**T.C.**
**İSTANBUL KÜLTÜR UNIVERSITY**
**INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

# FROM GENOCIDE TO GENESIS: PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPLORATION OF EVIL IN MARTIN AMIS' *TIME'S ARROW: OR THE NATURE OF THE OFFENCE*

**Master of Arts Thesis by**

**Hilal BİLGİLİ**
**1600001923**

**Department: English Language and Literature**

**Programme: English Language and Literature**

**Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Gillian M.E. ALBAN**

**NOVEMBER 2023**

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**NOVEMBER 2023**

## PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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## KISA ÖZET

# SOYKIRIMDAN YARADILIŞA: MARTIN AMIS'İN *TIME'S ARROW OR: THE NATURE OF THE OFFENCE* ADLI ESERİNDE KÖTÜLÜĞÜN PSİKANALİTİK İNCELEMESİ


**Hilal BİLGİLİ**



Bu tez, başta doktorlar olmak üzere Nazi suçlularının, Holokost sırasında nasıl dehşet verici suçlar işlediğini ve bu süreçteki psikolojik dönüşümün edebiyattaki yansımasını incelemektedir. Yarattıkları bu kriz karşısında Nazi faillerinin kişilikleri, zulüm işlemek ve insani bir görünüm sergilemek arasında derin bir bölünme geçirir. Bu tez, edebiyat metinlerini kullanarak bu ikili doğayı anlamayı ve eylemlerinin ardındaki psikolojik süreçlere ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Martin Amis'in *Time's Arrow* adlı romanı, bir Nazi doktorunun hayatını ölümden doğuma ters kronolojiyle anlatarak benzersiz bir anlatım tekniği kullanır. Bu teknik, kötülüğün tarihini çözer, kötülüğün özünü ortaya çıkarır, tarihsel olayları yeniden yorumlar ve kahramanın kendini duyarsızlaştırma ve cani eylemlerinden uzaklaşma yönündeki amansız çabalarını gözler önüne serer. Bu çalışmada, Nazi doktorlarının dönüşümü, suçun onlar üzerindeki kalıcı etkileri ve özellikle ters anlatım tekniğinin Holokost'u nasıl tasvir ettiği ve bir bakıma deşifre ettiği üzerinde durulmaktadır.

Bu araştırmayla, Martin Amis'in *Time's Arrow* romanında tasvir edilen suçun çelişkili doğasına ve Nazi failinin karmaşık ruh haline psikanalitik bir yaklaşım ve romanın

ayrıntılı analizi yoluyla ışık tutmayı amaçlıyorum. Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan ve Julia Kristeva'nın temel kavramlarıyla birlikte Robert Jay Lifton'ın Nazi sosyo-tarihsel bağlamını kullanan bu tez, failin Holokost krizine verdiği tepkinin rahatsız edici doğasına ve ahlaki sorumluluk yoksunluğuna dair bir perspektif sunmak için ikileşme, yabancılaştırma, ruhsal uyuşma, iğrençlik, anne rahmi, kadın varlığı ve yaşam ve ölüm içgüdüsü kavramlarını incelemektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Martin Amis, Psikanaliz, Kötülük, Ruh, Fail, İkileşme, Holokost Edebiyatı

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## ABSTRACT

# FROM GENOCIDE TO GENESIS: PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPLORATION OF EVIL IN MARTIN AMIS' *TIME'S ARROW: OR THE NATURE OF THE OFFENCE*


**Hilal BİLGİLİ**



This thesis explores how Nazi perpetrators, notably doctors, committed heinous crimes during the Holocaust, delving into their psychological transformation. Faced with this self-inflicted crisis, perpetrators undergo a profound shift, splitting their personalities between committing atrocities and wearing a facade of humanity. Using literary texts, this thesis aims to understand this dual nature, shedding light on the psychological processes behind their actions.

Martin Amis' novel, *Time's Arrow*, employs a unique narrative technique, recounting the life of a Nazi doctor in reverse chronology, from death to birth. This technique unravels a history of evil, deconstructs the evil self, reinterprets historical events, and exposes the protagonist's relentless attempts to distance from his heinous deeds. This study focuses on the transformation of the Nazi doctors, the lingering effects of perpetration on them, and especially how the technique of reverse narration portrays and, in a way, decodes the Holocaust.

With this study, I aim to shed light on the paradoxical nature of the offense and the complex psyche of the Nazi perpetrator, portrayed in Martin Amis' *Time's Arrow,* through a psychoanalytic approach and nuanced analysis of the novel. By utilizing Robert Jay Lifton's socio-historical context from *Nazi Doctors*, along with the key concepts provided by Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva, this study examines the concepts of doubling, defamiliarization, psychic numbing, abjection, maternal womb, and female presence and life and death instinct to offer insight into the disturbing nature of the perpetrator's response to the Holocaust crisis and his lack of moral responsibility.

**Key words:** Martin Amis, Psychoanalysis, Evil, Psyche, Perpetrator, Doubling, Holocaust Fiction

*To all the innocent children affected by the horrors of war,*

*Yesterday, today, and tomorrow.*

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I feel so lucky to have such amazing people in my life, and I am thankful for their timeless support and love. This thesis is a culmination of not just my hard work, but also the collective support and encouragement of all these wonderful individuals.

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## INTRODUCTION

*"Man is a mystery. It needs to be unraveled, and if you spend your whole life unravelling it, don't say that you've wasted time. I am studying that mystery because I want to be a human being."*

— Fyodor Dostoevsky

Theodor W. Adorno asserted that "poetry is impossible after Auschwitz." But why so? Is it merely because of the horrors that it caused, or the source of this horror which made it impossible to produce an artistic representation of it – which is the evil ingrained within the human psyche?

The horrors of the Holocaust have undoubtedly been a taboo on which most authors hesitate to write, ever since Holocaust transpired. Perhaps, having the *author*itative voice over such a tragedy was either too challenging or too overbearing; or too unthinkable considering that to create a fiction on the Holocaust entailed that the voice to be heard belonged either to the victim or the perpetrator of this offense; more often, of course, belonging to the victims of this dreadful crime against humanity. Giving voice to a Nazi criminal is not something that anybody would be readily willing to do since speaking a criminal's mind and perhaps explaining it would in a way justify their horrible deeds or give excuses and rationalize their cruelty. However, sometimes it is essential to know rather than to avoid, just as it is important to face it rather than pretending to ignore it. Martin Amis is one of the few authors that has had the courage to write Holocaust fiction from the perpetrator's eye and make his mind speak. His unorthodox narrative, therefore, introduces to us a new perspective on this very sensitive issue and leads us into the dark mind of a Nazi doctor in order to penetrate its darkness.

In a 2014 interview by Donna Seaman, Amis expressed his connection to the subject matter, stating, "It is more as if it's chosen you rather than you've chosen it" (Seaman). I share a similar sentiment; it feels as though the topic has chosen me rather than the other way around. My selection of this particular subject is deliberate, rooted in a distinct perspective that holds valid merit. As Erin McGlothlin aptly points out, writing "from the perspective of [Holocaust] perpetrators" is uncommon and often considered "taboo" within the established canon of Holocaust literature (*The Mind* 257). This choice reflects a conscious decision to explore a unique and unconventional

angle, challenging the boundaries of traditional Holocaust narratives. By delving into the perspective of the perpetrators, I aim to shed light on a less explored aspect of history, examining the complex motivations and actions of those involved. This approach, even if daring, provides an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the human psyche and the factors that lead to such atrocities.

What fascinates me and leads me into pursuing such a study was an attempt to understand the possible reasons and motives that formed the psychology of genocide, which is generated from the sick idea of racial cleansing. After all, this is humankind's doing – a civilized nation to be precise, seeing Nazi Germany's so far considered 'civilized' history, and we cannot avoid it by simply ignoring or considering it taboo, which eventually prevents it from being represented and understood. Representation of the perpetrator's point of view is not to justify their crimes nor to sympathize with them; on the contrary, to understand and face the dark potential of humankind and offer explanations of the matter.

In light of this, it can be said that Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow* offers an opportunity to case study the Holocaust perpetrator's mind and psyche, as he is one of the rarest writers to challenge this notion and include it in his oeuvre. In *Time's Arrow,* the life of a Nazi doctor who served in Auschwitz is narrated in backwards fashion, that is, the story retrogrades from his death surrounded by doctors on his deathbed, to his birth – back to his mother's womb. The voice of the narrator, or more correctly, the focalizer is his soul[1], or consciousness; both of which suggest a split from the body of the protagonist disguised in different identities unveiled as the story goes (back): first introduced as Todd Friendly in his American years, followed by John in Argentina, and lastly his real identity in Auschwitz as Odilo Unverdorben. His real name is rather meaningful with an ironic translation, since Odilo, which is a German name, means "prosperous in battle" and his surname Unverdorben means "unspoilt." With Odilo Unverdorben we see his transformation before and after Auschwitz; and the shift in his voice from third person narrator to first person narrator.

In the afterword of *Time's Arrow,* Amis states that if it had not been for Robert Jay Lifton's *Nazi Doctors* – a study on the psychology behind the genocide, this novel

[1] Soul is an abstract concept and has a religious connotation, even suggesting a sense of redemption in this respect. Although Martin Amis himself asserted that the voice of the narrator belongs the soul of the protagonist, in this thesis, it will also be referred as his consciousness since the focus is on the depths of the perpetrator's mind and unconscious.

would not and could not have been written. This enlightening study presents a psychological explanation of the inhuman deed of genocide. In his study, Lifton suggests the theory of "doubling", meaning the Nazi doctors could do what they did because they had a split in their identities, and this split separated them into the "normal self" and the "Auschwitz self", whereby the "Auschwitz self" could be held responsible for the brutal crimes committed by these Nazi doctors.

Moreover, Amis's world building in *Time's Arrow* also attracts my attention. It follows a Nazi war criminal's life narrated through his soul from a reversed chronology which necessitates the reader's involvement and judgement on the subject matter as well. Not only the time moves backwards, but everything including dialogues is narrated backwards, which induces the reader to expect explanations and even cognitively to engage in understanding the matter as the story proceeds. This unconventional narrative with its unreliable narrator invites the reader to both cognitively "make sense" of the events and to morally perceive the gaps in the narrator's misinterpretation and misjudgment of his role and the events occurring in Auschwitz. With this narrative technique, Amis presents a dual irony that none of this "makes sense", while all along both the narrator and the reader try to make sense of things and anticipate an explanation; however, it is up to the moral judgement of the reader to make sense of it all. This draws a parallel to the moral and linguistic decay that the actual Nazi atrocity caused — ideally a progress on the surface, while fundamentally being a regression to an ethical atrophy.

For this reason, I, as a reader and a researcher accept this challenge and want to explore the sense of evil in this context. How did they do what they did? What was the psychology behind the genocide? What led them to go to such extremes and lose their humanity? These are only a few of the many moral questions that I had in mind when I started this study, and with the depth of psychoanalytic theories, I have decided to interpret "the nature of the offense" − which is the subtitle of *Time's Arrow*. In the scholarship on *Time's Arrow*, I have noticed a lack in psychoanalytic approaches to the novel. Most of the readings are made either in terms of narratology or morality. Psychoanalytic interpretations, however, have not been undertaken adequately. For this reason, with this thesis I aim to fill this gap in the literature and contribute a different point of view on such a controversial and sensitive topic.

In *Time's Arrow*, Amis employs linguistic and temporal manipulation to depict a distorted reality and morality, illustrating the symbolic nature of language, time, and

reality. Through his unconventional narrative style, he delves into the mind of a criminal, requiring readers to decipher the twisted language and disordered structure. This technique is probably the most accurate representation of a criminal's mind and psyche, since it requires readers to grapple with the narrative, unlike conventional storytelling that presents information directly. Amis's narration offers an alternative to traditional Holocaust fiction; it terrifies, and catches one off guard, much like the horrific truths of the Holocaust. By excluding and pushing the *other* away from its firmly drawn w*hole*ness (which desperately bears (w)holes in it), the Symbolic system that we are mentally, linguistically, and unavoidably bound by produces evil inadvertently through discourse, ideology, indoctrination, and propaganda This constructed system compels individuals to extremes, bringing forth repressed elements in the form of evil. It invokes a potential that is neither too foreign to humankind, nor truly inherent within it.

Thus, with Martin Amis's novel I attempt to explore the nature of the offense with the aid of psychoanalytic theories, starting from the pioneer Sigmund Freud, his descendants Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva; these will form the theoretical background of my thesis in my literary analysis. Firstly, I will provide an in-depth literary review encompassing Holocaust perpetrator fiction and studies, showcasing the existing scholarly work on this theme. Despite their limited number, I will review the narratives concerning Nazi perpetrators written up to this time, explaining the content and rationale behind these works. Furthermore, I will articulate the reasons for specifically concentrating on Nazi doctors in my exploration. I will then proceed with Robert Jay Lifton's *Nazi Doctors* which is a psychological study on the subject matter and more importantly, one of the primary sources for *Time's Arrow*, hence for this thesis as well. Therefore, *Nazi Doctors* with an extensive historical explanation will form the socio-historical background for my thesis. Lastly, I will present my close reading of *Time's Arrow;* however, it should be noted that the close reading of the novel will comprise *my* analysis of the novel. I do not take Martin Amis at face value, nor do I claim that the way I read his work is the intended or the correct way to read it. His attitude might differ from the way I read his novel. I will only benefit from the richness of the symbolism implicit in his writing and offer an enhanced close reading of the novel to support my thesis and come up with possible answers. With my critical analysis, I hope to unlock a different and enlightening perspective on the novel, thereby enhancing the richness of Martin Amis's creative work.

It should also be noted that psychoanalysis often disregards the socio-historical context, and therefore it is rather difficult to draw universal conclusions. The socio-historical context that produced such evil is paramount for a multilayered, nuanced analysis; therefore, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive socio-historical background to shed light on the often-overlooked layer of human perpetration. It is important to understand the diverse factors contributing to the emergence of atrocities and the essence of perpetration, encompassing cultural, social, and belief systems, alongside the influence of propaganda, as well as the allure of social, and material gains for individuals. In essence, it is not necessary for every doctor, across diverse decades and cultures, to manifest the same evil actions or responses under specific circumstances. Nonetheless, it remains crucial to recognize the latent potential within the human psyche to enhance our understanding of human nature.

# CHAPTER I: LITERARY REVIEW

## 1.1. Literature of the Holocaust Perpetrators

It is no doubt that the narratives recounting the Holocaust have profoundly captivated the interest of historians, psychologists, and novelists, as well as the public. This fascination primarily stems from the testimonies of the victims who endured the atrocities inflicted by the Nazis. However, the historical narrative has not extensively highlighted the accounts of perpetrators, barring a limited number of instances. One such exception is evident in the memoirs of Rudolf Höss, documented during his imprisonment preceding execution, subsequently serving as inspiration for Robert Merle in his novel, *Death Is My Trade* (1952). Delving into the perspective, motivations, and actions of perpetrators through fiction, particularly within the context of Nazi perpetration, has been a rare and cautious endeavor. The authoring of perpetrator novels, in this specific historical context, has never been quite a common or favored thematic pursuit.

In her article "When the Perpetrator Becomes a Reliable Witness of the Holocaust" Susan Rubin Suleiman discusses this reservation that fiction writers may harbor when it comes to the portrayal of the inner life of a Nazi perpetrator. The comprehensive depiction of a character's subjectivity, encompassing not only actions but also feelings, perceptions, opinions, psyche, and their way of existence in the world, inherently demands a certain level of empathy from both the author and the reader. Even if the character is abhorrent, there is a need to recognize their *humanity*, thereby acknowledging shared characteristics with the broader human experience—regardless of how hard it might sound.

Suleiman highlights that cultivating such "empathy for a perpetrator of genocide—even if it coexists with revulsion and moral condemnation—puts both author and reader on uncomfortable ethical ground, and on uncomfortable aesthetic ground as well" (Suleiman 2). This discomfort is further compounded by the challenges associated with portraying the distorted nature of such narratives; thus, only the distorted narration techniques, such as the reversed narration technique of *Time's Arrow* can authentically portray such distorted ground, both aesthetically and ethically.

Suleiman's article further explores into the dilemma surrounding the narrative voice of the perpetrator. She highlights the concerns regarding the potential automatic evocation of empathy in readers through a first-person narrative voice, and shows the

difficulties associated with adopting the voice of an "omniscient" narrator to explore the behavior and perceptions of a perpetrator protagonist (Suleiman 2). While these issues may appear as aesthetic challenges in representation, Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow* adeptly navigates and addresses them through its distinctive narrative mode, offering a unique and effective approach to both ethical and aesthetic considerations.

A few other names have attempted to go into the chaotic inner world of the Nazi perpetrators to fictionally represent such point of view, both visually and in written form. Namely, the aforementioned novel, *Death Is My Trade* (in French: *La mort est mon métier*) by the French author Robert Mele*,* recounts the story of a commandant at Auschwitz named Rudolf Lang, a character closely modeled after the actual Auschwitz commandant, Rudolf Höss. The book tells the story of Rudolf's life from the age of twelve, including memories of his youth, his family life, his transformation into an SS commander, and his main mission to kill as many Jews as possible. Robert Merle drew upon Rudolf Höss' testimonies written during his imprisonment and court records from the Nuremberg trials but most importantly, utilized from the interviews conducted by the American psychologist Gilbert, who interviewed Rudolf Höss in his cell at the time of the Nuremberg trial. He believed that these interviews were more revealing than the confessions written later by Höss himself in his Polish prison. In this respect, both Martin Amis and Robert Merle employed a similar approach, resorting to psychoanalysis to shed light on the twisted psyche of a Nazi perpetrator. In the case of Martin Amis' exploration of a Nazi perpetrator in *Time's Arrow*, he, too, drew upon interviews with Nazi doctors conducted by Robert Jay Lifton, an American psychiatrist renowned for his study of the psychological origins and consequences of wars.

In the preface of the novel *Death is My Trade*, Merle confesses that at the time he was writing the novel, he was well aware that he was writing a book against the grain. He asserts, "Les tabous les plus efficaces sont ceux qui ne disent pas leur nom" ("the most effective taboos are those that do not speak their name"; my trans. iv). Despite recognizing the societal taboos surrounding his subject matter, Merle ultimately concluded that Höss' actions were not driven by malice but were carried out in adherence to the "categorical imperative of duty", "loyalty to his leader", and "obedience to orders", all in respect for the State — *Volk* (vi). In essence, Merle characterized him as a "man of duty," attributing monstrosity to this very behavior. This interpretation, influenced by psychoanalysis and Merle's desire to comprehend

Höss' actions, depicts Merle's Lang as an idealized and stylized version of Höss, portraying him as a tragic figure rather than a sadist.

