

## Breaking silences in the Aftermath of Holocaust trauma in Elie Wiesel's *Day*

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### ABSTRACT

This article employs a close reading of Elie Wiesel's third novel, *Day* (1961), as a lens through which to explore the difficulties inherent in disengaging from the Holocaust past and their impact on the Holocaust survivor's efforts to live in the present. In particular, the article explores how the novel's narrative employs silence, a key Wieselian symbol, in constructing its overarching framework. These textual silences, I suggest, portray the text's protagonist's inability to escape his past at the camps. It is only through transforming these silences into speech that he is able to truly begin to live in the present.

**KEYWORDS:** Elie Wiesel; day; silence; Holocaust trauma

In his preface to *Day*, his third novel, published in 1961, Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel speaks of the journey of his unnamed protagonist as one that addresses a significant question: 'Does life have meaning after Auschwitz?'<sup>1</sup> This question is particularly apt for a text that functions as an end to a literary trilogy that grapples with the struggle of the Holocaust survivor to, firstly, reconcile the traumatic memory of the past with the present and, secondly, find a means of articulating the narrative of his or her trauma within a world that fails to provide him or her with the language with which to do so.

Wiesel's 1958 seminal work *Night*, the first text in this trilogy, demonstrates this dual struggle through his process of constructing the factual account of his experiences at Auschwitz and Buchenwald as a teenager. Following his release from the camps, it took Wiesel a period of ten years to finally bring himself to a point where he could testify to his experiences of trauma both through the spoken and written word. As he has observed, he was, ultimately, motivated to write, what he terms, 'a kind of testimony of one witness speaking of his own life, his own death'<sup>2</sup> because it was his responsibility to bear witness to what he had experienced, particularly because his was a period of history that 'would be judged one day.'<sup>3</sup> However, a crucial issue he encountered in documenting this narrative was that the language available to him to do so had been 'betrayed and perverted by the enemy.'<sup>4</sup> In both his preface to *Night* and his memoir *All Rivers Run to the Sea*, Wiesel draws attention to the extent of this enemy's dominance by citing how particular words have taken on new meanings for him due to his time at the camps. In particular, he notes how he 'cannot write the words "concentration," "night and fog," "selection" or "transport" without a feeling of sacrilege.'<sup>5</sup> He suggests that any other words cannot capture the reality of this experience as he describes them as being 'meagre, pale [and] lifeless.'<sup>6</sup>

In making this statement, Wiesel speaks to a central concern located in all literary works that grapple with the devastating impact of the Holocaust. As Victoria Aarons observes in her study of the literary language employed in Holocaust narratives, 'The enormity of what we have come to think of as the Holocaust ... challenges conventional forms of expression and

thus defies and reconfigures traditional telling, calling upon writers to seek alternative structures of representation to appropriate and extend the scope of the Holocaust and its memory.<sup>7</sup>

In *Night*, Wiesel forms these 'alternative structures of representation' by conveying his narrative in a form which focuses less on his words than it does his silences which, as he puts it, '[envelop] and [transcend] words.'<sup>8</sup> As Simon P. Siebelman observes in his study of silence in Wiesel's works, these silences substitute for language in instances where 'reality becomes too wearisome to bear.'<sup>9</sup> More specifically, they symbolize 'a presence in the absence of language.'<sup>10</sup> This 'presence' is one that illuminates the gravity of Wiesel's experiences at the camps by emphasizing memories of trauma which resist any means of representation through language. These unspoken traumatic memories surround, haunt and, to a large extent, shape the text. This 'presence,' it is suggested, extends to Wiesel's lived realities in the present which in themselves are defined and shaped by these silences.

In *Dawn*, the second text in the trilogy which was published in 1960, Wiesel uses a fictional narrative to portray how this shaping of the present through the silences of traumatic memory occurs. The text's narrative is conveyed from the perspective of its protagonist, Elisha, a name which clearly alludes to Wiesel's first name. Wiesel himself indicates this connection when he speaks of this narrative as one which allows him to look at himself in a different way.<sup>11</sup> In the text, Elisha, who has recently been liberated from the camps, grapples with his feelings of displacement and alienation, a consequence of losing both his home and family, by joining a Jewish freedom fighter group in Palestine. The novel chronicles the ethical and moral dilemmas Elisha encounters after he is tasked with killing a British army officer who is captured after his men kidnap one of the freedom fighters with the intention of executing him. As he considers this dilemma, he continuously engages with the events of the present through the lens of his past at the camps. He does not, however, speak of these events directly. Rather, their nature and gravity are implied through his silences. The words and images that are enveloped by these silences draw on the tropes Wiesel uses to frame his narrative in *Night*, indicating an affinity between them. Yet, here, the past is reproduced through disconnected fragments. These fragments represent both Elisha's difficulty in reflecting on his narrative in its totality as well as how his traumatic memory disrupts his ability to piece together this narrative into a coherent whole. Subsequently, Elisha lives within the silences of his past, trying to find within them a way in which to formulate his world in the present.

In *Day* (formerly titled *The Accident*), silence occurs in a similar way as it does in *Night* and *Dawn*. Partly based on an incident which Wiesel himself experienced, the narrative of *Day* is primarily set against the backdrop of a hospital room where the unnamed narrator, who is a journalist working in New York during the 1960s, reflects on the events of his past, following a car accident that almost takes his life. A secret that the narrator keeps from everyone around him is that the accident itself was a suicide attempt. The silent past which haunts the narrative is one which is defined by a specific event that suggests why an act of suicide has become his only form of release. Whilst the event is indeed the Holocaust, which provides the novel's overarching framework, it is not (as Wiesel clarifies in the text's preface) dealt with directly because he feels 'unable to tell the story of this event, much less imagine it.'<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the narrative of the Holocaust is reflected through the novel's silences. As with *Night* and *Dawn*, these silences emerge, first, through the way in which they 'envelop' the narrator's words throughout the text, and, second, through how they conceal specific aspects of memory, ultimately leaving it fragmented. However, whereas *Night* and *Dawn* focus on the experience of living within silence, *Day* explores the process of overcoming silence. In doing so, it

emerges as a novel which examines the struggle of transforming silences into speech, particularly within a world which is preoccupied with moving forward into a present that, at least politically, has been liberated from the wounds of the past.

A close reading of *Day* reveals the tensions inherent in disengaging from traumas of the past and, subsequently, the silences which conceal these traumas. I begin my analysis by situating the novel within its historical context. In doing so, I observe how the social and political attitudes towards Holocaust memory, particularly within 1960s America, created a culture of silence amongst Holocaust survivors, instigating their reluctance to fully articulate their respective narratives. I then consider how the narrator of *Day* constructs his world through the trope of silence. Specifically, I examine the association the narrator creates between silence and his experience of death at the camps, that which comes to frame his perceptions of and engagement with the world of the living. In doing so, I consider the ways Wiesel shapes the narrator's narrative voice by drawing on the rhetorical technique of *prosopopoeia* and metaphorical language which places life and death in uneasy contention with one another. I then analyze how the world of the living counteracts the narrator's silences through its emphasis on speech and, subsequently, the act of living in the present. I pursue this analysis by considering the narrator's engagement with Kathleen, his romantic partner, and Gyula, a Hungarian painter. As I demonstrate, the narrator's interactions with Kathleen and Gyula, ultimately, bring him to a point where he has to finally begin grappling with the prospect of releasing himself from his silences and, thereafter, living in the present.

