be credulous even as he pursues historical truth through the very same device. In *The Memory of Justice*, Ophuls engages in a more overt self-reflexivity to thwart passive credulity. Film-within-film moments recur in *Memory*, and, though devoid of didacticism, act as mini-essays on reading images. Indeed, taken together, we could regard these moments as illustrative examples of the wide range of interpretations filmic testimony and evidence can yield, whether in documentary or in court. At the same time they also (in some instances in a manner amusingly reminiscent of silent films with narrators) draw our attention to the way that explanatory frames shape the way we view images. With famed Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld, Ophuls (and the viewer) watch surreptitious footage of a Nazi industrialist, Ophuls camera lingers on the projector, before closing in on the image on screen as Klarsfeld narrates "look how he runs!" Disturbingly, after interviewing Albert Speer, infamous Nazi architect, Ophuls is invited to the former Nazi's home to watch home movies of Hitler, Speer and his children, and other Nazis carousing and laughing at an informal gathering. Again, we

view a close up of the projector and again the shooter of the film, this time Speer, offers a narration for Ophuls.



Fig. 3.1
Former Nazi Architect Albert Speer plays home movies for Marcel Ophuls.
The Memory of Justice

At another moment while interviewing Speer, Ophuls reflexively interrogates the interview and testimony as devices. Almost mid-sentence the director stops and asks, “Herr Speer why do you give these interviews? It must not be very pleasant standing here, with the spotlight on you forced to again and again answer these questions.” Speer responds that his motivation is “to let the world know the truth.” But it seems too easy a response. Ricoeur and Derrida both assert that testimony, despite its commitment to the precise instant, gains its veracity through repetition. Perhaps somehow through the repetition, Speer will feel not only exonerated but credible. Ophuls’ questions reminds us through his question of the mediated and performative quality of testimony whether in court or in a documentary. Even as we look for a possible original revelation in the

interviews Speers grants to Ophuls, we are reminded that he has repeated the statements on camera numerous times before and he will probably repeat them again afterwards. In a clever subterfuge at one point in *Memory*, the film cuts again to Nuremberg footage of the Nazi war criminals. We watch the footage, now familiar through its reappearance in *Memory*, for a moment. Suddenly the camera pulls back to reveal a small television screen where we see the same Nuremberg footage we were seeing seconds before “within” now playing on the monitor. Standing in front of it are Ophuls’ wife Regine and several Yale students. Together they talk about the Nuremberg trials. Regine confesses to a hazy memory of the proceedings when she was living in Germany; the students discuss their perception of the successes and failures of the trial. The Nuremberg footage here has shifted from filmic specter haunting subsequent testimonies to object of scholarly analysis. Mutating from instrument to catch Nazi perpetrators, to recorder of Nazis at “play,” to object of analysis, film testimony, in Ophuls’ dexterous hands, shows itself to be a quicksilver being that demands, in addition to our embrace, our active attention and at times vigilance.

Sharing Space with The Specialist

In *The Memory of Justice* the trial and interview oppose each other agonistically; in *The Specialist* the original trial footage is reconfigured to phenomenologically become more like an interview. Part of what makes this Sivan work so uncomfortable to view is that in addition to re-positioning Eichmann at the center of the trial, the film also breaks down the boundary between us and the perpetrator. What arises is a spatially and

temporally un-delimited filmic space. The film's title, *The Specialist: Portrait of a Modern Criminal*, echoes the title of Hannah Arendt's famous work *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* of which it is an adaptation, or visualization. *The Specialist* consists exclusively of selections from the original Eichmann trial footage. In 1960, Eichmann, the notorious Nazi "specialist" on Jewish affairs and later on Jewish transport, was captured by Israeli Mossad agents in Buenos Aires and brought to Jerusalem. The Israeli government hired renowned American documentarian, Leo Hurwitz, to shoot the ensuing eighth-month trial that led to Eichmann's death sentence. Some thirty years later, Sivan sifted through the countless hours of trial video and selected and restored footage for his 127-minute compilation documentary.

Whereas the Eichmann trial centered on survivor testimony, with 111 witness-survivors called to the stand, *The Specialist* like Arendt's essay, reorients the trial's focus from victim to perpetrator testimony. In doing so, Sivan's film allows us to see for the first time extended portions of Eichmann's testimony. Indeed much of the *The Specialist's* unnerving quality arises from this intimacy with the perpetrator. At the same time, *The Specialist*, as I will show, powerfully and deliberately challenges testimony's "I am here. I was there." Whereas *The Memory of Justice* mobilized the Nuremberg court footage to haunt subsequent interviews with Nazis and atrocities in Vietnam and Algeria, cutting across the 1945 footage, interviews conducted by Ophuls, and news and archival footage, *The Specialist* never leaves the courtroom. However, through a variety of filmic techniques—special effects, editing, lighting, sound and voice manipulation—Sivan's film haunts the Eichmann footage with cinematic and historical associations from the

future. The film produces the uncanny effect of forcing us to share space with the perpetrator and at the same time contaminates the Nazi's testimony with other voices, other places, other films.

The Specialist lays bare issues central to testimony, whether in court or in a documentary interview. The film helps us to work toward a different way of seeing documentary interviews and filmed trial testimony. A re-training of the eye and a denaturalizing of the testimonial mode are deployed in order for us to see conventional documentary testimony anew. The questions "What do we see?" and "Whom do we hear?" are foregrounded from the start in *The Specialist*. The difficulty we have in answering them alerts us to how deceptively simple these questions can be in relation to testimony.

Sivan went to great lengths to restore Hurwitz's grainy videotapes, which were languishing in archives. The exquisite, hyperreal clarity of Sivan's images, which confront us in *The Specialist* depart from the conventions of realism that traditionally code "original footage." Sivan's restoration coats the original Eichmann trial footage with a sheeny patina that simultaneously allows us to see more clearly and disturbs our sense of security about what we see: is this, in fact, actual footage or is it partially digitally fabricated? This destabilization is furthered by the doubleness of authorship: are the cuts, zooms and directorial flourishes Sivan's or Hurwitz's? When Sivan, in the prologue to the film, intercuts a moment from the original, unrestored, grainy videotape, he plays with the notion that there is an authentic "real" image behind the restored one. The imperfect black and white image, a documentary signifier for "reality" and "truth,"

creates a hierarchy of reality between the restored and original image.¹⁵¹ In commentary on the film, we learn Sivan has played a trick on us—this “original” scratched and grainy footage was in fact digitally fabricated to look like an archival fragment. “This project,” Sivan asserts, “is a digital attack on the idea of veracity of the image--reflections on the glass booth, the lighting, the camera movements, everything was added. Hurwitz’s camera was static.”¹⁵² However, in a further irony, this seeming dichotomy of constructed and real, as Sivan’s film will emphasize, is yet another illusion since the “real” of the Eichmann trial itself consists of construction and performance—an aspect that Sivan, through his manipulation of the footage, is at pains to display. The very hyper-clarity of the image undermines the reliability of vision and plays with notions of surface and depth since what lies behind the restored image contains more artifice. *The Specialist* invites us to winnow out the cinematic manipulation in order to grasp some elusive reality even as we know this is an exasperating and fruitless task since the original trial is steeped in performance. We know, but still...

The Specialist, in its very first moment—the opening credits—draws attention to issues of performance. Historical figures are introduced as characters in a play or fictional film: “Adolf Eichmann—The Accused; Gideon Hausner—The Attorney General.” The blurring of documentary and fiction styles is furthered by the announcement that *The Specialist* is “based on the book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: The*

¹⁵¹ Semiologist Yuri Lotman famously commented that we see things in color not black and white, yet for our society black and white film and photographs have become an index for “realistic.” The scratched, grainy archival footage and the static sound have become further signifiers of authenticity and the real in documentaries.

¹⁵² Eyal Sivan stated this in a filmed Master Class at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) on November 23, 2009.

Banality of Evil by Hannah Arendt,” as if the film were an adaptation of a novel. As the credits continue, we hear snippets of Eichmann’s indictment conveyed by male and female voices overlaying each other speaking Hebrew, English, French, and German. We read that the film “was produced entirely from footage recorded in Jerusalem by Leo Hurwitz.” A prologue then begins, which compresses many of the central historical and theoretical issues that the main body of the film will confront. The first image we see, in the exquisite clarity of the restored videotape, is of rows of empty seats. Guards wander around in the empty space. The camera cuts to an empty glass booth, then to a close-up of a stack of books. Then, reflected in the glass of the booth, we see crowds filling the theater/courtroom. Moments later, the three judges enter and take their seats on the enormous stage, which towers over the lawyers and audience. The Attorney General, Gideon Hausner, begins his opening speech, which we read in subtitles. But midway through, the subtitles abruptly halt; ominous extradiegetic music suddenly begins to amplify; and Hausner starts to move in slow motion. As the music crescendos and abruptly stops, the image suddenly shifts from hyper-real sharpness to the grainy, scratched “original” video. In place of the intrusive extradiegetic music, we hear the familiar sound of static that often accompanies archival footage. The subtitles return in time for English speakers to read the final moments of the opening speech: “I therefore ask you to sentence this man to death.” As the camera pulls back to reveal the courtroom in all its theatrical monumentality, the music recommences. The words “The Specialist” then appear on the screen before an abrupt cut to black. Just as abruptly, an image of

Adolf Eichmann appears, staring at and through us in a medium close-up, which begins the main body of the film.

Sivan's gestures toward the theatrical in the opening credits are not facile blurrings of reality and fiction, but a foregrounding of the multiple layers of performance embedded in the Eichmann trial itself. Unveiling these layers necessitates consideration of the event of which the Eichmann trial is both a continuation and a reaction against: the 1945 Nuremberg trials. Despite sentencing and putting to death some of the most notorious Nazis and establishing the precedent of "crimes against humanity," the Nuremberg trials failed to communicate to an international public the unimaginably horrific story of the Holocaust. The Eichmann prosecution team and most scholars attributed this failure of transmission to the tribunal's choice to favor stacks of incriminating Nazi documents over survivor testimony. Fearing that survivors could be made to appear "biased" or unreliable under harsh cross-examination, and thus become fodder for Holocaust denial, the prosecution instead presented what they viewed as irrefutable, hard evidence. But, since the trials were stripped of the human component, a number of reporters found them boring, and countless individual stories of unspeakable suffering were lost under the mounds of documents. Fifteen years later, for David Ben Gurion, the prime minister of Israel at the time of Eichmann's capture, the upcoming trial could be a corrective to the failings of Nuremberg. Shoshana Felman, in *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century*, articulates a "crucial difference of perspective" between the two trials. "Whereas the Nuremberg trials view murderous political regimes and their aggressive warfare as the center of the trial...the

Eichmann trial views the victims as the center....”¹⁵³ Ben Gurion forcefully stated the objectives of the trial:

It is ...the duty of the State of Israel...to see that the whole of this story, in all of its horror, is *fully exposed*.... It is not the penalty to be inflicted on the criminal that is the main thing—no penalty can match the magnitude of the offence—but the *full exposure* of the Nazi regime’s infamous crimes against our people.¹⁵⁴ ... It is not an individual that is at the dock at this historic trial, and not the Nazi regime alone, but anti-Semitism throughout history. The judges whose business is the law and who may be trusted to adhere to it will judge Eichmann the man for his horrible crimes, but responsible *public opinion* in the world will be judging anti-Semitism....¹⁵⁵ (Emphasis added.)

Ben Gurion sought to fully “expose” the world to the Nazi atrocities whether the audience was present at the trial or watching the broadcast. Differing forms of mediation—from carefully selected courtroom architecture to television—would assist in this full exposure. The bifurcated goals of trying Eichmann and *transmitting*, in Shoshana Felman’s word, the horror of the Holocaust to the world led to a fundamental shift in the way in which information was communicated. In direct opposition to the document-centric Nuremberg trials, victim testimony became the “evidence” in the courtroom. And television, which had developed in the intervening years between the Nuremberg and the Eichmann trials, became an ideal medium for transmitting the survivor testimonies to the public, a medium that Israel seized upon. Treating the audiovisual medium as one that transparently records reality, the court states that cameras would record the proceedings “far more accurately than the written word.”¹⁵⁶ As Jeffrey Shandler cites in *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust*, the decision to televise the trial provoked considerable controversy and objection from the defense

¹⁵³Shoshana Felman, *Juridical*, p. 112.

¹⁵⁴ David Ben Gurion, *Israel: A Personal History*, trans. Nechemia Meyers and Uzy Nystar (New York: Funk and Wangalls, 1971), 575; cited in Felman, *Juridical*, p.218 n24.

¹⁵⁵ Ben Gurion, p.559; cited in Felman, *Juridical*, p.221 n41.

¹⁵⁶ Cited in Delage, *Caught*, p.170.

counsel, Robert Servatius, who argued that the witnesses might “play act” for the cameras. Israeli judges ruled in favor of the prosecution and cited Jurist Jeremy Bentham on British law regarding publicity and equitable trials: “Where there is no publicity there is no justice. It keeps the judge himself, while trying, under trial. The security of securities is publicity.”¹⁵⁷ This legal statement, striking in its own right and all the more so as a means to support the televising of the Eichmann trial, avers that under the gaze of the camera the judge becomes the apotheosis of judges, and that the watchful eyes of countless viewers guarantee justice. Rather than “performing” for the cameras, the Eichmann court implied—in a theory that Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch would similarly espouse the same year in their *cinema verité* work *Chronique d’été* (1960), where the staged encounter between interviewee and interviewer would provoke an authentic truth—the Holocaust survivor witnesses would instead become more authentically themselves under the camera’s gaze. As we now know, an alarming extension of Bentham’s notions of publicity and justice, of the salutary force of “being watched,” gave rise to the Panopticon prison, made infamous by Michel Foucault. Publicity quickly turns to surveillance.

Ben Gurion’s pronouncements of his pedagogic goals for the trial and Israel’s decision to broadcast it earned the Eichmann trial the moniker “show trial.” Adding another stratum to the layers of performance, authenticity, and spectatorship is the court’s ruling that the television cameras be hidden. The American production company, Capital

¹⁵⁷Cited in Horace Sutton, “Eichmann Goes on Trial: The Charged Air,” *Saturday Review* 44, no. 14 (8 April 1961): 60; article cited in Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (Oxford University Press, 1999) p.277 n21.

Cities Broadcasting Corporation, hired by the Israeli government to record the trial, set up cameras flanking the tribunal stage. A cordoned off control room housed director Leo Hurwitz and the camera crew, who selected what to record from the continuous feed streaming in on the monitors.¹⁵⁸ The court stated “we have satisfied ourselves that these machines stand concealed behind netted apertures, and that the persons operating them are likewise concealed; the machines record pictures by the ordinary lighting in the room and make no noise whatsoever. In this respect, i.e., as regards the possibility of a disturbance during the proceedings, we are absolutely satisfied that there will be none.”¹⁵⁹

Thus a certain disavowal hovered over the proceedings: everyone knew the cameras were there, but their presence was masked. The television crew functioned as an invisible textual voice in the Eichmann trial. Jeffrey Shandler comments:

The decision to conceal the cameras placed the television crew in the posture of a hidden surveillance team. Their absence from the spectacle ... indicates the court's inability to acknowledge the connection television provided [to external spectators] let alone to recognize the implications of the camera's presence.¹⁶⁰

Jennifer Mnookin has argued that both documentary and the trial “overtly aspire to the truth” and both “processes by which they are constructed are somehow hidden in plain sight.”¹⁶¹ The Eichmann court literalizes and instantiates this “hiding in plain sight” by concealing the cameras, those very apparati they deem most accurate recorders of the proceedings. While Sivan and many other filmmakers working within but challenging the conventions of the documentary medium do not “overtly aspire to the truth” in the

¹⁵⁸ Shandler, *While America Watches*, p.106.

¹⁵⁹ Cited in Delage, *Caught*, p.169.

¹⁶⁰ Shandler, *While America Watches*, p.131.

¹⁶¹ Jennifer Mnookin, “Reproducing a Trial,” p.157.

same way, their films show up this generic tendency to hide the underlying construction. *The Specialist* exposes at once the construction in *both* documentary and trial processes.

One of the most virulent critics of the trial's performative nature and overall approach was the eminent German Jewish philosopher Hannah Arendt, sent by *The New Yorker* to write weekly dispatches of the momentous event's unfolding. Two years later, she would convert her series of articles into a book, published in the United States in 1963 under the title *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. The book provoked considerable controversy (and continues to do so to this day) and lost Arendt a number of friends and collegial relationships. It was not translated into Hebrew and made available in Israel for many years. "Whoever planned this auditorium," she wrote,

... had a theater in mind, complete with orchestra and gallery, with proscenium and stage, and with side doors for the actors' entrance. Clearly, this courtroom is not a bad place for the show trial David Ben-Gurion, Prime Minister of Israel, had in mind when he decided to have Eichmann kidnapped....¹⁶²

Arendt saw the government-hired prosecutor, Gideon Hausner, as the mouthpiece for Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, who is, for Arendt, the "invisible stage manager" of the trial. Felman identifies Arendt's role in the trial as "the critical historian," in the Nietzschean sense—one who judges and condemns the past rather than aggrandizing it in the tradition of the monumental historian.¹⁶³ Much of Arendt's withering and incisive critique of the trial involves peeling back the layers to reveal the orchestrations beneath. She aims to fragment the projected image of a unified Israel by emphasizing the fissures in the community. Her emphasis on Jewish collaboration under

¹⁶² Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 4.

¹⁶³ Felman, *Juridical*, p.111.

Nazism remains one of the book's more controversial assertions.¹⁶⁴ Arendt excoriates the victim-centered focus of the trial, which she feels departs from the goal: to try Eichmann. She is particularly unforgiving of Hausner's choice of witnesses, many of whom are prominent Jews who she feels have a pre-packaged, well-rehearsed testimony. Ben Gurion and Hausner, on the other hand, seem to share the belief of many documentarians that a partially staged and scripted reality with twin goals of didacticism and full exposure does not jeopardize truth. Hurwitz's footage of the trial captures the many tiers of performance within it. Shandler emphasizes the impact that filming the trial had on witness selectivity: "One significant effect the televising had on the trial was in Hausner's choice of witnesses." Hausner sought "effective performers, choosing those who seemed 'less tongue-tied' after a 'preliminary sifting' of candidates."¹⁶⁵ Shandler notes that the trial's emphasis on publicity also affected the mode of address in the trial:

The multiple audiences that the trial addressed also challenged the effectiveness of its storytelling. From a legal perspective, the proceedings were directed solely at three men –the Israeli judges who sat on the bench and eventually handed down the verdict. As a public event, however, the trial was generally acknowledge to have a wide array of audiences, both within Israel and around the world. Catering to these various audiences posed a challenge to the prosecution in determining what stories to tell, who should tell them, and how they should be told.¹⁶⁶

Shandler observes that the prosecution addressed themselves more "to its invisible legion of auditors and viewers than to the adjudicating tribunal."¹⁶⁷ Eichmann and the judges on the other hand addressed each other and seemed to tune out the external viewers.