Another fictional testament of a Nazi perpetrator is presented in the work of Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges, in his short story titled "Deutsches Requiem" ("A German Requiem") published in 1946. The narrative portrays the fictional final declaration of Otto Dietrich zur Linde, the amputated, one-legged commandant of a Nazi concentration camp. Refraining from presenting a defense for his actions since it would make him appear "cowardly" (Borges 229), zur Linde is adjudicated and condemned to execution by firing squad. While awaiting his impending execution, he composes a last testament in his prison cell. He has "no desire to be pardoned, for [he] feel[s] no guilt, but … wish[es] to be understood (229). This document notably lacks any attempt at justification, and instead, zur Linde expresses satisfaction in the anticipation that the future will be ruled by "violence and faith in the sword" rather than what he dismisses as "servile Christian acts of timidity" (234). Additionally, he expresses a wish that, should triumph and glory elude Nazi Germany, they might find harbor in other nations: "Let heaven exist, though our place be in hell" (234). He exhibits a refusal to embrace empathetic sentiments for his victim, displays characteristics of dehumanization, unequivocally rejects the virtues of compassion and mercy advocated by Christianity, and adheres blindly to a steadfast belief in sacrificial violence. This belief is evident in his vision of the new world order advocated by Nazism as he sees it as a "moral act" removing the old "corrupt and depraved" man to embrace the new one (231). Through Nazism the new world order is stripped away from the old, weak, defeated, fatalist mentality to renew it with a violent, merciless, and destructive as ever: "There are many things that must be destroyed in order to build the new order; now we know that Germany was one of them. We have given something more than our lives; we have given the life of our beloved nation. Let others curse and others weep; I rejoice in the fact that our gift is orbicular and perfect" (234).

The need for destructing the old, defeated paradigms and reviving the German *Volk* by adopting a brutal, totalitarian, and homogenous vision is evident in Nazism, a theme that will be expounded upon in greater detail in the forthcoming Chapter II. Reflecting on his demeanor as he looks at his face in the mirror before the impending firing squad, zur Linde recognizes an absence of fear or pity, even towards himself: "My flesh may feel fear; I *myself* do not" (234). As explained in Chapter II, these perpetrators experience a kind of psychic numbing and losing of moral consciousness.

The stark contempt and disregard for Christianity emanate from the Nazi ideological perspective that associates religion with a perceived permissiveness, signifying vulnerability to external influences. This theme shall be further explained with the socio-historical background provided by Robert Jay Lifton in Chapter II.

Another historical fiction, *The Kindly Ones* (*Les Bienveillantes* in French) written by Jonathan Littell in 2006, unfolds through the perspective of its fictional protagonist Maximilien Aue. A former SS officer of French and German descent, Aue actively participated as a perpetrator in the Holocaust and bore witness to pivotal events of World War II. From the onset of the book, readers are aware that Aue's fluent command of the French language enables him to escape and assume a new identity as a returning Frenchman in France. A similar theme which depicts a former SS officer from the perpetrator's perspective is employed in another fictional autobiography titled *The Nazi and the Barber* (*Der Nazi & der Friseur*) authored by the German-Jewish writer Edgar Hilsenrath. The intriguing aspect of the book lies in Hilsenrath's decision to write it in German. Due to his choice of portraying the perspective of the perpetrator, he encountered challenges in getting it published in Germany. Consequently, the book made its debut in the United States in 1971 through an English translation by Andrew White, and then in 1977, it was eventually published in Germany. Through the lens of the perpetrator's perspective, the novel narrates the life of Max Schulz, a mass murderer affiliated with the SS. Following World War II, Schulz adopts a Jewish identity and ultimately relocates to Israel as a means to evade prosecution in Germany. The disguise and change of identity are also evident in *Time's Arrrow* with its protagonist Odilo, who assumes the names according to the places he flees to, namely Hamilton, John and lastly Todd Friendly. This theme reflects the actual evasion of Nazis from justice. Mary Fulbrook explains how after the war "…most of the guilty got away with it … Only a tiny minority were tried and sentenced for Nazi crimes. Fewer than one percent of those involved in killing Jews were ever convicted for their crimes" (31). Furthermore, a significant number of former Nazis quietly integrated into the new society without facing substantial accountability for their criminal actions (Fulbrook 32); in the case of Max Schulz from the novel *The Nazi and the Barber,* the grim reality was that he integrated himself into the very society he once a role in destroying, the Jewish society.

Fulbrook continues to present how following the post-war period in West Germany, individuals in the judiciary, the *medical profession*, employers of slave

labor, and the civil service predominantly managed to evade justice in the courtroom (32, emphasis mine). The fact that medical professionals could evade justice, as portrayed in *Time's Arrow* served as a catalyst for my concentration on these individuals. I contend that their violations of the law and betrayal of the Hippocratic oath were even more severe, and insulting compared to other already grim transgressions. "Blame was shifted onto a few individuals—preferably already convicted or dead—as well as the convenient symbol of all evil, the SS, 'alibi of the nation'" (Reitlinger qtd. in Fulbrook 32). Their connections and shared solidarity reinforced the process of concealing a tainted history, and scapegoating the convicted or already dead individuals drew the attention away from them. This allowed those who found their way out of Nazism to settle in secluded or remote places to lead quite lives through the pensions acquired for their service to Hitler's Reich.

The assessment of the gravity and degree of perpetration shifted accordingly, almost selectively establishing a hierarchy of perpetration among the individuals based on their status rather than the nature of their crimes. Fulbrook demonstrates this unfair demarcation as follows:

> Even if there was, in Norbert Frei's terminology, a "normative demarcation" in Adenauer's Germany, this was partial and selective: the notion of "perpetrator" was progressively narrowed to the lower- class thugs and concentration camp sadists, while professionals who had assisted in the administration of discriminatory and ultimately murderous policies were let off the hook (Frei qtd. in Fulbrok 32-33).

However, most of these individuals transgressed the lines and committed crimes against humanity at one lever or the other. While there were real sadistically driven perpetrators among them, there were also people who were just "doing their jobs" and acting as mere conformists abiding to the laws of the time. In their study, Uğur Ümit Üngör and Kjell Anderson assert that typologizing perpetrators is not easy since they do not fall within the boundaries of the same given type. They suggest that "for example, "law-abiding citizens" may become "conformist" perpetrators, while borderline types (those who are marginalized but not criminals) may be "profiteers," and "criminals" (those with a record of violence) may become "sadist" perpetrators during mass atrocities" (Üngör and Anderson 10). They draw a model concerning

perpetration as a socio-ecological model comprising of three different analytical levels: top level (architects), mid-level (organizers), and bottom level (killers) (11). Initially, historical research predominantly focused on the top-level perpetrators, neglecting the lower levels. However, a shift has occurred with the emergence of more detailed studies delving into the middle and micro levels. When it comes to the level of perpetrators, most of the perpetrator novels are concerned with the bottom level perpetrators, that is, the killers.

A few novels depict the top-level perpetrators, namely Adolf Hitler himself, such as *The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.* by George Steiner which revolves around Jewish Nazi hunters discovering a fictional version of Adolf Hitler (A.H.) who is alive in the Amazon jungle three decades after the war. There are also visual representations of top-level perpetrators, namely and perhaps the most remarkably the 2004 movie *Der Untergang* (*Downfall*) directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel. The movie depicts the final days of Adolf Hitler in his Berlin bunker right before the end of World War II. The portrayal of Adolf Hitler, played by the exceptional actor Bruno Ganz offers a unique and powerful depiction, capturing the dictator's despotic, furious, aggressive, and defeated yet undeniably human essence. These works, whether focused on the top-level or bottom-level perpetrators, depicts the ideological environment and how it is initiated and absorbed by the individuals. Such extreme ideology can "have a penchant for mass violence due to their anti-liberal nature, flirtations with utopia, development of sharp in/out group dynamics, and permissiveness to the use of violence" (Weitz qtd. in Üngör and Anderson 12). As a result of such extremism, individual identity can merge into a collective identity, forming an out-group perceived as a dangerous and profoundly alienated, dehumanized enemy —in the case of Germans of Nazi era it is the Jews. It creates an ideological environment where "commitment to Nazi worldviews and exercise of brute force were the norm. [The] organizations were embedded in a largely supportive (or fearful) societal context" (Fulbrook 27). In such an ideologically intoxicated social context, all forms and degrees of perpetration become intolerable and unthinkable. Diverging from the portrayals of perpetrators delineated earlier in various literary and visual mediums, my emphasis will adopt a distinct perspective. Specifically, I intend to shed light on the harrowing dimension of Nazi perpetration through the lens of a doctor's experiences. The analysis of *Time's Arrow* will provide a nuanced viewpoint, centering on the experiences of a Nazi doctor as a perpetrator.

### 1.2 Overview of *Time's Arrow*

*"Not only will you break through the paralysing difficulties of the time—you will break through time itself ... and dare to be barbaric, twice barbaric indeed."*[2]

Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus*

*Time's Arrow* deviates from its counterparts in the perpetrator novel genre, charting a distinct course in terms of narrative mode. Through the narrative of his 1991 novel *Time's Arrow*, Martin Amis explores the concept of time and the nature of the offence in telling the story of a former Nazi Doctor named Tod Friendly, who relives his life backwards in time. With its unorthodox narrative framework, which shows the progression of events from death to birth in reverse, the Holocaust is provocatively examined. The novel first welcomes the reader with its protagonist, Tod Friendly as an elderly American resident, awaking from his death in the hospital as a result of a traffic accident. The narrative follows his life in reverse as it moves forward, enabling readers to witness his experiences during World War II, the horrors of the Holocaust along with the protagonist's involvement in it, and especially his relationships with women. This reversal of viewpoint adds a novel perspective to the well-known historical events of Holocaust by exposing the atrocities of war and the cruelty imposed on the innocent from the voice of a perpetrator's consciousness. Pushing the limits of narrative structure, reversing the meaning both semantically and physically, *Time's Arrow* challenges the reader's thinking, and induces them to reflect on the nature of time and offense, the potential for evil in people, and the complexities of individual identity and the human psyche through Amis' creative approach to these events in history.

In accordance with this aim, this literary analysis seeks to unveil how Nazi doctors became the instigators and focal points of the Holocaust atrocity, by delving profoundly into the evil that they embodied. Drawing on the references and clues to real-life Nazi doctors given in the novel and making use of the symbolism in the novel, this analysis will explore the psyche of the Nazi perpetrator and seek to find possible answers as to how such people came to commit the evil they did. Although there have been many narratological and moral readings on this novel, this study will attempt a

[2] *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as Told by a Friend (1947)*

more psychoanalytical reading in order to penetrate further and investigate how the human psyche initiates and reacts to the self-created chaos in such dark times. Many psychoanalytic studies will be utilized in this study, from the early pioneer Sigmund Freud, and his successors Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva, to more recent trauma studies. Most importantly, the main source of this reading will be based on Robert Jay Lifton's "doubling" theory in his book *Nazi Doctors.* Since the narration of the novel is told backwards, this chapter will present the reading in an intelligible, chronological order to give the reader a clearer picture of events and what this reversed order tries to imply, or simply to explain why the world in Auschwitz "makes sense" in the reality of *Time's Arrow*.

With this new sense of order, this experimental narrative form and narrative perspective along with the general narrative tone, which is a mix of black humor and irony, Amis attempts to convey a raw version of the Holocaust for our contemporary minds to perceive. Prior to delving into the literary analysis of the novel, it is essential to acknowledge and highlight a number of critical perspectives and the overall reception that the novel garnered. One of the criticisms on the novel's formal strategy comes from Pearl K. Bell who defines *Time's Arrow* as a "grievously misguided approach to the Holocaust" whose narrative technique is a "bag-of tricks gamesmanship" (qtd. in Trussler 35). However, certain human experiences, such as the Holocaust itself, cannot be accurately depicted by various types of general plotting and it is inappropriate or incommunicable to storify for the pain and the suffering it embodies, therefore, as Michael Trussler claims, "the Shoah [Holocaust] must be approached differently than other historical events" (35). Amis approaches this very phenomenon differently – and even in a particularly unconventional manner, addresses the problem of the impossibility of "writing poetry after Auschwitz", as Adorno claims, and comes up with a solution for the "problem of representational accountability honestly" (35), and he does this through his time reversal. By breathing life back into the Jewish victims, he enables his Nazi protagonist to "help" Jews through semantic inversion and resolves him by sending him back to his mother's womb – which acts as his redemption. On this James Diedrick writes: "In his descriptions of breathing life back into the victims of Nazi genocide, the narrator effects a poetic undoing of the Holocaust, all the more poignant for the reader's knowledge that it can *never* be undone" (qtd. in Badrideen 60); however, at the end of the novel, it is undone, and it is a story that does not pass along, for it self-destructs.

Thus, he resolves this irresolvable question by undoing it through reversed chronology, reversal of meaning, and reversal of perspective.

Amis states that "[t]he Holocaust is the central event of the twentieth century" (Ballante qtd. in Finney 101), therefore it is understandable why, as Dermot McCarthy observes, Amis's "generation suffers from an event it did not experience and will expire from one it seems powerless to prevent" (qtd. in Finney 101). Furthermore, in 2002 Amis confessed "I feel I have an unfinished business with Hitler" (Heawood qtd. in Finney 101), revealing the heavy impact and responsibility that the post-war remnants of this catastrophic destruction have left on the following generation. Henceforth, despite Martin Amis's simple intention to portray the Holocaust, the task of accomplishing such a depiction through ordinary and conventional means proves far from straightforward, as Elie Wiesel posits that "at Auschwitz not only man died, but also the idea of man" (qtd. in Finney 102), thereby challenging the very foundations of trust in civilized society, justice, and goodness. Such metanarratives, encompassing concepts embodied in the Hippocratic oath, the Bible, and similar belief systems and principles, are fundamentally undermined by the existence of Auschwitz. Consequently, as articulated by Geoffrey Hartman, a sentiment emerges that "we feel that the Holocaust cannot be a part of us: the mind rejects it, casts it out" (qtd. in Trussler 36), for it entails a profound reversal of our established beliefs, values, and perceptions of reality. It is precisely this rejection by the human mind that necessitates the utilization of a similarly reversed logic in introducing the Holocaust into literature — an effect that Amis endeavors to achieve through his narrative inversion.

This narrative inversion intentionally creates a chronological gap that penetrates how the reader and the protagonist see the historical events unfold. This is because, as contemporary readers, "[w]e shall never know whether Nazism [or] the concentration camps … were intelligible or not," as Jean Baudrillard asserts, because "we are no longer part of the same mental universe" (qtd. in Trussler 37). Thus, "[t]he entire weight of the novel", claims Michael Trussler, "is directed against such an erasure of knowledge" (37). In this way, the narrator, stripped of his historical context and burden of guilt, impels the reader to partake in, if not endorse, the simultaneous repression and revelation of knowledge embedded within the novel. This sense of distancing aligns with that of Wolfgang Kayser's view that "the grotesque in art is in the "alienated world" — not a world which is merely alien but … our own world so disturbed that we no longer wish to live in it" (qtd. in Crew 646). Brian Crew, in turn,

perceives this narrative strategy employed by Amis as a means to engender "defamiliarization", compelling the reader to reconstruct the experiences of the characters and apprehend them anew (646). Of course, there is also a psychological dimension that this narrative strategy strives to bring out in the protagonist, which constitutes the fundamental essence of this literary analysis.

The inversion portrayed in the novel extends beyond temporal order and encompasses the moral and logical aspects of its world. As explained in Chapter II, Amis draws inspiration from Lifton's work on *Nazi Doctors*, highlighting how the healing profession was perverted into a means of killing, upon which he recognizes that "[h]ere was a psychotically inverted world, and if you did it backward in time, it would make sense" (DeCurtis qtd. in Finney 106). Amis effectively unveils the inherently corrupted and inverted nature of conventional concepts by reversing them, thereby highlighting their true essence. These concepts, which we once believed in and relied upon, are fundamentally flawed, and distorted in this "psychotically inverted world" from a psychotically inverted perspective. Through this reversal, Amis confronts readers with the uncomfortable realization that the positive effects derived from these concepts are, in fact, a result of their inversion. This unsettling revelation fosters a deeper "understanding", and "makes sense" (just like Auschwitz makes sense in the novel) albeit one that may elicit discomfort.

For *Time's Arrow,* a "reportorial and minimalist" novel, "history is filtered through the psychological" lens (Trussler 38), rendering and connecting to the events in the past such as delusional Aryan superiority, the defunct whole national body of Germany, the belief in the Third Reich, the sheer hatred toward Jews, Nazi ideological brainwashing, the ultimate split in the psyche of the Nazi doctors, the "bio-soldier" fantasy and most importantly the Nazi belief in progress. By moving backward, the narrative structure in and of itself makes a comment on the paradoxical "progress" of the Nazis, wherein the revival of antiquated myths is blindly believed in for the sake of national rebirth (Harris 489). This so-called "progress" ultimately results in regression, an anticipated national "rebirth" turns into yet another defeat; only letting the protagonist be reborn for a new "win." Susan Jeffords observes that "with a lost war in your hand you are sort of a woman" without a "resurrection, re-erection, re-election," and moreover, "you will not be a man again … unless you've got a replay on the war machine; a replay you win" (qtd. in Theweleit 284). In granting the protagonist the opportunity to replay events and achieve victory by taking refuge in

his mother's womb and oedipally killed by his father's penis, Amis allows him to reclaim his humanity, potency, and even the lives of those he had previously taken while remaining as "Odilo" that is, "prosperous in battle" and *unverdorben* that is "uncorrupted" by his crimes. However, of course, this will be elaborated in more detail below.

This psychological dimension on the protagonist's perception of events plays a large part in revisiting the Holocaust and re-interpreting its perpetrator's psyche. Michaela Praisler observers that throughout the narrative, "the erudite narrator shifts the emphasis to Tod's inner core, a strategy with a powerful proleptic force, announcing the horrors of the Holocaust which haunt our common past, but which lie in the narrative's future" (Praisler 185). This temporal paradox emerges from the haunting presence of the horror he has inflicted, which disrupts both his past and future. Because Tod fails to reconcile himself with this traumatic burden, it becomes a perpetual entrapment, haunting his past, present, and future. Thus, the narrative's purported "future" is, in essence, a disguised continuation of his haunted past and is haunted with all the futures of the others he has destroyed.