Through this reading of the text, I suggest Wiesel's narrative, on one hand, demonstrates the damaging consequences an attachment to a trauma narrative of the past and the silences that inform it have for the experience of a lived reality in the present. On the other, it offers the possibility of overcoming this past and its surrounding silences. In doing so, it indicates the potential a release from silence and, subsequently, the embracing of speech has for initiating a process of healing and rebuilding.

### **The problem of articulating Holocaust memory**

In situating *Day* and its representation of Holocaust memory within its social and political context, it is useful to consider how the setting of 1960s America, as well the narrator's anxiety towards speaking of his past, reflects on the United States's own initial reluctance to engage with the narrative of the Holocaust during this period. Alan Mintz relates this reluctance to the United States's victory over Germany at the end of World War Two. As Mintz observes, amidst the celebration of America and its allies' success in '[vanquishing] Fascism and [liberating] its victims from the Nazi beast,'<sup>13</sup> there was little consideration for the tragedy that had befallen European Jewry as a consequence of the war. Newsreel footage of army units liberating the camps, shown briefly in American cinemas, highlighted the graphic nature of the Jews' experiences at the camps.<sup>14</sup> Despite this, however, the liberation was predominantly framed as a further symbol of American victory and heroism. Ultimately, the 'enormity of the catastrophe-what it meant for Jews and the world that a third of the Jewish people had been murdered-simply could not be accommodated by ideas of victory or liberation, no matter what shocking facts may have been made available by the end of the war.'<sup>15</sup>

American Jews themselves were reluctant to actively engage with the narrative of the Jewish catastrophe. For them, the end of the war led to new opportunities as discriminatory bars 'preventing Jews from enrolling in prestigious universities were eased and GI benefits

afforded the means to do so.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, as Jews departed from ethnic neighborhoods in city centers and began living in suburbs, they established a distinct communal life. This led to the establishment of Judaism as an American religion, as opposed to an ethnicity. They ‘began to be thought of as Americans who, like Protestants and Catholics, adhere to one of America’s three greatest faiths.’<sup>17</sup> Despite their successful assimilation into American life, American Jews chose to ‘avoid distinctiveness in the public sphere, however much they held onto their own ways privately.’<sup>18</sup> Identifying overtly with the Holocaust and its victims’ memorialization ‘would have drawn unwanted notice at a time when Americans were united in their pride over the complete vanquishing of Nazism.’<sup>19</sup>

As famed historian Deborah Lipstadt observes, America’s need to distance itself from the Jewish catastrophe was further justified by the complexities surrounding its relationship with Germany following the events of World War Two. Within this period, the rising threat of Communism positioned Russia, America’s former ally, as its new enemy. Consequently, Germany, its former enemy, became its new ally as it was perceived as a ‘buffer to protect both Western Europe and the United States from a Soviet onslaught.’<sup>20</sup> Because of this, there was little inclination on the part of Americans to highlight Germany’s wrongdoings, specifically those of its previous regimes. Rather, events such as the Berlin airlift provided the American government and media with a platform through which to portray Germany, most significantly West Berlin, as ‘heroic, freedom-loving and, most important, united by an intense contempt for totalitarianism.’<sup>21</sup> American Jewry, in this instance, struggled to reconcile with a softer, heroic Germany’s image given their knowledge of the country’s failure to address and repent for the brutality it unleashed on Jewish Holocaust victims. They were also very much aware of ‘a growing German antagonism towards the DPs (Displaced Persons) and a web of bureaucratic problems as Jewish property owners tried to reclaim their property in Germany.’<sup>22</sup>

As efforts to redeem and glorify Germany persisted, specifically within the American media, there was a growing sentiment that ‘the past was best rewritten or, at the least, left unspoken.’<sup>23</sup> This implied Jews were encouraged to remain silent about the events of the Holocaust and Germany’s part in them. Many Jews persisted with this silence, based not only on concerns about national safety but also out of fear of a further oppression of their people. This fear was attributed to suspicions regarding Jewish involvement in Communist activity, following the capturing and execution of noted Jewish Communist figures Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. Only once tensions began to form in the relations between West Germany and the United States, a consequence of their differing opinions on how to deal with Russia’s actions, did perceptions of Germany begin to shift. Incidents such as the emergence of anti-Semitic vandalism, both in West Germany and around the world, as well as the ‘discovery that former high-ranking Nazi officials held important posts in the West German government,’<sup>24</sup> led to ‘the conviction in certain American circles that Germany had not completely divorced itself from its past.’<sup>25</sup> However, whilst the Eichmann trial helped facilitate this shift further, there remained efforts to distinguish Nazi crimes from German history and culture. In doing so, these efforts ‘explicitly exonerated West Germany and its people.’<sup>26</sup> It was perceived by some that much of the anti-German sentiment stirred up in the media, particularly in relation to the Eichmann trial, was used to distract from the Soviet threat that was considered the ultimate enemy. Furthermore, overall interest in the events of the Holocaust proved unsustainable despite the impact of the trials. Lipstadt suggests that the ‘seeming failure of the Holocaust to have had a sustained impact on the public consciousness can be explained in part by the absence in [early 1960s] America of an intellectual, political, and economic atmosphere conducive to a prolonged and intensive grappling with many of the issues related

to the Holocaust.<sup>27</sup> Ultimately, because the Soviet threat was America's primary concern, 'Jews in general and survivors in particular were still subject to severe criticism for demanding that Germany confront its past.'<sup>28</sup> To do so, it was suggested, would be to empower Communist forces by encouraging anti-German sentiments.