¹⁶⁴ The rupture Arendt's writing caused led to attempts to mute her voice. Ylana N. Miller, in "Creating Unity Through History: The Eichmann Trial as Transition, *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 1 no. 2 (2002) cites an organized attempt by the Israeli government to discredit and suppress her work. The need for a united history, Miller argues, superseded the allowance of polyphony.

¹⁶⁵ Shandler, *While America Watches*, p. 127.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.130.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.132.

Crucially, as *The Specialist* makes abundantly clear, each person in the tribunal speaks from a marked position of power.

Ylana Miller asserts that “Although the testimony, as it unfolded, thus contributed to the construction of a collective memory, it remained limited as a historical contribution, among other reasons because of the criteria that determined inclusion as well as exclusion.”¹⁶⁸ The selectivity of witnesses has continued to have great bearing on the history narrated in subsequent interview documentaries on the Holocaust. Arendt’s criticism of the choice of witnesses and the move away from prosecuting Eichmann brings to the fore the complications in testimony. Sivan, through selective use of footage and editing, in effect, re-makes the trial the way that Arendt felt was judicially correct. Like *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, *The Specialist* re-centers the trial on Eichmann and away from witness testimony (at points survivors are brutally cut off by Sivan’s editing). Sivan also seems to respond to the sleight-of-hand Arendt perceived in having Hausner be the mouthpiece for Ben Gurion, “the invisible stage manager,” by continually drawing attention to Hausner’s directorial presence. Throughout the documentary, Sivan exploits the intrinsic theatricality of the trial through generous use of lighting, camera angles, music, and special effects.

If Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem* is critical history, Sivan’s adaptation of the trial report is haunted history. Inflected by Nuremberg Nazi denial footage, which preceded the Eichmann trial and by filmic images of Nazis in both fiction and documentary works subsequent to the trial, *The Specialist* is a palimpsest, with Leo

¹⁶⁸ Ylana Miller, “Creating Unity,” p. 143.

Hurwitz and the original trial itself peeking through. Gal Raz also points to a "historical vertigo" which Sivan creates by leaving out crucial dates and information surrounding the trial.¹⁶⁹ Another "historical vertigo" occurs when viewing the Hurwitz footage in *The Specialist*. Sivan's film reverberates with Nazi and Holocaust films, many of which were made well after the Eichmann trial. Because Sivan chooses to abstain from voiceover or verbal commentary, one has the vertiginous sensation of accessing historical footage inflected with the history that succeeded it. When Eichmann sits behind his mounds of papers and methodically adjusts his glasses, the image takes on iconic value, marked by the many non-fictional and fictional images of the bureaucratic Nazi, which appeared after the Eichmann trial. Similarly, Eichmann's utterances of denial and his willful deferring of responsibility to higher ups circulate amid the countless proclamations of ignorance by Nazis. Furthermore, *The Specialist* itself leaves an imprint on subsequent documentaries; it adds to the echo of Nazi denials, which began at Nuremberg. The Eichmann trial was the first recorded trial with a single Nazi perpetrator, as opposed to the lineup of war criminals at the Nuremberg trials; however, as I have mentioned, the trial's focus on survivor testimony—and the circulation of now iconic moments of filmed survivor testimony at the Eichmann trial—meant that the greatest impact was on victim-survivor testimony, not perpetrator testimony. *The Specialist*, in restoring never-before-seen footage and re-centering the trial on Eichmann, as Arendt did in her trial report, exposes viewers for the first time to extended Nazi perpetrator testimony. In doing so, it plays its own part as haunter in works that follow it.

¹⁶⁹ Gal Raz, "Actuality on Banality: Eyal Sivan's *The Specialist* in Context," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 24, Number 1 (Fall 2005): 8.

The Specialist, in re-centering the trial on Eichmann and in its frequent use of close-ups and focus on the perpetrator, turns the trial space into interview-like space. The agonistic tension between the Nazi and Ophuls in *The Memory of Justice* opposed trial and interview space. *The Specialist*, on the other hand, turns the trial footage into an intimate encounter with the perpetrator: we have the same unnerving response watching Eichmann in *The Specialist* as one does watching interviews with perpetrators. In forcing the viewer to share space with the perpetrator, in ostentatiously using filmic devices, in playing with archival and doctored film footage, in encouraging us to conjure other voices of denial (whether Nazis, corporate criminals, or perpetrators of other atrocities), and in vertiginously playing with temporality—alarmingly shakes up any comfortable notions we may hold about the past, testimony and truth. Sivan provocatively declares, “This is not film about genocide, it’s not about the Eichmann trial. It is a film using the material of certain past in order to speak about the present, it’s about “current affairs in Europe.”

The Specialist also encourages us to think about indexicality and testimony. As digitally restored trial footage, it combines analog and digital formats. Its editing of the archives to place Eichmann’s testimony before witness testimony, however, gives the unnerving *feeling* that we are making contact with the perpetrator. The idea of contact is extremely unnerving when we consider what occurs when we see and hear a Nazi on screen, particularly one who oversaw the extermination of millions of Jews. *The Specialist*, while the sense of being close to the perpetrator is unnervingly strong, the

digital restoration technically precludes indexicality. The film repeatedly plays with the sense of distance and closeness.

Face-to-mediated-face encounter

Sivan jars us at the start of the film when he cuts to a close-up of Eichmann. But, significantly, we view Eichmann through an encasing bullet-proof glass structure. This extraordinary structure, which led many reporters at the time to assign the Nazi the sobriquet “The Man in the Glass Box,” suggests that Eichmann existed on a different ontological level than the judges, lawyers, and audience present in the courtroom. Sivan exploits the presence of this transparent cage, superimposing reflections on the glass, which gesture toward another screen embedded in the one that appears before the viewer.



Fig. 3.1. Sharing space with a perpetrator. Eichmann’s impassive face.

Fig. 3.2 A more distanced view of the Man in the Glass Box. Reflections on the glass draw attention to the director’s intervention. *The Specialist*.

While Hurwitz’s/Sivan’s camera allows us imaginary entrance into Eichmann’s space, the box simultaneously maintains a separation between “us” and the Nazi criminal. The glass case invites the desire to shatter this wall and break through the web of lies and

denial on display but it also disallows too much familiarity. The director's camera is all the more omnipotent since it is never clear whether the movements are authored by Hurwitz or Sivan, moves through the glass to close-ups of Eichmann's face, a face we scour for some glimpse into the nature of this man. Yet the camera's ability to pierce the glass, bringing Eichmann's face into close-up, undermines the revelatory potential of film. For Eichmann remains stubbornly impassive and the close-up only exacerbates his unreadability. Sergei Eisenstein averred that physiognomy was returned with new force with the invention of cinema. The close-up revealed a "soliloquy of the silent language of the face."¹⁷⁰ Jean Epstein famously panegyricized on Greta Garbo's face, revealed in all its glory through the close-up. And for Benjamin, the last vestige of the withering aura was the photograph of the human face. But Eichmann's face is the antiauratic face—blank, expressionless. He is the faceless bureaucrat.

Jeffrey Shandler cites the preoccupation, during the original Eichmann trial, with Eichmann's face. Because Eichmann had never been seen in photographs or footage, there was a fixation with laying eyes on him. Shandler notes that "the act of seeing Eichmann was so important that looking, watching, and witnessing became central motifs of the trial's press coverage.... In their quest for insight into Eichmann—and all that came to embody—through their attention to his body, observers scrutinized his presence for revealing minutiae, his behavior for involuntary betrayals of inner monstrosity."¹⁷¹

But the curiosity soon turned to frustration as Eichmann's face and body stubbornly refused to reveal any signs that might in some infinitesimal way offer insight into his or the Nazi character. Shandler cites a number of journalists' and writers' reactions at the time. Elie Wiesel articulated

¹⁷⁰ Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form*, p.127; cited in Michael Taussig, *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 23.

¹⁷¹ Shandler, *While America Watches*, p. 107.

the general disbelief of the perpetrator's seemingly "normal" appearance: "He *must* have a different appearance: he *must* display some sort of nervousness, some sort of hatred, some sort of madness, that would mark him as different from other human beings."¹⁷²

A reporter for the *Forward* commented "Our eyes never leave him, and he remains for us an impenetrable psychological riddle.... Let us at least see one pulsation of an artery behind this heavy mask!" Television close-ups of Eichmann did not "provide the viewer with an advantage over the courtroom spectator, but only emphasized Eichmann's inscrutable ordinariness and made his presence seem that much more remote."¹⁷³ A *New York Times* article commented, "Eichmann himself is watched by Mr. Hurwitz with hungry attention, but there is not a whole lot to see on the rather ordinary face.... He has been a disappointment."¹⁷⁴

Part of the disappointment of Eichmann's inscrutability is in the failure of the mimetic medium, the medium which, in Eisenstein's estimation, reincarnated physiognomy, the science of reading the face. What Peter Brooks calls the "the tyranny of transparency" in contemporary society has been particularly linked to confession and revelation in tell-all talk shows and documentaries. Brooks asserts that the "truth of the self and *to* the self have become the markers of authenticity, and confession—written or spoken—has come to seem the necessary, though risky, act through which one lays bare one's most intimate self, to know oneself and to make oneself known."¹⁷⁵ Vestiges of the Enlightenment's fervent belief in "power through transparency" and "fear of darkened spaces, of the pall of gloom, which prevents the full visibility of things, men and

¹⁷² Elie Wiesel, *The Jewish Daily Forward* 12 April 1961, p.1; cited in Shandler, p.109.

¹⁷³ Shandler, *While America Watches*, p.111.

¹⁷⁴ Lawrence Fellows, "TV Makes Its Israeli Debut with a Tragedy," *New York Times*, 2 (July 1961) sec.2, p.9.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p.9.

truths...” still cling to the late-twentieth and early twenty-first century.¹⁷⁶ While all knew that the enormity of Eichmann’s crimes could never be even remotely understood by a revelatory flicker on the face, the desire to see something in the close-up still persisted. Eichmann’s unsettlingly mechanistic recitation of the horrific events he helped orchestrate leads one to search for ruptures that might betray a flicker of conscience. The camera assists us in our search by zooming in on the defendant’s hands, his expressionless face, his frantic scribbling, but to no avail.¹⁷⁷

However, Eichmann’s impassivity is revelatory of the Nazi “character.” Performance, denial, and self-deception were parts of the very fibers of the Nazi regime and essential to its power. These layers of performance extended to the sadistic deceit in the extermination camps. The narrator in Alain Resnais’ *Night and Fog* describes a death-camp “hospital” where deathly-ill “patients” were given paper band aids, as “setup and scenes.”¹⁷⁸ Denial found its way into performance. Arendt cites an example of a former Nazi who claimed he was an inner emigrant—while perpetrating the most unimaginable atrocities he simultaneously experienced an internal revolt against his acts. He declared that fear of revealing his hidden resistance led him to strive at all times to be “more Nazi” than the other Nazis. The infusion of performance into the everyday life of

¹⁷⁶ Thomas R. Flynn, “Foucault and the Eclipse of Vision,” in *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision* (Berkeley: University of California, 1992), 275.

¹⁷⁷ The frustration of contemporary viewers of the Eichmann trial shows up the failure of the camera to give us clues, offer some inkling of an answer. The viewers hope the camera will act as it does within the trial genre’s exemplar *Basic Instinct*, where, as Clover describes, the cinematography, in becoming “increasingly polygraphic in its close-up probe of faces—searching the for signs of lies and truth,” often does gratify our desire for some answer or clue, and in doing so reaffirms our faith in the camera’s revelatory powers. Clover, “Law,” p. 125.

¹⁷⁸ Cited in Jay Cantor, “Death and the Image,” in Charles Warren, ed. *Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 27.

the Third Reich adds another layer of performance to the Eichmann trial and complicates Nazi testimony in general. Closely tied to performance was the essential maintenance of self-deception in the Third Reich. Arendt identifies Himmler's insidious spin on the stubborn "animal pity" many S.S. members inevitably experienced. "Instead of saying: What horrible things I did to the people!, the murderers would be able to say: What horrible things I had to watch in the pursuance of my duties, how heavily the task weighed upon my shoulders!"¹⁷⁹ Himmler, in other words, attempted to change his men from performers to audience members who passively observed the brutal acts even as they enacted them. This stepping outside the self and transformation from performer to observer in the act of perpetrating atrocities turns any after-the-fact testimony into an act of repetition or re-enactment.

In Roger Griffith's words, Nazism worked on a "capillary level of society ... in the liminal sphere between 'inner' and 'outer' reality."¹⁸⁰ By "proposing not only to govern human beings but to regenerate them in order to create new humanity," it permeated "all aspects of human life ... abolishing any distinction between the personal and the political."¹⁸¹ Eichmann's face, speech, and gestures seem to emblemize this complete fusion of the personal and political and the evacuation of the individual. He exasperates judges, the audience, and the prosecutor with his Nazi bureaucratism, the only language, he insists, he knows.

¹⁷⁹ Arendt, p.106.

¹⁸⁰ Roger Griffith, "Notes Towards the Definition of Fascist Culture: the Prospects for Synergy Between Marxist and Liberal Heuristics," *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 42, Issue 1 (1999): 8.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.8.

Although Sivan encourages us to read the verbal and visual registers separately by zooming on Eichmann's expressions and gestures, the original layer of distancing from the event frustrates a hope for revelation in these close-ups. But what appears before us in these moments is another layer of performance and deception present at the inception of the event. Rather than encountering a disjuncture between what is spoken and what we see, there is a disquieting consistency. Eichmann appears to replay his original role as audience to his own actions.

“The face is the evidence that makes evidence possible,” Emmanuel Levinas gnominically pronounced.¹⁸² The “face,” for Levinas, is an unrepresentable figure that comes from outside and instills us with ethics. Nazism attempted to annihilate this other and embraced an extreme narcissism. In *The Mass Ornament*, Siegfried Kracauer presciently asserted that, under fascism, “the masses are forced ... to gaze at themselves everywhere ... made aware of themselves in the form of an aesthetically seductive ornament.”¹⁸³ Arendt asserts that Eichmann lacked, above all, empathy. His “inability to speak was closely connected with an inability to *think*, namely, to think from the standpoint of somebody else.”¹⁸⁴ Eichmann's face then is the antithesis of the Levinas face, which relies on the other.

Particularly frustrating to the viewer's (and presumably the judges') ability to read and glean some kind of knowledge from Eichmann's testimony is that he neither confesses nor fully denies his culpability. Arendt emphasizes that Eichmann does not

¹⁸² Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985).

¹⁸³ Siegfried Kracauer, “The Mass Ornament,” in Stephen Bronner, ed. *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 316.

¹⁸⁴ Hannah Arendt, p.42.

proclaim his innocence but instead makes the mysterious assertion that “he was not guilty in the sense of indictment.” Throughout the trial, he neither consistently lies nor consistently tells the truth. Therefore, although *The Specialist* cuts out or interrupts almost all survivor testimony to center the film on Eichmann, we cannot come away with knowledge about the defendant in the traditional sense.

At one point in the trial, Eichmann unnervingly breaks the proscenium of the glass box and steps out into the main area of the courtroom. Sivan punctuates this moment with ominous music, which further exacerbates our discomfort. For those viewing the trial, Eichmann’s world inside the glass encasing appears as “another reality,” and the aggressive rupture of this divide provokes an unnerving closeness between this man and us. In Felman’s words, “The Other in the Nazi program is at once *enclosed...and framed.*”¹⁸⁵ Eichmann had appeared like the Other, sealed and framed in the box. Viewers of *The Specialist*, suspended in Sivan’s hypnagogic world, feel themselves safely distanced from the glass enclosure that surrounds Eichmann. The opening of the glass cage partakes of radical film aesthetics by breaking the boundary between viewer and projected spectacle. The moment is particularly disorienting because we watch, in slow motion and to the sound of otherworldly music, Eichmann trace out the annexed Nazi territories on an imposing map. Maps in classic documentaries are traditional signifiers of facts and history, grounding us in a knowable world. Elizabeth Cowie identifies the co-existence and interrelation of two desires for reality which the documentary film provokes, “on the one hand...a reality as reviewable for analysis...a

¹⁸⁵ Felman, *Juridical*, p. 241.

world of evidence confirmed through observation and logical interpretation” on the other “the desire for the real not as knowledge but as image, as spectacle.”¹⁸⁶ In this moment reality as spectacle collides with reality as reviewable for an analysis. Eichmann, suddenly one ontological level closer to us, calmly and methodically delineating with a pointer which areas of Europe were annexed by the Nazis conveys “facts” and yet is thought-defying.

Sivan’s film also lays bare issues of address and power, which are often submerged in filmic testimony. The courtroom design clearly and hierarchically demarcates the position of the participants. The three judges tower over the auditorium, the head in the center, the prosecutor and defense attorney flanking the “stage;” Eichmann resides in his box in the peripheral foreground; and the audience sits behind. The prosecutor addresses the defendant as a single-minded monster and viewers may watch Eichmann in these moments through a similar lens. However when the judges cross a seemingly impassable divide to ask Eichmann their own questions, they attempt to get some inkling of an understanding.

Sivan’s manipulation of the Eichmann trial footage unveils links between power, speaking, and modes of address that are collapsed in the traditional documentary interview. It is as if the many subterranean mechanisms of power, language and enunciation in the ostensibly two-person documentary have become instantiated in the many people in the courtroom.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Elizabeth Cowie, “The Spectacle of Actuality,” p.19.