The narrative heads towards his "secret" that is, his criminal Nazi past, thereby paradoxically situating his past as a psychological future while physically progressing towards it. As noted by Adam Głaz, for the protagonist, then, this means only the thermodynamic time's arrow is reversed, not the psychological one (Głaz 111). The absence of a cause-effect relationship between events, caused by the reversed chronology, inhibits any sense of accountability for one's actions within the novel. This absence creates a world for Odilo in which planning, prediction, responsibility, ethics, and morality hold no weight, allowing him to remain morally "un-responsible" (Głaz 112). However, his evasion of responsibility is not a means of escaping into a "peaceful" oblivion. In fact, he actively undoes himself throughout the narration, erasing his culpable existence that caused immense suffering to others and to himself. As the instigator of his own trauma, he strives to eliminate himself, echoing the Freudian compulsion to repeat the traumatic moments in the hope of resolving them while escaping the need to face them. In Odilo's case, the traumatic cause resides within himself, prompting him to reverse his entire existence and erase the consequences of his actions.

Consequently though, this reverse narrative structure of the novel generates a perverted irony. The narrator-protagonist, who is expected to recall his past and foretell

his future, appears to be deprived of such cognitive faculties. Therefore, Dermot McCarthy aptly characterizes the novel as "an inverted *Bildungsroman*" portraying the regression of the protagonist through the lens of an "amnesiac" narrator employing a blend of "comic" and progressively "darkly grim" ironies (McCarthy 294). This phenomenon becomes evident upon examining the novel's tripartite structure. The initial three subparts of the novel provide invaluable insights into life: "What goes around comes around," "You have to be cruel to be kind," and "Because I am a healer, everything I do heals." These first three subparts reveal the stage where he reaches his mental maturation, acknowledging that the consequences of his actions will eventually demand resolution, justifying and reconciling with his criminal past by rationalizing being cruel in order to be kind, as if kindness can exist after such extreme cruelty as he performed. Additionally, he reclaims his healer persona, which had been corrupted by the killings he perpetrated.

In part II, the narrative rewinds back to his relatively younger years, where he escapes from Auschwitz. Therefore, he rationalizes "you do what you do best, not what's best to do," and "here there is no why" referring to the inexplicability and inevitability of Auschwitz, "multiply zero by zero and you still get zero" during which, ironically, he gets something, the sense of purpose since it "makes sense" for him in Auschwitz. However, in hindsight, he realizes that nothing comes from nothing[3], and repeating the same mistake cannot lead to new successes with a bit of belatedness in his comprehension. Subsequently, the part titled "She loves me, she loves me not" adopts a youthful tone, where the "world stops making sense" (157) for him. Nevertheless, he turns "innocent, emotional, popular and stupid" again (157). Lastly, the section titled "because ducks are fat" manifests a childlike reasoning, accompanied by a deviation from grammatical correctness. His judgment of the mistakes he "brang" and "choiced" (171) reflects an immature child's perspective. As also indicated by the subtitle of the novel "The Nature of the Offence," the didactic inclination underlying the novel becomes readily palpable, evident in the three distinct parts of the novel, illustrating the protagonist's progressive mental and moral decline.

Amis' radical portrayal of the Holocaust has generated significant scholarly attention, ranging from postmodern criticism, critique on post–Enlightenment grand narratives, narratology, theories of trauma, and irony. These theoretical frameworks

[3] Latin: *ex nihilo nihil fit.* King Lear: nothing will come of nothing.

aid in explaining the narrative disruption of conventional norms within the work. However, Tamás Juhász observes that trauma theorists, despite their contributions to contextualizing the Holocaust and its diverse representations, fall behind due to their focus on therapeutic and legal processes, which contrasts with the essence of *Time's Arrow*. Undoubtedly, trauma studies contribute key narrative idiosyncrasies for the novel, among which are a sense of belatedness, the representation of memory as in a state of "textual (dis)order", the emergence of a split self, and the representation of emotional numbness (Juhász 647), all of which are elucidated by Robert Jay Lifton in his study on Nazi doctors.

### 1.3 Perpetrator's Trauma

The exploration of trauma studies can shed light on various concepts experienced by perpetrators, including but not limited to "belatedness" and "repetition." In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud explores the enduring pattern of suffering in certain individuals. He reflects on the persistent nightmares of battlefield survivors and the repetitive reenactments of those who have undergone traumatic experiences. He is intrigued by the uncanny way catastrophic events seem to cyclically manifest in the lives of those who have lived through them. Therefore, he concludes that there must be a compulsion that leads to repetition hence calls it "repetitive compulsion." Professor Cathy Caruth suggests that the traumatic neurosis "goes beyond this dramatic illustration of repetition compulsion and exceeds, perhaps, the limits of Freud's conceptual or conscious theory of trauma" (Caruth 2). She adds and argues that it is not merely "the unconscious act of the infliction of the injury and its inadvertent and unwished-for repetition, but the moving and sorrowful *voice* that cries out, a voice that is paradoxically released *through the wound*" (2). Voicing, and talking through the past experience is also emphasized in Freud's writings as he suggests that talking about one's trauma, that is, "the talking cure" would be the "cleansing of the soul" and help in the removal of the recurring "mental clouds" (Freud "The Origin" 184). Referring to Freud's texts, Cathy states that trauma is like a wound "inflicted upon the mind, breach[ing] the mind's experience of time, self, and the world, … [it is not] fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor" (3-4). Deducing from Freud's turning to literature when describing a traumatic event, Caruth draws a link between psychoanalysis and literature because both are "interested in the

complex relation between knowing and not knowing" (3). This is where the language of psychoanalysis and literature meet. The literary analysis of *Time's Arrow* will attempt to present this link.

Erin McGlothlin, for instance, by furthering trauma studies, adds a new perspective to traumatization, that is the unthinkable perpetrator's perspective — specifically here the Holocaust perpetrators', and argues that they are not exempt from this dispensation (McGlothlin "Perpetrator" 103). Psychiatric research conducted on trauma studies during and after the World Wars I and II introduced the PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder) which used to be defined as "shellshock" involving the aftershock and traumatization of soldiers fighting in a combat. This disorder, however, only involved those who suffered from the stress of "constant bombardment", and witnessed the death of comrades, who are presumed to be the victims of or witnesses to violence, not the instigators of it (103). Therefore, the perpetrator's trauma is "under-theorized" (Morag qtd. in McGlothlin 104) until MacNair coins the term "perpetrator-induced traumatic stress" (PITS) (105) resulting from "situations that would be traumatic if someone were a victim, but situations for which the person in question was a causal participant" (MacNair qtd. in McGlothlin 105) — such as committing violent crimes including genocide, mass murder, etc.

McGlothlin suggests that for perpetrators who are obligated or encouraged to engage in mass killings, especially "ordinary" or "normal" persons who exhibit no noticeable psychological disorders or criminal behavior prior to the initiation into violence, the experience of killing, especially of unarmed civilians, "may be associated with terror and horror" (Maguen qtd. in McGlothlin 105) as well as with "physical disgust and moral abhorrence" (Munch-Jurišic qtd. in McGlothlin 105), all of which are connected to traumatic stress (McGlothlin 105). McGlothlin argues that this goes for genocidal projects, too, giving SS Reich Leader Heinrich Himmler as an example for having similar feeling of distress when witnessing mass killings that he had ordered. Furthermore, the perpetration can cause a sudden shock which leads the agent to a "new dimension of human experience" which both violates social and moral codes and surpasses cognitive and psychological barriers, since the "human mind is not well suited for killing" (MacNair qtd. in McGlothlin 105). The transgression marks a moment of split in the agent's traumatic memory, of no return, where one is on the threshold of an existential break both within the self and from the moral taboos,

causing a destruction in one's mental integrity and identity. This is where the perpetrator self emerges.

The perpetrator self has different strategies to avoid any indications of the trauma. These strategies of avoidance, or rather "coping mechanisms" (Anderson qtd. in McGlothlin 107) manifest themselves in various ways. For example, rationalization, which justifies, excuses, or rationalizes their deeds, is often employed in the language of perpetrators of mass atrocities (i.e., Holocaust), revealing "the psychological or social structure of *denial* and of a specific *absence* of truth and conscious experience (Schmidt qtd. in McGlothlin 107). The denial, both "the denial of responsibility" and "the denial of memory" (MacNair qtd. in McGlothlin 107) correspond to the perpetrator's efforts to maintain and present a sense of self that is unimpaired by personal experiences of committing violent acts. In attempts to integrate the perpetrator self into the overall self, the PITS sufferer may display dissociation, "disconnection between events, experience, and consciousness" (Staub qtd. in McGlothlin 107); a depersonalization, that is, "the experience of looking on from the outside, as if the person was an observer, not an agent doing the killing" (107), derealization, and lastly a "psychic numbing" as Robert Jay Lifton proposes, doubling occurring in the psyche of the perpetrator. To gain a deeper insight on this mental symptom, Chapter II will set out to explore Robert Jay Lifton's *Nazi Doctors* and the respective socio-historical background of this era.

Narratives such as *Time's Arrow* reflect fundamental aspects of postmodernist fiction by relying on a socially shared universe of meaning while simultaneously defamiliarizing it through its inseparability from an alternative world. This tendency is particularly evident in the narratives of traumatized individuals, as in the case of Odilo in *Time's Arrow*. However, my analysis aims to delve deeper into the psyche of this unconventional narrator, whose account of this tragedy is both unwanted and, paradoxically, provides a "cathartic" (Praisler 194) perspective on the Holocaust. Specifically, my focus lies in attempting to comprehend the paradoxical nature of the perpetrator, aiming to elucidate the split between the narrator and the narrated. Considering the perpetrator's affiliation with the medical profession, the act of perpetration assumes a graver and more ominous dimension, an aspect that I endeavor to illuminate through this study. To achieve this, I will draw upon psychoanalytic theories, which offer profound insights into the human psyche and provide potential explanations for the emergence of evil within individuals and its impact on their

psyche. Evil is not a strictly inherent or extraneous aspect of human nature; rather, it can be activated or imposed upon individuals as can be seen in the case of highly civilized individuals having the capacity for evil. The premise of my argument lies on the acquired type of evil inflicting trauma not only upon its victims but also upon those who perpetrate it. Consequently, I will aim to analyze the impacts of evil on individuals and seek to recognize its manifestations. By utilizing the abundance of symbolism, both fictional and derived from real-life references embedded within the novel, I intend to portray a traumatized perpetrator's twisted mind and split psyche.

### 1.4 The Meaning of Evil

The inquiry into the nature of evil necessitates a thorough examination of the psychology of the perpetrator, as it significantly contributes to understanding this phenomenon. When contemplating the question of evil, it is essential to scrutinize both its effects and origins. The psychological dimension of the perpetrator is crucial in determining the moral nature of the act. Equally important is an investigation into the underlying sources of these evil deeds. But before all that, one needs to question the true meaning of evil.

Zachary J. Goldberg believes that the examination of the moral psychology of perpetrators is necessary for a complete understanding of the nature of evil and deduces from Kant that "evil is an invisible enemy that originates in a person's moral psychology often hiding behind reason and even good conduct" (Goldberg 74). He goes on to argue that it is only by examining the psychology of moral choice that we can hold perpetrators responsible for their actions (74). In the case of genocide perpetrators, the profound moral contamination underscores the inadequacy of moral choices and, consequently, places culpability on the perpetrators for their deeds. For further inquiry, one needs to delve into the definition of evil.

Peter French, for instance, offers a definition to evil as "a human action that jeopardizes another person's (or group's) aspirations to live a worthwhile life (or lives) by the willful infliction of undeserved harm on that person(s)" (qtd. in Goldberg 75). However, he goes on to argue that evil is "primarily about victims … victimization is the identifying characteristic of evil" (75). Victims are certainly one of the defining aspects of evil. The severity of victimization determines the impact of evil, as well. Similarly, Claudia Card characterizes evil as harm that is reasonably anticipated and intolerable, resulting from culpable wrongdoing (qtd. in Goldberg 75). Similarly, her

emphasis lies on the nature and gravity of the harms rather than the psychological states of the perpetrator, asserting that this distinction is what sets evil apart from ordinary wrongs. Todd Calder suggests that that evil is characterized by two elements: significant harm and an inexcusable intention to facilitate, permit, or observe significant harm for an unworthy objective. (qtd. in Goldberg 75). Even though these definitions do not completely dismiss the perpetrators; they do neglect the psychological aspect of the perpetrator and are, therefore, psychologically shallow. In the case of Nazis, for instance, the goal was never "unworthy" as Calder defined, for them it was a sacred mission to revive the Third Reich and doing it for the *Volk*.

It is perhaps the complex nature of evil that ordinary people can make sense of these evil acts, that they can justify them, that ordinary people can cause not-so-ordinary evil. This dynamic reveal that individuals with entirely ordinary motivations can commit acts of evil when placed in exceptional circumstances that prompt such behavior. Christopher Browning's analysis of the Nazis as ordinary men in *Ordinary Men Reserve Police Battalion 101* puts an emphasis on the "situational factors" (Browning 166), "peer pressure to conform" (Browning 175, 189) "culture of brutality" turn "ordinary men" into "willing executioners" (216). He highlights the "binding factors" or "cementing mechanisms" that make disobedience of refusal for the Nazi individual more difficult (173). This shows how the Nazi killers assumed an "authoritarian personality" (165) asserted by Theodor Adorno. Through this transformation, their general impetus became furthering of common goals of the *Volk*. In this context, evil was driven ideologically and intended for racial purity, and social dominance. Some of the Nazi perpetrators were obligated to obey to rules, some were passive complicit by simply being a conformist; some were motivated by material or social gain, and some were motivated by fear, fear of social exclusion, or simply, execution.

Parallel to this, Goldberg suggests that perpetrators of atrocity can be motivated by *banal* motivations such as obedience to authority, peer pressure, or thoughtlessness, (Goldberg 77) much like Hanna Arendt's statement, "banality of evil" on the SS officer Adolf Eichmann's trial, who is one of the major organizers of the Holocaust. From his testimony, Arendt realized that "Eichmann's murderous behavior did not necessarily correspond with stereotypes of SS men. He was neither mad nor a monster nor brainwashed, far from it" (Earl 113). Instead, he was a diligent bureaucrat, a relatively typical yet ambitious individual whose regular duties in office IV B4 played a role in

enabling the killing of millions of innocent people (Arendt 22-23). He was the "epitome of the banality of evil" (Arendt 252), Arendt argued. However, this comes across as an understatement, since in the contexts of a legal trial, individuals usually try to fight for their lives and thus give false impressions. Browning recognizes a contradiction in her thesis, particularly in cases that conflict with the shootings on the Western front. In those instances, perpetrators killed their victims—men, women, and children—at close range, face to face. These perpetrators were far from being *banal* as Arendt suggested.

In his study Nazi Doctors, Robert Jay Lifton goes further than this statement and examines the not-so-banal actions of these *banal* looking people. He offers interviews conducted on former Nazi criminals in a non-legal environment, a departure from the approach in Adolf Eichmann's case. Despite the disturbing revelations in their testimonies, Lifton tries to come up with psychological explanations as to how and why the evil in these individuals emerged. Regardless of their pre-existing commitment to Nazism, the Nazis had to adjust to their transformed social identities. Lifton attributes this phenomenon to a concept he terms "doubling." To gain a deeper insight on this mental symptom, the following pages will set out to explore Robert Jay Lifton's *Nazi Doctors* and the respective socio-historical background of this era.

## CHAPTER II: SOCIO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Introduction to Robert Jay Lifton's *Nazi Doctors*

In the afterword of *Time's Arrow*, Martin Amis confesses that he owes a great debt to his friend Robert Jay Lifton who gave him a copy of his book *The Nazi Doctors* (Amis 175). He states that "[his] novel would not and could not have written without it" (175). For Amis, who had been wanting to write a man's story in reverse chronology, *The Nazi Doctors* played a pivotal role for shaping the story, the context, and the character of the specified novel because, as he states in a 2002 interview, after reading *The Nazi Doctors*, "now there would be a point" to reverse the arrow of time (Reynolds and Noakes 20). And the point is this historical tragedy, as the subtitle of the novel goes, "The Nature of the Offence." In this interview, Amis expresses his view on this subject as follows:

> And what I'm saying is that the Holocaust would have been exactly what the Nazis said it was — i.e., a biomedical initiative for the cleansing of Germany — if, and only if, the arrow of time ran the other way. That's how fundamental the error was. And I think the novel [*Time's Arrow*] expresses that. Nazism was a biomedical vision to excise the cancer of Jewry. To turn it into something that *creates* Jewry is a respectable irony (Reynolds and Noakes 20).

Amis defines the nature of this offence as "unique" but not in terms of its cruelty or cowardice but in terms of its style which is, to him, "a combination of the atavistic and the modern", "reptilian and logistical" (Amis 176). He claims that the Nazis found "the core of the reptile brain[4] and built an autobahn that went there" arguing that it was "built for speed and safety, built to endure for a thousand years" and resembling it to "the *Reichsautobahnen* … [which] were also designed to conform to the landscape, harmoniously, like a garden path" (176).

Similarly, in his study, Robert Jay Lifton, builds a psychological road that goes to the depths of the brains, or rather the psyche, of the Nazi doctors who participated in evil in the death camps. With his study, Lifton aims to explore "the broad Nazi

[4] Here the term "reptilian brain" likely denotes the primal segment of the human brain governing instinctive self-preservation behaviors crucial for individual and species survival. This region shares predominant structures similar with the brains of snakes and lizards, as implied by the name. In this analogy by Amis, the focus is on the Nazi obsession with preserving the "Aryan race."

"biomedical vision" as a central psychohistorical principle of the regime, and the psychological behavior of the individual Nazi doctors" (Lifton 4), in order to understand more about how Nazis and Nazi doctors in particular came to do such demonic acts surpassing comprehension, from both dimensions. It should be noted that "understanding" should not replace "moral judgement" or "forgiving." As Lifton mentions, the principle including the French aphorism *Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner* (to understand all is to forgive all) (Lifton 13) does not correspond to forgiving all when full understanding includes an awareness of both moral and psychological issues that lie behind this crime. Lifton suggests that this danger needs to be recognized and "it can be overcome only by one's remaining aware of the moral context of psychological work" (13). Therefore, in both Lifton's work, and this dissertation, there is no intention to justify or forgive the atrocities that the Nazis caused, while trying to understand the nature of the evil they committed.