Given these criticisms and anxieties surrounding the articulation of Holocaust memory within this period, it is interesting to consider the implications of *Day*'s title and its interplay with the central dilemma the narrator encounters throughout the text. Appropriately, in the novel's preface, Wiesel refers to it as a sequel to *Dawn*. The title of *Dawn* reflects on the transitional period between death and life, past and present, an Auschwitz world and a post-Auschwitz world. The ending of *Dawn* in which the sunlight of day has arisen, leaving only a 'tattered fragment of darkness, hanging in midair,'<sup>29</sup> provides an appropriate beginning for *Day*, a title evoking life, the present and, thereafter, a new beginning which the narrator struggles to be part of. Connected to this is the notion of day as a symbol of a period that breaks night's silence, heralding the emergence of speech and, in this regard, a new form, a present self. Yet, as is established from the outset of *Day*, the narrator fears speech. Though Wiesel does not address this directly, this fear may, in part, be rooted in the stigma attached to speaking of the atrocities of the Holocaust and Germany's role in instigating them. However, silence also provides the narrator with a form of escape as it acts as the only medium through which he can access his past which he is intrinsically tied to. In his study of Wiesel's work, Alvin H. Rosenfeld writes that his protagonists 'are often intent on searching out ways to return to life after a prolonged and punishing encounter with death. Engaged in missions of retrieval, they pursue traces of their former lives, seeking to rescue, if only for memory, whatever might remain of a past they cherished but know has been destroyed.'<sup>30</sup> For the narrator of *Day*, the desire is not to regain entry into a 'cherished past' but, rather, a past defined by catastrophe and death. Yet, it is this very past which provides him with the security to live within the world of the living.

### **Framing the world through silence and death**

The significance of silence as a framework for this narrative is established in a flashback where the narrator remembers an earlier attempt to take his own life. Prior to this incident, he observes that after (what he terms) 'the war,' he 'had often, very often been urged to tell'<sup>31</sup> of his experiences. Yet, he refused to do so because 'the dead didn't need us to be heard.'<sup>32</sup> The burden of living with this memory and, more specifically, his distance from the dead, lead him to consider jumping overboard off a French ship in order to be reunited with them. He is prevented from doing so by a nameless stranger who shares with him his tale of how he himself, whilst looking at the waves of the sea, has been attracted to the prospect of death, noting how these waves evoke 'eternity, peace, the infinite.'<sup>33</sup> Feeling an affinity with this stranger who, like him, 'had thought about death and was attracted by its secret,'<sup>34</sup> the narrator begins to tell him of his past:

I told him what I had never told anyone. My childhood, my mystic dreams, my religious passions, my memories of German concentration camps, my belief that I was now just a messenger of the dead among the living ...

...

Sometimes I left a sentence unfinished, jumped from one episode to another, or described a character in a word without mentioning the event with which he was

connected. The stranger didn't ask for explanations. At times I spoke very softly, so softly that it was impossible that he heard a word of what I was saying; but he remained motionless and silent. He seemed not to dare exist outside of silence.<sup>35</sup>

In these moments the stranger becomes the embodiment of silence through the way he remains 'motionless and silent,' daring not to 'exist outside of [this] silence.' It is interesting to consider this silence which has been rendered by 'memories of German concentration camps' in relation to Elaine Scarry's study of the inexpressibility of pain through language and, subsequently, the consequences of this inexpressibility. Scarry speaks of pain as a 'felt-experience'<sup>36</sup> which is inexpressible. This inexpressibility makes it mirror death which is 'unfeeling.' This connection, she observes, prompts the destruction of language. For the narrator of *Day*, this destruction implies a disconnection from, to use Scarry's terms, 'objects in the external world'<sup>37</sup> which would allow him to 'to move out beyond the boundaries of his [...] own body into the external, sharable world.'<sup>38</sup> In turning to the 'unshareable' silences which elicit the disconnection from this 'external, shareable world,' the narrator gains entry to language, thoughts and ways of being that he cannot access within the 'shareable' world of the living. This allows him to express, relate and feel the details of his past through silence in a way he cannot do through the speech of the living. Traumatic memory remains present in this silence as the narrator admits to sometimes leaving 'a sentence unfinished, [jumping] from one episode to another' or failing to make connections between characters and events, indicating absences which position him, to refer to Cathy Caruth's words, as a 'symptom of history [he] cannot entirely possess.'<sup>39</sup> However, as he observes, a fragmented memory of the past, as well as its absences, is of no consequence to silence which does 'not ask for explanations' by virtue of the fact that, as with pain, it, as Scarry puts it, 'takes no object'<sup>40</sup> as it is neither of or *for* something. It is simply an 'objectless' entity which provides the narrator with an outlet through which to possess the intimate connection to his past which he desires, ultimately freezing him within it.

The consequence of being frozen within these silences of the Auschwitz past is that the narrator moves throughout the text occupying the role of a deceased being, belonging to the world of the dead, merely masquerading as a living being within the world of the living. Sharon B. Oster examines this lived experience of death in the context of the Nazi jargon term *Muselmann*. As Oster observes, 'within the concentration camp lexicon. *Muselmann* refers to the masses of starved, emaciated, near-dead concentration camp victims.'<sup>41</sup> Yet, this term gains in complexity when considered particularly in relation to how the literary writings of Holocaust survivors capture their experiences of the camps. In this context, Oster suggests that writers such as Wiesel 'invoke the death-in-life figure of the *Muselmann* as their own shadowy Auschwitz double, a comparative mirror for the self-that-lives of the self-that-died, [a metaphor] for the impossibility of "surviving".'<sup>42</sup> In using the term 'Auschwitz double,' Oster borrows from Charlotte Delbo who states 'Auschwitz is so deeply etched in my memory that I cannot forget one moment of it. – So are you living with Auschwitz? -No I live next to it. Auschwitz is there, unalterable, precise.'<sup>43</sup> In living next to Auschwitz, she also lives next to the version of herself who experienced it, the 'Auschwitz double.' Delbo asserts that she is able to distinguish her present self from her 'Auschwitz double,' particularly because, as she puts it, to 'return from there [Auschwitz] was so improbable that it seems to me I was never there at all.'<sup>44</sup> Yet, in her dreams where her 'conscious will has no power,'<sup>45</sup> the 'Auschwitz double' emerges. As it does so, she feels herself suffering in a manner that, as she describes it, is 'so unbearable, so identical to the pain endured there, that I feel it physically, I feel it throughout my whole body which becomes a mass of suffering; and I feel death fasten on me, I feel that I am dying.'<sup>46</sup> For the *Muselmann* of *Day*, the 'Auschwitz

double' overpowers the present self to the extent that he believes the place from which, as Delbo has stated, 'None of us was meant to return'<sup>47</sup> remains his true reality. He emphasizes this when, at one point, he observes that, following the 'war,' 'I knew that I no longer existed, that my real self had stayed *there*, that my present self had nothing in common with the other, the real one. I was like the skin shed by a snake.'<sup>48</sup> What is notable here is how the narrator's silences conceal both the place name of Auschwitz, through the use of the word '*there*,' and his 'real self,' the being who died '*there*.' He is, therefore, nameless precisely because he considers himself to be much like 'the skin shed by a snake,' an 'objectless' embodiment of nothingness whose very existence is fictitious.