¹⁸⁷ Shoshana Felman argues that a trial needs closure and “art” is what refuses to be closed.¹⁸⁷ “A trial is presumed to be a search for truth, but technically, it is a search for a decision and thus, in essence, it seeks

At the end of a discussion on testimony with Bernard Stiegler, Derrida makes a provocative statement:

...the unconscious, the taking into account of a topic of ipseity, the differentiation or the scission of agencies, the fact that the ego is only one agency or can be a dissociated agency, all of this ...remains massively ignored by juridical discourse.....Better-or worse-this discourse is built on disavowal. ...And in the long, very long, term this situation will have to change. When it does, we will inhabit, our inheritors will inhabit a complete different world. But it's beginning, slowly.¹⁸⁸

Whether the law cannot account for these schisms in the “I,” these challenges to testimonial’s unicity, its “I am here. I was there” is hard to determine. But in one astounding moment in the Eichmann trial, presiding judge Landau states, “I will permit myself to depart from the habitual procedure to abandon Hebrew to address the accused in his own language.” Looking directly at Eichmann, he continues in German “Did you ever experience a conflict, what one would call a conflict between your duty and your conscience?” Eichmann’s response articulates the textbook state of denial “One could call it a state of being split, a case in splitting where one could flee from one side to the other.... It was necessary to abandon one’s conscience.” Landau listens intently.

not simply truth but a finality: a force of resolution.” Literature “wrenches apart what was precisely covered over...by the legal trial.” Citing Freud’s notion that “historical events are inherently dual in nature and truly register in history only through the gap of the traumatic repetition,” Felman emphasizes that in order for a trial to be a great historical event it must be “cross-legal,” or refer to another trial. She asserts the ocularcentric aspect of the trial “the rules of evidence ... are ... based on seeing. The strongest proof admitted by the court is proof corroborated by the eye; the most authoritative testimony in the courtroom the eyewitness. Every trial, therefore, by its very nature as a trial, is contingent on the act of seeing.” Felman stresses the interlink between the trial and the work of art: “It is not a coincidence that the two works that have forced us to rethink the Holocaust in modifying our *vocabularies of remembrance* were, on the one hand, a trial report [*Eichmann in Jerusalem*] and, on the other hand, a work of art. [*Shoah*]. Since law, in Felman’s estimation, distances us and art brings us closer, the Holocaust becomes accessible, “*precisely in this slippage*. But it is also in this space of slippage that its full grasp continues to elude us.” Citing Paul Valery, she argues that repetition is necessary when an act has not been comprehended. While Felman points to a crucial dialectic and contact between the trial and the artwork she does not attend to the particularly vexed role that documentary plays in this drift from trial to artwork and back again. She also elides all but entirely a consideration of repetition of denial on the part of the perpetrator, centering instead on the victim and the abyss that trauma reveals.

¹⁸⁸ Derrida, *Echographies*, p.98-99.

Chapter 4
ARCHEOLOGY OF DENIAL

Route 181: Fragments of a Journey through Palestine-Israel
and
Censored Voices

Denial in the context of Israel and Palestine is especially charged: as many scholars have stated, Israel is founded on a fundamental disavowal encapsulated in the Zionist slogan, “a land without people for a people without land.” As Ella Shohat has shown, film has been a powerful tool in furthering the Zionist myth of an empty land and, in recent decades, has been an equally powerful tool in countering the Zionist narrative, conjuring with incantatory power from film to film the former Arab towns, traces of which abound in present-day Israel.¹⁸⁹

In many ways film is an apt form to study and combat a willful blindness in Israel that has been there since the nation’s founding. Just as it can ask us not to see, film can allow us to see more, or differently; just as it can offer us a sense of visual mastery, it can make us aware of the limitations of our vision. As a medium that makes present that which is absent, it continually fends off, or welcomes, the spectral. For Palestinians, a people whose very existence has been repeatedly denied, visibility is of course a central concern. The title of Mustafa Abu Ali’s militant 1974 film, ironically echoes Golda Meir’s claim about Palestinians: *They Do Not Exist*. Edward Said has remarked, “the

¹⁸⁹Ella Shohat, *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* 1989 (New York/London: I.B. Tauris, 2010, Print).

whole history of the Palestinian struggle has to do with the desire to be visible.”¹⁹⁰

Palestinians who were expelled from their homes during the Nakba (the Catastrophe of 1947-8) but who remain in the land that is claimed by Israel, are legally classified as “present absentees” by a regime that, in Shohat’s words, is “fond of oxymorons.”¹⁹¹

Shohat makes the remarkable observation that pre-state Israeli Pioneer films unwittingly belied the “empty land” myth that they were propagating: their on-location shots showed Arabs in the background of supposedly empty desert landscapes.¹⁹²

In the Pioneer films, a whole host of tensions, contradictions and convergences between ideology and film’s medium-specific powers comes to the surface. In allowing us to discern the ongoing Arab presence while at the same time deploying the Zionist narrative to claim that the land is empty, these films clairvoyantly visualize what Palestinians will, in legal terms, become: present absentees. While anticipating on screen what will soon become a reality in Israeli law, the Pioneer films also give rise to an uneasiness because the controlling textual voice contradicts what we see. This distrust of the filmic textual voice will soon be complemented by a distrust of language that can label a people as an oxymoron. Ironically, in unintentionally documenting and archiving Arab presence in Palestine, the Zionist films contribute to an alternative archive that future historians and filmmakers can draw on to counter the myth of an empty land.

Looked at from a perspective that is either critical of Zionism or overtly anti-Zionist, film itself can be seen as tainted, since it has been, and still is, abused as a

¹⁹⁰Edward Said, preface to *Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema* (New York: Verso, 2006, Print) 3.

¹⁹¹ Donald Rumsfeld shared a similar fondness for the oxymoron, coining the phrase “known unknowns” in relation to weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Errol Morris immersed us in the absurdity of Rumsfeld’s obfuscating language in his 2013 film on the former Defense Secretary *The Unknown Known*.

¹⁹² Shohat, p. 33, 282.

propaganda tool. We can detect in a number of revisionist works by Israeli and Palestinian filmmakers a tension between belief in and suspicion of the medium. This tension is particularly pronounced in documentary films, since they constitute a genre that has traditionally courted our trust. In interview films, as I have discussed in the previous chapters, an uneasiness in the viewer often emerges in the face of testimony from an untrustworthy witness. This uneasiness, as we have seen, gives rise to a ruptured or fractured interview space. It also frequently throws off our comfortable trust in the sounds and images before us, and can induce a disquieting distrust in the medium itself. When this uneasiness is invited by the filmmaker, as is often the case in many moments in Ophuls' works, it can break down our comfortable assurance that the documentary transparently represents truth. We can feel suspicion and trust at the same time: suspicion of the interview as a form and solidarity with the director who has encouraged our critical viewing. By contrast, when this distrust or uneasiness arises in spite of what appears to be the filmmaker's aim, when the interview space fractures while the film seems at pains to maintain a unified space, when our discomfort is at odds with the apparent aim of the film, a sense of betrayal can occur. Like pre-state Pioneer films that unwittingly rupture a cohesive Zionist narrative, a number of more recent Israeli films fragment their interview spaces seemingly without the filmmaker's prompting.

Revisionist Israeli and Palestinian documentaries, which turn to the interview as a means to counter the official Israeli narrative, also contend with a haunting that they can mobilize productively or keep at bay. As Annette Wieworkia has argued, the link between the Holocaust and the testimonial form has been firmly established since the

Adolf Eichmann trial, where over 100 survivors took the stand. Within Holocaust interview documentaries, I have put forth, space disturbers are Nazi perpetrators or bystanders, and space unifiers are often Holocaust survivors. When the interview mode moves into Israel and Palestine, it carries with it the imprint of the preceding Holocaust documentaries. However only in some Israeli films, most notably Eyal Sivan and Michel Khleifi's four-and-a-half hour magnum opus *Route 181: Fragments of a Journey through Palestine-Israel* (2003), does the controversial inversion occur: Holocaust survivors and their descendants often become space disturbers (their denial-laden speech pervades the visual space of the interview, creating a sense of disconnection with their surroundings and with the land where the interview often takes place) whereas Palestinians become space unifiers (their straightforward, trustworthy speech pulls the visual space of the interview into an incorporated whole, creating a sense of belonging to the land, which often constitutes part of the interview space).

However, there is a growing body of Israeli documentaries that operate differently. These films—including Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir* (2008), Tamar Yarom's *To See if I'm Smiling* (2007), and Mor Loushy's *Censored Voices* (2015)—belong to a category that Raya Morag has neutrally termed Israeli “perpetrator trauma films,” which Livia Alexander, in an incisive essay, terms the genre of “confessing without regret,”¹⁹³ and which are widely referred to as “shooting and crying” films. In these films, Israeli perpetrators often make explicit comparisons between their history as

¹⁹³ See Raya Morag, *Waltzing with Bashir: Perpetrator Trauma and Cinema* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013, Print) and Livia Alexander, “Confessing Without Regret: an Israeli Film Genre,” in Michael Flynn, ed. *Screening Torture: Media Representations of State Terror and Political Domination* (New York: Columbia UP, 2012, Print).

victims of the Holocaust and their present-day role as perpetrators of atrocities against Palestinians. While verbally and visually these films associate Israeli brutality against Palestinians with Nazi atrocities, they do not *perceptually* invert the organization of the interview space. The filmmakers allow the Israeli perpetrators to maintain a unified space (since they remain trustworthy) despite their past crimes, and we are encouraged as viewers to feel connected to, rather than uneasy with, their testimony. In other words, the Israeli perpetrators do not become space disturbers, as the Israeli perpetrators or those who justify acts of Israeli perpetration do in *Route 181*. Nor, in these works, are the Palestinians granted the status of space unifiers because rarely are they granted the right to speak.

This chapter focuses on two documentaries, *Route 181: Fragments of a Journey through Palestine-Israel* and *Censored Voices*. The earlier film offers a forceful counter-narrative to the official triumphant version of Israel's founding in 1948, and the later film counters the celebratory aspects of the 1967 Six-Day War. Each film exemplifies a different treatment of the interview space. In *Route 181*, a work co-directed by a Palestinian, Michel Khleifi, and an Israeli, Eyal Sivan, the filmmakers travel along the 1947 UN Resolution 181 partition line, interviewing local inhabitants as they go. Like *The Sorrow and the Pity* (also four and a half hours), *Route 181* alternates between ruptured and unified interview spaces. In Ophuls' *Sorrow* (as in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*) moments of cohesion were granted to survivors of the Holocaust, whereas rupture was caused by Nazi perpetrators, collaborators, or not-so-innocent bystanders. In *Route 181*, Palestinian testimony is given the status of unity, and the space disturbers are those

Israelis who justify removal of the Palestinians. In both films, the juxtaposition of contrasting interviews emphasizes the differences in spatial composition.

In sharp contrast, Mor Loushy's *Censored Voices*, which opened on November 20, 2015 in New York and screened at the Other Israel Film Festival earlier in the month, leads us into a strikingly unified interview space. The film reveals for the first time the original tape recordings of several soldiers, who conversed with Amoz Oz and Avraham Shapira a few days after returning from the 1967 war. Shapira's book, *The Seventh Day: Soldiers Talk about the Six-Day War*,¹⁹⁴ based on these conversations, was published in 1967, but seventy percent of the content was censored at the time by the Israeli army. *Censored Voices*, the most recent Israeli perpetrator documentary, revives Shapira's book, now considered an ur-work of the perpetrator genre,¹⁹⁵ a genre that includes literature and nonfiction writing as well as film.¹⁹⁶ Like other Israeli perpetrator films, *Censored Voices* encourages solidarity and empathetic connection between the viewer and the Israeli soldiers, many of whom confess to committing atrocities. Furthermore, although the film is literally polyphonic, it synthesizes the many soldiers' voices into a collective one and welds this collective voice to the implied narrator and to the images.

¹⁹⁴ Avraham Shapira, *The Seventh Day: Soldiers Talk about the Six-Day War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971, Print).

¹⁹⁵ In his highly critical review of *Censored Voices*, Ilan Pappé mentions that *Conversations with Soldiers* was "more popularly referred to at the time by my generation as the 'shooting and crying' book." Ilan Pappé, "New Evidence From 1967 War Reveals Israeli Atrocities," *Electronic Intifada* June 23, 2015.

¹⁹⁶ A recent Haaretz article entitled "Fodder for the Next Shin Bet 'Shooting and Crying' Documentary," with the subtitle "Israeli forces spent eight hours blowing up a Palestinian family's house piece by piece, all to arrest a wanted man—who turned out to be so dangerous that they released him two days later," demonstrates how the "shooting and crying" film genre has become a common reference in the Israeli public. The title refers to Dror Moreh's *Gatekeepers* (2012), a documentary consisting of interviews with present and past Shin Bet officials. Amira Hass, *Haaretz*, September 8, 2015. Web.

Route 181 and *Censored Voices* have encountered vastly different critical responses. I argue that one of the reasons for this difference is the films' divergent use of the interview space. *Censored Voices*—a film which testifies to the Israeli murders of unarmed prisoners of war and civilians; which describes a massacre of male Palestinian refugees; which visually and verbally makes explicit comparison between the forced removal of Palestinians from their towns and the roundup of Jews in the Second World War; which brings up the Holocaust as a way of understanding this “cleansing” of Arab towns; and which suggests, should the viewer want to hear it, that East Jerusalem does not rightly belong to Israel—has been embraced by the mainstream comfortable left press, by international festivals, and even by a prominent right-of-center Israeli online newspaper. *Route 181*, on the other hand, has been subject to censorship, harsh criticism and excoriation by many in that same comfortable left milieu.

We could surmise that one of the reasons *Route 181* has encountered harsh treatment is because it focuses not on the 1967 war but on the much more difficult topic of the Nakba, which accompanied Israel's founding as a nation. However, this idea is contradicted by the overall reception of *Khirbet Khizeh*,¹⁹⁷ a memoir presented as a novel, which painfully describes, through the voice of a sympathetic perpetrator-narrator the expulsion of Palestinian citizens from a village in 1948. This book of personal recollections by a soldier, Yizhar Smilansky (under the pen name S. Yizhar), has achieved popular acclaim; it was even praised by many when it was published in 1949. For years it has been assigned reading for Israeli students. The book's translation into

¹⁹⁷ S. Yizhar, *Khirbet Khizeh*, trans. Nicholas de Lange and Yaacob Dweck (New York: Farrar Straus, 2014, Kindle edition).

English in 2008 and a strongly positive review in *The New York Times Book Review* in 2015¹⁹⁸ point to the recent international interest in Israeli perpetrator accounts. I believe the use of interview space in *Route 181*, which shows no violent images, but includes verbal descriptions of massacres by both Israeli and Palestinian interviewees, helped trigger the controversy and scathing criticism that met the film. And the markedly unified interview space in *Censored Voices* is part of what allows a Lieutenant currently in the Israeli Defense Forces to tell the *New York Times* that the film is “representative of Israel’s vibrant democracy, where everything can be and is openly discussed.” The lieutenant stresses that, due to the nature of twenty-first century warfare and terrorism, the film is not in anyway analogous to the current situation in Israel.¹⁹⁹

Archeology and counter-archeology in *Route 181*

Like *The Sorrow and the Pity*, *Route 181* takes on a nation’s denial. However, if *The Sorrow and the Pity* breaks through a nation’s willful blindness about a specific moment in its past (the Vichy period), *Route 181*, by contrast, reveals how a one-sided representation of history is woven into a nation’s very foundation and continues to this day. As in *Sorrow*, the repressed returns; this time it bubbles up from the land as it surfaces simultaneously in the interviews. Since it is physical territory that lies at the heart of the “question of Palestine,” to borrow the title from Said’s well-known book, the

¹⁹⁸ Dexter Filkins, “Whose Village?” *New York Times Book Review*, Feb. 22, 2015, 26. Print.

¹⁹⁹Cited in Jodi Rudoren, “Disillusioned by War, Israeli Soldiers Muted in 1967 Are Given Fuller Voice,” *New York Times* Jan. 25, 2015, Print.

landscape—a crucial element of the interview and filmic space—becomes a crucial site for a filmic investigation of the issue of denial.

Although *Route 181* is well known for its intertextual connections to Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah*, as I will discuss later in the chapter, it is equally in dialogue with *The Sorrow and the Pity*. Despite their obvious differences—*Sorrow* is structured around interviews intercut with archival footage, whereas *Route 181* is a filmic journey along the 1947 UN partition line, with the directors conducting interviews on the ground as they travel from South to North—these two four-and-a half hour films have a similar approach to official history. Like *The Sorrow and the Pity*, *Route 181* confronts and challenges a national myth. If in *Sorrow*, official history—fixed, immutable, frozen—was emblemized in monuments, in *Route 181* official history finds its grounding in Israeli Zionist archeology, where, as Eyal Weizman points out, “the subterranean strata” is “perceived as a parallel geography akin to a national monument.”²⁰⁰ Both films rely on the interview as an instrumental tool to break through denial and to inscribe new memories in a nation’s consciousness. Both films alternate between ruptured and cohesive interview spaces. As discussed in chapter 2, *The Sorrow and the Pity* itself becomes an archival object, which is eventually absorbed into the nation’s archives and official history. French historian Henri Rousso credits *The Sorrow and the Pity* with “breaking the mirror” of the Gaullist myth of total resistance in the Vichy period, moving France out of the denial of French collaboration and, along with American historian

²⁰⁰ Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel’s Architecture of Occupation* (New York: Verso, 2012, Kindle edition).

Robert Paxton's highly influential book *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order*,²⁰¹ shepherding in a phase in France, which Rousso, drawing on psychoanalytic theory, calls "the return of the repressed." Rousso argues that France is now caught in a subsequent "obsession" phase, unable to move forward and let go of the collaboration years. *Route 181*, in its totality, also becomes an archival object. However, in contrast to *Sorrow*, it remains in a counter-archive, awaiting its insertion into a new historical narrative of Israel and Palestine. Like many recent Israeli and Palestinian documentaries on the occupation that I will discuss later in the chapter, and like Joshua Oppenheimer's groundbreaking 2012 film about Indonesia, *The Act of Killing*, *Route 181* investigates a traumatic past, repercussions and repetitions of which continue in the present day. Indeed, because of the ongoing occupation and pervasive denial of the Nakba and other Israeli atrocities, Israel remains caught in the return of the repressed.