Apart from the psychological explanations it offers, *Nazi Doctors* includes interviews that Lifton conducted with a group of former Nazi doctors. Regarding the interviews, Lifton observes that while some of them wished to be heard, none of them "arrived at a clear ethical evaluation of what he had done, and what he had been a part of" (8). These individuals could provide elaborate accounts of events and describe the general atmosphere with genuine feelings. However, Lifton noted that their testimony often came across with a sense of detachment, almost as if narrating in the third person. Therefore, in terms of moral presence, the narrator was not really present. In order not to color and impact their responses and create prejudice on the receiving part, Lifton intentionally hid his Jewish identity from the Nazi doctors he interviewed. He believed this would cause a high percentage of prejudice and refusal from the doctors; however, some of them suspected, of course. Lifton notes that most of these doctors adopted a post-World War II conservative political and social stance that was characterized by criticism of Nazi extremes but sympathy for more authoritarian features of German society, and they occasionally displayed "a flash of nostalgia for Nazi times, for an era when life had intensity and meaning whatever the conflicts engendered" (11). During the interviews, Lifton himself felt the need for moral confrontation and accusation against the doctors along with feelings ranging from rage to revulsion. He even admits having nightmares about Auschwitz, "sometimes involving [his] wife and children" (12).

Considering the limits of psychological explanation, Lifton brings up Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* which is about her renowned judgement on Adolf Eichman and emphasis on the "banality of evil." The entire Nazi activity has long been characterized and attributed by this phrase; however, Lifton goes beyond this perception and attempts to understand these banal doctors and their not-so-banal activities, or as he puts it the "banal men performing demonic acts" (12). He suggests that "in doing so — or in order to do so— the men themselves changed: and in carrying out their actions, they themselves were no longer banal" (12). To surpass this banality and explore the territories of the "not understandable", Lifton adopts a significant principle, that even though certain events go beyond our comprehension, a partial grasp or at least an attempt is all it takes to approach this sensitive topic. In this sense, the nature of evil is better understood with a mix of psychological and moral considerations, along with discovering the psychological factors that advocate evil.

In his book *Becoming Evil* James Waller similarly seeks to understand how "ordinary people" have committed "extraordinary evil" (Waller 9) bringing historian Saul Friedlander's suggestion that "we now need the lens of psychology to bring some focus to the "incomprehensibility" of extraordinary human evil that scholars continue to document" (9). Waller believes that it is "ordinary people" who commit genocide and mass killing (20); however, he does not attribute it to banality like Arendt. On the contrary, he relates it to the components that psychologically form the enemy, the *Other*, such as: the "us-them thinking" (198): comprising of the inherent and universally observed facets of human nature, encompassing ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and a drive for social dominance; "moral disengagement" (201): involving cultural belief systems that mold perpetrator's tendencies for moral justification, dehumanizing the victims and giving euphemistic labeling to evil actions (211); and the immediate social environment, professional socialization, group cohesion that makes one's role and identity. These interpretations both enhance and go in line with Lifton's psychological interpretation.

In his psychological interpretation, Lifton partially departs from the canonical figures such as Freud, and Otto Rank with his 1941 study *Beyond Psychology*, claiming "psychology itself was entrapped in its own scientific ideology" (qtd. in Lifton 13), and assumes that such ideology could simplify Auschwitz or the SS doctors who were involved, down to a series of mechanisms. Therefore, in order to examine

the nature of evil and to evoke moral questions, he suggests "one need not remain entirely *beyond* psychology but must constantly look at the matters that psychology has ignored" (13). He states that his psychological paradigm departs from Freudian model life/death instincts and focuses on life continuity, or the symbolization of life and death. In his paradigm, which has an immediate and an ultimate dimension, he equals separation, disintegration, and stasis to death, and signifiers of death, while equaling the experiences of connection, integrity, and movement to a sense of vitality and with the symbolization of life. By implication, this ultimate dimension suggests that people ask for a sense of immortality, surviving through offspring, human affect, religious doctrines, or whatever bears an eternal nature.

The experience of transcendence, an intense psychic state within which time and death disappear, can bring this sense of immortality, too, or what Otto Rank called, "immortality systems" — if one is to begin to grasp the force of the Nazi projection of the "Thousand Year Reich." Likewise, the Nazi notion of the *Volk*, which goes beyond just referring to people, represented for many German intellectuals the idea of a collective group intimately linked to a transcendent essence. The *Volk*, therefore, materializes the immortalizing force in connection with eternal racial and cultural essence. And this connection is the Nazi version of "revolutionary immortality" (14). In order to achieve this sense, some boundaries had to be crossed. A Darwinian kind of "selection" was organized in the Nazis' favor, which crossed the boundaries between nature (natural selection) and God (the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away) (17). Through these organized selections the Nazi human evolution aimed at getting rid of the "gangrenous appendix in the body of mankind", the racial polluters, "racial tuberculosis", "the eternal bloodsuckers" "people's parasite," (16) those of the Jewish race. Through this organized mass murder, including forced sterilization, medical killing and eventually death camps, a vital boundary between healing and killing was violently crossed. This violation is so flagrant that neither logic nor morality can reconcile such violation with the Hippocratic oath.

### 2.2 The Historical Scene

It should be noted that the emergence of the highly organized and murderous regime in Germany did not transpire overnight. To comprehend the broader motivations that impelled numerous civilized individuals to perpetrate acts of extraordinary evil, one must take into account the leading historical context and the socio-political scene of

Germany during the interwar period. After the WWI, Germany found itself in the throes of a profound crisis. With a lost war at hand, a typical German household could often be depicted as working-class citizens struggling with unemployment, dire poverty, and the anguish of providing for their starving families. The nation had suffered the loss of about two million lives in the war, with an additional 1.5 million veterans returning home bearing physical and psychological scars. This collective trauma left the German population emotionally drained, devastated, and consumed by a vehement desire for retribution.

Furthermore, Germany was compelled to sign a humiliating peace treaty, relinquish significant territories, and shoulder an unreasonable amount of debt, which precipitated severe economic turmoil. On top of it, the Great Depression hit, leading hyperinflation rates increase one thousand percent per month, and leaving the Germans to impoverished. All the socio-economic systems that had promised prosperity began to fail: Liberalism, Democracy, religion, one by one losing their power. Germany was facing an existential threat of literal extinction. All this depravity seemed to be contributing to what was to come.

That is when Adolf Hitler entered the scene, wielding his charismatic charm and potential brilliance, while pledging to preserve the German race. The Nazis, under Hitler's leadership, firmly opposed what caused destruction upon Germany: capitalists, communists, and notably, the infamous enemy within: the Jews. All along, what is striking is the fact that doctors, those to whom human life is traditionally entrusted, played a pivotal role in perpetrating acts of destruction — acts that are very foreign to their healing nature.

### 2.3 Breaking of the Hippocratic Oath: Sterilization

*I swear by Apollo Physician, by Asclepius, by Health by Panacea, and by all the gods and goddesses, making them my witness, that I will carry out, according to my ability and judgement, this oath, and this indenture.… I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgement, but never with a view to injury and wrongdoing. I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art. In whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick, and I will abstain from all intentional wrongdoing and harm…. Now if I carry out this oath, and break it not, may I gain*

*forever reputation among all men for my life and for my art; but if I transgress it and forswear myself, may the opposite befall me.*

*– Oath of Hippocrates*

Before Auschwitz and the other concentration camps, there was a breaking point that led to the violation of the Hippocratic oath. It all began when the Nazis devised a system of state-mediated, state-justified, direct medical killing or "camouflaged mass murder" (Lifton 21), that is, "euthanasia." This system referred to executions that were planned through medical means with medical decisions and which were conducted, performed and supervised by Nazi doctors and their assistants. The justification for the direct medical killing was based on the concept of "life unworthy of life" *(lebensunwertes Leben).* Through this extreme biomedical vision, based on the principle of "life unworthy of life", Nazis initially carried out coercive sterilization, which was followed by the killing of "impaired" children in hospitals, and then the killing of "impaired" adults, mainly collected from mental hospitals to be sent to the killing centers with gas chambers (21). Nazis expanded their outrage in the same killing centers to execute the "impaired" inmates, and eventually to the mass murder of mostly the Jews, in Auschwitz and the other death camps. This outrageous project included the murderous experiments conducted on the inmates, coercive abortions and castrations, tortures, deliberate malnutrition, and negligence, all of which annihilated the Hippocratic oath and damaged the public confidence in those who took this oath. An oath denouncing from its Hippocratic basis, hence become *hypocritical*.

The mass killing project started with sterilization. Such a sterilization program existed in the Western world way before Nazi Germany, namely in the United States. By 1920, the American compulsory sterilization program on those criminally insane and genetically inferior, along with the growing interest in eugenics[5] were existing factors (22). These factors must have played a pivotal role in inspiring the ideology of racial and genetic "hygiene" in Nazi Germany. In 1923, a German physician named Fritz Lenz was critical of his fellow citizens and the Weimar Constitution for their falling behind in terms of eugenics research; however, he was also critical of the general American focus on protecting the "white race" rather than the "Nordic race" — this is perhaps where the German focus on preserving the specific "Aryan race"

[5] "Eugenics" is a term coined by Francis Galton in 1883 referring to the principle of improving the genetic quality of human race.

comes from. The fear of "national degeneration" and a threat to the health of "civilized races" (23) led to the racial-eugenic drive in the United States to sterilize huge numbers of convicts and mentally ill patients. An emergent biomedical concept that was connected to the over-ardent American eugenics movement had the following potential scope, as A. E. Wiggam rightfully puts it: "The first warning which biology gives to statesmanship is that the advanced races of mankind are going backward; … that civilization, … is self-destructive; efforts to improve man's lot, instead of improving man, are hastening the hour of his destruction" (23). That is to say, the so-called civilized races are backfiring on themselves, and going backwards while supposedly developing. At times like this, progress becomes regression in terms of civilization; the kind of progress that is an accumulation of horror, regression, and chaos.

For Germans, however, the eugenic movement had a specific tone of romantic excess. As in the example of Lenz and his earlier statement in 1917, that "race was the criterion of value" and "the State is not there to see that the individual gets his rights, but to serve the race" through "organic socialism", with a fear that, without a radical eugenics program, "our [Nordic] race is doomed to extinction" (24). For this reason, creating a mass sterilization in Germany in the 1920s for Germans like Lenz became a sacred mission. It was this holy purpose that encouraged Germans to embrace National Socialism. The entire Nazi regime, therefore, was built on a biomedical vision that *required* the kind of racial purification that would "progress" (or rather regress) from sterilization to extensive killing (24). So, the regime initiated the so-called long-needed genetic/racial hygiene.

This "sacred mission" had been announced in Hitler's publication of *Mein Kampf* as well, advocating that the German people should be "assembling and preserving the most valuable stocks of basic racial elements [and]… slowly and surely raising them to a dominant position" (24; Hitler 395). Similarly, he asserts that "the *völkisch* state must see to it that only the healthy beget children.… [The State] must declare unfit for propagation all who are in any way visibly sick or who have inherited a disease and can therefore pass it on" (22; Hitler 417). Therefore, it was the very first thing Hitler did in the name of "sacred mission" to sterilize the members of the state, as soon as he came to power on January 30, 1933, and took the oath of office as Chancellor of the Third Reich. Under the Nazi government, sterilization became the

very first application of biomedicine to the issue of whether the putatively genetically and racially inferior population should live or die.

The early sterilization act was first announced on June 22, 1933, by the interior minister Wilhelm Frick, who declared that stern and extensive measures were warranted since Germany faced a serious threat of *Volkstod* (death of the nation) (25). Within the first six months of Hitler's regime, sterilization became a basic doctrine and was based on the state's medicalized justification of "life unworthy of life." Among the "hereditarily sick" were "categories of congenital feeblemindedness", "schizophrenia", "manic depressive insanity", "epilepsy" "Huntington's chorea", "hereditary blindness", "hereditary deafness", "grave bodily malformation", "hereditary alcoholism" with pertinent individuals collected from institutions (25). On 18 October 1935, the infamous Nuremberg Law was issued, which forbade Jewish and non-Jewish people to get married or engaging in any sexual activity, with the purpose of "preserving German blood" and "securing the German nation for all future time" (25).

There was not much opposition to sterilization because of the fear of the regime, because any negative reaction was crushed. The Catholic Church disapproved of it but avoided any possible confrontation and could do nothing but urge for Catholic judges and physicians to be excluded from the law's enforcement (29). An important question was raised by one of the judges on a Hereditary Health Appeals Court: that of the "burden of unusual responsibility placed on doctors to perform operations that serve no therapeutic purpose" (29). The response to this morally significant question came from Gerhard Wagner, a leading Nazi medical authority, and a zealous advocate of sterilization, in a column in a Party newspaper, which simply stated that the nation's survival came before "dogma and conflicts of conscience" (29) and that anyone who opposed the government's plan would face harsh punishment. Most of the doctors that Lifton interviewed had approved of sterilization, and although some thought that "the law was totally messed up" (29) and the Party's idealism of the time produced a widespread culture of heavy devotion, they, nonetheless, contributed their services to the state by merely doing their job.

This occurred due to the Nazification of medicine, education and military which was the turning point for the transition from sterilization to direct medical killing — euthanasia, and finally to systematic mass murder. For instance, Rudolf Ramm, a medical professor at the University of Berlin, put forth the radical idea in a

seminal journal that each doctor could no longer only serve as a caregiver for the sick but would also be a "cultivator of the genes," a "physician to the *Volk*," and a "biological soldier"; a "caretaker of the race" "preventing bastardization through unworthy, racially alien elements" and "attaining the national goal of keeping our blood pure" (30). He also argued that taking an incurable patient's life, "euthanasia" "was the most merciful treatment" and "an obligation to the *Volk*" (30). The health of the Volk meant more than individual health, and according to one of the interviewers, the main principle was to become a "doctor to the *Volkskörper* ['national body' or 'people's body'], emphasizing "[their] duty… to the collectivity" (30). The totalitarian perception of the national body, the totalized community (*Gemeinschaft*), coercive unification and elimination of possible oppositions within the social organization (*Gleichshaltung*), the need to become a national Gestalt unit were predominantly present in the spirit of Nazification.

Even the Hippocratic oath was Nazified, with Gerhard Wagner's claim that medicine had been "despiritualized" by the "mechanically oriented spirit" of Jewish professors (32). Thus, there was a need to return to the earlier generation, the Hippocratic oath. Consequently, Heinrich Himmler, the supreme commander of the Nazi police and the *Reichführer* of the SS, adopted Hippocrates as a role model for SS doctors. Himmler mentioned "the great Greek doctor Hippocrates," his character and achievements in a brief preface to a collection of short volumes for SS doctors titled "Eternal Doctors," which was approved and "authorized" by Hitler (32). This contradictory Nazi embrace of Hippocratic principle was referred as "an ironical joke of world history" by a witness in testimony at the Nuremberg Medical Trial. This paradox was justified with the underlying logic of reconstructing the medicine and the total German nation for the sake of greater healing.

Nazis also departed from conventional medicine because of the weakening religious values. They opposed the exaggerated Christian compassion for the weak individual rather than focusing on the wellbeing of the *Volk*. With this rather Nietzschean stance, they also rejected the Christian principle of charity (*caritas*), "the ill-conceived love of thy neighbor" and claimed the state's mission was to grant life to the healthy, hereditarily sound and racially pure (32). Nazified medicine, thus, involved applied biology, as Rudolf Hess stated: "National Socialism is nothing but applied biology" adding that "we [Nazi doctors] introduced biological considerations into [Party] policies" (31). This biomedical vision was so intense among physicians

that with 45 percent they had one of the highest ratios of Party members of any profession, revealing the failure of religion, and power of the instilled Nazi ideology.

This Nazi biomedical vision was inextricably linked to the systematic persecution of Jewish physicians. Victimizing their Jewish colleagues allowed German doctors to conflate their "scientific racism" and anti-Semitism with their professional and economic motives to eliminate their challenging competitors. Germans had long felt threatened by Jews and their perceived otherness as a threat to German state, race and society. This worry was passed down to the German doctors who strived to solve the so-called "Jewish problem" (35). The key statement of Heinrich von Treitschke, a notable historian of the nineteenth century, in 1879 that "The Jews are our misfortune" (35) is crucial in this case which served as an image transmitted over generations. Lifton recognizes this reflection on some of the interviewed doctors through their references to Treitschke's statement. Seemingly, the image of Jewish-caused German "misfortune" reminded the Germans that there was indeed a serious "Jewish problem" that Germans had to solve.

Treitschke accentuated the dangerous Jewish "intrusion" into what had to be a "Christian-German state," and the threat that the children of these "alien people from East" (eastern Europe) "would one day dominate" Germany's institutions, especially economy and the press (36). For many German doctors, the notion of Jewish "dominance" was indeed becoming reality in their profession, with Jewish doctors constituting 50 percent of Germany's medical profession in large cities, and 13 percent in general — along with their world-renowned scientific achievements. Therefore, Hitler placed a special emphasis on "the cleaning of the medical profession" mainly because of the Nazi biomedical expectation of "racial leadership" (36). For this reason, within two months of Hitler's regime, an anti-Jewish boycott campaign began in Berlin, on 1 April 1933, posing constant threat, torture, bullying, physical abuse in order to discourage Jewish doctors from pursuing their profession. In early 1933, official measures had been taken against Jews: gradual limitations on their professions, academic prohibitions and finally on 3 August 1939, with the fourth amendment to the Nuremberg Laws, all medical licenses of Jewish doctors were nullified.

Jewish doctors were considered "evil" and a "menace" for their "obsession with sexology and defense of homosexuality, along with the formation of Freudian psychoanalysis" — all in all, leading the German *Volk* to "sexual degeneration" and ultimate "destruction" (42). There were also caricatures of evil Jewish doctors

performing abortion on young Aryan women, supposedly undermining German womanhood and threating the innocence of young Aryan girls (41). Abortions were prohibited unless the child was defected or was of Jewish blood which was an "racial emergency situation" (42). Not only the medicine profession but also academic medical was Nazified. Universities became "intellectual frontier fortresses" and "bodies of troops" (37), and a public vow was signed to support Hitler, among those who signed the vow were reputable people such as philosopher Martin Heidegger and surgeon Ferdinand Sauerbruch. The principle of *Gleichshaltung* paved the way for the formation of a violent and arrogant subculture among students, namely Hitler Youth. Medical students were told to become "biological soldiers" with "marching boot and the book," "placing one's body and mind in the service of the militarized and ideologized authority of the state" (38). Among the oppositions against Nazi regime, the most dramatic and moving of all, was the White Rose resistance student group, denouncing the regime and declaring "We will not be silent. We are your bad conscience. The White Rose will give you no rest" (39).