Because of this, the narrator, in the form of his present self, structures his world through the lens of the traumatic memory of the past. Wiesel portrays how the narrator positions himself in this role by employing the rhetorical technique of *prosopopeia* to frame his narrative voice. In defining *prosopopeia* and establishing how it occurs within literary works, Christian Benne refers to Roman rhetorician Quintilian's *Institutio Oratio*. Quintilian observes this technique occurs when 'an orator imitates the voice of his adversaries, of other people, or even of abstract entities such as peoples, cities or nations.'<sup>49</sup> This is done 'in order to present their innermost thoughts (as if they were talking to themselves), in order to recount real or fictive conversations, or in order to embody figures who, for example, can give advice, criticize, praise, show compassion, and so on.'<sup>50</sup> Crucially, in relation to Holocaust writing, '[even] gods can be evoked in this manner, or dead people brought back to life.'<sup>51</sup> In the context of Holocaust literature, Aarons refers to *prosopopeia* as a figure of speech that causes 'disruption and unease'<sup>52</sup> as it instigates the 'reanimation of the dead.'<sup>53</sup> She observes that by 'giving voice to the dead, *prosopopeia* ... articulate[s] the plight of the survivor: the living stand in for the dead as, chiasmatically, the dead stand in for the living as the 'voice' of collective trauma.'<sup>54</sup>

The text's use of *prosopopeia* is informed by and constructed through metaphorical language which connects to imagery Wiesel, through the narrator, associates with the world of Auschwitz. Here, metaphors are employed in ways that elicit a sharp contrast between the worlds of the dead and the living. In developing on from I.A. Richards's definition of a metaphor as a figure of speech which instigates 'a shift, a carrying over of a word from its normal use to a new use'<sup>55</sup>, Denis Donoghue suggests that 'a force of a good metaphor is to give something a different life, a new life.'<sup>56</sup> Aarons, however, observes that, in the context of Holocaust writing, a metaphor acts a 'transformative disturbance of renaming or reconfiguring.'<sup>57</sup> This implies that, within this context, the metaphor, in fact, disrupts and disturbs life by 'reconfiguring' it in ways that cause it to intersect with death and, ultimately, encounter the prospect of its dominance. Oster echoes this notion of 'disturbance' by referring to the 'death-in-life' metaphor via the term 'impossible metaphor.' In using this term, she suggests that the metaphors which Holocaust writers use to relate the atrocities of Auschwitz to the 'external, shareable world' of the reader inevitably fail in their efforts to do so. This is because they articulate the 'unshareable' horror and intensity of the camp experience through comparisons with 'shareable' experiences of the everyday life that exist outside of Auschwitz's barbed wire fences. The 'shareable' cannot articulate the 'unshareable.' Despite it being impossible for these metaphors to ever truly capture the camp experience, the 'impossible metaphor' nevertheless 'yields meaning through *dissimilarity*, through its failure to translate between vehicle and tenor.'<sup>58</sup>

In *Day*, the interplay between *prosopopoeia* and ‘impossible metaphors’ is made evident from the text’s opening passages where the narrator documents his experience of walking through the New York City streets:

The heat was heavy, suffocating; it penetrated your bones, your veins, your lungs. It was difficult to speak, even to breathe. Everything was covered with an enormous, wet sheet of air. The heat stuck to your skin, like a curse.

People walked clumsily, looking haggard, their mouths dry like the mouths of old men watching the decay of their existence; old men hoping to take leave of their own beings so as not to go mad. Their bodies filled them with disgust.<sup>59</sup>

The image of heat penetrating ‘bones,’ ‘veins’ and ‘lungs,’ impeding speech and sticking to ‘skin, like a curse’ makes it reminiscent of a crematorium at the death camps. In *Night*, metaphorical imagery associated with the crematorium becomes particularly significant to Wiesel after he witnesses the burning of children upon his arrival in Birkenau. In particular, he refers to the image of the ‘flames’ that arise from the crematorium. Wiesel refers specifically to this image when he reflects on the experience of bearing witness to the children’s deaths during his first night at Birkenau. Through this image, he connects to the children’s death with his spiritual death via his description of ‘the flames that consumed [his] faith forever.’<sup>60</sup> These ‘flames’ become integral to how he perceives and engages with his realities at the camps as he speaks further of how he himself has ‘been consumed by flames’<sup>61</sup> and how his ‘soul [has] been invaded-and devoured-by a black flame,’<sup>62</sup> leaving only ‘a shape’<sup>63</sup> which embodies his deceased self. Wiesel, ultimately, frames his experience of the camps through the perspectives of this ‘shape.’ This, subsequently, conceives a scenario in which the camps themselves become the crematorium which he, as the ‘shape,’ is entrapped in. In speaking as this ‘shape,’ Wiesel acts as the *Muselmann* who gives voice to and, subsequently, ‘reanimates’ the voices of the dead. Conversely, these voices also provide the means through which he articulates his lived experiences of the camps. The voices are framed by the silences that emerge through death. These silences in themselves become ‘a rhetorical trope’<sup>64</sup> which emerges in moments where the horrors of the camps cannot be conveyed through language.

In *Day*, This process of ‘reanimation’ occurs to a similar effect. As with *Night*, the narrator draws upon the memory of the crematorium throughout *Day*, making it the center from which he constructs his experience of trauma. Here, the everyday scene of New York City life is ‘reconfigured’ as it becomes the ‘impossible metaphor’ which articulates the ‘felt experience’ of being burnt in a crematorium. He associates the city’s ‘unreal’<sup>65</sup> spectacle and heat with the process of burning and losing life as he observes how this spectacle seeps away whilst the ‘world [turns] in slow motion under the weight of the heat,’<sup>66</sup> everything occurring ‘with an exasperating slowness.’<sup>67</sup> The narrator and his fellow beings are rendered speechless and powerless by this heat, ‘watching the decay of their existence.’ It is as if he has placed himself, and the others who surround him, inside the crematorium, rendering their existence as one that is in the process of death and decay. Though there are no flames within this crematorium, the silences surrounding the heat imply that a burning is, indeed, taking place. The old men’s hopes ‘to take leave of their own beings so as not to go mad’ and the notion of their bodies ‘filling them with disgust’ emulate the experience of being burnt by the flames, desperate to escape as these bodies dissolve into ashes.



In constructing his worldview in this scene, the narrator returns himself to the *Muselmann* of the camps. In doing so, he once again speaks as the 'shape' who 'reanimates' the voices of the dead in order to comprehend his reality. Of course, the *dissimilarity* between the spectacle of New York City life and the environment of the crematorium complicates his efforts to form a connection between these two worlds and, subsequently, his past and present. Ultimately, his failure to make these connections establishes the dynamic that occurs throughout the text as the narrator continuously draws on 'impossible metaphors' of the living world as a means of accessing and representing the world of the dead. In doing, he submerges himself ever further into his 'unshareable' silences which articulate what language cannot.