Route 181: Fragments of a Journey in Palestine-Israel

Route 181 proliferates in images of construction and destruction. The din of drills threatens to drown out the voices of interviewees. Cranes, excavators, piles of concrete and half-built developments blight the landscape. Trucks piled high with slates of wood destined for the separation wall make their way slowly along the road. As much as there is building up, there is digging down. Soil is measured below the surface for its firmness. Ongoing archeological digs unearth ancient ruins. Irrigation systems are on display in a Kibbutz museum. The camera and interview, too, are constructing and demolishing,

²⁰¹ Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order 1940-1944* (New York: Columbia UP, 2001, Print).

delicately excavating and more aggressively digging, breaking through walls of denial or revealing them to be stubbornly impregnable. Simultaneously, as it probes its subjects' psyches, the film again and again conjures up a repressed past by drawing attention to still-extant traces of Arab towns in what is now Israeli land.

Through a series of charged and incriminating inversions, *Route 181* breaks apart the Zionist teleological narrative. In its treatment of what Janet Walker has called “situated testimony,”²⁰² the film grounds its Palestinian interviewees on the land and makes their presence immanent within the interview space; in contrast, the film often alienates its Israeli interviewees from the site from which they speak, and makes their presence disruptive within the interview space. Similarly, *Route 181*'s multi-faceted use of archeology upends what Said calls the “privileged Israeli science *par excellence*.”²⁰³ Archeology, as many scholars emphasize—and as Nadia Abu El-Haj in *Facts on the Ground*²⁰⁴ and Eyal Weizman in *Hollow Land* explore in depth—has been, and continues to be, instrumental in establishing Israeli Jewish claim to the land. Shohat explains:

Excavation, as a hermeneutic, didactically demonstrated Jewish genealogy and teleology through its uncovered traces in *terra firma*. While Jewish fragments dug up from the belly of the earth were indexical of millennial depth, Arab presence was merely its surface dust.²⁰⁵

Route 181, unlike Israeli archeology, trains its camera and focuses its interviews on this very “surface dust,” again and again drawing our attention to the numerous traces of earlier Arab presence on what is now Israeli land. In this way, it performs what might be

²⁰²Janet Walker, “Rights and Return: Perils and Fantasies of Situated Testimony after Katrina,” in Bhaskar Sarkar and Janet Walker, eds., *Documentary Testimonies: Global Archives of Suffering* (New York: Routledge, 2010, Print).

²⁰³Edward Said, *Freud and the Non-European* 2003 (New York: Verso, 2014, Kindle edition).

²⁰⁴ Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002, Kindle edition).

²⁰⁵ Shohat, p. 253.

called a Palestinian cine-archeology. Said has described Palestinian archeology as one that attends to “the enormously rich sedimentations of village history and oral traditions.”²⁰⁶ *Route 181*, through repeated questions directed to Israeli inhabitants about the Arabic names and locations of the former Palestinian towns, pushes back against habitual repression.²⁰⁷ Just as the film shifts the archeological focus from the land’s deepest core to the shallow strata, revealing extensive evidence of former Arab presence on or just below the surface, so *Route 181*, in its interview technique, reworks Freud’s

²⁰⁶ Said, *Freud and the Non-European*. Kindle edition.

²⁰⁷ In the summer of 2000, Edward Said was invited to give a talk at the Freud Society in Vienna. That February, after a photograph surfaced showing Said at the Lebanese border, apparently about to throw a stone at an Israeli guardhouse, the Freud Society retracted its invitation. In a *New York Times* article about the cancellation, the head of the Society is quoted as stating that a concern about rising anti-Semitism in Austria led to the decision. (Dinitia Smith, “A Stone’s Throw is a Freudian Slip,” *The New York Times*, March 10, 2001.) Said stated, “Freud was hounded out of Vienna because he was a Jew. Now I am hounded out because I’m a Palestinian.” The dis-invitation was especially outrageous, Said pointed out, because his talk was to focus on the way in which Freud’s work, though Eurocentric, opened onto other cultures and experiences outside Europe.

The parallels between the circumstances surrounding Freud’s *Moses and Monotheism* and Said’s *Freud and the Non-European* (a published lecture) are, as a number of scholars have observed, remarkable; we could even say uncanny. Freud, expelled by the Nazis from Vienna, spent the end of his life as an exile in London, where, sick with cancer, he wrote the final part of *Moses and Monotheism*, his last book. Said, sick with Leukemia, delivered *Freud and the Non-European* in London after being banned from giving the paper in Vienna; it would be his last work.

Said, a Palestinian living most of his life in exile, found in the Jewish psychoanalyst’s valedictory work a hope for Israel and Palestine. In *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud turns to the origin of Judaism and declares Moses was a non-Jewish Egyptian. Said sees in Freud’s dogged insistence on Moses’ foreign-ness a need to prevent Judaism from being “on sound foundation.” And, in a move both utopic and in keeping with Said’s long-standing belief that some texts—those which, like Benjaminian moments in history, “brush up against historical constraints”—invite us to carry them out of their original context, Said takes *Moses and Monotheism* to present-day Israel and Palestine. Said maintains that Freud “left considerable room to accommodate Judaism’s non-Jewish antecedents and contemporaries” and that “Israeli legislation countervenes, represses, and even cancels Freud’s carefully maintained opening out of Jewish identity toward its non-Jewish background.” Where Freud, in stubbornly insisting on Moses’ foreign, non-Jewish, Egyptian identity, sought to keep Judaism on an unstable foundation, Israel turns to archeology to “consolidate” its identity. On the other hand, Palestinian archeology asks, “in the spirit of Freud’s excavations” what “became of the traces of their history.” We could say, in this Freudian/Saidian framework, that Israeli official archeology creates a repressed that returns in the form of Palestinian archeology.

archeology of the psyche²⁰⁸—moving away from the early psychoanalytic focus on deep excavation to focus instead on what is either right there on the tips of the interviewees’ tongues or ready to reveal itself with only a few leading or abrasive questions.²⁰⁹

Paradoxically, from the perspective of official Israeli Zionist archeology, *Route 181* zooms in on the surface strata rather than the deep core from the Biblical period; within its own perspective, the film makes the former Arab presence and the Palestinian Nakba the deepest strata, and the *core* trauma, and Jewish presence and construction in Israel the later surface strata. Finally, the film enacts its own version of return by two exilic or diasporic filmmakers, one Palestinian, one Israeli, both based in Europe, who journey through their own strange and familiar land envisioning all the while a shared future free from boundaries, borders and checkpoints.²¹⁰

Ma'loul Celebrates its own Destruction, Michel Khleifi’s 1986 short film, much admired by Sivan, is about an Arabic town destroyed in the Nakba. Once a year, a group

²⁰⁸Freud describes his archeological method first in relation to treating hysteria but he continues to elaborate on the archeology of the psyche in his later writings. In *Studies in Hysteria*, he states, “I arrived at a procedure which I later developed into a regular method and employed deliberately. This procedure was one of clearing away the pathogenic psychical material layer by layer, and we like to compare it to the technique of excavating a city.” Indicating the aim for digging to approach a deep core, Freud states in reference to a patient “I would begin by getting the patient to tell me what was known to her and I would carefully note the points at which some train of thought remained obscure or some link in the causal chain seemed to be missing. And afterwards I would penetrate into deeper layers of her memories at these points....” Cited in Richard Armstrong, *Freud and the Ancient World: A Compulsion for Antiquity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) 186.

²⁰⁹In a talk included on the DVD supplemental material, Khleifi called *Route 181* a “four-and-a-half hour therapy session.”

²¹⁰Sivan comments in an interview that even when growing in Israel he like an inside/outsider: “In addition to my permanent attempt not to be like others, I found an alternative family through some friends who were Oriental Jews. Suddenly I discovered that they spoke Arabic at home. I grew up in a South American family, so we were *already* different, and we had the same inside/outside relationship. Inside the home we spoke Spanish and outside the home we spoke Hebrew.” Cited in Gary Crowds, “Historical Memory and Political Violence: An Interview with Eyal Sivan,” *Cineaste* Fall 2012, 25.

of original residents and their descendants visit the town's remains on Israel's Independence Day or what Palestinians consider Nakba Commemoration Day. (In 2011, the Knesset passed a bill that prohibits commemoration of the Nakba.) Khleifi's film closes with an image of a pastoral landscape bisected by a barbed wire fence.

Route 181 opens with an image of an equally pastoral landscape. There are two men in the foreground, Sivan and Khleifi, dressed similarly in dark vest and light blue shirt, sitting side by side on a roughly hewn wood bench, one with a map on his lap, the other pointing to a spot far in the distance; explorers preparing to set off on a journey. Rustling leaves and chirping birds fill the soundscape. The observant viewer, however, may note the appearance of a mesh-wire fence in the left corner of the frame, almost but not quite blending into the landscape.²¹¹

Two abrupt jump cuts reframe the image from long shot to medium-long shot, and then to medium shot. Cued by the blurriness of a man's hand in the medium shot, we may realize we are seeing a series of stilled images. A cut then removes the men from the landscape, leaving us for a moment with an idyllic pastoral vista subtly marred by the wire fence. The next shot shows blood-red text rising toward the top of the screen. In alternating lines of Arabic and Hebrew, the text tells us that Palestinian filmmaker Michel Khleifi and Israeli filmmaker Eyal Sivan "embarked on a cinematic journey through their

²¹¹ In yet another resonance, W. T. Mitchell describes a postcard he bought on a visit to Israel: "It depicted a Bedouin on a camel crossing sand dunes in the middle distance, framed in the foreground by palm trees suggesting a perspective from the oasis. A perfectly ordinary postcard, I'm sure, an appeal to the fantasy of the Holy Land as a kitsch icon in which the figure of the Arab serves as a stand-in for the wandering Israelite in the wilderness. But this particular one had a feature that only became evident on closer inspection: in the shadow of the palm tree, a coil of barbed wire." W. J. T. Mitchell, "Holy Landscape: Israel, Palestine, and the American," in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed. *Landscape and Power* second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, Print) 276.

own country” in the summer of 2002.²¹² The text continues: “For this trip they traced a route on a roadmap. They called it Route 181, adopted from UN resolution 181.” As the text describes the United Nations resolution in the upper half of a split screen, we see a hand (presumably belonging to one of the directors) placing an original 1947 UN map on the lower half. If it is jarring for those familiar with the map of Israel to see the original UN borders, which carve out a nation dramatically smaller than present-day Israel, what follows is doubly jolting: to the harsh amplified sound of paper ripping, the map is violently torn apart by the same hand, now holding a cutter, as the text tells us, “This journey along Route 181 followed this border that has never existed.”

In the films’ first images, the directors inscribe their signature—bodily as they sit on the bench, and metaphorically as they literally show the hand of one of the directors—as if to forcefully do away with any notion the viewer may have of transparent documentary reality, a notion that both Khleifi and Sivan eschew. The film’s very first image also visualizes the directors’ dream of a future common Palestinian-Israeli state. The idyll of the two men looking out over a land they will travel together is hopeful, but subtly disturbed by the wire fence. In some ways *Route 181* seems to pick up, more than twenty-years later, where the short *Mal’oul* left off, growing by four hours and, in its focus on the Nakba, expanding its purview from *Mal’oul*’s one destroyed village to traces of countless former Arab towns scattered throughout the whole of Israel.

²¹²Both filmmakers have emphasized that their film presents a shared viewpoint. Sivan comments that, “*Route 181* is not a film in which there is an Israeli point of view and a Palestinian point of view.” Crowdus, *Cineaste*, p.28.

Moments before the final shot in *Mal'oul*, an elderly Palestinian from the now-demolished town confronts the camera. Pained and angry as he stands outside his former village, he responds to a comment made by the interviewer about the six million Jews who were killed: “I didn’t kill them. Let their persecutors pay. Am I their murderer? I never hurt a fly!” The first image in *Route 181* condenses references to the past, present and future in one frame. Its recalling of *Mal'oul* carries with it, the unequal, as Sivan has often stressed, but temporally connected tragedies of the Holocaust and the Nakba, as resounded in the villager’s exasperated cry. “Victims of the victims,” as Said famously described the Palestinians.²¹³ However, in placing within one frame the two men and the wire fence—which carries a double association to the Holocaust and, within the context of Israel and Palestine, the Nakba and occupied territories—*Route 181*’s first image suggests that not only can Palestinians and Israelis live side by side in one land but that there is space within this frame for their unequal, distinct but connected traumas. First, however, as the three cuts that reframe the same image imply, we need to look at the past from different perspectives.



Fig 4.1. The directors inscribe their signature. Sivan gestures with his hand over the land they will travel, as Khleifi sits with the 1947 partition map in hand. A director’s hand rolls out the map.

²¹³Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* 1972 (New York: Vintage, 1992, Kindle edition).

Dangerous Terrain

In striking contrast to the prologue, which began with a pastoral image and soundscape, the main body of the film opens to the deafening noise of a helicopter as the camera tilts down to a beach blighted with concrete structures, rusted metal and wire fences. The camera rests for a moment on a construction sign by the shore, saying in Hebrew, BEWARE: DANGEROUS TERRAIN, as if announcing to the viewer that the film will lead us onto unstable ground. While the camera holds on another static shot of the spoiled landscape, we hear, above the roar of the sea, the familiar ring of an off-screen cell phone—an “aural intruder” in the space, heralding the intrusive humans who will appear a moment later.²¹⁴

Rather than being integrated into the landscape as if they belonged there, the men—Jewish Israeli contractors originally from Kurdistan and Morocco, as we soon learn—are sonically and visually marked as intruders. Their bodies, like the bulldozers they will command, convey an aggressive dominance over the land. But before the interview with the contractors begins, the camera focuses on Chinese workers speaking in the foreground. The directors choose not to subtitle the dialogue, leaving the non-speaker of Chinese languages in the dark about what the workers are saying. Our inability to understand the Chinese men, and a cut away from them without any translation, gives us a glimpse of the everyday experience of these workers: no one understands them and no one cares what they are saying. In the next shot, the filmmakers are interviewing the

²¹⁴ Elisabeth Wiess coined the term “aural intruder” in *The Silent Scream: Alfred Hitchcock’s Sound Track* (Madison, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson UP, 1982, Print).

Israeli contractors, with the Chinese workers in the background. One of the contractors mentions that they treat the Chinese workers well, since “they’re human.” But he adds that one Arab is worth four Chinese (because they must provide food and lodging for the Chinese). However, he also notes that Arabs “are animals, not human.”

During the conversation, one of the contractors remarks, “we’re waiting for these clowns to finish marking the parcel.” The camera cuts to a long shot of two young men, Bedouin Israeli Arabs, whom we watch as we hear the conversation between Sivan and the contractors. Cut back to the contractors. Sivan asks, “Did you know this land belonged to refugees in Gaza?” One of the contractors responds, “We had land in Kurdistan too, can I get it back?” Suddenly background becomes foreground: the camera brings the Bedouins into medium closeup, as if playing with and reversing the early Zionist filmic pattern of allowing Arabs only to appear in the background. However, the reversal in filmic perspective with the young men is more complex than a mere inversion.

These young men, at home in neither Palestine nor Israel, inhabit a space of in-between-ness, a double non-belonging. The directors’ choice to include them early in the film (a film that follows a non-existent partition) immediately challenges a binary view of Palestinians and Israelis. In the same way, as Robert Stam points out, the film itself—co-authored by a Palestinian and Jewish Israeli who share “virtually identical viewpoints”—cuts against any binary framework.²¹⁵

Both of the young Bedouin Arabs define themselves as Israeli, and distance themselves from their Arab identity. One professes he doesn’t care that the land, which

²¹⁵Robert Stam with Richard Porton and Leo Goldsmith, *Keywords in Subversive Film/Media Aesthetics* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015). Kindle Edition.

he is currently testing to determine whether it is firm enough to hold a massive new Israeli condominium, was once a Palestinian town. But he can't resist looking at a 1947 partition map, which Khleifi holds out. (The map is a significant motif in the film: the directors pull it out repeatedly, and it sits on the dashboard of their car as they drive.)²¹⁶ After looking at the map, the young Bedouin admits that he does have some connection to the Nakba; in 1948, Israeli soldiers shot and killed 14 people in his hometown. The other young man, who begins speaking in Hebrew until Khleifi nudges him away from his adopted identity by insisting he speak Arabic, declares he wants to join the Israeli army to serve his country and "have fun." However, he later allows that there are no opportunities for him in Israel, so he plans to move to the U.S.

In these young Bedouin men's double non-belonging, a consequence of the Nakba, we can also imagine the inverse: a future unified nation, envisioned by Khleifi, Sivan and the many advocates of binationalism or a common state, in which all citizens would doubly belong to Israel and Palestine, or to what the filmmakers refer to as Palestine-Israel. Sivan entitles his 2012 documentary on the topic *Common State: Potential Conversation*. Writing on Khleifi's body of work, Bashir Abu-Manneh has commented that the filmmaker's "cinematic project" is "essentially dyadic: to *reveal* Palestine and to *intervene* in its transformation." Khleifi's reading of the present, Abu-Manneh notes, entails evoking "the repressed past and the immanent future... producing

²¹⁶Shohat poetically notes, "The partition map lies on the car's dashboard and is reflected in the window, as though the real and its shadow orient the film's quest for the map's referents, only to gradually reveal the absurdity of partition lines written in the shifting sands of conflicting political imaginaries." Shohat, p. 288.

a dynamic picture of collision, struggle, and potential regeneration.”²¹⁷ Khleifi, speaking in an interview about his 2009 film *Zindeeq*, but in words that could equally apply to *Route 181*, comments, “Old Palestine will not come back, but mourning properly will allow us to see the Palestine of the future, the new Palestine that we strive to achieve.... Do we continue to repeat the same ‘story’ and the same ‘questions’ and in the same format?”²¹⁸

In *Route 181*, as the filmmakers drive along the invisible UN partition line, the camera frequently zooms in on the rearview mirror. Images of the film’s present, reflected in the mirror from multiple angles, quickly become the filmic past as we move forward into the film’s future. The car moving forward, as it simultaneously reflects backwards, encapsulates the complex temporality that Abu-Manneh notes is captured in Alejo Carpentier’s phrase, “Memories of the Future.”²¹⁹ The rearview mirror, in *Route 181*, becomes a polysemic sign, inviting multiple readings just as the images within its frame reconfigure the past from numerous angles. The views from the rearview mirror enact one of Sivan’s aims for his cinema: “If everyone is looking at a particular subject or issue from a particular vantage point, maybe we should move a little over to the side and look at it from another viewpoint.”²²⁰

²¹⁷Bashir Abu-Manneh, “Towards Liberation: Michel Khleifi’s *Ma’loul* and *Canticle*,” in *Dreams of a Nation* (New York: Verso, 2006 Print) 59.