Although just 350 doctors are believed to have "committed medical crimes," this number implies a large wave of criminality and might have only been "the tip of the iceberg" (43). These doctors believed, just like the popular doctor Ernst Mann had articulated, that "misery can only be removed from the world by painless extermination of the miserable!" (44). Therefore, the violent process was to continue with the direct medical killing, that is, "the mercy killing" — euthanasia, materializing the sheer brutality and ideology into a state-authorized murderous project.

### 2.4 Genetic Cleansing: Euthanasia

Similar to the sterilization program, the "mercy killing" had considerable advocacy in the United States as well. However, the American medical practice of mercy killing included patients extremely impaired both physically and mentally; it had legal limitations and received public backlash and did not evolve into a systematic killing program — contrary to Germany. In Germany, the "scientific racism" took over and revolved around the principle of the organic *body* of the *Volk,* legitimizing the state's right to kill and decide who is to live, in order to keep the social organism alive and healthy (46). There were even books written solely to discuss this idea, namely, the 1920 "The Permission to Destroy Life Unworthy of Life" (*Die Freigabe der Vernichtung Lebensunwerten Lebens*) written by two acclaimed professors Karl

Binding and Alfred Hoche. The entire concept of euthanasia was both professionalized and medicalized, and as a result transformed the act of killing into a putatively healing work.

In the book, Binding discusses the doctor's legal responsibility in "death assistance" (*Sterbehilfe*) and the "killing of the consenting participant," and the "killing of incurable idiots unable to consent" (47). He proposed that the whole process had to be evaluated by a three-person panel comprising of a general physician, a psychiatrist, and a lawyer — though this proposal would never proceed to be juridical. Hoche, on the other hand, supported that this killing policy was consistent with medical ethics, characterizing the impaired people as "empty shells of human beings" and justifying that these people were practically dead, so this type of killing was "allowable" and "useful," especially considering the fact that these people posed a tremendous "economic burden" to the state (47). Although Hoche was initially known to be against the mercy killing, after the First World War, in which he lost his son, his attitude to the issue changed radically and he advocated that "the best young men died in war, causing a loss to the *Volk* of the best available genes" (47). The entire study, therefore, projects the general German scene after the devastating First World War defeat.

There had been various means of propaganda for legitimizing the direct medical killing and developing euthanasia consciousness. From 1934, mental hospitals were encouraged to neglect their patients on purpose; each year funds were reduced; some courses were held to demonstrate the "grotesque" behavior of the mentally ill patients or rather of the "life unworthy of life." 1938 onwards, these courses began to involve members of SS, political leaders of the Party, the police, the press and prison officials. There were "informative" films — merely a medium for propaganda, depicting the consequences of heredity impairment: "The Inheritance" (*Das Erbe*, 1935); demonstrating the healthy German citizens (i.e. German girls doing gymnastics): "The Victim of the Past" (*Opfer der Vergangenheit,* 1937); dealing with direct medical killing in order to persuade the German public to accept the idea of "euthanasia" upon Karl Brandt's suggestion: "I Accuse" (*Ich klage an,* 1941) (48-49).

Hitler's involvement and great interest in the direct medical killing only precipitated the whole process to evolve into a mass murder. At the Nuremberg Party gathering in 1935, Hitler made Dr. Gerhard Wagner aware of his first recorded intention to exterminate the "incurably ill" (50). According to Hitler, "a war effort

requires a very healthy people" and the wartime where the value of human life is diminished "made it the best time for elimination of the incurably ill" (50). Whereupon a parent's petition for the "mercy killing" (*Gnadentod*, meaning "mercy death") of an infant named Knauer, born blind with one leg and part of one arm missing, and presumably an idiot, acted as the catalyst for the ultimate killings of children as well as the entire euthanasia program. The system of the project was built upon Hitler's concern that "the parents should not have the impression that they themselves were responsible for the death of this child" (51). Thus, it took the shape of a medicalized and authorized killing project.

Certainly, the project involved systematic extermination, starting with newborns and progressing to older children. Initially organized by medical experts, it later became a structured regime led by prominent doctors. The Reich Committee for the Scientific Registration of Serious Hereditary and Congenital Diseases was established to register children under three with suspected serious diseases. Midwives and doctors were mandated to report such cases, ensuring accuracy. The medical professionals were expected to draw their either-or conclusions entirely on the questionnaire, without ever examining the children or reviewing their records. The decision for the "treatment" (*Behandlung*) which meant killing, fell into three columns: plus sign meant killing, minus sign meant not killing, and the middle column meant "temporary postponement" or "observation" (53); however, generally the final judgment was in favor of killing the children. Although children and the families of those children were informed that the children would receive the best and most modern therapy available (54), it was all a deception and this intentional falsification by medical practitioners was intended to deceive and convince themselves into thinking this was *as if* a healing work rather than killing. This deception exposes the underlying psychological need of the killer doctors to ease their guilty conscience and the reversal of healing and killing by the Nazi mindset.

Individual responsibility was dispersed across this medical structure. At no point during the entire process did anyone feel personally accountable for, or even complicity in the murder of another person. It was a clockwork structure; everyone involved surpassed, and therefore, diffused the sense of responsibility; it was a lawful medical apparatus in which each individual acted as a mere cog in the machine. Prior to being killed, the children were kept for a period of time to make it appear as if they were being given medical care. Moreover, the killing was done covertly and gradually,

by adding sedatives to liquids such as the tea they drank, and gradually increasing the dose until the child finally went into a coma and then fell into an eternal sleep. The cause of death was usually falsified, listed as ordinary sickness such as pneumonia. Given this, the institutional doctor was at the forefront of the medical system, despite the regime's claims that the state accepted complete responsibility.

The doctors were the agents of the state, and from their point of view, as one doctor reported: "these children were already marked for killing on their transfer reports," so that "I did not even bother to examine them" (55) which consequently rendered any examination nothing but a formality. The murdering of children persisted after 1941, the year in which Hitler formally ordered the overall "euthanasia" project to be ceased, in fact, it undoubtedly escalated, and it was still done more irresponsibly. Five thousand children are thought to have been killed, although the actual number was likely far greater if the "wild euthanasia" period is considered. The meaning of murder, to these people, changed in order to minimize their sense of responsibility and guilt. According to one doctor, "there was no killing, strictly speaking …. People felt this is not murder, it is a putting-to-sleep" (57). While killing of the children was somewhat justifiable according to the mindset of that time, killing of a mentally ill adult was seen as murder. Ironically, though, killing of mentally sick adults took a grotesque turn with the application of gas as a killing method. There was a radical shift from syringe to gas which destroyed the whole medical conception and justification of the project.

Soon, psychiatric transfers began to be implemented of which transportation arrangements were almost a caricature. The Common Welfare Ambulance Service Ltd. (*Gemeinnützige Krankentransport*, or *Gekrat*), the organization established for this purpose, sent "transport lists" to the hospitals from which it was to collect patients. The SS officials who operated the buses frequently wore white coats to give the impression that they were doctors, nurses, or medical assistants; thus the "men with white coats and SS boots" epitomized the much of the euthanasia project. The patients, after passing the checkpoints of "observation institutions," and "transmit institutions," would finally be sent to the killing centers under T4 policy, killed by the actual doctors, which, by a doctor named Dr. Viktor Brack, was articulated as "the syringe belongs in the hand of a physician" (71) in spite of the fact that the killing weapon was a gas cock, rather than a syringe.

Among the killing centers were Hartheim, Sonnenstein, Grafeneck, Bernburg, Bradenburg, and Hadamar; all of which were isolated areas that were either former mental hospitals, nursing homes or prisons with high walls which prevented outside observation of what was happening inside. Apparently, "the unloading of the buses could be done in a way [so that] neither the screams of the patients nor any other occurrences could penetrate to the outside world" (71). Under the alleged medical advice of Dr. Heyde, Hitler is reported to have chosen the use of carbon monoxide gas as the means of execution. The choice was made as a result of an experiment carried out in early 1940 at Brandenburg, which was being used as a killing center at the time rather than a jail. Carbon monoxide gas and injection-based executions were directly compared and as a result, due to its killing efficiency and frequency, the gas worked perfectly and thus was favored.

Therefore, under the direction of SS Criminal Police officer Christian Wirth, who was lent to the T4 staff, the first Nazi gas chamber was constructed. The setup comprised a "fake shower" area with benches, and the gas was injected from the outside into water pipes that had tiny holes through which the carbon monoxide could escape. Two doctorate-level SS chemists were there to operate, one of whom ran the gas. The other, August Becker, told how: "eighteen to twenty people were led naked into the "shower room": through a peephole he observed that very quickly "people toppled over, or lay on the benches" — all without "scenes or commotion." The room was ventilated within five minutes; SS men then used special stretchers which mechanically shoved the corpses into crematory ovens without contact" (73). Nazi doctors, namely Karl Brandt, who changed his mind about this killing method after personally experiencing carbon monoxide poisoning "without feeling anything" (72), found carbon monoxide to be the "most humane form of death" (72). By this means, killing by gas clearly also killed the medical atmosphere.

Brandt, under Hitler's directive, justified the inhumane methods as a medical breakthrough. He argued that new medical procedures were often initially met with skepticism but later accepted (72). Balancing state authority and medical ethics, he emphasized the need for a method accommodating both aspects. Brandt's account gets to the heart of the doctors' acceptance of medicalized killing while allowing for self-serving aspects. Because of this embrace, many patients were deceived into thinking they would receive a medical examination, and later have "a real bath and get other clothes" (73) while in fact they were being sent directly to the gas chamber, and those

who did not fall for this deception were subdued by physical force. The entire killing sequence was the doctor's responsibility: he sucked the air out of the gas chamber, he released the carbon monoxide for about ten minutes straight, he observed the effects of the gas through the small window, and he made sure the gas was emptied so that corpses could be dissected or burnt in ovens. The deception persisted to such an extent that the ashes of cremated patients were randomly mixed together, thus the urn that the family of a deceased patient received had different cremated patients' remains.

However, no amount of bureaucratic deceit could erase the sensorial evidence of the killing: "'The heavy smoke from the crematory building is said to be visible over Hadamar every day.' And: 'At full capacity . . . [the chimneys at Hartheim] smoked day and night. Locks of hair went up through the chimneys and landed in the street'" (75). About twenty thousand Nazi military, civilian leaders and SS members were shown films (see page 35) and "case demonstrations" of severely regressed patients, mainly Jewish patients, were presented as "life unworthy of life;" one of which included Dr. Pfannmüller's demonstration of the "most simple method" of starving a child to death (76). All these errors and inconsistencies had to do with the program's official position, making this dirty, ugly and immoral view impossible for the population to accept, while on the other hand, a liberating cure for the race. However, a more radical solution, namely, the Final Solution (*Endlösung*) or more simple killing of Jews was at hand for a massive and more effective solution for the executions.

Throughout the systematic *Aktion* T4, that is the forced euthanasia operation, Jewish patients were treated differently as a separate ethnic group, due to the doctrine of "elimination [in the sense of removal] of Judaism as a whole" developed across the Nazi extermination policies. In 1939, after the Polish invasion, a "Jewish reservation" was formulated; deportation trains left for Poland during the winter of 1939-40 carrying mentally sane Jews from Austria, Bohemia and Moravia (76). The Madagascar Plan, which called for using that island as a "reserve" for Jews, was still being discussed, but there was growing talk within the Party of a "radical solution" to the "Jewish problem," which eventually became the so-called Final Solution. "Jews were to be killed — to the last man, woman, and child — simply because they were Jews"; moreover, they were considered to be special targets for the Nazis because they could represent both "dangerous genes" in a personal medical sense and "racial poison" in a collective ethnic sense (77).

June 1940 marks the start of mass Jewish killings through gassing. Jews were segregated into different houses in those killing institutions because, as Schmidt's words, "Aryan mental patients could not be expected to die together with Jewish patients, much less live together," because they were depicted as "the scum of humanity" (77). Polish Jews in Lublin faced forced slave labor and mass shootings, initially carried out to clear mental hospitals for military use, their bodies were buried by Polish prisoners who themselves were later shot. *Einsatzengruppen* soldiers' psychological strain led to the shift from shootings to explosives, but this method was inefficient. Gas became the preferred method due to its expediency.

**2.5 Racial Cleansing: Auschwitz**

The T4 death project inexorably included the concentration camps, and the program that supervised this operation went by the code name 14f13. This served as a crucial link connecting the Nazi version of euthanasia with genocide. The euthanasia of the mentally and physically impaired inmates was put into place by Himmler's directive and Bouhler's approval in the early April 1941 under "Special Treatment" (*Sonderbehandlung*) 14f13[6], which was a reference number for the operation in documents of the Concentration Camp Inspectorate (135). T4 had dispatched medical staff to the camps since the beginning to select and list inmates for execution. The standards in 14f13, however, were even poorer than the ones in T4. Nazi, white-coated physicians created a kind of collective diagnosis for Jews, which would later become a Nazi trademark. Jews did not require an examination; their status as Jews sufficed for collective arrest and "special treatment."

The term "special treatment" was then used in a specific order, first to describe medically identified "unworthy life" in society (in the T4 program, where it was less commonly used), then to describe still-medicalized "euthanasia" in the camps (via 14f13, where it was always used) of all groups considered undesirable by the regime (Jews, homosexuals, political opponents, ordinary citizens, Catholic critics etc.) (136). However, an SS instruction to camp commandants in March 1942 made it clear that prisoners who could labor should not be put under 14f13. This, of course, led to a contradictory dichotomy within the SS bureaucracy, with one party advocating maximum extermination and the other exploitation of slave labor.

[6] Other examples include 14f1 for natural death, 14f2 for suicide or accidental death, 14f3 for being shot while attempting to escape and so on.

It did not take too long for 14f13 to enter into an even more brutal phase while the war was taking its toll on people. Due to unbearable overcrowding and growing unsanitary conditions, the camp personnel began to make selections between those to kill and those to preserve for slave labor among the *Musselmanner* (to be explained) ranging from laborers from the East, Hungarian Jews, and Jehovah's Witnesses; removing gold dental work from the inmates; turning a Renaissance castle into a "children's home" intended to camouflage what was really happening there (138). All this cruelty showcases the "powerful Nazi impulse, sometimes conscious and at other times inchoate, to bring the greatest degree of medical legitimation to the widest range of killing" (138). This cruel impulse, with the existence of 14f13 project, paved the way for the forming of an ideological and institutional bridge between concepts and polices and unrestricted genocide. Therefore, 14f13 allowed for a practically limitless deployment of the euthanasia program, particularly for Jews, however also to Gypsies, Russians, Poles and other Germans. The Nazis deceived the victims, eyewitnesses and above all, themselves into believing that the killings were entirely medicalized. Though it is estimated that the specific 14f13 project killed over 20,000 people, millions more died as a result of the ideas and regulations it promoted.

This project eventually led to Auschwitz, the institution where perhaps the gravest human destruction and atrocities the world has seen took place. Auschwitz was called by different names, such as "Auschwitz Center for Therapeutic Racial Killing," or as Heinz Thilo, a Nazi doctor, called it *anus mundi*, "anus of the world," which was characterized by what another Nazi doctor, Paul Kremer, as "the most horrible of all horrors": "the particularly unpleasant… action of gassing emaciated women" (147). The term *anus mundi*, according to a Polish psychiatrist, perfectly captures the Nazi conception of "the necessity to sweep clean the world," "a vision "of the Germanic superman, … of a world where there would be no place for sick people, cripples, psychologically immoral people, contaminated by Jewish, Gypsy or other blood" (147). This was all referring to biological waste, and for the Nazis this waste was none other than the Jews, although this "medicalized" genocide included Gypsies, Poles and Russians. It was only the Jews that underwent systematic selections and racial discrimination. In the end, the first objective of Auschwitz was to murder each and every Jew.

This medicalized genocide was carried out by SS doctors, and one of their duties included performing initial extensive selections of arriving Jews. Typically,

these selections followed a formula: young people who appeared to be healthy were allowed to survive and mostly to work temporarily, but the elderly, the weak, children, and pregnant women were all sent directly to the gas chamber (147). Then the presiding SS doctor, together with a special team of "disinfectors" would be taken to the gas chamber adjoining one of the crematoria where the SS doctor had the supervisory responsibility for the killing process; he would then declare those in the chamber dead and would look through the peephole to observe and verify the killing (148). Twenty minutes later, the doors of the gas chamber would be opened, and the corpses would be removed. Apart from the shootings in Gestapo (Auschwitz Political Department) of political prisoners and opponents who were officially declared dead, most of the Jews either received false death certificates, or did not even require one.

In addition to these, SS dentist were to supervise prisoner work *Kommandos* in pulling out gold teeth and fillings of dead Jews; SS doctors were to perform abortions on "alien" (*fremvölkisch*) pregnant women. Since pregnant Jewish women, once spotted, were sent directly to gas chambers upon arrival, abortions were also done secretly by Jewish prisoner doctors on pregnant Jewish women lest they were sent directly to the gassing in order to allow them to survive and work in the camp (149). SS doctors were also responsible for the selections to go smoothly, providing their technical knowledge on burning of bodies, all of which lead SS doctors to find themselves in the "healing-killing paradox." As Lifton describes, for the SS doctor "killing became the prerequisite for healing," "his healing area was simultaneously a clearinghouse for further killing" (150). This paradoxical situation was what Dr. Ernst B. called a "schizophrenic situation" (150), a transition from an SS doctor's "normal self" to the "Auschwitz self," as Lifton will describe this phenomenon as "doubling." Any act or attempt to commit suicide was forbidden within the confines of Auschwitz, since suicide both violated the paradox of healing-killing and was a sign of rebellion and more significantly a form of freedom for the inmates. This intensive control over life and death on the part of Nazi perpetrators transformed their Auschwitz selves into life's gatekeepers. The only tolerable way of yielding to death was that of *Muselmänner* since it had no impact on the life-death control.

The Auschwitz jargon for the "walking dead," (Sofsky 25) "*Muselmann*," (*Muselmänner* for plural) was used by prisoners and SS staff, which literally means "Muslim man," to describe people who were suffering from starvation, exhaustion, and succumbing to their impending death or in other words, "the human being in the

process of dissolution" (Sofsky 25). Due to their cruel treatment, the *Muselmann* inmates displayed extreme physical weakness, emaciation, and apathy for their own predicament, and an inability to react to their surroundings. This term may have originated from the *Muselmann'*s inability to stand for long periods of time due to the lack of leg muscle, resulting in their spending the majority of their time laying in a prone position. This prone position could have invoked the image of Sujud, the Muslim prayer position of prostration, hence the name, given that in Islamic principle one has to succumb to fate since every calamity is predestined by God's permission. "Recognizable because of their listlessness, they were called *Muselmännner* (Muslims). They would stop eating entirely or approach the electrified fence to be shot (Baumel and Laqueur 41). Therefore, it can be said that "[b]efore physical expiration, the *Muselmann* died a death that was social" (Sofsky 25) and this serves as anthropological evidence of the horrible Auschwitz conditions.

