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### A Catharsis for Humanity

The Holocaust, a Nazi propagated genocide against the Jewish people, remains a testament in our collective history to the human capacity to perform evil and the human ability to persevere amidst unimaginable evil. During the Israeli trial against Gestapo chief Adolf Eichmann, the leading prosecutor, Gideon Hausner, illuminated the horrors of the Holocaust in his “Six Million Accusers” address to the court, invoking a number soaked in notoriety to observers near and far. The words of Gideon Hausner not only honor and empower the victims, and their suffering, but seek to transform them into true witnesses, partaking in a moral judgement superior to any delivered before earthly law. In cultivating honest, unwavering depictions of the Holocaust, entwined among the official charges on Eichmann, “Six Million Accusers” converts the sense of survival into an extraordinary identity, and the identity of the Holocaust survivor avows the vast power of a shared conscience. Jewish survivors stood as living symbols of that power’s consequences. Thus, a belief remains that, for a greater future, no one be forgotten or forsaken to a fate so terrible, *so unspeakable*. Above all, “Six Million Accusers” channels a personifying catharsis for the Jewish experience— a resolution affirming the triumph of hope, justice, and life itself.

In the opening address, Hausner conveys the message of Jewish suffering as a universal representation of human suffering. He elaborates on emblematic stories and uses figurative language to create compassion from mutual emotions and recognizable ways of life, garnering an

undeniable consensus of dignity for those who endured the Holocaust. The text remarks upon the malicious events families, friends, and neighbors, once parallel to our own, faced, “[Children were] murdered and thrown out of trucks, torn to pieces before their mothers’ eyes, their little heads smashed on the ground... Tender infants pressed by their mothers to their bodies in the gas chambers so that they were not immediately poisoned, until the executioners came and threw them alive into the furnaces” (Hausner). A blunt, vivid flow of language, while avoiding feigned overtones in dramatization, fiercely strikes the emotional state of the audience. Hausner disallows his observers from being unable to conceive the Holocaust’s atrocities, instead he establishes a state of mind akin to the circumstances the victims confronted. The speaker narrates an account from Auschwitz where “a dead prisoner was found, bent over whom was a second prisoner, also dead, grasping the liver from the corpse of the first” (Hausner). Cannibalism, as a metaphorical allusion and documented evidence, typifies the gravest suffering, consuming humanity in flesh. Through exemplary practices of rhetoric and empathy, Hausner’s speech universalizes the Jewish experience, and it unequivocally imposes the accountability of such monstrosity upon the culprit, forbidding him a defense that claims he obeyed superior orders.

Likewise, Hausner sets Eichmann as a leading architect for the Holocaust and concentrates this cathartic release of Jewish suffering onto a deserving embodiment of the human design in genocide. Despite the court rejecting Eichmann’s legal argument “with the voice of the International Military Tribunal,” the prosecutor carries the duty to prove the direct responsibility that Eichmann possessed in ending innocent lives: “It was his word that put gas chambers in action; he lifted the telephone, and railroad cars left for the extermination centers; his signature it was that sealed the doom of thousands... he was the one who planned, initiated, and organized, who instructed others to spill this ocean of blood, and to use all the means of murder, theft, and

torture” (Hausner). In demonstrating the guilt of the accused, the Jewish survivor transfers the weight of death, any feeling of fault for losing his or her fellow people, onto the physical presence of Eichmann, the real moral offender. There is an internal redemption at the basis of the Holocaust identity in resurrecting the fallen to join the living, bringing forth the voices of the same men, women, and children, all bound by one religion, whom Eichmann and his fellow Nazis aimed to eradicate. A “spokesman,” announcing to “unfold the awesome indictment,” shoulders “the burden of proof” for those who “cannot rise to their feet and point an accusing finger” (Hausner). This identity distinguishes a tragic heroism, self-applied to Hausner’s ethos, that the mutual conscience of the West must recognize. The suggestion that citizens of Europe, and then the world, must wrestle with the facts of the Holocaust and the truths of the survivors relieves the Jewish identity of its pain, its intimate knowledge on evil. Furthermore, Hausner molds Eichmann into a visible manifestation for the witnesses and the Jewish experience, so a resounding legacy is established for future generations of humankind to remember the cruel power of collective silence in a genocide.

As he universalizes the suffering that the Holocaust created and channels the process of Jewish survivors freeing themselves of such suffering, Hausner espouses how righteousness prevails even after the greatest devastation. There are implications highlighted in the speech that if the Jewish people have persisted through the Holocaust, then their identity must internalize the very essence of hope and faith. The address asserts the intention of the Nazi operations, and at the same time, foreshadows the preservation of a Jewish future, “[These children and youths] they are the very soul and innermost core of this indictment... those unplumbed treasures of radiant youth and hope for life and achievement... He that destroyed them was seeking to destroy the Jewish people” (Hausner). In emphasizing references to youth, a way to be reborn,

untainted from death's vestiges, Hausner elicits the message that the Jewish survivor has thwarted wrongdoers and sustained the virtues of life, even in misery and despair, for his or her descendants. The desire to bear witness and challenge the makers of radical evil becomes a crucial response, a natural need to relay one's agony. Following that, one's optimism. Since survivors of the Holocaust have met firsthand with the verge of humanity's collapse, Hausner develops their identity to pursue a commitment in finding justice and uniting over a common care for the future. Moreover, he permits Eichmann, the enemy of compassion and decency, a basic "privilege which he did not accord to a single one of his victims" which is the right "to defend himself before the court" (Hausner). The prosecutor, the survivors, and the witnesses at the Eichmann trial change into symbols of a resilient life, a life unbroken by the plans to destroy their individual lives, their shared history, and an intrinsic part of our world. A sincere simplicity in these symbols and the identity from where they originate confirms the complete catharsis of the Jewish experience, but the permanent infliction of the Holocaust on the Jewish body lingers.

At the end of Eichmann's trial, the Nazi criminal was judged guilty and sentenced to death. However, as the "Six Million Accusers" address by Gideon Hausner demonstrates, the Eichmann trial was neither a retaliatory act of revenge nor a meaningless expression of sentiment. It stands as the catharsis, a collective purification via emotion and communication, for the Jewish people and leads to their renewal. The history of the Holocaust disturbs the fundamental principles of our humanity to this day; nonetheless, we must accept the notion that humanity holds the gift to heal itself, strengthened evermore, until the moment there is no faith in hope, justice, and life. In the wake of our time and its hardships, understanding the story and the identity of the Holocaust survivor furthers modern society in upholding the moral responsibilities we inherit. If ignorance prevails, crimes against humanity will result in humanity's demise.

Works Cited

Hausner, Gideon. “Six Million Accusers.” *Modern World History*, Facts On File, [online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=17293&itemid=WE53&primarySourceId=6042](https://online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=17293&itemid=WE53&primarySourceId=6042). Accessed 31 Mar. 2021.