²¹⁸Isis Nusair, “Between ‘Reality’ and Memory: An Interview with Palestinian Filmmaker Michel Khleifi” (*Jadaliyya.com* June 5, 2015, Web.)

²¹⁹Abu-Manneh, p.59.

²²⁰Cited in Gary Crowdus, “Historical Memory and Political Violence: An Interview with Eyal Sivan,” *Cineaste* Fall 2012, 31.



Fig. 4.2. The past is seen from a different angle as the car moves into the future.

Inverted interview space

As Richard Porton observes, *Route 181*, upon its 2005 New York premiere, was ignored by many American critics and dismissed by those who did review it.²²¹ In a rant in *Film Comment*, Harlan Jacobson argued that in offering us the “vox populi” rather than setting up cameras in front of “the Knesset, the Dome of the Rock, or the Wailing Wall,” or talking to any “big-picture players, thinkers, or scholars,” the film decontextualizes history. Seeming to imply that his readers distinguish themselves from “popular” America, Jacobson compares the film’s interviewees to what he sees as their American

²²¹ Richard Porton, “Roads to Somewhere: *Paradise Now* and *Route 181*,” *Cinema Scope* Fall 2005, Issue 24, p.12. Web.

counterparts: “Can you imagine what you'd hear from Mobile to Memphis to Maine if you mostly talked to truck drivers, retirees, and kids deprived of any and all history—and didn't talk to anyone with anything to say other than anecdotal bile?”²²² Jacobson, in other words, criticizes *Route 181* for not voicing official history and for not placing itself beside official institutions or monuments. Ironically, in doing so he highlights the very aspects that constitute *Route 181*'s counter-archeological project. “*Route 181*...scoops up plenty of reality on the ground, while history slips through its fingers,” he asserts. I would argue that, far from letting it slip through its fingers, *Route 181* reveals (repressed) history, which resides precisely on, in and just under the ground.

Although largely overlooked by American critics at the time of its U.S. release (it has been garnering more and more attention over the years), *Route 181* caused a sensational stir in France. After the film aired on the Arte channel in 2003, French intellectual Alain Finkielkraut, in a radio interview,²²³ declared *Route 181* “a call to murder [Jews]” and labeled Sivan a Jewish anti-Semite.²²⁴ A screening at the Pompidou Center was cancelled. Sivan filed a libel suit against Finkielkraut that went to trial in 2006. In the summer of 2007, the magazine *Cabinet* published, along with an

²²² Harlan Jacobson, “Road to Perdition,” *Film Comment* Jan 2, 2005, Print.

²²³ The interview occurred on the French Jewish radio station RJC on Nov 30, 2003. Details of the interview are described in Thomas Keenan and Eyal Weizman's article “The Barber Trial: Sivan vs. Finkielkraut,” *Cabinet* Issue 26 Summer 2007, Web.

²²⁴ In Haim Bresheeth points out in “Reviving the Palestine Narrative on Film: Negotiating the Future through the Past and Present in *Route 181*” (in Karima Laachir and Saeed Talajooy, *Resistance in Contemporary Middle Eastern Cultures: Literature, Cinema, Music*, New York: Routledge, 2013, p.147) that Finkielkraut directs his vitriol against Sivan and almost never mentions Kheifi, thus almost erasing Kheifi's role as co-director. Bresheeth suggests that in doing so Finkielkraut continues the Zionist tradition of denying Palestinian presence or existence. I would argue that, at the very least, it seems that focusing on Sivan and labeling the Israeli director an anti-Semite allows Finkielkraut to direct attention away from the actual history—the Palestinian expulsion—at the heart of the scene in dispute. Finkielkraut's ignoring Kheifi also protects the philosopher from accusations of being anti-Palestinian.

introduction by Thomas Keenan and Eyal Weizman, an English translation of the trial's transcript.²²⁵ The proceedings are a fascinating example of filmic textual analysis occurring in a courtroom. In the fall of 2007, *Cabinet* staged a re-enactment of the trial at the German art festival Documenta.

A significant portion of the trial testimony, for which Claude Lanzmann served as a witness for Alain Finkielkraut (and against Sivan), hinges on the interpretation of a scene in *Route 181*, which provocatively recalls one of the most well-known and excruciating scenes in *Shoah*. In *Shoah*, Lanzmann exhorts a barber, Abraham Bomba, who is cutting a man's hair during the interview, to recall how he was forced to shear the hair of death camp inmates. In *Route 181*, Sivan and Khleifi encourage a Palestinian barber, also in the act of plying his trade, to recollect. What this barber recalls is witnessing a massacre of his fellow Palestinians in Lod by Israeli soldiers during the Nakba. To Finkielkraut, who calls *Route 181*, "a constant plagiarism of Lanzmann;" and to Lanzmann, who begins his testimony expressing "...the immensity of the insult to me, as the author of a work that has touched hearts and minds throughout the world;" it seems that the "crime" *Route 181* commits is as much against Lanzmann's magnum opus as it is, according to the two Frenchmen, against the memory of the Holocaust. Indeed it seems the "montage interdit" or forbidden juxtaposition was as much *Shoah/Route 181* as it was the Shoah/the Nakba.

Yet given the ire that Sivan and Khleifi's film in its entirety provoked in some members of the French Jewish intellectual community, the film might have caused an

²²⁵"Sivan vs. Finkielkraut," *Cabinet* Issue 26 Summer 2007, Web.

uproar even without the explicit reference to *Shoah* because of the connection—though never an equation—that it draws between the Nakba and the Holocaust. However, as noted earlier, what is striking is that numerous works in the Israeli perpetrator genre, from *Khirbet Khizet* to *Waltz with Bashir*, to *Censored Voices*, also make explicit comparisons between the two tragedies, yet have been largely embraced by the mainstream press and have stirred no controversy. A close look at the interview space in two scenes in *Route 181* that involve onscreen tears, and in two other scenes, which demonstrate the contrast between unified and fragmented interview space, will suggest some of the reasons why Khleifi and Sivan’s film became a flashpoint.

In the middle section of the film, the filmmakers drive down a long, private dirt road and the camera passes over a telltale cactus en route. With this subtle prompt before the upcoming interview, the camera acts here (as it does at other times in the film) as our preconscious, allowing us to see and not see, to see but only belatedly register traces of former Arab presence. Along with olive trees, cacti signal that an Arab town once existed in an area. Most olive trees and cacti were uprooted, often replaced with pine trees planted by the Jewish National Fund. In Israeli and Palestinian film, the cactus calls to mind poignant scenes of Palestinians searching for their former homes. In *Ma'loul* a village elder visiting a destroyed town looks among the pine trees for the place where his house once stood. A cactus and pile of stones mark the spot. In Ra'anana Alexendrowicz’s *Inner Tour* (2001), a film with which *Route 181* has interesting dialogical reverberations, a group of Palestinians go on an Israeli-guided tour of what

once was their land. In a moment hard to believe could have happened by chance, but which Alexendrowicz maintains was not staged, a Palestinian elder on the tour bus begs the driver to stop along the side of the road. The man disappears into a field, and after wandering about he sees the cacti and other telltale vegetation and knows he has come upon his former home. These scenes document the rejoining of a Palestinian and their lost land. In *Route 181*, the cactus on the roadside does not mark a reunion; instead haunts the upcoming interview with an Israeli settler, recalling the presence of the expelled Palestinians, a presence that will be denied by the interviewee.

When the Khleifi and Sivan arrive at the end of the dirt road, a series of shots showing ridiculous-looking iron animal sculptures precede our introduction to the interviewee. The interview proper then begins: a handsome, appealing Israeli man with a modest manner walks along the driveway to his house, noting the ancient stones lining the way and telling Khleifi and Sivan that he found them and that, as a stone-cutter himself, he admires the skill of the earlier stonemasons. The sculptor notes that the stones act as a link, connecting him to a long line of people working on the same stone, but never mentions that those (displaced) people were Arabs.²²⁶ For viewers, who have been primed by the cactus on the roadside, a feeling of disconnection, of a link not made, begins to arise as the man draws a continuous line between himself and the generations of (Arab) stone workers that came before him. The filmmakers don't let this inchoate unease linger for long; they ask the sculptor about the location of the Arab towns on the old map. The man easily details their whereabouts and comments, still not speaking the

²²⁶Haim Bresheeth notes this omission on page 145.

word “Arab” or “Palestinian,” that “the people known as the refugees of 48 were replaced by other refugees.” We as viewers may be more discomfited by this seemingly gentle man’s denial than we are by some of the brutal statements made by other Israelis— comments about Palestinians such as, “They’re squatters; they should all be transferred” (which a restaurant proprietor says of the displaced Palestinians in the South) or, “If we had done in 1948 as the Americans did to the Indians, it would have been better,” as a Jewish National Fund employee pronounces. Our discomfort in the scene with the sculptor arises from the contradictions between the man’s viewpoint and what we know is being suppressed. As the conversation progresses, cutaways to a series of bizarre animal sculptures add to the discomfort in the interview space.



Fig. 4.3. A sculptor’s creations inflect the interview. *Route 181*.

What follows, I believe, is one of the more uncomfortable moments in the film. Sitting cross-legged on his lawn in medium shot, the interviewee tells the filmmakers his story. As a “pure product of Zionism,” he says, he arrived in Israel with his parents when “there was nothing, no civilization.” As the camera cuts to medium closeup, the man, seeming to be driven by what Bhaskar Sarkar and Janet Walker call the camera’s “testimonial impulse,”²²⁷ describes the terrible suffering his mother went through under

²²⁷Bhaskar Sarkar and Janet Walker, p. 14

the Nazis before she escaped. In the midst of the narrative, the sculptor is overcome by emotion, and the camera patiently waits for him to recover. For many viewers, and especially for those who have seen numerous filmed Holocaust testimonies, this scene is exceedingly uncomfortable because it recalls Holocaust documentaries. However, many viewers enter this phase of the interview already somewhat distanced from the sculptor because of his implied denial of the Palestinian trauma. The closeups of the silly-looking sculptures have also added an absurdist gloss to the environment. Therefore, when the man, in discussing his mother's trauma, breaks down before the camera, the viewer may already be partially anticipating the statement that follows: the man says that his family's suffering "makes our hold on this land ever more solid."

Later in the film, tears of an elderly Palestinian woman fall as, surrounded by generations of family, she recounts her story of violent expulsion from her land. In this moment, the integrity of the filmic space is maintained and infused with her suffering. Cutaways to the often-pained faces of young children underline the collective trauma. The listeners in the frame act as our surrogates. Unlike the interview with the Israeli sculptor, who sat alone in the frame and whose trauma inherited from his parents was bracketed by his refusal to feel for the related Palestinian trauma, in this scene we view the marks of the Palestinian displacement in the faces and bodies of three generations. While this scene captures the pain of being separated from one's land, an earlier scene, also with an old Palestinian woman, displays the hardship for some Palestinians in *staying* on their land. The woman, who introduces herself as "an Arab, a Palestinian, and an Israeli," testifies with strength but tears to the losing battle to hold on to her land. Her

declaration that “[the Israelis] don’t treat us like human beings,” recalls the comment by the Israeli contractor at the film’s beginning, his statement that Arabs “are animals, not human.” The interview with the woman, interviewed outside, immersed in the landscape, reinvigorates a powerful connection between the Palestinian and the land.

There is more to this re-organization of the interview space than an inversion of space disturbers/space unifiers. By making the Israelis clash with the filmic mise en scene, the film inverts the Zionist narrative that firmly ties Israelis to the land and space of ancient Israel. And, conversely, in making the Palestinian interviewees seem connected to the land and space, the film makes the possibility of a unified existence immanent in the filmic space. Indeed, it is in these moments of integration, I argue, that the film, in capturing a traumatic oft-repressed past, simultaneously embeds a utopic vision of the future. Said’s *After the Last Sky*,²²⁸ which emphasizes through words and images the fragmentation and place- and spacelessness that marks Palestinian identity, helps us appreciate the radical force of these moments of cohesion within the space.

Over the course of its four and a half hours, *Route 181* sews unexpected links between the Sephardim, or Arab-Jews,²²⁹ interviewed—a number of whom long for their homeland in Morocco, Tunisia or Iraq, speak of being betrayed by the Israeli government and remember nostalgically how Arabs and Jews lived peacefully together there—and Palestinians—who long for the land from which they’ve been expelled. And, as does Sivan and Ilan Pappé’s ongoing project *Common Archive*, which brings together

²²⁸ Edward Said, *After the Last Sky* (New York: Columbia UP, 1998).

²²⁹Shohat uses the term “Arab-Jew,” which connects the Arab and the Jew. Jews from Arab countries, also called Sephardim or *Mizrahim*, have long been subject to discrimination and had to suppress their Arab roots in Israel.

testimonies from surviving perpetrators and victims of the Nakba perpetrators, the testimonies by Israelis in *Route 181* who participated in expulsions of Palestinians and testimonies of Palestinian victims of the crimes ironically also corroborate each other. The collecting of these numerous testimonies in one film presents a powerful counter-narrative.

In small Kibbutz museums too, we see—often from the contorted speech of the tour guides as much as from the filmmakers’ pointed questions—the official Zionist narrative fracture before us. These scenes perform in miniature what the film in its entirety conveys—a powerful counter-narrative which, along with numerous other revisionist films, comes, as Shohat has remarked, to “haunt the Zionist metanarrative.”²³⁰ They recall a highly uncomfortable scene in Alexandrowicz’s *Inner Tour* when the Palestinians on an organized tour visit a Kibbutz museum. The tour guide gives what appears to be exactly the same tour for the Palestinian visitors as he would for Israeli visitors, highlighting “victorious” moments when the Israeli pioneers vanquished their Arab attackers. In both films, the scenes in the kibbutz museums are dense studies of the documentary interview as a form, making the often-buried assumptions about the interlocutors uncomfortably apparent.

In one Kibbutz museum in *Route 181*, which features a reconstruction of the 1948 battlefield along with visual displays, a guide with a gentle demeanor, who came to Israel from Ukraine in his twenties and fought in the Arab-Israeli war, gestures to early photographs of Palestine, declaring, “There was nothing. It was empty.” Seeming to

²³⁰Shohat, p. 278.

vacillate between official speak and his own conflicting views, he states that the Arabs fled, but when asked if most of the Arabs were armed fighters, he immediately says, “No, most wanted to live peacefully farming their land.” The scene closes with an exchange, which foregrounds, as many moments in the film do, the assumptions often made about who the listener or viewer is. The guide comments with concern that Arabs will be 50% of the population in 20 years. “What’s the problem?” one of the filmmakers asks. Choosing to understand the question not as “What’s the problem with having an Arab majority,” but instead as “What’s the problem that’s causing this population growth,” the guide answers, “The problem is Arabs have too many kids.”

In another small national museum on irrigation, the guide becomes increasingly belligerent as the filmmakers interrupt his official tour with provocative questions about the 1948 ethnic cleansing of Arabs. Finally, the guide screams at them for speaking “nonsense.” However, narcissism and opportunism, twin sins often ignited by a camera’s presence, get the better of him at the end of the interview, when, all smiles, he holds out for display a picture of his model for a new water jet system in need of funding (it could be named after a generous donor) and asks the directors to send him a copy of the film.

Perhaps the most powerful investigation of the interview form, its complex dynamics and exchanges, takes place when the filmmakers visit a soldier who took part in the 1948 “Operation Matate,” or Operation Broom, whose goal was to sweep the region clean of Palestinians. Strikingly for an interview that will estrange the form and subvert many of its conventions, it is the only interview in the film that states the name of the interviewee and asks standard testimonial questions that establish his age and origin.

The former soldier, whose name is Greenberg, flatly describes expelling the Palestinians during Operation Matate and makes repeated hand gestures mimicking sweeping. As he speaks, the signifiers of Israeliness in the interview space—a wall of Israeli flags prominently displayed in the background—take on a hyperbolic, absurdist presence. At one point, when Sivan’s pointed questions about the expulsions finally cue the former soldier to the fact that Sivan may not share his heroic view of the operation, there is a pregnant pause. The man looks quizzically towards the camera then shifts, as Shohat points out, from “soldierly camaraderie to the policing apparatus of the state,”²³¹ asking whether the directors have a permit to film. When asked why he raises the question, he states: “I have my suspicions about you. Your attitude is a bit strange....Your vision of things is different than ours.” Sivan: “Ours?” Greenberg: “Mine. Ours is mine. I’m representing them.”

This moment unnervingly draws our attention to many of the elements of the documentary genre and it brings to the fore the documentary interview’s inherent strangeness, which realist codes have naturalized. The scene highlights the ideology that infuses many documentary interview questions; it captures in miniature the delicate negotiation between the particular and the general that governs the documentary genre.²³² “*Ours is mine. I’m representing them.*” If Sivan’s views are “strange” then, by definition, so are the sympathetic viewer’s. Perhaps once we’ve experienced the disturbed denial-laden spaces, the homogenous ones—whether in the next scene or in another film—don’t

²³¹Shohat, p. 281.

²³² Jonathan Kahana has discussed this negotiation in *Intelligence Work*.

look quite the same; the components which give rise to cohesion slightly fray, and the interview's oddness as a form peeks through.

If the codes that govern the interview form look strange or uncanny at moments, the land in *Route 181* frequently becomes infused with uncanny strangeness. Prominent Israeli archeologist Magen Broshi states, "European immigrants found a country to which they felt, paradoxically, both kinship and strangeness. Archeology in Israel, a *sui generis* state, serves as a means to dispel the alienation of its new citizens." Said notes that Broshi's statement perfectly articulates official Israeli archeology's goals.²³³ *Route 181* inverts these goals: the film does not dispel alienation; it makes the land strange again.

The relentlessness of the questions about the former Arab towns and the repeated appearance of the original map take on a ritualistic quality which, in again and again beating back against denial, come to resemble the very insistence of the return of the repressed. In steadfastly staying on the surface strata, which contains the Arab presence; and in performing a Palestinian cine-archeology, all the while scraping away the first layers of "pathogenic" material of their interviewees' psyches, *Route 181* slowly starts to fill in this central missing layer in the official Israeli narrative.