Auschwitz as an institution evolved into three categories serving to three different purposes: Auschwitz as a Nazi concentration camp (*Konzentrationslager*), as a work camp (*Arbeitslager*), and as an annihilation camp (*Vernichtungslager*). One of the main policies of the concentration camp was the "cult of severity" promoted and influenced by a number of names such as Himmler, Heyde, Theoder Eicke and Rudolf Höss, that "all inmates were enemies of the state; and camp guards were to be trained in cruelty and to dispense it with pitilessness (or "hardness"), detachment, and incorruptibility (Lifton 153). Inmates suffering from this intentional cruelty were subjected to a system of identification, according to which each inmate was assigned a rectangular piece of material sewn onto their costumes: red for political prisoners, purple for Jehovah's Witnesses, black for asocials (i.e. prostitutes), green for criminals, pink for homosexuals, red/yellow for Jews with two triangles on top of each other to form a hexagram (Star of David); "The Jewish Star," though, after 1944, was replaced by a horizontal yellow bar above the classification triangle (153).

When Auschwitz was created in June 1940, it was created on the model of a traditional concentration camp initially intended mainly for Polish prisoners; however, soon work was required of the inmates, and what followed was the systematic intimidation and humiliation. Therefore, Auschwitz as a work camp built the ground for deliberate and gradual killing of the Poles and Jews. As of 1937, the labor force in camps was well organized enough to be regarded as a significant "national source of forced labor", and the need for this labor led to an increase in arrests (155). Similar to

T4 inmates, Auschwitz prisoners were only considered deserving of life inasmuch as their labor strengthened the Third Reich, making them, as has been noted, "less than slaves" (155). However, beneath that pragmatism lay the Nazis' worship of work and their myth that prisoners could get their freedom through hard labor. This narrative was particularly popularized by Eicke, who was undoubtedly accountable for the infamous *Arbeit macht frei* ("Work brings freedom") sign that initially appeared at Dachau and then at the entry to Auschwitz (155). Auschwitz, in particular, served as a mirror for the Nazi inner conflict between murderous ideology and pragmatic growth through forced labor.

Soon, Auschwitz began to take shape as an annihilation camp in early 1942. Mass murder technology and vision underwent a fundamental upheaval in Auschwitz. Höss's memory of Himmler's explanation of the camp's mission reveals how deeply the biological vision was entwined with the Auschwitz vision:

> Jews are the eternal enemies of the German people and must be exterminated. All Jews within our space to be destroyed without exception, now, during the war. If we do not succeed in destroying the biological substance of the Jews, [and] the Jews will some day destroy the German people (157).

Upon which, Höss was "suddenly summoned" by Himmler in the summer 1941 and told: "The Führer has ordered that the Jewish question be solved once and for all that we, the SS, are to implement that order" (157). Thereby, since the already existing extermination camps in the East were overcrowded, Auschwitz's had been "earmarked" for the job due to its ideal location for communications, transportation, seclusion, and disguise, whereby Höss was dictated to "treat this order as absolutely secret" (158). This marked the transformation of Auschwitz into the primary camp for the policy of mass murder of the Jews. Before finding the most convenient method of killing, as gassing, Jews used to be mown down by the *Einsatzkommandos* armed with machine guns and machine pistols which resulted in horrifying scenes.

These gruesome images left a traumatic effect on the members of these killing squads, resulting in their excessive alcohol abuse, going mad, or simply committing suicide for they, as Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski declared to Himmler, were "… deeply shaken … These men are finished [*fertig*] for the rest of their lives. What kind of followers are we training here? Either neurotics or savages!" (159). Therefore, they

had to rely on Zyklon-B (hydrogen cyanide or prussic acid) for its quick deadly effect for the mass extermination operation, supplied by German Corporation for "Pest Control" (161), when the mass killing of Jews began in late 1941 – early 1942. With the estimated total of 1,900 kilograms of Zyklon-B used in Auschwitz, the SS doctors assumed that "… the victims would experience a terrible choking sensation. But the bodies showed no signs of convulsion. … the prussic acid had a paralyzing effect on the lungs, but its action was so quick and strong …" (162). Paralyzing lungs were preferred over the blood baths caused by mass shootings, therefore leaving this dirty business back in the hands and under the supervision of the Nazi doctors.

The Nazi doctors orchestrated the entire so-called "medical" activity upon the Jew inmates' arrival. They would carry out selections on the camp, with Dr. Mengele (also known as the Angel of Death), Dr. Heinz Thilo, *Arbeitsführer* (work leader), pointing their thumb to either left and right, left meaning death by gas, while casually whistling a melody (163-165). Since there were not enough ovens, huge trenches had to be dug to burn the bodies during the Hungarian transport, starting in late May 1944. The bodies were tossed into these blazing trenches, often including living adults and children. In order to conserve petroleum, the necessary oil and fats for burning were harvested from the bodies of the gassed (165). Humiliations also heavily characterized the brutal climate of the camp: undressing the inmates completely before the "sauna" (the gas chamber), shaving all the bodily hair of the inmates in the name of preventing lice, the ill-fitting striped clothing, the tattooing on the forearm, asking casual, friendly questions to the arriving inmates only after sending them to the gas chambers, selecting Jewish inmates on Jewish holidays, making them trot and so on. One inmate recalls an incident where outside a gas chamber, the Nazi doctor spotted a broken glass on the floor from shattered eye-glasses and warned the inmates, "Please be careful that you … [don't] injure your[self]" (166). This suggests how mentally and psychologically prepared the Nazis were, given they could use all kinds of hoax, irony, and humiliation.

### 2.6 Doubling, the Faustian Bargain and the Auschwitz Self

Whether prepared or not, there was certainly something sinister going on with the Nazi doctors in Auschwitz. Lifton explains this situation as "doubling," similar to Freudian *doppelgänger*, a split within the self, whose selves function differently within the same body. Nazi doctors such as Josef Mengele (Dr. Auschwitz), Eduard Wirths and Ernst B. were primal showcases for this occurrence. Mengele, for instance, was known to be

the embodiment of Auschwitz selections, referred to as the "Father Mengele" by the women at the institute with a sexual connotation, considered to be a "good-looking" "gentle" and "cultured man", ironically close with the inmate children, bringing them food, candy and little toys, being greeted by the Gypsy children as "*Onkel* ['Uncle'] Mengele!" (185), who, after this deception, sent them to the gas chambers. It makes one wonder: How could they hide behind a charming mask so unaffected by anything while at the same time be a stone-cold killer?

In order to be able to carry out those murderous acts, the SS staff had to go through an adaptation process into the Auschwitz realm that they and their collective ideology had created. Most SS doctors experienced an unusual individual-psychological transition from disgust to acceptance under a growing obligation for the selections, as Dr. B states, "In the beginning it was almost impossible. Afterward it became almost routine. That's the only way to put it" (195). The transition entailed a "socialization" process within Auschwitz, which, as Lifton suggests, included the crucial change from "outsider to insider" (195). Dr. B.'s definition of Auschwitz as an "existing fact" with which one could not be against but had to "go along with," makes the mass killing an "unyielding fact of life to which everyone was expected to adapt" (196). The way they convinced themselves of this, such as that the inmates were at least "go[ing] to heaven in the cloud of the gas" (196), was an indication that they were suppressing certain moral codes and combating conscientious inquiry about their nonmedical activity, which was helped by heavy alcohol consumption and drug abuse[7].

Any SS doctor who wished to resign and leave the camp was confronted with the frigid declaration that "according to a 'Führer order,' service in a concentration camp was considered front-line duty, and that any refusal was considered a desertion" (198). This pressure alone was enough for the SS doctors to force themselves into adapting to the Auschwitz reality, moral revulsion and combination of feelings such as despair, anxiety, unhappiness and discomfort. Thereby, their concern focused on how to come to terms with the Auschwitz environment, instead of the evil dominating it. Dr. B.'s description on how they "[knew] it from the inside" and his analogy of

[7] *Blitzed: Drugs in Nazi Germany* (2017) by Norman Ohler unveils the wide-spread drug use throughout the Third Reich, including cocaine, heroin, morphine, and most importantly, methamphetamines, or crystal meth; essential to troops' endurance and mental stability of any member of SS, even contributing to the German victory in 1940.

slaughterhouse also shows their psychological transition and numbing of the five senses: “When you have gone into a slaughterhouse where animals are being slaughtered … the smell is also a part of it …. A steak will probably not taste good to us afterward. And when you do that … every day for two weeks, then your steak again tastes as good as before” (197). Internally, these doctors wanted this psychological transition to happen due to their drive to become an insider through socialization with other doctors, identifying with them, psychological distance and numbing through repression, derealization and heavy drinking.

This eventually created what Dr. B called the “schizophrenic situation” (202) where the Auschwitz was put in an “extraterritorial” space, “a special enclave of bizarre evil” (200) in which SS doctors “lived like lords” and had an “encompassing presence” (202) almost like an omnipotent being while carrying out pseudo-medical activity as a part of their fiction. Detoxifying language contributed to the self-deception and delusion that SS doctors were meeting the ethical and idealistic expectations for a better, higher, and communal purpose of the camp and, of course, the *Volk,* while ignoring the harsh reality of their evil acts. The principles of a “coherent community,” “common effort,” along with shared anti-Jewishness played their share in fueling the ideology that “the Jews were [their] misfortune” and this gestalt abjection toward Jews justified their need for this “appendix [Jews] … to be extirpated” (204).

Nazi doctors, therefore, had to actualize the psychological transformation from this ideology to the literal enactment of mass murder because they were so convinced of Nazism’s “world blessing” and the Jews as being “the root evil” and thus “all Jews, even existentially, had to be absolutely exterminated” (205). As a Czech doctor, Erich G, observes, Nazi doctors would “treat Jewish people as having a human form but not a human quality” and “as potential polluters of German race” (206) which indicates how a Nazi doctor turned from healer to a killer. They seemed to forget about their Hippocratic oath, and more importantly, took the oath of loyalty to Hitler as more real and more seriously, which presents the absolute power the latter oath had. They had a strong commitment to the immortalizing principle and an association of self with transcendent morality, rendering the SS doctors to be the “weakest link in the SS chain” (207) in terms of belief, commitment, and vulnerability.

Their first cracks of vulnerability show when it comes to the Nazi doctors being self-deceptive. They were so much in denial that a doctor, Jacob R. explains that

"[they] were cruel in sending people to the gas chambers but "never admitted it" (202); he says if he ever asked them to stop sending people to the gas chambers, he knew the answer he got would be "Gas chamber? What do you mean? (203). As if whatever happened there did not count at all. This self-deception, along with boredom, and overwhelming psychological effects of the camp, all Nazi doctors took up some kind of "hobbies" ranging from medical work to research, anything that was not related to killing. In this way, as Dr. B says, "The doctors escape[d] into … illusion" (203). This illusion, along with almost a "Faustian bargain," created another vulnerable dimension in the Nazi doctor caused by the "split situation" (210) between the idealism and superior German state with the "world blessing" and "the other situation, the one working with those … methods there" (210). In other words, within the Auschwitz environment, once becoming an "insider," the Nazi doctor underwent a breaking point and developed a split in his personality, a "doubling", called by Lifton, which allowed one to observe the duality of decency and cruelty in the same doctor. Their "Auschwitz self" was capable of any cruel activity while their "normal self" remained relatively humane.

Although there are individual examples of this doubling, Auschwitz was essentially a collective act of many who thought their deed, duty was the rational thing to do. With regards to the collective functioning Auschwitz effort, Dr. Jacob R. stresses "this question of power — of having uncontrolled power over somebody" (213) and with regards to the evil use of that power, Dr. Tadeusz S. mentions what Dr. Fischer had told him, "We [Nazis] have gone so far now that we have no way out" (213), which emphasizes the extremes they went to. Lifton suggests that there are two ways of interpreting this, one of which is the "moral principle that evil could not be undone" (213) and the psychological principle that after running a killing factory for a while, one felt compelled to keep it running, which fed their "Freudian death instinct." The psychological implication is that atrocity perpetuates itself, making it psychologically imperative to carry on murdering in order to justify it and make its meaning appear otherwise. That is all to say the entire Auschwitz activity was self-perpetuating in which Nazi doctors managed to participate in this psychological rupture or in other words "doubling" that Lifton emphasizes, with enough distance to reduce the psychological distress and responsibility then and throughout.

Furthermore, in order to stabilize their mental state, to draw a certain distance from the act of killing and simply to deceive their "normal selves," Nazi doctors had

certain experimental impulses, which Lifton named as a Faustian[8] bargain. Block 10, an infamous location that may be regarded as the epitome of Auschwitz, served as the focal point of these experimental endeavors. Jewish inmates, mostly women, and twins were subjected to horrible experiments with windows closed in order to shut out communication with the outside world. A woman prisoner doctor who spent a year there describes it as a "horror place" resembling both "hell and a mental institution" where the inmates were used as "guinea pigs" (270). The block had different research areas allocated to different doctors such as Professor Clauberg on his female sterilization project (later inventing the "Clauberg test"), and Dr. Wirths with cancerous studies on cervix; lastly but perhaps the most notorious one is Dr. Josef Mengele with his experiments on racial studies carried out on twins, with an alibi "there would never be another chance like it" (357). These doctors will be discussed in more detail in the literary analysis chapter.

These drives, along with the "doubling" that occurred in their selves, dividing their personalities into two functioning wholes, with one part of the selves dominating and acting as the entire self, are the key points in understanding the nature of evil in Nazi doctors' evil Auschwitz activity. Thus, it can be said that the "doubling" served as the psychological front for the Nazi doctor's Faustian bargain with the evil environment; in exchange for his role in the killing, he was offered a number of psychological and material advantages, under the condition of adaptation. Beyond Auschwitz, German physicians in general were subjected to a greater Faustian temptation: that of becoming thinkers and executers of a cosmic plan for "racial cure" by "victimization and mass murder" (418). Lifton suggests that for the individual Nazi doctor, "doubling was likely to mean a choice for evil" (418) and can be illuminating about it. He lists five characteristics of doubling: first, there is a dialectic between two selves in terms of autonomy and connection to his previous ethical standards, and humane roles such as a father, husband and an ethical physician. Second, it has a "holistic principle" meaning the Auschwitz self "succeeded" the entire self (419). Third, it is driven by survival instinct and has a life-death dimension. Fourth, it requires "avoidance of guilt" hence the Auschwitz self is the one performing the "dirty work," and lastly it involves both an "unconscious dimension" along with "a significant

[8] *Doctor Faustus* (1592) is a play written by English playwright Christopher Marlowe about a German doctor who sells his soul to the devil for power and knowledge. Marlowe is the first one to write in English, inspired by a German tale.

change in moral consciousness" (419). All in all, doubling is a way of adopting to the extremity and hence requires a violent disruption of the self.

As a result of this doubling, psychic numbing, ideological poisoning, intense hatred of the other, or, in other words, this eclipse of the reason of Nazi Germany, around six million Jews were murdered. According to Simon Wiesenthal, a survivor of Nazi death camps who devoted his life to the prosecution of fugitive Nazis, "the Holocaust had eleven million victims, six million Jews and five million others, mostly Slavs" (Hayes 181), though the alleged number of Slavs is questionable since Slavs did not have a distinguishing color for their triangles and were mostly taken as "political prisoners" or the "asocial ones" (181), and the Soviet civilian casualties are revealed to be more than ten million people. Also, Hitler and Himmler believed that many Czechs and some Poles were capable of "Germanization" (*Germanisierung*) or being integrated into the German language and culture (181). This proves that no other group was assaulted as relentlessly and systematically as the Jews, even though a wide variety of people were all subjected to this horrible suffering. Victor Klemperer, a diarist, mentions in his diaries the existence of Auschwitz which he describes as "swift-working slaughterhouse", and writes about the death toll of the Holocaust: "six to seven million Jews … have been slaughtered (more exactly: shot and gassed)" (Hayes 138). In short, the Nazi perpetration caused the loss of around six to seven million Jews, along with many other casualties they caused.

The varieties of doubling, examples in the camp, and in literature will be given in more detail in the next chapter with the necessary references. The real-life cases such as Dr. Ernst B., Dr. Wirths, and Dr. Mengele will respectively and accordingly serve as showcases for the formation of the protagonist of *Time's Arrow*. Through these figures, their radical "doubling," their minds intoxicated by many factors such as ideology, family, ethnic, and race, we will see the potential invocation of evil in the self. The psychoanalytic theories will also help illuminate this complex situation occurring in the mind of a perpetrator.

## CHAPTER III: LITERARY ANALYSIS OF *TIME'S ARROW*

### 3.1 Close Reading: When Things Run Backwards

I was once a little child,
Three years ago.
That child who longed for other worlds.
But now I am no more a child
For I have learned to hate.
…
But anyway, I still believe I only sleep today,
That I'll wake up, child again, and start to laugh and play.
I'll go back to childhood sweet like a briar rose,
Like a bell which wakes us from a dream,
Like a mother with an ailing child
Loves him with aching woman's love.
…
Somewhere, far away out there, childhood
sweetly sleeps,
Along that path among the trees,
There o'er that house
Which was once my pride and joy,
There my mother gave me birth into this world
So I could weep…
… (Volavkova, 22-23)

– *Hanuš Hachenburg, a fifteen-year-old Jewish concentration camp inmate in Terezin*

A man awakens from his "blackest sleep" (Amis 11), by the "forbidden touch" of doctors… *American* doctors, with their "forbidden hands" – "so strong, so clean, so aromatic" (Amis 11). As he rises from death, the very thought that occurs to him is how much he hates doctors, any doctors, all doctors; a sudden disgust forms and settles inside him. And right after this unreasonable disgust, he thinks of a Jewish joke that he finds amusing, "with the old lady running distractedly along the sea shore: *Help!*

*My son the doctor is drowning*" (11). This is how Martin Amis introduces his Nazi doctor in his 1991 novel *Time's Arrow,* where he explores the nature of the offence, aiming to make it make sense, only when, as he claims, time runs backwards. The man who awakens from his death relives the moments in his life backwards and reclaims his many identities with a reversed chronology: firstly (lastly) as Tod Friendly in 1991 in USA, then John Young, then Hamilton de Souza in Portugal, and lastly (firstly) as Odilo Unverdorben in Auschwitz and concludes in 1916 Solingen, Germany. In this backwards time travel, Odilo is revealed to be a Nazi doctor and the narrator distinguishes himself as his soul. In this reality that flows counterclockwise, we, as readers witness that what goes around comes back around.