### **Tensions between the dead and the living**

The overarching presence of the crematorium foreshadows the emergence of a significant figure who haunts the narrator, in his capacity as a *muselmann*, throughout the text. This figure is his deceased grandmother, who, it is implied, died in a crematorium. The narrator 'reanimates' the voice of his grandmother and brings her memory into the world of the living through the relationship he establishes with Kathleen. In mirroring the narrator's grandmother's appearance and mannerisms, Kathleen becomes the vessel through which he exhumes this memory. In doing so, he, on one hand, seeks to find a means of 'representation' within the living world, a way in which to conceive what is, at least, an illusion of the truth and selfhood that was lost to him at Auschwitz. On the other, he shapes her being into a metaphor that allows him further access to the world of the dead. At one point, he recalls how this exhumation occurred from their first meeting. Whilst walking Kathleen home through the streets of Paris, he flashes back to a discussion he had with his grandmother as a young boy. During this discussion, he asked his grandmother about the act of dying and the relationship it forges between humans and God:

One day I had asked my grandmother, "How should one keep from being cold in a grave in the winter?"

My grandmother was a simple, pious woman who saw God everywhere, even in evil, even in punishment, even in injustice. No event would ever find her short of prayers. Her skin was like white desert sand. On her head she wore an enormous black shawl which she never seemed able to part with.

"He who doesn't forget God isn't cold in his grave," she said.

"What keeps him warm?" I insisted.

Her thin voice then became like a whisper: it was a secret, "God himself." A kind smile lit up her face all the way to the shawl that covered half her forehead. She smiled like that every time I asked her a question with an obvious answer.

"Does that mean that God is in the grave, with the men and women that are buried?"

"Yes," my grandmother assured me. "It is he who keeps them warm."<sup>68</sup>

As the narrator contemplates this, he is interrupted by Kathleen, who touches his arm. At this moment, the detail of Kathleen's black hair which matches the color of his grandmother's

black shawl, transforms her touch into that of his grandmother's. Except, as he envisions it, his grandmother gives him a whip across the face. This whip is rooted in an anger which stems from the memory. As the narrator observes, the nature of his grandmother's death implies that she would never know 'the cold of a grave'<sup>69</sup> and subsequently (though he does not indicate it directly) the warmth of God. Rather, the fact that her body is not buried but, instead, 'entrusted to the wind'<sup>70</sup> in the form of ashes, implies that she has no union with God and, therefore, no peace in death. She is now a solitary, 'objectless' figure who exists within a liminal space between life and death. Hence, in the narrator's mind, this 'whip' symbolizes his punishment for forgetting this predicament. In response to this, he pleads forgiveness, swears that he has not forgotten her and states, 'Every time I'm cold, I think only of you.'<sup>71</sup> Appropriately, this statement is followed by Kathleen's exclamation that she herself is cold as the narrator notes how 'the wind cut [their] faces.'<sup>72</sup>

Subsequently, the narrator shapes Kathleen into his protector and confidante, the exact same roles his grandmother occupied in his life. This dynamic is more clearly established when he contrasts two separate memories, one where he reflects on an unexperienced trauma as he imagines his grandmother's experience in the gas chamber, and the other where he confesses his past to Kathleen during their first night together. Prior to this, the narrator recalls a visit from his doctor, Dr Russel. During this visit, the narrator, suffering from a fever, exclaims that he is thirsty. To this Dr Russel responds that 'the enemy refuses to retreat'<sup>73</sup> and that the narrator must, therefore, hold out. The 'enemy,' in this context, is the fever, a metaphor for death which continuously tries to take hold of him. Noting this, the narrator observes that, in this battle, the enemy will win because 'he doesn't suffer from thirst.'<sup>74</sup> He relates his thirst to that of his grandmother's in the gas chamber, observing that she would have understood his thoughts on the relationship between thirst and the enemy:

Grandmother would have understood. It was hot in the airless, waterless chambers. It was hot in the room where her livid body was crushed by other livid bodies. Like me, she must have opened her mouth to drink air, to drink water. But there was no water where she was, there was no air. She was only drinking death, as you drink water or air, mouth open, eyes closed, fingers clenched.<sup>75</sup>

Following this, the exchange between the narrator and Kathleen occurs as follows:

[...]I fell on my knees, took her head in my hands, and looking straight into her eyes, I told her the story of my grandmother, then the story of my little sister, and of my father, and of my mother; in very simple words, I described to her how man can become a grave for the unburied dead.

I kept talking. In every detail, I described the screams and nightmares that haunt me at night. And Kathleen, very pale, her eyes red, continued to beg:

More! Go on! More!

[...]

I kept looking at her and holding her. I wanted to get rid of all the filth that was in me and graft it onto her pupils and her lips, which were so pure, so innocent, so beautiful.

I bared my soul. My most contemptible thoughts and desires, my most painful betrayals, my vaguest lies, I tore them up from inside me and placed them in front of her, like an impure offering, so she could see them and smell their stench.

But Kathleen was drinking in every one of my words as if she wanted to punish herself for not having suffered before.<sup>76</sup>

The key detail that links the narrator's grandmother and Kathleen is the act of drinking. Whilst the grandmother drinks death within the gas chamber, Kathleen drinks in the narrator's memories of death. Of particular significance is the silent meaning underlying the words the narrator uses to describe his process of confiding in Kathleen. By stating that he wants to 'get rid of all the filth' and 'graft it onto her pupils and her lips,' he, in fact, creates the sense that he is burying her, placing her within his grave with the 'unburied dead.' It is as if she herself is the grandmother's 'livid body' that is being united with the 'other livid bodies,' specifically those of his father, mother and little sister. In exposing Kathleen to his 'internal world' and, therefore, his 'objectlessness' through this burial act, he initiates a sense of attachment between them that, subsequently, transforms her into an 'objectless' being. This is particularly significant because the fact that the narrator perceives her as the reincarnation of his grandmother allows him, to some degree, to alter the narrative of the grandmother's death. In essence, as opposed to her body being 'entrusted to the wind,' the narrator's metaphorical burial of Kathleen provides him with the opportunity to place her in a grave where he can be the God-like figure who provides her with warmth and protection.

However, though Kathleen's presence allows the narrator the opportunity to reconnect with the memory of his grandmother, their relationship is complicated by the fact that what Kathleen represents symbolically is the antithesis of both the narrator's grandmother and the narrator himself. In describing his grandmother, for instance, the narrator, in further utilizing image of the black flame, observes that she is 'like a flame [that] chased away the sun and took its place.'<sup>77</sup> Hence, she is the embodiment of death that frames the narrator's existence. Kathleen, in comparison, is described in terms that relate her more closely to the image of the sun and, therefore, day. The narrator speaks specifically of her as someone who likes 'light and love'<sup>78</sup> and has 'all the qualities to conquer the living.'<sup>79</sup> This implies, as Siebelman observes in his reading of the novel, that Kathleen 'especially represents life.'<sup>80</sup> She is the sun that chases away the night. Therefore, as much as Kathleen may appear to be integral to the structuring of the deceased being's world, she is also its ultimate threat. This implies that she is inevitably another 'impossible metaphor' that is unable to fully connect with his world. In reality, she herself is not 'objectless.' Rather, when considered through the lens of Scarry's theory, she is the object that needs to be either '*of or for* something,' a being whose body belongs to the 'external, shareable world.' She consistently expresses the desire to sever the bond between the narrator and his past and, therefore, the world of the dead, to provide him with an object from which to withdraw him from his 'objectlessness.' As the narrator observes, she 'wanted to make me happy no matter what. To make me taste the pleasures of life. To make me forget the past.'<sup>81</sup>