In the beginning of *Mal'oul*, we see a mural of the original town before it was destroyed hanging on the wall of one of the former residents. The man who commissioned the painting tells Khleifi:

The artist went up to the village, or at least what's left of it. He got an idea of what it had been like. And while he painted we would tell him to add a house here or there. Here are the fields, here the spring, which was probably further down....Here are a few going home from the fields.

²³³ Said, *Freud and the Non-European*, Kindle edition.

Suddenly, Khleifi's camera zooms into the painting, and with the help of animation, the villagers and the scenes in the mural suddenly come to life before our eyes. By the end of *Route 181*, the film has brought to life a missing stratum and reanimated Arab presence throughout the country; what we see is Palestine-Israel.

Route 181 closes with a bittersweet scene. A group of Moroccan and Tunisian Jews, who share collective loss and warm friendship, gather every evening to watch the sunset. *Route 181*'s final words spoken by one woman are: "The Germans wanted to bury us but the Arabs hid us. They saved the Jews." Lest we get too comfortable and forget what's ahead of us, the film's final image is a barrier, blockading Khleifi and Sivan's car, commanding in Hebrew, English and Arabic: "STOP: BORDER IN FRONT OF YOU."

Uncensored? *Censored Voices*

When Israeli soldiers returned home after the June 1967 war, they were met with triumphant celebrations. Amos Oz and Avraham Shapira—kibbutzniks and reserve soldiers at the time—sensed that many veterans did not in fact feel like heroes. Just days after the war ended, Oz and Shapira decided to record conversations with fellow veterans and kibbutzniks about their experiences during the war. Their intention was to publish the conversations in a booklet, a stark counter-testimony to the heroic post-war narrative circulating in the country and in Western news reports. But the military censor intervened and banned seventy percent of the content; the remaining thirty percent was published in Avraham Shapira's 1971 book *The Seventh Day: Soldiers Talk about the*

Six-Day War. The repressed material is revealed for the first time in Mor Loushy's 2015 documentary *Censored Voices*.

A powerful, tightly edited work that combines the soldiers' original recorded conversations with rare archival footage from the 1967 war (collected from numerous archives in different parts of the world²³⁴), *Censored Voices* methodically and powerfully dismantles the heroic narrative of the Six-Day War. The film's structure closely resembles Freud's archeological approach to psychoanalysis; in this case, as in *Route 181*, the analysand is the nation. Unlike *Route 181*, which deliberately keeps its psychological and archeological excavation focused on what lies on or just below the surface, *Censored Voices* is driven by a centripetal force moving the film gradually toward the atrocities at its core. Loushy's film peels back the layers of repression and denial, which were keeping the official heroic story intact. As the interviews proceed, each day takes us further away from the war in time; and each day the soldiers' testimony, often trepidatious at first, moves closer to an uncensored truth.

The film follows the war's chronology and spatial movement. The geographic movement over the six days, beginning in Egypt and culminating in the heart of Jerusalem, mirrors exactly the standard archeological psychoanalytic approach to traumatic or repressed experiences—a gradual movement toward a core event. Mapping the war's geographic path means simultaneously mapping the shift in perspective from far-off battlefield killings of faceless enemy targets to the close-range murder of unarmed civilians.

²³⁴ In the Q&A after the November 5 screening of *Censored Voices* in New York, Mor Loushy explained that she did a world-wide search and gathered material from over 30 archives.

The film cuts from the present-day, sometimes pained, faces of the former soldiers (now in their 60s and 70s), as they listen to the voices of their younger selves, to archival war footage and news reports, and back to the older men listening to their testimony. Periodically, titles appear: “11 days after the war, Kibbutz Ein Shemer,” “14 days after the war, Kibbutz Yisre’el” over images depicting the enclosed shelters where the conversations at each kibbutz took place. There is, of course, another chronology at work here, significant though not overtly marked. It is the history of the relationship between the soldiers’ testimony and the Israeli censors. The voices we hear were censored once and now they are not. However, Loushy’s film, funded in part by the Israeli state through the Yehoshua Rabinovich Foundation for the Arts, had to go through the country’s military censor, as is required of all Israeli films, and some changes were demanded.²³⁵ Exactly what was requested by the censor we don’t know, for, as *The New York Times* review of the film notes, “Israel forbids the filmmakers to reveal how much they were forced to change, and the military censor’s office refused to discuss it.”²³⁶

Producer Hilla Medalia has stressed in interviews that the cuts required were

²³⁵ International attention was recently brought to what goes along with receiving funding from the country’s two state-funded film foundations, The Israeli Film Fund and the Yehoshua Rabinovich Foundation. Palestinian director Suha Arraf’s film *Villa Touma* received funding as an Israeli film from the Israeli Film Fund. However Arraf registered her film as Palestinian at the 2014 Venice Film Festival. The Israeli government objected, and at first it seemed that Arraf would have to return the money unless she agreed to register her film as Israeli. In the end, the Israeli Film Fund returned the money to the state, absorbing the cost itself, but it changed its contract for future fund recipients, as did the Rabinovich Foundation. Both organizations, to the consternation of many filmmakers, now require all directors to declare they will represent themselves and their films as Israeli. The controversy surrounding *Villa Touma* is discussed in John Anderson, “The Hand That Feeds Bites Back: Israel and Suha Arraf differ on Nationality of *Villa Touma*,” *The New York Times*, Oct 16, 2014 and Debra Kamin “Filmmakers Call Israeli Film Funders Loyalty Oath Troubling,” *Variety*, Feb 13, 2015.

²³⁶ Jodi Rudoren, “Disillusioned by War, Israeli Soldiers Muted in 1967 Are Given Fuller Voice,” *New York Times* Jan. 25, 2015.

insignificant²³⁷ and stated “We were able to release the film as we wanted it.”²³⁸

Insignificant or not as the changes may have been, the simple fact is that the film before us is the one that made it through the censors. In a somewhat vertiginous swirl, the documentary at once emphasizes its revelation of once-censored material (without addressing why the tapes are no longer deemed incendiary) and de-emphasizes the censorship of *Censored Voices* itself.

A look at how three different presses in Israel framed an identical review of *Censored Voices* demonstrates how the film leaves itself open to a range of interpretations. It thus circulates in an entirely different critical arena from that of *Route 181*. Anthony Weiss’s glowing review of the film for the syndicate Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) is entitled, “Long Suppressed, *Censored Voices* speaks out on Six Day War.” The title is of course misleading and simply untrue: the film has not been long suppressed; the soldiers’ voices have been. Whether carelessness or intentional bad grammar is to blame, the title blurs the object of censorship, directing our attention away from the question of why the soldiers’ testimony is now no longer suppressed. The reviewer comments that “there is so much raw, varied and shocking material in the movie that parts can easily be wielded or attacked to serve particular political arguments,” but he praises the film for being “courageous enough to embrace contradictions and leave them unresolved.” Weiss assures his readers (who presumably occupy a range of positions on

²³⁷ Kevin Ritchie cites the producer in “Berlinale ‘15: Mor Loushy unearths “Censored Voices,” *Realscreen* Feb 12, 2015.

²³⁸ Quoted in Anthony Weiss, “*Censored Voices* Tears Apart Israel’s Heroic Narrative of Six-Day War,” *Haaretz* February 2, 2015.

the political spectrum) that the film “offers an unflinching look at Israeli atrocities without being unpatriotic or anti-Zionist, recounting the horrors of the war without suggesting that Israel should have refused to fight it. It is critical of the Israeli occupation, yet doesn’t claim to offer answers.”²³⁹ When the review is picked up by *The Times of Israel*, an online paper, published in English, Arabic, French and Chinese, which has an avowed goal of combating negative coverage of Israel within Israel and around the world,²⁴⁰ a descriptive capsule underneath has been added: “Film recounts veterans’ raw emotions during the 1967 conflict, while shedding light on the ugly nature of combat.”²⁴¹ The capsule depoliticizes the soldiers’ voices and entirely blunts the specificity of their criticism of Israel and the 1967 war. The soldiers’ brave condemnation of the occupation of the territories and their devastating accounts of Israeli war crimes become, in *The Times of Israel*’s capsule, toothless testimony to a universal truth, “the ugly nature of combat.”²⁴² If that were all there was to the accounts, we have

²³⁹ Anthony Weiss, “Long Suppressed, *Censored Voices* speaks out about Six-Day War,” *JTA* Feb 1, 2015.

²⁴⁰ As an article in *The Forward* points out, *The Times of Israel*’s financial backer is American investor Seth

Klarman. Klarman, who claims to have no editorial input, nevertheless made his goal for the online journal explicit in the first issue, which appeared in 2012, writing: “My own interest in Israel has become even stronger post-9/11, when the threat of terrorism and the danger of radical Islam collided with a global campaign on many fronts to delegitimize the Jewish State. As a longtime student of the history of anti-Semitism, I know this blind hatred is never the fault of Jews....” Klarman’s family foundation, *The Forward* reveals, has given substantial donations to anti-Islamist groups, to organizations that counter perceived anti-Israeli media bias in the West Bank, and to Elad, a group which uses archeology to justify Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem, and which has “successfully” evicted Arab East Jerusalem residents from their homes. “The Soft-Spoken Man Behind the Times of Israel,” *The Forward* Feb 9, 2012.

²⁴¹ Anthony Weiss, “Long Suppressed, *Censored Voices* speaks out on Six Day War,” *The Times of Israel* February 1, 2015.

²⁴² Interestingly, although Loushy emphasizes that her film acts as strong condemnation of the ongoing Israeli occupation—she stresses the *specificity* of *Censored Voices* political argument—she also adopts the de-politicized language of “universal truths” when speaking of how the film might be relevant to other countries. In an *Indiewire* interview she states “*Censored Voices* talks about a universal matter. Although it is about the Six-Day War, I think that every viewer can take it to the war(s) in his or her own country, to the psychology of war, a glance into the soul of the human race in war. I believe that the end of the film is

to ask, why would they have been so “long suppressed?” A day later, when the same review appeared in the left-of-center Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, which publishes in Hebrew and English, there were two changes from the original one in *JTA*. The title is now “*Censored Voices* Tears Apart Israel’s Heroic Narrative of Six-Day War,” and the capsule underneath reads, “In the wake of the 1967 war, Israel’s victorious soldiers were lionized as heroes, but many didn’t feel that way, a new documentary shows.”²⁴³ *Haaretz*’s title and capsule allow for more specificity and context for its majority Israeli readership and point to an alternative history, one far less heroic than the official narrative. The choice of stills from the film each paper selected is telling too. In *The Times of Israel* article, the first still we see is of formidable Israeli soldiers surveying the Old City from afar before a planned attack. In *Haaretz*, the first still is of a long line-up of prisoners in the Gaza Strip.

Prologue

A black screen with white text opens the film: “On June 5th 1967, the armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan were amassed on Israel’s borders, threatening to annihilate it.” Additional expository text then appears below: “Six days later, Israel won an historic victory, conquering lands, and tripling its size. Israel, as we know it today, was born...” The identical font and placement of the two segments, one after another appearing within

very sad; it exposes a chord in the human race that leads us to make wars, to sin, to animal behavior. But I would like the end to also hold a spark of optimism about always having to listen to the other voice. We should not fear to look at the human race, with all its faults, so that we may mend them.” Laura Berger, “Sundance Women Directors: Meet Mor Loushy—*Censored Voices*,” *Indiewire* January 22, 2015.

²⁴³ Anthony Weiss, “*Censored Voices* Tears Apart Israel’s Heroic Narrative of Six-Day War,” *Haaretz* February 2, 2015.

the same frame, conceal a fascinating split in the expository text, which is unacknowledged by the film. As we will see, *Censored Voices* will insistently endorse the first statement—the idea that the war began, and was justified, because Israel was under existential threat (an idea that is now questioned by some historians). However, the film will devastatingly dismantle the second—the idea that the Six-Day War was heroic and that the lands were “conquered” rather than emptied and occupied.

After the opening expository text, there is a cut to a closeup of a box marked “censored.” Hands open the box, take out an audiocassette and begin to spool it on a tape recorder. A cut returns us to the black screen with white text, where we read “One week after the Six-Day War, a group of young kibbutzniks recorded conversations with soldiers back from the battlefield.” Cuts take us back and forth between the audiotape being threaded on the recorder and the black screen with text, which tells us that, “The Israeli army censored the recordings, allowing the kibbutzniks to publish only 30% of the conversations.” The tape has now been threaded completely. The hands pull back, and the black screen appears one last time to tell us, “The original recordings are revealed here for the first time.” In the final moments of the prologue, Amos Oz, who acts as the film’s moral center and the filmmaker’s partial surrogate, and whose voice frames the opening and closing of the documentary, enters a room and sits before the tape recorder as we hear the filmmaker’s voice telling Oz she will play his 1967 voice. Over archival footage, we hear the writer’s younger voice stating that if the men can tell each other what they really felt and experienced during war, “We may not do the best service to national morale but we’ll do a small service to truth.”

Implicitly, the film works against any sense of excisions by its emphasis on full revelation and truth—generic tenets of the traditional documentary. The title, along with an additional website subtitle (“War, Uncut”), the opening of the box marked “Censored,” and the hands unwinding the tape all seem to promise transmission of complete, unexpurgated testimony. The viewer’s privileged glimpse of the hand actually unwinding the audiotape onto the recorder—which acts as the film’s structuring device—gives us a sense of being present while the film is being made. The segment may seem to be baring the apparatus, but the effect is the opposite of breaking the illusion of transparent reality: it sutures the viewer into a privileged space with the filmmaker just before the renowned author joins us. *Route 181* also opened with an image of the director’s hand, but the effect was entirely different. When we saw a hand holding the partition map—*Route 181*’s structuring device—it reminded us that documentaries are inherently mediated and manipulated. In *Censored Voices*, the directors’ hands instead facilitate the transmission of complete, unexpurgated testimony. When the tape is fully spooled, the hands retract; the original recordings take over.

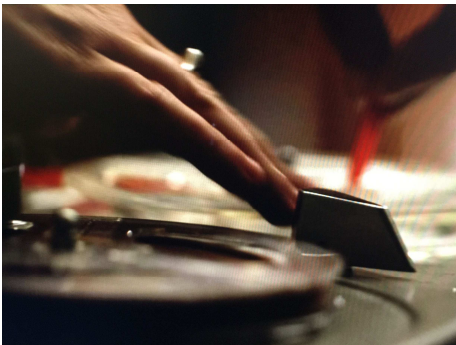


Figure 4.6. The director’s hand facilitates uncensored revelation. “The original recordings are revealed here for the first time.”

Disparate filmic components work in concert throughout *Censored Voices*, pulling the viewer inexorably towards more and more horrifying atrocities. Archival footage of the war, increasingly disturbing although often beautifully shot, keeps pace with the aural narration. While the film is literally polyphonic—we hear the voices of a number of different soldiers speaking about their wartime experiences—it knits its many voices together into a single collective one, which works in tandem with the archival footage. The smooth interweaving of voices and images continues to suture us into the text. Indeed, arguably more completely than in most other Israeli perpetrator films—films that are part of a genre partially defined by the propensity to do so—*Censored Voices* pulls its viewers into the psyche of the Israeli soldiers.

This immersion is also due to the merging of the authorial voice with the recordings, and to the filmmaker's decision to have the former soldiers listen, in the present, to the tapes with virtually no present-day commentary. As opposed to many documentaries (such as those discussed in chapters two and three), which fracture the subject by confronting the interviewee with footage of an earlier self that may not cohere with their current self-presentation, *Censored Voices* has the latter-day faces offer a continuity of self, throwing no obstacle²⁴⁴ in our path as we step into the conversations

²⁴⁴ Loushy's explanation as to why she chose not to interview the men in the present day emphasizes her desire to maintain a connection between the men's voices in the past and their present-day selves: "I really wanted to give as much room and space to the incredible raw material I got from these conversations. I wanted also to tell a story of the censorship because these voices have not been heard in Israel. By only showing them listening, that tells a story of how they were not being heard. It also tells the story of the connection between the past and the present. You can understand the whole story through their faces. What was interesting to me was their first reaction to hearing their voices." *Realscreen* Feb 12, 2015. Also, at a Q&A after an *Other Israel* screening at the Jewish Cultural Center on November 5th, 2015, Loushy stated that her intention was to create continuity between the men's present and their past.

from nearly half a century ago. Indeed, as opposed to the uneasiness we experience when interviewee denial or prevarication, often coaxed out by the director, fracture the documentary interview space, as frequently occurred in *Route 181*, in *Censored Voices* we are led into a strikingly ideologically unified interview space. In synthesizing the multiple narrative voices and images into a singular one, Loushy encourages solidarity between the viewer and the speakers, who function mainly as one collective unit. Furthermore, when we view the older men in the film's present listening silently to their recorded voices, their body language and facial expressions—nods, smiles, sorrowful winces—reinforce the connection and continuity between their older and younger selves.

While the soldiers' narration and the accompanying archival footage are profoundly disturbing, we are bound to the men through the wartime stories they share, rather than distanced from them or made uneasy because of their acts. Uneasiness, if the viewer experiences it, is instead produced not by the director's prompting but by recognition of what the film elides and reinforces. The film provides an opposing narrative to the heroic official one, a powerful counter-reading. However, its oppositional narrative is, as discussed above, univocal; consequently in allowing a once-suppressed collective voice finally to be heard and to join the public archive, *Censored Voices*, as I will discuss below, simultaneously quiets other voices and keeps other archives sealed. In this way, the film's own counter-reading solicits another reading, one which acts, to borrow Stam's term, as a "counterpoint" to the film's.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ For a discussion of "counterpoint," see Robert Stam, *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1989).

Unlike Ari Folman, director of *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) and Samuel Maoz, director of *Lebanon* (2009) who, in interviews and in Q&A's I attended, repeatedly avowed that their films (both about the 1982 Israeli-Lebanon war), though anti-war, were not political, Loushy forcefully defines herself and her films as political. In the current climate in Israel, "I believe we have to be political," she declared to great applause at the Other Israel/JCC screening I attended. And she sees *Censored Voices* as a direct condemnation of the occupied territories and a challenge to the official Six-Day War narrative. Yet the film itself reinforces some aspects of the official narrative as it breaks apart others. It also in certain ways recreates a structure of "encirclement." Expanding on Tom Engelhardt's phrase "images of encirclement," Robert Stam and Louise Spence discuss this prevalent pattern in Hollywood westerns. The "besieged wagon, train, or fort is the focus of our attention and sympathy," and "point-of-view conventions" foreclose the possibility of "sympathetically identifying" with the Indians.²⁴⁶ A number of Israeli films echo the same structure, as Shohat has pointed out,²⁴⁷ where we are visually and metaphorically "with" the Israeli soldiers as they are besieged by attacking Arabs. *Lebanon*, which was praised by many reviewers for its "innovative" visual structure, presents almost a hyper-encirclement framework—it traps the spectator with the Israeli soldiers in the besieged tank for virtually the entire film.