The opening scene of the narrative provides a lot of hidden clues pertaining to the protagonist's traumatic past, which readers are about to delve into. Paradoxically, this past is structured as Tod's future. As Freud argues, civilization has its discontents and because of these discontents, civilization is only possible through repression. The liberation of the repressed causes unpleasure, thus the ego tries to avoid it as much as possible. Repression manifests either by redirecting suppressed desires into socially acceptable behavior or by burying them deep within the unconscious. The repressed information, however, tends to resurface in distorted and unconscious forms, in this instance manifesting as a joke (dreams, and Freudian slips of the tongue are other examples of unconscious forms). Repression, as a mechanism, imprisons the targeted material to the unconscious rather than eradicating it entirely. Therefore, the immediate occurrence of Tod contemplating a Jewish joke upon his resurrection, wherein a doctor is depicted drowning, unveils his repressed trauma concerning Jews. It metaphorically signifies how the subsequent narrative will subvert expectations by reversing the roles, with the doctor being drowned instead of the real-life events of the Jews being massacred.

Following his instant and irrational dislike towards doctors, and his recollection of this Jewish joke, the pride bestowed upon doctors is questioned by him, as he wonders "why not shame, why not incredulous dread?" (11). He considers them to be "life's gatekeepers," (11) a position he assumes no one would willingly assume – little does the reader know he will be revealed as a Nazi criminal doctor himself. Even though he does not overtly express the feelings of shame, guilt, remorse, or dread, he unwittingly discloses all these emotions in disguise, as his trauma in this unconscious form has caused him to repress all these feelings rather than confronting and resolving

them. He can no longer repress them, for the narrator is the source of this repression, — referred to as the soul, consciousness, or conscience of the protagonist—rendering him incapable of accessing his own thoughts or mind. The narrator assumes the role of the *soul* in the context of the Cartesian duality of humans, wherein the body and soul are distinct entities. Consequently, the hidden and buried voice within Tod cannot be concealed or evaded anymore, preventing him from escaping its influence.

In the afterword of *Time's Arrow*, Martin Amis confesses that he was inspired by a specific passage in Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five* wherein the protagonist Billy Pilgrim, who is "unstuck in time" (Vonnegut 41), watches a war movie backwards on the television. The movie is about "American bombers in the Second World War and the gallant men who flew them" (41). Through the act of reverse viewing, Billy transforms scenes of destruction into acts of creation, effectively making "everything and everybody as good as new" (41). He extrapolates the scene and imagines everybody turning into babies, including Hitler, thus symbolically connecting this reversal of time to the origins of humanity with Adam and Eve. This disrupted mode of narration is evident in the traumatized protagonist's voice both in Billy's case, who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the devastating Dresden bombing, and in the voice of the narrator of *Time's Arrow*. This is evident when Amis' narrator says, "It just seems to me that the film is running backwards" (Amis 16). The disorienting impact of trauma bears heavily upon the narrator's perception of events, disrupting his track of time, and distorting his sense of reality. In Tod's case his haunting criminal Nazi past becomes his place of purgatory, wherein he seeks redemption and purification from his crimes by ascribing constructive meanings to his past crimes. Amis grants Tod the opportunity to atone for his transgressions by absolving his entire existence, thereby reinterpreting the meaning of Auschwitz and finding solace within the forgiving sanctuary symbolized by his mother's womb. But then again, how exactly does Tod's chronological narrative go?

To draw a more coherent picture of the described events in the book, it is beneficial to arrange them in their chronological sequence. The book ends in an idyllic portrayal of Solingen, a town located in the northwestern Germany, where Odilo Unverdorben's story actually begins. During his teenage years, he meets Herta, who would later become his wife, at a bus stop. Around this time, the initial restrictions against Jews begin to be enforced. Odilo embarks on his pursuit of medical studies, where he becomes "infuriated" by the entrance of Jewish people into "plum jobs" such

as the medical profession (163), aligning with the historical context explained in Lifton's book. The narrative then depicts Odilo's involvement in the infamous Crystal Night[9] (*Kristallnacht*), during which he was ostensibly (because of the inverted narration) "helping" Jews (160). Subsequently, Odilo starts his first medical assignment at Schloss Hartheim, where he served as a metaphorical yet ideological "biological soldier," (158) where mentally ill people deemed "unworthy of life" (154) were subjected to gassing (158). He marries Herta; however, unfortunately they lose their baby after she gets pregnant with their first child. Then his journey takes him to Auschwitz, where he collaborates with Uncle Pepi, also known as, Josef Mengele, on his "experimental operations" (143), participating in the selection process on the ramp, and engaging in the entire process of gassing. Then before the arrival of Bolsheviks, Odilo flees Auschwitz, initially seeking refuge in Italy, and subsequently Portugal, with a "first-rate new name" (110) such as "Hamilton de Souza", all with the assistance of a Reverend. In 1948, Odilo sets sail to America under his new identity of John Young, until the possibility of his citizenship being revoked necessitates his relocation to New York, where he acquires his final and lasting identity: Tod Friendly. Under this name, he continues his medical career until his eventual demise, where the book initially opens.

The opening scene of the novel portrays a poignant reflection on the principle of retribution with the phrase "what really goes around comes back around" (11) as the protagonist awakens up from his death, surrounded by American doctors; a retribution unveiling as a former Nazi doctor being in the hands of American doctors. Since hands are the physical agents of one's deeds, Tod experiences an immediate repulsion towards the "forbidding touch" (11) of the American doctors' "forbidding hands" (11) who are treating him on his death bed. No longer possessing agency over those very forbidding hands that he once wielded, Tod now finds himself being acted upon by the forbidding hands—an embodiment of the concept of what goes around comes back around – a retributive justice which constitutes the very beginning of the novel and thereby his beginning, as well. He describes the doctors' hands being "so strong, so clean, so aromatic," while he, with his Nazi past, polluted and violated their

[9] The night between November 9 and November 10 in 1938 where bloody and deadly attacks on Jewish-owned homes, businesses and synagogues were organized and carried out by the National Socialist Party leadership. The attacks included pogrom, looting, arson, mass arrests, homicide, and kidnapping. More than 90 people were massacred.

inherent reliability. Normally, a doctor's hand should be so strong, so clean and aromatic; however, Tod has tainted and debased these attributes of doctors, transforming them into symbols of abuse and filth, since he has blood on his hands. This is the reason why he thinks a doctor should feel "shame" and "incredulous dread" (11) instead of pride since he and his cohorts have violated the very healing nature of this profession through their "disgusting vocabulary" (11) — might be referring to the Nazi slang in the death camps — as well as their "disgusting furniture" (11) such as the gas chambers, and other instruments employed by the Nazi doctors to inflict suffering upon their innocent victims.

He tells the reader that in his sleep, or rather:

> presiding over the darkness out of which [he] had loomed there was a figure, a male shape, with an entirely unmanageable aura, containing such things as beauty, terror, love, filth and above all power. This male shape or essence seemed to be wearing a white coat (a medic's stark white smock). And black boots. And a certain kind of smile. (12)

This image he creates is essential in investigating the depth of his unconscious psyche, an exploration which is undertaken throughout the course of the narrative. Within this context, the protagonist articulates his dreaming of a certain male figure, evoking a resemblance to that of a Nazi doctor adorned in the iconic white coat and black boots, as similarly depicted in Lifton's study on Nazi doctors. This male figure represents to him all the contradictory emotions of beauty and terror, love, and filth, and above all an overwhelming sense of power. This conflicting and dualistic notion roots from the Freudian concept of *unheimlich* (uncanny). The uncanny is a thing that both fascinates and terrifies the individual owing to its capacity to unveil concealed material. The term *unheimlich* itself harbors opposite meanings inside, thus presenting both the revealed and the concealed, the known and the familiar, alongside the unfamiliar, which Freud explains as the "class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" (Freud "The Uncanny" 2-3). The image of a doctor with white coat and black boots reminds Tod of his own former Nazi image, a once familiar and homely aspect of his past that now resides as a concealed

secret, generating a sense of unfamiliarity. Therefore, this *unheimlich* figure contains and signifies all those contradictory qualities to him, thus serving as a symbolic conduit to the protagonist's inner psyche.

The recurrence of the male doctor figure within the protagonist's dreams offers significant insights into the profound trauma lingering within his psyche. Dreams offer insights into how the unconscious mind works and thereby resurfacing the traumatic experiences in this veiled form. The repetition of the traumatic event through dreams exposes the ego's masochistic inclinations towards repression, unpleasure principle and compulsion to repeat. By dreaming of the Nazi doctor image adorned with white coat and black boots, the protagonist reposits himself in the role he once occupied. This depiction is symbolic in representing his entrapment within the image itself, as his unity of body is reduced to what wearing white coat and black boots signifies — an image he feels condemned him. Re-imagining a traumatic event or image indicates him seeking to relive a moment that cannot be simply erased but instead is repeatedly experienced with the futile hope of rectification. Therefore, throughout the narrative, the protagonist seeks resolution by undoing his own identity and reversing the meaning of all things, thereby attempting to resolve his trauma and eliminate the very cause of it — himself.

As he adapts to this newly reversed order of the novel's reality, the protagonist wonders whether other people have someone else inside them, "a passenger or parasite, like [him]" (16). He acknowledges "this body [he's] in won't take orders from this will of [him] (13), and that he has "no access to his thoughts — but [he] is awash with his emotions" (15). From his perspective, others are lucky since they do not have the "dream" that he has with "[t]he figure in white coat and the black boots. In his wake, a blizzard of wind and sleet, like a storm of human souls" (16). The souls he took with his Nazi persona continue to haunt his psyche, manifesting in the form of this recurring dream. Although he is the instigator of his own trauma upon himself and others, his perpetration of evil propels him into an uncharted realm of human experience beyond the comprehension of the mind because as previously explained, killing is not incongruous with the human psyche. This transgression causes the perpetrator's mental integrity and identity to be disrupted and causes a split in his psyche. This split, in his earliest manifestation in the novel, is presented to the reader as "a passenger or a parasite" (16), one of which denies the responsibility and the other embodies the

unwanted double — abject. However, a detailed exploration of this aspect shall be undertaken subsequently.

In fact, the narration foreshadows the criminal past of the protagonist from time to time. Even though the narrator cannot access his thoughts but is submerged in his emotions, he "sense[s] the heat of fear and shame" and continues to wonder, "is that what I'm heading towards?" (16). Tod's fear, which "*is* really frightening" and "inexplicable" (15) along with his hidden shame is what the reader is heading towards throughout the narration, which is his Nazi past that he is ashamed of and afraid of confronting. Interestingly, he describes this fear as having to do with "his own mutilation" (15) or rather his loss of self-identity, his loss of wholeness and potency.

This phenomenon arises from an individual's experience of a paranoid position, stemming from anxiety related to returning to a fragmented self during the mirror stage of human mental development. In this context, the ego, as exemplified in the protagonist's case through his newly adopted persona as "Tod Friendly," serves as a protective shield, establishing its rigid structure, hence the fear of its fragility. The anxiety of fragility finds expression in unconscious manifestations, such as irrational fears and dreams, often taking the form of aggressive fragmentation, symbolized by *imagos* such as disjoined limbs or the manifestation of phantom limb syndrome. These manifestations result from the underlying fear of regressing to the ego-less body, body in bits and pieces, "… imagos of castration, mutilation, dismemberment, … in short, the imagos that [are] grouped together under the apparently structural term of *imagos of the fragmented body*" (Lacan "Aggressivity" 13). The imago of fragmented body threatens the newly formed self, and the newly formed ego serves as a fortress to the fragile state of the self. This is why Tod grapples with a profound fear of his own mutilation, an aversion to regressing to his previous fragile identity as "Odilo." However, the narration eventually returns to his fragmented self, representing his own mutilation as he symbolically cuts off the Nazi parts of his identity, his self-castration (impotence), as well as his symbolic devourment by his own mother as he returns to her womb at the end.

His Lacanian mirror image becomes more apparent as his inconsistent contemplation of the evil unfolds. He confesses that he is "not a complete innocent" (Amis 16) and refers to the "value-free" and general information that he possesses. This portrayal evokes the image of a modern time Prometheus and Doctor Faustus as he continues to engage in his reflections:

> If you ever close a deal with the devil, and he wants to take something from you in return – don't let him take your mirror. Not your mirror, which is your reflection, which is your double, which is your secret sharer. The devil has something to be said for him: he acts on his own initiative and isn't just following orders. (17)

It is as if all this information has violated his sense of innocence, referring to the Nazi "value-free" knowledge to which he was subjected. This knowledge burden, devoid of moral considerations, has tainted his formerly innocent state, taken his "mirror" and caused a shift from the stage of self-recognition (Lacanian mirror stage) to the realm of symbols (Lacanian symbolic stage), altering his authentic self and reflection into an evil double. Parallel with Lifton's depiction of the Nazi activities in Auschwitz as a Faustian bargain, Tod, here, acknowledges his deal with the devil in which he apparently lost his "mirror," his selfhood, reflection, that is, his double, his *doppelgänger*. Evidently, Tod is tormented by a profound sense of abjection and shame and cannot stand the sight of his reflection in the mirror, since "he never confronts or consults them" (17). He is unable to face the consequences of his evil actions, thus experiencing a fading of self, a condition known as *aphanisis*. *Aphanisis* is the process by which a subject is partially obscured by any signifier employed to conceptualize him or her: "when the subject appears somewhere as meaning, he is manifested elsewhere as "fading", as disappearance" (Lacan *The Four* 218). He represses his shame, pain, and fear, and avoids self-confrontation wherein he is now defined by his abject Nazi identity. His meaning appears as a Nazi criminal while his innocence gradually fades away. Consequently, he becomes nothing but the abject double of himself, avoiding any mirror encounter that could reveal his transformed and morally compromised self.

After this avoidance of confrontation, the protagonist proceeds to resume his nightmare wherein "his sheets have the white smell of fear"(Amis 18). Through his nightmare, the narrator smells "the baby powder," (18) which serves as a symbolic representation of his suppressed trauma concerning the babies he had been responsible for executing, as well as the image in the dream in which his nails are agonizingly torn away from his fingertips and then consumed by fire, highlighting his deep-seated fear of mutilation. In his nightmares, he adopts the perspective of the victim, the *other*, and

masochistically subjects himself to the symbolic pain he inflicted upon others. The masochistic tendency becomes evident throughout the narration as he continues working as a pediatrician in the US, wherein he willingly exposes himself to the presence of children, triggering memories of his traumatic experiences involving the deaths of infants he was involved with.

This is why the image of babies assumes a crucial critical semiotic role in explicating his deep-rooted traumas. It keeps showing up in his dreams (53) and the narrator posits that he is "coping with it fine so far" (54). Dreams can serve as the most reliable tool for examining the depths of the mind and investigating the compulsion to repeat the traumatic event. The traumatic event demands to be experienced by the subject again and again, putting the subject into the traumatic situation and thus making him fixated to the trauma. In this case dreaming, which normally leads to wish-fulfillment, subverts its function, perhaps to unveil the ego's masochistic tendency, because of the repression, unpleasure principle and its compulsion to repeat. Paralleling the inverted nature of the narrative's reality, the power dynamics within the dream realm are also reversed. He explains that even though "you naturally associate babies with defenselessness … in the dream the baby wields incredible power … the ultimate power of life and death over its parents … and everybody else who is gathered in the room" (54). This room he is seeing, with "about thirty souls," which is "dark" and "black" (54), refers to the gas chambers in Auschwitz. He is recreating a scenario in his dream where he places the babies in a powerful position, if not, a destructive power, which makes the babies act "more like a bomb" in the black room "with its groping carbon" (55). This bomb baby is "weeping" because of "the new and desperate responsibilities that power brings" (54). Ironically, after the dream, "Tod himself weeps like a baby" (55), thus unveiling his unconscious identification with the deceased babies, the victims of his malevolent actions during his involvement in Nazi atrocities. The image of the baby metamorphoses into an extension of his own psyche, weeping because of the inexorable burden of the responsibility he wielded during his criminal engagement in the Holocaust. This power is so destructive and heavy that it symbolically reduces him to the status of a vulnerable, defenseless and powerless baby —the very existence he is responsible for exterminating. The bomb baby, thus, symbolizes his impotence beneath the crushing weight of this power, as well as the countless babies who fell victim to this omnipotent power.

### 3.2 Women & Abjection

All along, the narrator, as in his words "his secret mind," "his future," is witnessing this "late night show screened by Tod's head" free of imposture and accusation because he is innocent (54). It is Tod that feels crushed under this heavy burden of responsibility, while the narrator, distinguished as his "voice of conscience" is free of all this burden. Seeking solace amidst such pressures, he discovers comfort and forgiveness in the presence of women, particularly Irene, a maid figure. The female presence, especially a woman of lower class, serves to appease his literal and symbolic sense of untidiness, fulfill his sexual desires (Eros - sex/life instinct), and satiate his desperate need for forgiveness Intriguingly, the women with whom Tod engages in affairs, including Irene, occupy subservient roles and hail from a lower class, thereby reinforcing and securing his patriarchal potency that he had lost during his Nazi past. He begins two-timing and committing infidelity only to gratify his sex/life instinct and immerse himself in the forgiving female presence.

Suddenly, Tod realizes that "the world is a woman" (56). This moment of epiphany has endured within him throughout his life after his time in Auschwitz. This profound realization centers around the contrasting dispositions of women, whose presence embodies productivity, regeneration, vibrancy, forgiveness, *jouissance*[10] and thus triggers sex/life drive in direct opposition to the destructive actions exhibited by the Nazis which produces nothing but death drive. Therefore, the narration takes him back to the root of the world, to his mother's womb. Woman's — mother's ineffable infinity invokes in a man the nostalgia for the wholeness he has lost, since the separation from the mother's womb has occurred. This interruption which "separates the infant from the womb, a premature separation from which comes a malaise that no maternal care can compensate for" (Lacan *Family* 20), thus the imago of the maternal womb haunts the whole life of a man. Therefore, this evokes in the subject "the appetite for death", as in, the death instinct experienced by the subject as satisfactory (Lacan *Family* 21). By abandoning oneself to death, the subject is, in fact, attempting to rediscover the imago of his mother (Lacan *Family* 22). This theme parallels his

[10] Beyond the limits of pleasure principle, pleasure turns into pain. Lacan refers to this principle as "pain principle" or rather *jouissance*, which he defines as unavoidably "evil" and "suffering because it involves suffering for [one's] neighbor" (Lacan *Ethics* 184). In this respect, *jouissance* is the result of the paradoxical mixture of pain, pleasure, and desire. It is such an intense experience that one needs to transgress to such extremes and cross one's own lines to get a little bit closer to it, however it is unattainable. This means it demands the unpleasant innate human tendencies such as aggression, destruction, severity, and cruelty.

realization that “the world is a woman” and thus throughout the narration he travels back to the root of life to reimagine himself.