A crucial way in which Kathleen pursues her efforts to make the narrator 'taste the pleasures of life' is through speech. When she visits him in the hospital for the first time, for instance, he notes how she exuberantly speaks of the 'the beautiful view!'<sup>82</sup> outside the window, as well as his having 'such a nice room!'.<sup>83</sup> She does so, he observes, as if she is 'living the happiest moments of her life,'<sup>84</sup> transforming the hospital into a performative space where she expresses 'new attitudes, new makeup, new joys.'<sup>85</sup> Speech then, particularly with

regards to its function within the process of 'objectification,' is a symbol of life that stands in sharp contrast to the narrator's deathly, 'objectless' silences. Therefore, it becomes integral in combating these silences. Kathleen fills the spaces of silence with words because to speak is to draw the narrator out of the realm of the dead and, subsequently, into the world of the living.

Siebelman observes how, in order to combat this speech, and, thereby, retain the structures of his world, the narrator employs another form of silencing through the act of lying. Elaborating on this further, Siebelman observes that through committing the act of lying, 'the protagonist believes he will be marginally accepted by society, while his authentic self will pass undisturbed beneath the falsehoods.'<sup>86</sup> His efforts to overcome Kathleen's words and maintain her function in his life imply that she becomes the person he lies to the most. The most significant of his lies pertains to his love for her. If he loves Kathleen, he deduces, then he has successfully performed the role of what may be termed an 'objectified' being. Thereafter, the life he has constructed for himself maintains an illusion of meaning and resonance, truth and self. The lies regarding his love for Kathleen emerge in various forms throughout the novel. In its opening moments, for instance, he observes that he loves her but cannot look at her. Comparing Kathleen to God, he tells her, 'You can love God, but you can't look at him,'<sup>87</sup> suggesting that '[if] man could contemplate the face of God, he would stop loving him. God needs love; he does not need understanding.'<sup>88</sup> When she promptly asks him how this analogy relates to their relationship, he tells her, 'I too need your love'<sup>89</sup> but prefaces this statement with the words 'I lied.'<sup>90</sup> Later, when Paul Russel asks him if he loves Kathleen, he hesitates as he utters '[of] course I love her'<sup>91</sup> whilst 'trying to look calm.'<sup>92</sup> In truth, as he later states, the 'living-dead'<sup>93</sup> cannot love, making any chance of real love on the narrator's part impossible. All she can be for him is 'the object' he possesses as a means of maintaining the illusion he requires to exist in the living world. More than this, despite signifying an 'impossible metaphor,' she remains the only entry point through which he can engage not only with the memory of his grandmother but other facets of his past.

Kathleen's awareness of her function in the narrator's life, as well as his impact on her, is emphasized by him throughout the text. At the beginning of the novel, for instance, he notes how her voice is filled with 'sadness and bitterness'<sup>94</sup> when she asserts that she will follow him when he states that he wants to go '[far] ... [very] far,'<sup>95</sup> a clear gesture to the location he refers to as '*there*.' Observing how she has changed from being defiant and hardened to submissive and defeated, he states, 'I knew that our suffering changes us. But I didn't know that it could also destroy others.'<sup>96</sup> Later at the hospital, he refers to her as a 'sorceress who has lost her true face from having put on too many masks'<sup>97</sup> and, in conflating her with the memory of the crematorium, observes how a 'great fire burned around her,'<sup>98</sup> causing her to cry out and sob. The transferal of this image from the witness to the listener who 'drinks' the memories of the witness's past in itself demonstrates the extent to which Kathleen has been impacted by, what Dori Laub refers to as 'the trauma of the listener.' Laub writes that, through the act of listening, the person who listens to the details of a trauma narrative becomes 'a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event.'<sup>99</sup> For Kathleen, this occurs to the extent that she herself becomes part of the memory as she 'relives' the experience of burning in the crematorium. In this instance, she has 'lost her true face' because the various 'masks' she has to wear, both in portraying the personae of the narrator's past and his lover in the present and, subsequently, his 'impossible metaphor,' have caused her to lose herself within the illusion and then, ultimately, the lie which he has created.

## Entering the world of the living

The only figure in the novel who can truly challenge the narrator's silences and, thereafter, the world of the deceased being is Gyula, a Hungarian painter, who comes to the hospital to paint the narrator's portrait every afternoon. The revelation of the portrait and its contents is foregrounded by the presence of another crucial Wieselian image: the mirror. In *Day*, the act of looking into a mirror signifies a threat to the narrator as it implies an encounter with the image of a living being. So fearful is he of this encounter that he threatens to break a mirror that a nurse offers him after shaving him. As Ellen S. Fine observes, 'he rejects the meeting with the stranger in the mirror [because he] fears the creation of a new form out of the formlessness that envelops and protects him.'<sup>100</sup> This implies, she suggests, that he must face the prospect of 'developing a new sense of self'<sup>101</sup> that exists amongst the living. Furthermore, it means renegotiating his understanding of and place within a world which is, in fact, a significant part of his truth, as opposed to a lie.

What is interesting then is that when the narrator is finally confronted with the image of himself in Gyula's portrait, what he sees is not a reproduction of himself in the present. In contrast, it is a representation of the self which exists within his inner world, that defined by his silences. In examining the portrait, he silently observes how it projects a fearful version of what he considers to be his 'real self':

My heart was beating violently. I was there, facing me. My whole past was there, facing me. It was a painting in which black, interspersed with a few red spots, dominated. The sky was a thick black. The sun, a dark grey. My eyes were a beating red, like Soutine's. They belonged to a man who had seen God commit the most unforgivable crime: to kill without a reason.<sup>102</sup>

As the narrator describes it, the portrait represents a subtle recreation of his grandmother's death. The black sky contains the smoke from the crematorium, whilst the 'dark grey' sun embodies the 'black flame' she becomes, that which 'chased away the sun and took its place.'<sup>103</sup> The red in the narrator's eyes reflects the blood shed, both by him and those who suffered with him. It is a representation of a world that does not hide behind 'impossible metaphors.' The comparison the narrator makes between his painted self and Chaim Soutine, a famed Russian Jewish painter, is an intriguing one. Soutine, who fled Paris whilst being hunted by the Gestapo, was known for having unusually antagonistic feelings towards the work he produced. As Stanley Meisler observes, Soutine hated his work to the extent that he would threaten to murder his paintings. Meisler explains that if Soutine's work displeased him, 'he would run into the kitchen, pick up a knife and slash at the canvas. Sometimes he would burn the ripped painting as well.'<sup>104</sup> Reflecting his tortured feelings both towards himself and his work, Soutine painted a self-portrait he entitled *Grotesque* where he represented himself as 'a forlorn figure with deep, anguished eyes, a twisted ear, a distorted shoulder, an apelike arm.'<sup>105</sup> The perception of the narrator's painted self suggests that, much like Soutine, the intention is for him to look at this representation of his 'real self' as being grotesque, distorted and, ultimately, monstrous. Gyula's painting is, subsequently, meant to point out to the narrator a devastating irony. He fears looking into a mirror because he does not want to see the monstrous inner image of what he believes he has become in the present. Yet, it is the 'real self' and the past it encompasses, that which he is trying so desperately to reclaim, that symbolize the true monstrosity.