In *Censored Voices*, the trope of besiegement works in a much more complex, contradictory and ambivalent manner, but it is nevertheless present. We first "meet"

²⁴⁶ Robert Stam and Louise Spence, "Colonialism, Racism and Representation: An Introduction," *Screen* 1983, Issue 24, p. 12.

²⁴⁷ See Shohat, Chapter 5 "The Return of the Repressed: The Palestinian Wave in Recent Israeli Cinema."

Israel on a precise date when its very existence, according to the expository text, is threatened by surrounding Arab armies. Throughout, the film—through the soldiers’ voices, with which we are encouraged to identify wholly, and through archival news footage, which I will discuss in detail—will reiterate this initial encirclement framework.²⁴⁸ To adhere to the assertion of existential threat before the war’s start, but be able to “tear apart” the official Six-Day War narrative, the film must split the war in two. The split concealed in the opening expository statements is later overtly expressed in the film. “I feel convinced that the war was just, but it became a different war,” one soldier remarks. From this perspective, the initial war, perceived as self-defense, was just. The occupation of the territories was not. This splitting however is not as neat as the film may hope it to be. Once the encirclement image is imprinted on our minds, it is hard to entirely eradicate its traces when we arrive at the “second” war.

1948/1967

Minutes into *Censored Voices*, we see archival footage of euphoric celebrations in front of the Western Wall. A jubilant Moshe Dayan appears on screen for only a few seconds, but much is encapsulated in this moment. Within the film’s demythologizing project, Dayan is metonymic for the Six-Day War victory narrative. Yet his image is also

²⁴⁸ In this framework, the Arabs, calling for the annihilation of Jews, stand in for the Nazis. In recent weeks, during widely-reported knife attacks by Palestinians on Israelis, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reinvigorated this Nazi/Arab equation in inflammatory language. Bernard Avishai details Netanyahu’s statements in “What Provoked Palestinian Knife Attacks in Israel?” in *The New Yorker* October 23, 2015. Netanyahu, Avishai recounts, told the World Zionist Congress, in Jerusalem, that the mufti gave Hitler the idea for the Holocaust. When accused by Israel Herzog of offering fodder for Holocaust deniers, Netanyahu then clarified that his intention was “to show that the forefathers of the Palestinian nation, without a country and without a so-called occupation, without land and without settlements, even then aspired to systematic incitement to exterminate the Jews.” Netanyahu later retracted much of his statement.

so thick with interconnected wars and atrocities that when it appears on the screen, a montage of multi-directional historical associations flashes before us: the 1948 Arab-Israeli war (where he presided over massacres of Palestinians and multiple war crimes); the First Lebanon War (whose strategy of setting up an Israeli-friendly Christian government he envisioned in the 1950s); the Vietnam War (whose tactics he observed first-hand just before becoming Israeli defense minister in 1967); and the Cold War (which, because of Arab-Soviet collaboration directly affected the US's decision to overlook Israeli defiance of international law in the Six-Day War).

Dayan's image may be a portal that takes us through many wars back to Israel's actual birth and the Nakba, but the film makes only one overt reference to the 1948 war²⁴⁹ and one somewhat ambivalent statement on the Nakba. Through the disconnected childhood remembrances of one of the soldiers, we hear about the man's impressions of war before he went to war himself: "My early memories are of war; I grew up in the shadow of wars, or rather, not in their shadow but in their light.... People who took great risk.... From a life in the Diaspora to building this country, this nation... We're a generation that doesn't belong anywhere." Unlike the sons that film scholar Shmulik Duvdevani writes about, who struggle to come to terms with their fathers' crimes,²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ A write-up on *Censored Voices* for *Realscreen* seems to pick up the film's cue and skips over the '48 war in its overview: "While the Israeli-Palestinian issue tends to inspire a lot of heated discussion, a filmmaker is imploring viewers to stop talking for a moment and listen in a documentary that revisits the *origins* of that conflict." (Emphasis added.) Kevin Ritchie, "Berlinale '15: Mor Loushy unearths "Censored Voices," *Realscreen* Feb 12, 2015.

²⁵⁰ In "The Agonies of an Eternal Victim: Zionist Guilt in Avi Mograbi's *Happy Birthday, Mr. Mograbi*," Shmulik Duvdevani argues that "I-movies" of the 1990s and early 2000s express "their makers' acknowledgment of their accountability for the constitutive and formative events related to the establishment of the State of Israel and the accompanying Palestinian Nakba.... This accountability originates in the understanding that my present state would not be as it is today were it not for past Zionist activities—of expulsion, banishment and massacre—that have not yet been atoned and compensated

these soldiers fear they can never be heroes like their fathers. Yet the film's images and tales of atrocities committed during the 1967 war uncannily recall those committed during the 1948 war. Late in the film, after we have just witnessed excruciating footage of Palestinians being expelled en masse from what are now the occupied territories, we hear Oz's younger voice state, "On June 5th, I felt I was fighting for our lives; on June 10, I find myself with Hebron, Jerusalem and Sharm el Sheik." Another soldier interjects, "Amos, if you're going to be consistent with this, you'll realize our whole claim is not justified or reasonable." Oz responds, "Nahman, I'm not consistent because I see a fundamental tragedy. Where one side is not 100% right and both sides aren't 50% percent right. A tragedy is a situation where both sides are 100% right." In this striking exchange, the film, through the voice of Nahman, articulates a possibly more radical conclusion—that Israel's claim to the land from its very founding is not justifiable or reasonable. It is significant that Oz, the film's surrogate author, rejects this notion by calling the situation (which we conjecture from earlier moments to mean Zionism) a tragedy. In seeing both sides as 100% right, he imposes a symmetry onto an asymmetrical situation.²⁵¹

for....The son's recognition that their existence in the present is the direct result of injustices in the past leads them to take on their parents' guilt so as to cleanse them." The essay appears in Raz Yosef and Boaz Hagin, eds *Deeper than Oblivion: Trauma and Memory in Israeli Cinema* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

²⁵¹Interestingly, in Harlan Jacobson's scathing review of *Route 181*, Jacobson remarks, "Would that [the filmmakers] had found Amos Oz, the Israeli writer and former resident of Kibbutz Hulda, whom I long ago heard say words to the effect that "the tragedy is that both sides are jabbing at ghosts. Jews think they're fighting extermination by the Nazis, Arabs by the Brits. They don't see each other." Here, as in the statement quoted from *Censored Voices*, Oz reconfigures the situation. Ethnic cleansing of the Arabs by the Israelis becomes two equal sides fighting against invisible perpetrators.

Censored Voices may allow the myth and reality of 1948 to remain ambiguous, but it actively participates in furthering a perspective on the 1967 war that a growing number of scholars, drawing extensively on declassified documents from the LBJ Presidential Library among other official government archives, have questioned or complicated: the idea that Israel, at risk of annihilation, acted in self-defense.²⁵² Most recently, law professor John Quigley argues in *The Six-Day War and Israeli Self-Defense* that Israel's attack on Egypt was not, as the Israeli government claimed and convinced its population still living in the wake of the Holocaust, a self-defensive measure, but in fact an act of aggression, which violated international law.²⁵³ Sandy Nolan comments in a *Salon.com* article that in the Johnson Presidential documents, "Israel emerges a vastly superior military power...and war itself was something Nasser, for all his saber-rattling, tried to avoid."²⁵⁴ Based on CIA intelligence reports, Johnson told Israeli Foreign Minister at a White House meeting over a week before the war, "You will whip the hell out of them." In public, Nasser called for Israel's annihilation but in private—Nolan, citing declassified material states—Nasser told US officials he had no intention of

²⁵²Risk of annihilation is often used as a justification for Israel's actions in the 1947-48 Arab-Israeli war. One of the more unnerving examples is a statement by Benny Morris, an Israeli New Historian who methodically went through the Israeli de-classified archives and cited extensive evidence of ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian population. In an interview with Ari Shavit, cited by Haim Bresheeth, Benny Morris states "There are circumstances in history that justify ethnic cleansing. I know that this term is completely negative in the discourse of the 21st century, but when the choice is between ethnic cleansing and genocide—the annihilation of your people—I prefer ethnic cleansing." A portion of this interview is cited in Haim Bresheeth, "Reviving the Palestine Narrative on Film: Negotiating the Future through the Past and Present in *Route 181*," in Karima Laachir and Saeed Talajooy, *Resistance in Contemporary Middle Eastern Cultures: Literature, Cinema, Music* (New York, Routledge, 2013).

²⁵³ John B. Quigley, *The Six-Day War and Israeli Self-Defense: Questioning the Legal Basis for Preventive War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

²⁵⁴ Sandy Nolan, "Rethinking Israel's David-and-Goliath Past: Little-Noticed Details in Declassified U.S. Documents Indicate That Israel's Six-Day War May not Have Been a War of Necessity," *Salon.com* June 4, 2007.

engaging in a war. American officials relayed the message, which corroborated American intelligence, to the Israelis. These archives paint a picture quite different from the one of a tiny nation encircled by aggressive Arabs attempting to crush it.

“The Arabs were having experiences similar to those we had in World War II. Perhaps that’s the tragedy. That I identified with the other side. With the enemy.”

As we are brought closer and closer to the atrocities committed by the Israeli army in the Six-Day War, the film’s initial encirclement frame—the idea that Israel was surrounded by enemies threatening its annihilation, stated by the text and voiced by the men, who aver that they initially believed they were surrounded by threatening nations—becomes ever more important. In an article in *The New York Times* Middle East section, Jodi Rudoren supports the film’s emphasis on the existential threat, seeing it as a way of warding off generalized criticism of Israel: “But with Israel increasingly in a defensive crouch on the international stage, the film raises concerns that, viewed without consideration for the existential threat Israel faced at the time, it could become catnip for contemporary critics.”²⁵⁵ Within the film, even when the Israeli soldiers are brought face to face with the Arab victims of the war, the soldiers, perhaps partially to protect themselves from the shock and pain of seeing their fellow human beings devastated, at times tell themselves that the men are would-be attackers who could have annihilated Israel.

When the war began, the Israeli soldiers fought in the Sinai, where their enemy remained a distant other. It seemed, as one man states, that the Egyptians almost “weren’t

²⁵⁵ “Disillusioned by War, Israeli Soldiers muted in 1967, are Given Fuller Voice.” *The New York Times*, Jan 25, 2015.

human.” Another man adds, “It was like shooting at dolls.” The viewer too, seeing only footage of Israeli troops, is kept at a remove from the Egyptian fighters. But the film keeps excavating. A reminder of the enemy’s human-ness momentarily penetrates when a soldier describes finding photos of the children of an officer he has just shot. After the soldiers conquer the Suez, they begin to face the enemy up close. Excruciating footage of Egyptian prisoners of war dying of thirst accompanies a narration of the Israeli soldiers’ reactions, which ranged from disdain to pity, to wondering “how they would have treated us.” What follows is a crescendo of horrifying testimony about the murder of unarmed soldiers and civilians. At almost exactly the midway point or center of the film, we arrive in Jerusalem at the Lion’s Gate. Footage shows us soldiers at the archway shooting their way into the Old City and announcing ecstatically, “The Temple Mount is in our hands!” Here, in what many Israeli’s consider the heart of the country, the film bears witness to some of the most extreme of the 1967 atrocities. The people we see in the archival footage are no longer soldiers or prisoners of war but civilians—men, women and children of all ages. We witness the moment these citizens are turned into refugees. We see them being rounded up and loaded onto truck after truck packed to the gills with people and belongings. We hear about them being slaughtered at random. And here references to the Holocaust return to the soldiers’ narratives: “When you see a whole village go, like sheep, wherever they’re taken, and there is no sign of resistance, you realize what ‘Holocaust’ means.... The Arabs were having experiences similar to those we had in World War II. Perhaps that’s the tragedy. That I identified with the other side. With the *enemy*.” (Emphasis added.)

The film, structured like the psychoanalytic process, has reached its innermost core. It now slowly works its way out to the other side, closing with statements on Israel today from the ex-soldiers in the present.

Embedded Viewing

In a work whose voices and visuals are as tautly woven together as they are in *Censored Voices*, which marshals its disparate sonic and visual elements to advance with few detours toward its core revelations, there is a recurring utterance not easily sublated by the film's dominant narrative voice: segments of ABC period news coverage with reporter Bob Young.

Unlike the archival footage which, devoid of markers of time and place, takes on an oneiric glow, as if arising from the soldiers' psyches, the news reportage is situated by location and date. In the first clip, originally aired in May 1967 before the war began, two remarkable graphics flash up on the screen. The first is a map displaying a tiny Israel surrounded by encroaching planes and tanks, conjuring swarming insects, massing in Egypt, Jordan and Syria. The Arab countries, all the same color on the map, are made indistinguishable whereas Israel is clearly separated by a different color. The map perfectly visualizes encirclement aesthetics.



Fig. 4.5. Encirclement aesthetics. Israel under threat. ABC News, 1967, in *Censored Voices*.

The image is immediately followed by another graphic that in different form conveys the same message, which is that Israel is threatened and outnumbered by its collective Arab neighbors. The second image depicts a tiny figure wearing a Star of David, standing above the number 3. Beside the tiny figure, there is a towering figure wearing a turban and a star and crescent, standing above the number 100. Israel is depicted as outnumbered 100:3.

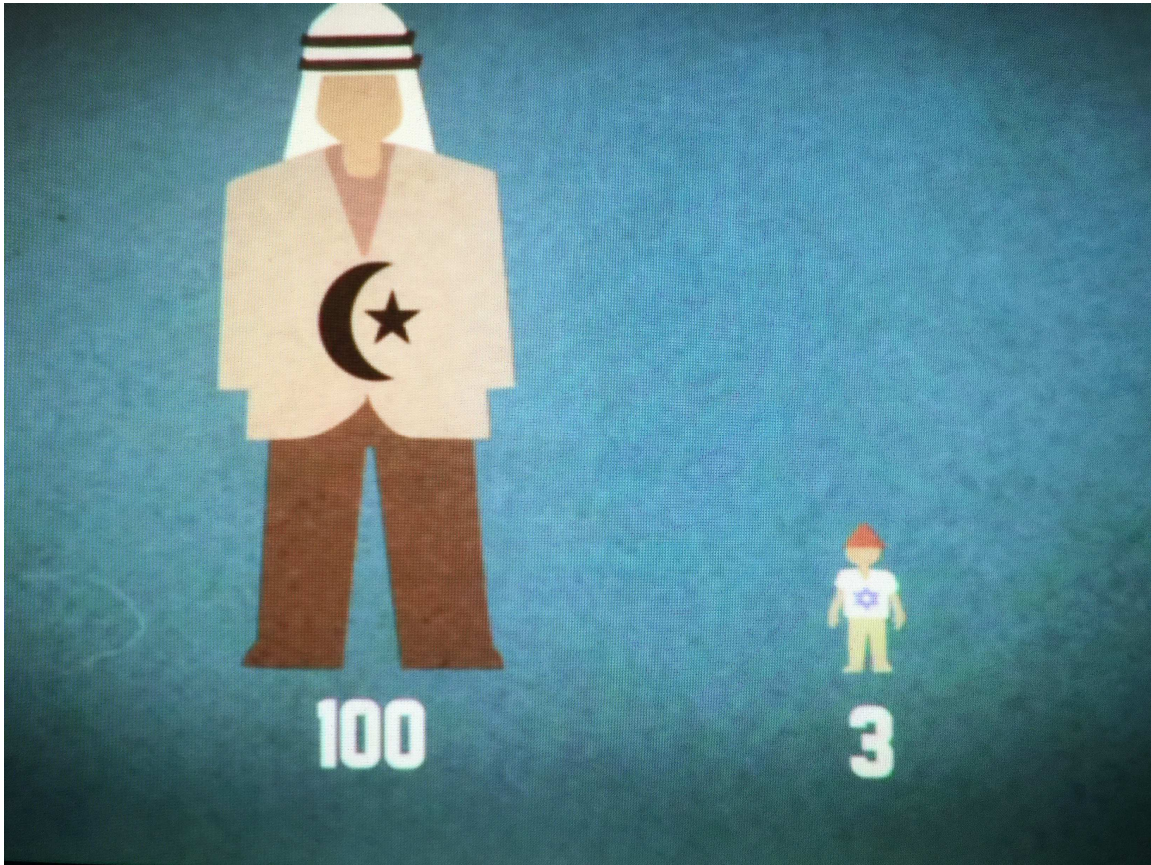


Fig. 4.6. Israel seen as dwarfed by Arab neighbors. ABC News, 1976. *Censored Voices*.

Reporter Bob Young tells us that, despite the risk of annihilation, Israel holds on to “a mystical sense of invincibility.” The word “mystical” gestures, if obliquely, toward Israel’s claim of ancient rights to the land. The map will reappear intermittently throughout the film, showing Israel’s improbable victories and expansion and visualizing the Arab armies’ retreat.

In the second and third news segments with Bob Young covering the Six-Day War, the reporter is embedded in the frame with the soldiers he interviews. His camaraderie with the men is evident in the way they joke and interact together. In the third clip, we see smoke rising from Gaza in the distance as Young lets the soldiers report

directly to the viewer. Soldier: “Well, we got there early in the morning and bombed a few houses where there were Arabs with guns....” Young: “It looks like the job is pretty complete then?” Soldier: “Yes, in an hour or two it will be cleaned.” Young: “You going to celebrate and do a little singing up here tonight?”



Fig. 4.7. American Reporter Bob Young jokes with Israeli soldiers as they prepare for war. ABC News, 1967, *Censored Voices*.



Fig. 4.8. Bob Young and Israeli soldiers gaze over Gaza after a village has been “cleaned.”

When the final ABC clip begins, Young stands in front of hundreds of makeshift tents. In the background we see destitute women and children, whose forlorn faces at times fill the screen. Young reads the following text from a piece of paper in his hand:

Most of the refugees here are women and children. Some of the husbands are here too but they are out of sight, nursing feelings of mixed desperation and hatred, not wanting to be filmed. Virtually all bring stories of Israeli brutality. Their villages have been deliberately destroyed, they say, so that they would have to move. They do not believe that the Western World wants to know their story and they say Israel is the 51st state of the United States of America and American imperialism is the cause of their misery. This largest of the refugee camps has a population of 7500 with more coming in every day. The only thing growing here are seeds of revenge. ABC News, Amman.

In the previous news segments, Young and ABC invited the American viewer to identify completely with the Israeli soldiers. In one, Young, along with the soldiers, looked at far-off, just-conquered Gaza with a celebratory gaze. He allowed the soldiers to narrate their war victories directly without interjecting an “objective” perspective. In this final segment, at the Jordanian refugee camp, the newscaster’s position has radically shifted. Whereas before, he was visually and metaphorically embedded with the Israeli soldiers and encouraged complete identification with the men, now he stands alone. We hear the out-of-sight Arab men’s stories not from them, as was the case with the Israelis, but mediated through Young, who distinguishes between his voice and theirs by strategically interjecting “they say.”²⁵⁶ The “liveness” of the Palestinian men’s experience is further diluted since Young reads the report. The news segment displays a fascinating mix of sympathy, horror, incredulity, and threat. Viewers are likely first hit with the shock of

²⁵⁶ Interestingly, in Khleifi’s *Ma’loul Celebrates its Own Destruction*, a Palestinian school teacher required by Israeli law to teach Palestinian school children Israeli history, does so in an even, diplomatic tone. However his frequent insertion of “They say...” before talking about early Zionist claims to the land acts as a subtle form of resistance.

seeing the newly created refugee camp, a direct result of the Six-Day War, and the devastated faces of the women and children.



Fig. 4.9. Bob Young, shortly after the 1967 War, stands alone in front of a newly created refugee camp, contemplating the effects of the war. ABC News, *Censored Voices*.

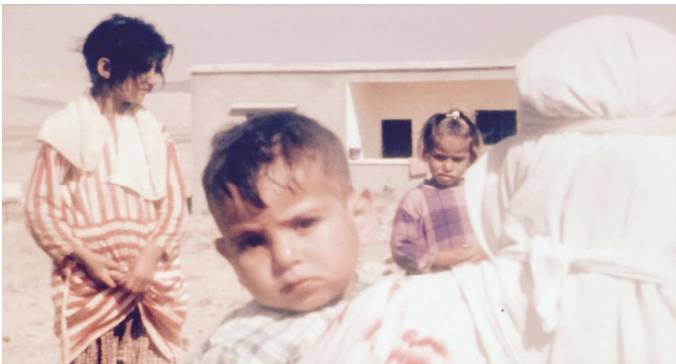


Fig. 4.10. The poor look appropriately poor. Children are among the new refugees in the camp. ABC News /*Censored Voices*.

But the Israeli brutality intermingles, in Young's report, with easily dismissed rhetoric about "American imperialism" and Israel being the "51st state." Edward Said has remarked: "On the one hand, Palestinians stand against invisibility.... on the other hand,

they stand against stereotype in the media.”²⁵⁷ Here the men, unseen, must stand against both. In a remarkable one or two minutes the newscaster transforms the Palestinians from victims (of “Israeli brutality”) worthy of our sympathy (if not identification) to potential threat warranting our fear (of their “seeds of revenge”).

The ABC news footage doubles back on *Censored Voices*, producing potentially disruptive resonances, uncannily echoing, magnifying and exaggerating a subject position that operates in more subtle ways within the film. Indeed the ABC map showing Israel encircled by Arab nations visualizes the expository titles that begin the film: “On June 5th 1967, the armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan were amassed on Israel’s border, threatening to annihilate it.” While we may be encouraged to read the ABC news coverage critically—although a brief exchange I had with Loushy suggested this might not be intended—its reiteration in different form of the initial authorial text redoubles the idea that Israel is a threatened nation. Furthermore, couldn’t we consider our perspective, focalized as it is entirely through the Israeli gaze, as a kind of embedded viewing that echoes in much more subtle form Young’s embedded reporting?²⁵⁸ Like the out-of-sight

²⁵⁷ Edward Said, preface to *Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema* (New York: Verso, 2006) 3.

²⁵⁸ A self-reflexive criticism of this kind of embedding of the viewer can be found in Avi Mograbi’s *Z32* (2008). The film occupies an intriguing place within the Israeli perpetrator genre. I read the work as a powerful meta-film that acts as a critique of the genre. In it, we are trapped with a young soldier and his girlfriend, whose identities are disguised by digital masks. Rather than comfortably identifying with the soldier’s narrative, as we do in *Censored Voices* and in other works in the genre, we are made to feel trapped and suffocated by the insularity of the space. We are forced to listen to the tale of the soldier’s murder of a Palestinian policeman multiple times, told by the soldier himself and by his girlfriend. The digital masks resemble human faces so closely that we at times may think they are the actual faces of the interviewees. A shot revealing their artifice will remind us again of the disguise, and that the soldier could be charged with war crimes for his actions. Mograbi intercuts the scenes with the soldier with Brechtian-like episodes in his living room. The director performs a song about how his film is sheltering a murderer instead of turning him over to face criminal charges. In one scene with the soldier that dramatically departs from the interior scenes, Mograbi drives the soldier to the location where the murder took place. En route in the car, Mograbi stops to ask (in Arabic) a Palestinian man for directions. Afterwards he turns to the soldier joking, “Like my Arabic?” The intimacy with the soldier in this moment seems to uncomfortably

men in the refugee camp, whose tales of Israeli brutality we only hear filtered through Young, the Arab victims of the '67 war themselves remain voiceless within *Censored Voices*. Like the interview between Ophuls and the Count in *The Sorrow and the Pity*, which unleashed a suspicion that pervaded the entire film, the ABC news segment doubles back onto *Censored Voices*, destabilizing what seemed a comfortable subject position. However while Ophuls' films invite suspicion and discomfort as an essential component of critical viewing, *Censored Voices*, with its emphasis on full revelation and truth, and its integrated narrative voice, seems to work against this type of counter-reading of the documentary as a form in general and of *Censored Voices* in particular.

draw our attention to the tendency in the Israeli perpetrators genre to encourage intimacy between the director, and by extension the viewer, and the perpetrator.

CONCLUSION

HAUNTING 2.0

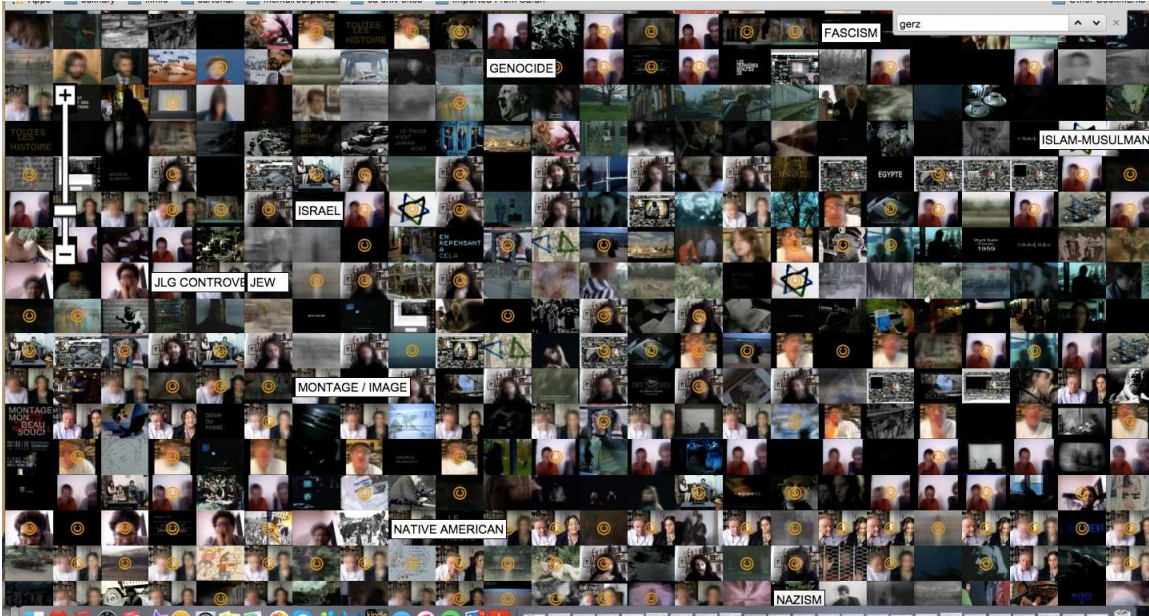


Fig. 5.1 Screen Shot from Eyal Sivan's *Montage Interdit*.

Ophuls and Sivan's film in progress opens with a voice over a black screen exclaiming, "Jean Luc! Jean Luc!" A cut reveals Ophuls, outside Godard's house telling him it's time to go to Tel Aviv and make a film. A moment later, Godard appears at the door, tells Ophuls to leave him alone, and slams the door in face. After this tongue-in-cheek scene, the screen cuts to black and the title "a film by Marcel Ophuls and Eyal Sivan," appears. Ophuls and Godard, in a public conversation in 2009, had discussed making a film on Israel and Palestine but couldn't agree on an approach (Godard wanted it to focus on

“being Jewish.”)²⁵⁹ While a Godard/Ophuls film has yet to come about, Sivan built his first interactive documentary around Godard’s filmic opus and included excerpts of Godard and Ophuls’ 2009 filmed conversation.

Montage Interdit (Forbidden Montage) launched in 2012 and was co-presented at Berlin Documentary Forum 2 with Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, who are part of the project. Sivan describes *Montage Interdit* as a “web-based documentary practice [in progress].” The web project places disparate but often interlocking histories together on one screen, reifying what has existed, as I have been arguing, in inchoate form—as haunting—in many of the documentary interview films discussed in this dissertation. The technology of new media enables Sivan to create an interactive website with cross-referenced footage and interviews such that violent histories spanning from the distant past to the present, separated by time and space, become literally linked with the click of a user’s hand. We ourselves can create montages, often “forbidden” ones, by clicking within an interview, interrupting its unfolding to cut to another clip or interview. Sivan’s web project allows us to see multiple histories together on one plane.

The title of Sivan’s project refers to the famous 1956 debate between André Bazin and Jean-Luc Godard, which appeared in the pages of *Cahiers du Cinema*. In his essay, “Montage Interdit,” Bazin argues for the long take over editing, whereas in “Montage, mon beau souci” (“Montage, my beautiful care”) Godard maintains that montage is the essence of cinema. Sivan’s project extracts numerous clips from Godard’s oeuvre and embeds multiple interviews with filmmakers and scholars, who discuss the work. Sivan’s

²⁵⁹ A film by Frederic Choffet and Vincent Lowy of their conservation entitled *Marcel Ophuls et Jean-Luc Godard: The Meeting in St. Gervais* is available on DVD.

project is visually vertiginous on first encounter; we are confronted with a screen that looks like multiple horizontally arranged film strips. Scattered here and there over some of the strips are white-boxed uppercase words: ALGERIA, ANTISEMITISM, ARAB, AFRICA, CHRISTIANITY, GENOCIDE, FASCISM, ISLAM-MUSULMAN, ISRAEL, JLG CONTROVERSY, MONTAGE/IMAGE, NATIVE AMERICAN, NAZISM, OCCIDENT/WEST, PALESTINE, TERROR, SHOAH/NAKBA. All refer to issues taken on in Godard's films. We don't see or listen to perpetrator testimony but their presence is evoked through the tags of different atrocities. Rather than a pentimento of denial like many of the documentary interviews that have been the focus of this dissertation, the screen flattens out the layers, placing different but related atrocities on one plane visible simultaneously.

Clicking on a frame near one of the words will activate an interview with a scholar, usually conducted by Sivan over Skype, on the topic. With a click, the selected frame enlarges and slowly slides across the screen as the interview proceeds. Clicking other nearby frames will bring up related interviews or clips from relevant films. Multiple clicks by the user will give rise to two or more interviews playing simultaneously in adjacent moving squares accompanied by more white-boxed titles. It becomes clear that there are numerous combinations of clips and interviews and numerous mini "documentaries," which the user can generate from the material. While one interview on a particular topic may focus our gaze, the words in capital letters on various historical and theoretical issues and the still images ready to come alive with a click never leave our purview.

It is in this way that Sivan (through Godard) powerfully realizes the “montage interdit”—visually placing discrete but related historical traumas adjacent to one another, often encouraging forbidden comparisons such as Shoa/Nakba, Algeria and Anti-Semitism, Islam-Muslim. Although the interviews and clips themselves move from left to right across the screen, the visual space creates connections and linkages vertically, horizontally, diagonally and all across the site. Rather than ghostly echoes haunting a filmic interview space, here we create interrelations and new links between historical events and view testimony of disparate but interconnected atrocities simultaneously. New media can visualize a multidirectional history and memory, or as Debarati Sanyal has termed, a crabwalk of history, in ways distinct from the linear form of traditional film. We can view the different historical atrocities here in non-chronological and non-hierarchical terms and, through clicking, listening and viewing, witness the links between them. Sanyal, commenting on global patterns of violence, remarks that “This structural implication in atrocities of all kinds is the dark side of the ‘connective turn’ in a modern age of mass media and digital technology.” Sanyal wisely cautions against blindly celebrating new digital technology.

As we have seen, Sivan’s work has insistently used the visual medium to make forbidden montages, whether in the barber scene in *Route 181*, which recalled the Bomba interview in *Shoah*, or in *The Specialist*, which closed with Eichmann imaged as the contemporary corporate criminal. In a split-screen documentary also made in 2012 called *Common State, Potential Conversation* about a common or one-state solution for Israel and Palestine, Sivan, I suggest, uses the divided screen as a feint. Placing Palestinian

interviewees on the left side of the screen and Israeli interviewees on the right, the film first appears to ascribe to the “objective,” or “balanced” viewpoint of the Israeli Palestinian conflict. The screen, divided in half, seems at first to impose a symmetry on an asymmetrical situation. However, we soon realize that the visual division between the Palestinian and Israeli sides of the screen does not correspond with divided views on a solution to the occupation. Instead, the Palestinian and Israeli artists, scholars and writers Sivan interviews share virtually identical opinions. Both sides are in favor of a one-state solution. As one interviewee speaks, Sivan films another interviewee on the other side of the screen listening, nodding and agreeing to the statements. Sivan uses the split screen to underscore the futility of forcibly separating Muslims and Jews, Palestinians and Israelis, much as Khleifi and Sivan followed the imaginary UN partition line in *Route 181* to point to the absurdity of separation. As we watch *Common State*, the line that bisects the screen begins to fall away as more and more links are forged between the two sides. The film encourages the viewer to envision with Sivan and the interviewees the possibility for a common state some time in the future. We can compare *Common State* with the 2008 interactive web documentary *Gaza/Sderot: Life in Spite of Everything*, an Arte production. For a month Israeli and Palestinian production teams chronicled the lives of six Palestinians living in Gaza and six Israelis living in Sderot, just across the border. Two-minute portraits posted each week on a split screen—the left side for Gaza, the right for Sderot. The user can click on either side to watch the mini-films and can also navigate the site for extra material. *Gaza/Sderot*’s powerfully and sympathetically documents the lives of Israelis and Palestinians who suffer on a daily basis from the

occupation. However, unlike *Common State*, which in a form of détournement, turns the split screen format against itself, *Gaza/Sderot* fits itself squarely into the two-side framework and thus reinforces a false symmetry often imposed on the occupation.

In *Ici et Ailleurs* (*Here and Elsewhere*, 1974), one of the films extracted and discussed by many of the commentators in *Montage Interdit*, Godard and Anne-Marie Mieville incorporate footage from an unfinished film made during Godard's Dziga Vertov period. In 1970 the Arab league commissioned Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin to make a film about the Palestinian revolutionary movement in Jordan. Before the film, entitled *Jusqu'à la victoire*, was complete, however, a number of its principle "actors" (to use Godard's word) were slaughtered by the Jordanians during "Black September." *Here and Elsewhere* teases us with a neat opposition: we are invited to read the "here" as France and the "elsewhere" as the Palestinian world. The film juxtaposes domestic scenes of a French family with the footage of the Fatah training camps. But the film resists this neat pairing. There is an immediate ontological mismatch in the juxtaposition of fiction (the French family) and "documentary" (the Palestinians), and a temporal mismatch as well. The insertion of the scenes of the French family displays the disenchantment with French politics, whereas the footage of the Palestinian training camps contains the hope of victory, which will soon be dashed.

While the intercutting between France and the Palestinian training camps in Jordan suggests a clear separation between "here" and "elsewhere," this opposition becomes unsustainable as it proves impossible to keep the "here" and "elsewhere" from blending into one another. When Mieville and Godard's deconstructive analyses break

the surface of the images of *Jusqu' à la victoire*, what emerges underneath often leads back to the “here” of the West. As we watch a young Palestinian girl recite lines from a revolutionary poem, Mieville remarks that the girl is innocent but her theatrical gestures and tone are not: they are steeped in a domineering style of politics that takes us back to the French Revolution.

The title *Ici et Ailleurs* also suggests an ineluctable pull in the image away from the “here” of what we see to an “elsewhere.” “You produce your image with mine” Godard comments in the voiceover. The division between here and elsewhere becomes even more blurred when we consider that film unwinds before spectators in their own “here,” which produces a leveling effect on all the images: all are elsewhere to the “here” from which we view them.

In *Here and Elsewhere*, Godard laments the enslavement of film images, unable to break out of an endless chain that links one image to another and another. Extracting numerous clips from Godard’s oeuvre and positioning them in new contexts and associations, *Montage Interdit* seems to suggest one way out of this ineluctable chain. When the viewer-interactant²⁶⁰ first encounters *Montage Interdit*, however, we are likely overwhelmed with the stimuli and visually dense image and may experience at first a visceral uneasiness. It is only after spending considerable time navigating the site that we can become familiar with the configurations. *Montage Interdit* thus charts in some ways an inverse course to the haunted or ruptured interview spaces I have discussed at length in this study. Rather than moving from familiar to uncomfortably strange, *Montage*

²⁶⁰ “Interactant” is Siobhan O’Flynn’s term for viewer-users of interactive web documentaries.

Interdit becomes increasingly legible as the connections it forges between different but connected histories seem to gradually move from strange or forbidden to familiar.

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