The fact that Gyula is able to recreate this 'real self' with such accuracy speaks to Siebelman's suggestion that he himself is a Holocaust survivor. He bases this reading on two textual clues. As the painting suggests, the first relates to 'the statement that only Gyula has been able to divine the protagonist's secrets.'<sup>106</sup> This indicates that 'he alone possesses some special quality allowing him to comprehend the hidden significance of the protagonist's words and silences.'<sup>107</sup> The second is the time of day during which he comes to visit the narrator. The period of the afternoon 'corresponds to one of the daily services of the Jewish liturgy: *minha*'<sup>108</sup> which is written by the biblical figure of Isaac, himself a survivor.<sup>109</sup> Siebelman observes that Isaac and Gyula share an affinity with each other in that both are survivors 'who [have] come to accept life.'<sup>110</sup> The combination of their names, Isaac (he who laughs) and Gyula (redemption) together 'speak[s] of joy, redemption, and a sense of life.'<sup>111</sup> Therefore, Gyula, like Kathleen, signifies life and day. However, in his capacity as a survivor, he is also a signifier of death and night. Like the narrator, this positions him between two realms as a form of *Muselmann*. However, the difference is that Gyula does not perceive life through the lens of death, nor, thereafter, does he deal in lies or 'impossible metaphors.' Rather, the very fact that he is able to externalize the narrator's memory through his visual representation of it implies that he has transcended night and, more specifically here, moved from silence into speech and, subsequently, from the 'objectless' to the 'objectified.' This suggests that he now occupies a state of being which is 'shareable' with the world.

It is, therefore, significant that, following the viewing of the painting, the narrator and Gyula transition into what becomes a silent dialogue. Within this dialogue, Gyula articulates the thoughts and words the narrator cannot bring himself to think or say:

You see? Maybe God is dead, but man is alive. The proof: he is capable of friendship.

But what about the others? The others, Gyula? Those who died? What about them? Besides me, they have no friends.

You must forget them. You must chase them from your memory. With a whip if necessary.

Chase them, Gyula? With a whip, you said? To chase my father with a whip? And Grandmother? Grandmother too, chase her with a whip?

Yes, yes, and yes. The dead have no place down here. They must leave us in peace. If they refuse, use a whip.

And this painting, Gyula? They are there. In the eyes of the portrait. Why did you put them there if you ask me to chase them away?

I put them there to assign them a place. So you would know where to hit.

I can't, Gyula. I can't.<sup>112</sup>

Particularly striking here is Gyula's use of the word 'whip,' a sharp contrast to the narrator's aforementioned usage of it earlier in the text. The use of this word, in the earlier instance, implied a power dynamic in which the narrator's grandmother, as well as the other inhabitants of the world of the dead, possessed control over the narrator, emphasized through

her act of ‘whipping’ him across the face. The action Gyula encourages, however, is one in which the narrator now is in control of a whip, indicating a transition between the living and the dead as it is now the narrator who is to commit the act of violence. By encouraging this violent action towards the dead, Gyula provides the narrator with a means to release himself from the control death has exerted over him. As horrific as this thought is to the narrator, it is necessary to make him accept that he is part of the living world and that the dead beings he is attempting to resurrect have no place in it. Gyula, essentially, suggests that the narrator must take on the role of the perpetrator, re-enact the violence that befell his family and murder the deceased beings himself. This symbolic murder is the only way through which he can accept their deaths and emerge from his silences into the present. The portrait then, as Gyula has constructed it, provides the narrator with the opportunity to bring himself back ‘there’ and commit the ‘murder.’ He, however, is too immersed in his deathly silences and, subsequently, his ‘internal world’ to move forward with this action.

Echoing Soutine himself, Gyula sets the painting alight. As the narrator observes this, he speaks of the painting remnants not as paper but ashes. It is as if Gyula is re-enacting the burning of the bodies in the crematorium. In doing so, he initiates the narrator’s grandmother’s second burning, committing her to the world of the dead once more. Prior to this, the narrator observes that, within the portrait, his grandmother’s ‘emaciated face’<sup>113</sup> now wears ‘an expression of peaceful suffering.’<sup>114</sup> The description of this suffering as ‘peaceful’ suggests that she is no longer ‘entrusted to the wind.’ Though her burial is not a physical one, she has now nevertheless found the warmth of God. This in itself dismantles the world the narrator has created.

The narrator’s witnessing of the burning of the painting elicits a cry from him that ends the novel. This ending departs significantly from the endings of *Night* and *Dawn* in which the young Wiesel and Elisha find themselves surrounded by silence as they encounter their deceased selves, those which have been birthed and constructed through their experiences at Auschwitz. In contrast, what occurs here is not an encounter with a deceased self but, rather, its destruction. This implies that the narrator can now no longer exist in silence. Nor, as this indicates, can he continue to speak with the ‘reanimated’ voices of the dead. In a reference to the closing passages of Jerzy Kosinski’s 1965 novel *The Painted Bird* where the text’s protagonist, a survivor, at long last regains his speech after being rendered mute by the atrocities he has experienced, Aarons observes that ‘the regaining of speech [is] a metaphor for bearing witness to both the atrocities suffered and ... individual survival.’<sup>115</sup> The narrator of *Day*’s cry emphasizes this as it becomes a symbol of the speech that is finally being unleashed. No longer is he the *Muselmann* who hangs between two worlds as he departs from the victimhood of night and enters into day where he emerges as the living survivor. The cry is a symbol that registers strongly with Scarry’s words in which she addresses the individual’s efforts to express pain through language, heralding the creation of ‘linguistic structures that will reach and accommodate this area of experience normally so inaccessible to language,’<sup>116</sup> representing an effort to provide pain with a referent and, thereafter, position it within a state of objectification. In considering this effort more closely, Scarry writes that to ‘witness the moment when pain causes a reversion to the pre-language of cries and groans is to witness the destruction of language; but conversely, to be present when a person moves up out of that pre-language and projects the facts of sentience into speech is almost to have been permitted to be present at the birth of language itself.’<sup>117</sup> In this case, the narrator’s cry may indicate that he and his narrative of trauma do, indeed, still dwell within a ‘pre-language’ space. As Aarons observes, ‘for the survivor, the affirmation of voice, the act of bearing witness is always an incomplete, unfinished gesture.’<sup>118</sup> Yet, perhaps there is hope

that, in time, this cry will fully transform into speech, heralding the 'birth' not only of a language through which to articulate his pain but also of a new 'objectified' self that is able finally to release himself from the past and, in doing so, make both himself and his trauma narrative 'shareable' with the world.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this article, the analysis of Elie Wiesel's *Day* explored the impact of silence in shaping and concealing a narrative of trauma. Subsequently, through my discussion of how the narrator employs silence, which he associates with death, to frame his world, I have explored the detrimental effects the past, as symbolized by these silences, may have for the experience of living in the present. I have contrasted these silences with the impact of speech, as embodied by the characters of Kathleen and Gyula. Speech, I have suggested, symbolizes the act of living within the living world. It is, subsequently, the process of engaging with speech that provides the narrator with the point from which to disengage from silence and, in doing so, begin to find a way through which to engage with the world of the living in the present. Whilst, as I have indicated, the narrator still remains resistant to speech at the end of the text, he, nevertheless, begins to engage with the process of making himself and his narrative 'shareable' with the world. In highlighting this progression, Wiesel demonstrates the value an embrace of this 'shareable' world has for psychologically surviving a trauma narrative of the past.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## **Notes on contributors**

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## **Notes**

1 Wiesel, "*Day* Preface," 230.

2 Wiesel ctd. in Cargas, "In Conversation with Elie Wiesel," 59.

3 Wiesel, "*Night* Preface," 6.

4 Ibid., 7.

5 Wiesel, *Rivers*, 321.

6 Wiesel, "*Night* Preface," 7.

7 Aarons, "A Genre of Rupture," 28.



8 Ibid., 8.

9 Siebelman, *Silence in the Novels of Elie Wiesel*, 29.

10 Ibid., 29.

11 Wiesel, “*Dawn* Preface,” 39.

12 Ibid., 230.

13 Mintz, *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America*, 4.

14 Ibid., 5.

15 Ibid., 5

16 Ibid., 5.

17 Ibid., 6.

18 Ibid., 6.

19 Ibid.,6.

20 Lipstadt, “Memory of the Holocaust,” 198–9.

21 Ibid., 199.

22 Ibid., 199.

23 Ibid., 201.

24 Ibid., 204.

25 Ibid., 204.

26 Ibid., 205.

27 Ibid., 207.

28 Ibid., 207.

29 Wiesel, *Dawn*, 221.

30 Rosenfeld, “The Futility of Holocaust Testimony,” 228.

31 Wiesel, *Day*, 264.

32 Ibid., 264.

- 33 Ibid. 268.
- 34 Ibid., 268.
- 35 Wiesel, *Day*, 268.
- 36 Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 31.
- 37 Ibid., 5.
- 38 Ibid., 5.
- 39 Caruth, *Explorations in Memory*, 5.
- 40 Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 5.
- 41 Oster, "Impossible Holocaust Metaphors," 305.
- 42 Ibid., 316.
- 43 Delbo, *Days and Memory*, 2.
- 44 Ibid., 3.
- 45 Ibid., 3.
- 46 Ibid., 3.
- 47 Delbo, *Auschwitz and After*, 114.
- 48 Wiesel, *Day*, 270, italics in the original.
- 49 Quintilian ctd in Benne, "The Philosophy of *Prosopopoeia*," 281.
- 50 Ibid., 281.
- 51 Ibid., 281.
- 52 Aarons, "A Genre of Rupture," 34.
- 53 Ibid., 34.
- 54 Ibid., 36.
- 55 Richards qtd. in Donoghue, *Metaphor*, 1.
- 56 Donoghue, *Metaphor*, 2.
- 57 Aarons, "A Genre of Rupture," 34.

- 58 Oster, "Impossible Holocaust Metaphors," 308.
- 59 Wiesel, *Day*, 233.
- 60 Wiesel, *Night*, 52.
- 61 Ibid., 55.
- 62 Ibid., 55.
- 63 Ibid., 55.
- 64 Aarons, "A Genre of Rupture," 36.
- 65 Wiesel, *Day*, 234.
- 66 Ibid., 234.
- 67 Ibid., 234.
- 68 Ibid., 254–5.
- 69 Ibid., 255.
- 70 Ibid., 255.
- 71 Ibid., 256.
- 72 Ibid., 256.
- 73 Ibid., 258.
- 74 Ibid., 258.
- 75 Ibid., 258.
- 76 Ibid., 272.
- 77 Ibid., 295.
- 78 Ibid., 284.
- 79 Ibid., 283.
- 80 Siebelman, *Silence in the Novels of Elie Wiesel*, 54.
- 81 Wiesel, *Day*, 283.
- 82 Ibid. 281.

- 83 Ibid., 281.
- 84 Ibid., 281.
- 85 Ibid., 281.
- 86 Siebelman, *Silence in the Novels of Elie Wiesel*, 52.
- 87 Wiesel, *Day*, 235.
- 88 Ibid., 235.
- 89 Ibid., 235.
- 90 Ibid., 235.
- 91 Ibid., 279.
- 92 Ibid., 279.
- 93 Ibid., 295.
- 94 Ibid., 237.
- 95 Ibid., 237.
- 96 Ibid., 237.
- 97 Wiesel, *Day*, 304.
- 98 Ibid., 304.
- 99 Laub, "Bearing Witness," 57.
- 100 Fine, *Legacy of Night*, 48.
- 101 Ibid., 48.
- 102 Wiesel, *Day*, 336.
- 103 Ibid., 295.
- 104 See Meisler, "Soutine".
- 105 Ibid.
- 106 Siebelman, *Silence in the Novels of Elie Wiesel*, 55.
- 107 Ibid., 55.

108 Ibid., 55, italics in the original.

109 Siebelman's reference to Isaac as a "survivor" perhaps relates to the story of the binding of Isaac (known in Hebrew as the "Akedah") which is documented in Genesis 22:19. In this story, Abraham, Isaac's father, is commanded by God to sacrifice his son on Mount Moriah as a test of his faith. Obeying this order without question, Abraham binds Isaac to an altar upon a piece of wood. Just as Abraham is about to slaughter Isaac with a knife, an angel of God calls to Abraham, telling him not to harm Isaac as he has proven his allegiance to God. This incident haunts Isaac for the rest of his life. Nevertheless, he emerges from it as a survivor.

110 Siebleman, *Silence in the Novels of Elie Wiesel*, 56.

111 Ibid., 56.

112 Wiesel, *Day*, 337.

113 Ibid., 338.

114 Ibid., 338.

115 Aarons, "A Genre of Rupture," 36.

116 Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 6.

117 Ibid., 6.

118 Aarons, "A Genre of Rupture," 36.

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