The female figures in his life, although for him representing the life force, vary in terms of the signification they hold for him based on his mental state. Following his escape from Auschwitz, he grows more interested in women’s bodies as a hobby (86). He pursues women’s bodies not only for sexual gratification but also for “love, spiritual communion, loss of self, exaltation” (87): *jouissance*. One such figure is Irene, a mature maid, who has experienced the loss of a child, similar to Tod’s own history. She is suicidal (28), knows his “secret” (29) but at the same time chooses not to tell on him because she “forgives everything” (66). She is the “womanly kind” that he likes (40) full of both life and death force since she has suicidal tendencies, projecting his death instinct. And among all the nurses and servants with whom he engages in affairs after Auschwitz, Irene embodies the quintessential representation of the penetrating “naked female stare,” (62) seeing through him, and perhaps “even the figure in the dream with his white coat and his black boots and, in his wake, a night sky full of souls” (62). Notably, she is the only female confronting him that “he has no soul” (62), and she is the one who knows that he has changed his name and has a criminal past.

He meets Irene while assuming the identity of Tod Friendly, a persona in which he is “not alone but lonely,” is dead inside (*tod* in German translates to “dead”) but friendly. Beneath this concealed mask, the soul of the protagonist yearns for fidelity with Irene and tell her that he is “true to her”, he is “constant” (63). However, his attraction to Irene is unconsciously influenced by her childless condition, representing a significant and latent motivating factor. Before meeting her, he features another dream wherein he is a woman, with no hair. In this dream, there is a man who can harm him, and he has “no choice but to love him, nervously” (67). He describes this dream to be a “childless” one, for it lacks the bomb babies; however, it serves as an unconscious manifestation of his remorse and culpability regarding the forced sterilization of countless inmate women during his time at Auschwitz. Haunted by deep-seated feelings of regret and guilt, suppressed and unacknowledged, for the protagonist, Irene assumes a role in navigating these complex emotions for him for her childless condition is not a direct result of his perpetration.

Beyond the weight of the innumerable women subjected to forced sterilization during his Auschwitz tenure, the protagonist’s wife, Herta, who endured the loss of

their child, also holds a significant place in his psyche. This element contributes to his propensity for seeking relationships with subservient, married, and childless women. He confesses that he does not like "women who have children … they can have husbands … boyfriends … but no kids" (97). His affairs include female figures such as nurses, sisters, matrons, but no mothers (98). Such a pattern appears rooted in his perception that his future has been irrevocably compromised, rendering him akin to *tod* without a future or prospects, just like the countless futures he had terminated in Auschwitz. Because women represent productivity, procreativity, regeneration, progeny, and the broader essence of life, his death instinct, which comes to define his entire sense of self, prevents him from going further, both because of the veiled yet pervasive sense of guilt and masochistic need for retribution. His fictional future within the narrative confines bears his tangible past where lies his wife, Herta, whose face is not "forgiving" (120). At both ends of the novel, he cannot perpetuate his lineage and, thereby, effectively fulfill his established patriarchal role. The unforgiving face of Herta projects the sentiments of disgust, disappointment, and unacceptance, specifically pertaining to his complicit engagement in Nazi transgressions. He is, therefore, aborted from his patriarchal role; his phallic power has become futile. This parallels all the men and women he has sterilized during Auschwitz, mirroring his own diminished generative capacity and life instinct. The impotence he has imposed on the victims results in his own forfeiture of potency which we see throughout his Nazi times.

Herta makes him feel shame and reminds him of his own abject state. She "disapproves" of the work" he does in Auschwitz and calls him names he does not understand and that he cannot answer; and on top of that, she never meets his eyes due to what he did "to the bald whores" (141). The fact that Herta denies his entire being, avoids eye contact, and serves as a representation of the maternal womb remind him of his abject expulsion from the mother. This occurrence is a trauma for a male individual that haunts his entire life; it invokes in him the nostalgia for the wholeness he has lost since the separation from the mother has occurred. With Herta's rejecting face and unforgiving face, the protagonist relives this loss once again, and feels expulsed. This triggers his death instinct and creates a longing for his paradise lost. This is why the entire narration is set to bring him together with the maternal womb where he can take refuge in ineffable female infinity and forgiveness. This triggered death drive makes him abandon himself to a symbolic death by undoing himself

through the reversed chronology and thereby rediscover the image of himself and his mother whom he realizes makes up the entire existence, as he confesses the world is a woman (56). This is why he is trying to undo his actions, giving them reverse meanings such as abortion becoming implantations.

When he first arrives in America, under his new identity as John Young, he discreetly initiates the practice of performing abortions on female patients. This is the moment where he first starts seeing recurrent dreams involving what he terms as "bomb babies" (101). In the dream, he wears "his white coat — but no black boots" (101), devoid of any overtly Nazi associated attire, Nazi motives, or traceable connections. The great power that the bomb babies have is "the mortal importance of no one knowing they are there" (101) underlining the parallel with his own concealed and abject identity as a Nazi fugitive, having undergone a process of disguise. He metaphorically associates himself with these bomb babies. Therefore, after this time, he changes his identity to Tod Friendly, embodying an eerie juxtaposition of existence and non-existence: dead but friendly, there but without a soul as observed by Irene. Yet, the soul — the narrator, the unconscious of the protagonist, distinguishes himself from Tod and confesses: "I'm glad it's not my body that is actually touching their bodies. I have *his* body, in between" (102). The body he inhabits serves as a cover for him, an armor segregating his inner world from the outer realm This embodiment, however, eludes recognition as his own, rendering him estranged or, more aptly, defamiliarized with it. The narrator and the body he is carried within are displayed to be two different entities, highlighting the split within the protagonist's psyche. The narrator emphasizes his unconnected being from what is narrated, regardless of sharing the same body.

Nonetheless, he wishes he had a body of his own: "They wouldn't believe me, even if I could tell them. They would turn away, in excruciation and contempt. I'm like the baby taken from the toilet. I have a heart but I don't have a face: I don't have eyes to cry. Nobody knows I'm here" (102). Here, the narrator echoes his "torn condition" (103) his sense of "dispensing existence" (103), seeing "the face of suffering … fierce and distant and ancient" (103), the "mortal weariness" he is feeling, after which he realizes: "Maybe I'm tired of being human, if human is what I am. I'm tired of being human" (103). His overwhelming abjection permeates his entire existence; he has a heart to suffer a fierce, distant, and ancient suffering for what he has done, but no face to confront it or to take accountability, nor the eyes with which

to undergo a cathartic transformation leading to eventual purification. In this instance, Julia Kristeva's abjection theory comes into play.

Kristeva describes abjection as having a strong relation to perversion. It is essentially different from Freudian uncanniness and is more violent. Abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a memory" (Kristeva *Powers* 5). Julia Kristeva, who formulated the concept of abjection, defines the abject as "neither subject nor object" a non-object which "has only one quality of the object — that of being opposed to *I*" (Kristeva 1), it is the "most *fragile*" and "most *archaic*" (12) state of being. It stays close as an opposition to the *I,* yet it cannot be adapted, nor can it blend into the homogeneity of the ego. It is a violent, unpleasant, perverse excess that lingers within the psyche; an excess which both fascinates and disturbs the self. It is unnamable, or undefinable. It draws the subject to a place where meaning dissolves. It is "improper" and "unclean" (2) and invokes repulsion in the self, hence it needs to be expelled. "Abjection is a resurrection that has gone through death (of the ego)" (15) because the "I" experience is anchored in the superego which introduces the ego to the law, prohibitions, and rules. In this case "the abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them" (15). This is where the alter ego is created so that the *I* does not disappear. The subject, therefore, becomes its own object, while the abject manipulates the structures that it is in and blurs the boundaries of the self and the other. The fact that the newly established boundaries are shattering disturbs the subject, identity, system, order, and the unity of the ego.

As soon as the Lacanian symbolic universe is introduced and the social dimension is constituted, the abject remains outside of this structure. The boundaries are not that stable and the abject reveals the fragility of the law. The abject is "the repudiation of the Name of the Father" (Kristeva 7). The reason why the law rejects the abject is because the abject reminds one of the experiences of the real and the law tries to repress the real which is essentially linked to *want* and need. The language of the symbolic does not suffice to describe the unnamable experience of the real, and since the abject is an excess of the real, it becomes "the object of primal repression" (12) and appears in the gaps and cracks of the secondary repression in the symbolic universe. Abjection, as the primordial separation (from the mother) is a "violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back" (13); it inflicts a

catastrophe on the subject. It parallels the real experiences of expulsion from the maternal body, reminiscent of a personal catastrophe. Thereby, any form of expulsion, exclusion, excess, or waste triggers memories of one's own separation from the maternal entity, fostering a sense of disgust and the imperative for its removal.

Therefore, accordingly, the protagonist stands as a waste of human experience, a rejection from humanity, a literal symbol of disposability, a human excrement as he is like the baby taken from the toilet — an epitome of abjection. This poignant notion finds resonance in his earlier contemplation: "Where would Tod and I would be without the toilet? Where would we be without all the trash?" (40), for he believes his (their) existence evokes disgust and warrant removal. He also observes that "all life … all sustenance, all meaning … issues from a single household appliance: the toilet handle" (18), which reduces the entirety of his existence and its significance to merely flushing down the toilet.

However, his abject state and torn condition remain concealed beneath the surface. He articulates this concealed state with the realization, "my whole being snags and crackles with broken glass, but that's all right, because although they may smell me, nobody sees me and nobody knows me" (Amis 71). It is noteworthy that the olfactory sense maintains a direct connection with the ability of taste, and it shares close interactions with the regions of the brain responsible for olfactory identification, memory retention and emotion. Therefore, if he cannot be recognized through his smell, as he claims, then this only underscores his unsettling state of *unheimlich* — a state characterized by a lack of identification, an impossibility for emotional connection, an inherent elusiveness and inaccessibility for memory. All these attributes collectively highlight his abject condition and serve to protect his untraceable *unheimlich* double, existing beyond the bounds of identification.

In his reversed reality, his abject state unconsciously manifests itself in various forms. Apart from the unconscious expressions noted earlier (dreams, jokes etc.), a revealing instance of this manifestation emerges through a Freudian slip of the tongue. When describing the unattractive way of eating in this reversed world order, he inadvertently remarks: "… then you *select* a soiled dish, collect some scraps from the garbage, and settle down for a short wait" (19, emphasis added). It is important to note that the terminology employed here is not arbitrary, if not, deliberate, and laden with significance. Notably, Maya Slater, in her article "Problems When Time Moves Backwards," criticizes the word choice and thinks that "the word 'select' is wrong

here" (149). However, a more nuanced analysis reveals that the deliberate usage of the word 'select' bears a profound connotation. This whole process draws a haunting parallel to the grim selections made at Auschwitz where Jewish people were ruthlessly "selected" for gassing — in which the protagonist actively participated. The process of gassing was regarded as a form purification, cleansing the inmates of their abject Jewishness, much akin to how a dishwasher purges dirt from soiled plates. This analogy intensifies the narrative's exploration of abjection and the distortion of moral boundaries in the reversed reality.

The need for purification manifests itself once he takes refuge in Rome with the help of Father Duryea. In his futile endeavor to cleanse himself, he retreats to the bathroom, driven by an aspiration to attain a "clean breast" and "clean hands" (121), as if it would metaphorically expunge the figurative blood on his hands, the sense of guilt staining his conscience. Notably, this introspective moment resonates with the thematic underpinning of the imperdibility of guilt, akin to Lady Macbeth's relentless handwashing motif in Shakespearean literature. This is the moment where he confronts his sins for the first and the last time with his fragmented confessions to Father Duryea. Within this confession, he acknowledges that he has sinned and been to hell, and still wants to heal "by doing good" (121), that he was in such a situation where "acts suggested themselves", that they lost their feeling about human body, even children and tiny babies; that he has "lost his idea of the gentleness of human flesh" (120). He cannot ask for help, yet the priest offers his best, to which he replies: "you do what you do best, not what's best to do" (120) that is, his innate commitment to help and forgive unconditionally, irrespective of deservingness. After this pivotal incident of confrontation, the protagonist undergoes a symbolic act of severance from his abject and unforgiving past by tearing into pieces the photograph of his wife, Herta, described as "the face of a young woman: dark, downy, pleasant, direct. Not especially forgiving" (120). Symbolically, this is his way of obliterating any vestige of his dark and unforgiving past and any tangible reminder thereof. Even so, despite these attempts at purgation, his abject state persists.

In fact, as time goes backwards, it is in this very instance that the root of his abjection is unveiled, as he declares: "Our name has changed once more … we are now called Odilo Unverdorben" (121). Ironically, the name "Odilo" connotes prosperity in a battle, which contrasts with the real outcome of the war, and the term "unverdorben" means "unspoiled" which starkly contrasts with the profound moral

decay wrought by his abhorrent actions. As time unfolds in reverse, and he arrives at (or rather flees) Auschwitz, it marks the moment when "the world is going to start making sense" (124). At this point, the narrative perspective switches to the first-person singular, and the narrator continues to narrate in the voice of "I": "*Now*. I, Odilo Unverdorben, arrived at Auschwitz Central … Human life was all ripped and torn. But I was one now, fused for a preternatural purpose" (124). This is when the split within his psyche occurs, and as the temporal progression reverses, the split eventually reunites and fuses his double/doppelgänger to his psyche. Now he is one with his double, with his Auschwitz self. Consequently, after Auschwitz, the dichotomy between Tod/John/Hamilton and the narrator emerges, since the Auschwitz self cannot reintegrate and coexist seamlessly within his psyche; thus, he was acting as a mere passenger or parasite within himself. However, throughout his time in Auschwitz, the doubling process succeeds the entire self, culminating in a profound psychological amalgamation.

This phenomenon is evident in Lifton's study on former Nazi doctors, who exhibited no sign of clear ethical introspection regarding their crimes and participation in the Holocaust and related atrocities. Their accounts of these events were delivered in detail yet as if "almost in the manner of a third person" (Lifton 8). Persistent forgetting, coupled with manifestations of psychic numbing, and self-serving distortion yielded to a profound defamiliarization experienced by these Nazi fugitives. The same occurrence can be seen in the case of Odilo, as well. Throughout the narrative, there is no evidence of clear ethical self-examination regarding his actions, except for a solitary instance where he covertly confesses to Father Duryea, from whom he knew he would get unconditional forgiveness. The process of doubling was necessary for Nazi doctors, including Odilo, as a means for managing the evil they were engaged in; it was their choice for evil. They had to materialize their abject self in the form of "Auschwitz self," allowing this other self to execute the "dirty work", thereby avoiding any possible emergence of guilt. This double, the opposing self, could escalate into a dangerously unrestrained force as seen in the case of Nazi doctors. As Otto Rank discerns, "that opposing self can become the usurper from within and replace the original self until it "speaks" for the entire person" and he describes the double as "the potential for evil, is necessary to the human psyche: the loss of one's shadow or soul or "double" means death" (Lifton 420). Consequently, the double is evil because it signifies the death of one's own self. It kills a part of the self from

within. This embodiment of the Auschwitz self is conspicuous in real-life cases such as Josef Mengele, Ernst B., Eduard Wirths, and notably, the fictional character Odilo Unverdorben, who participates in their grim reality.

### 3.3 Doubling & Nazi Doctors

Odilo's process of doubling occurs throughout his Nazi activity starting from Schloss Hartheim where he was to execute those "unworthy of life" (Amis 155), and he articulates this process as follows: "At night my eyes are full of tears. By day I throw myself into my work. I wonder if there will be any end to the sacrifices I am being asked to make" (135). The duality in his psyche is palpably reflected in his expression, and the sacrifice he makes means losing a part of his identity, his humanity, and knowing the fact that nothing will ever be the same again. Drawing upon Lifton's research, there is a process of adapting to the evil environment of Auschwitz, and the doubling amongst individuals within this environment serves to escalate this process of adaptation. For instance, Josef Mengele, referred to as "Uncle Pepi" by gypsy kids in the camp, is a real-life figure that Odilo mentions. He describes him as "godlike," "coldly beautiful, true, with self-delighted eyes; chasteningly graceful in his authority; and a doctor" (127). He seems to be "everywhere," and as Odilo describes, his omnipotence was the thing that tipped him over into the realm of the "superhuman" (136), the German myth "übermensch." He was also "fantastically clean for Auschwitz" and you could feel that "he was only playing the part of a human being" (136). Odilo's complicity in Mengele's racial experiments, including the notorious twin experiments conducted in Block 10 (see page 49), is candidly admitted, with Odilo acknowledging, "He led. We followed" (136). This leader he followed is in line with the accounts provided in Lifton's comprehensive study, which outlines similarities in the behavior and characteristics of Mengele.

Dr. Josef Mengele was aptly described as "the SS man from *Mein Kampf*" (Lifton 337), by an Auschwitz prisoner doctor. His omnipotence within the Auschwitz environment is also highlighted as he seemed to be "everywhere," "the most active," (341), an "omnipotent rescuer" (347) and even likened to "a godlike form of rescue" (346). He was viewed as "proper and never rude" (350), "pleasant and very human" (355), "capable of being so kind to children, to have them become fond of him, to bring them sugar," (337) yet the next day sending them to the gas chamber; "that is where the anomaly lay" as articulated by a prisoner doctor. Further intensifying this

anomaly was Mengele's peculiar obsession with cleanliness and perfection, reflected in his meticulous adherence to the Nazi principle of murder-selection. Survivors recounted him being "sensitive about bad smells," describing him as "clean, clean, clean!" (345). This obsession with cleanliness stood in grim parallel to his ruthless commitment to the selection process, for selections made to clean the state from its Jewishness. He was perceived as a "nonhuman evil force," "the lord of life and death" (345), executing selections "with relentless conscientiousness and responsibility" (344), and performing surgeries "without showing any emotion at all" (347). This dual aspect of his demeanor suggested to the survivors that "he was playing a role" (343), as in line with Odilo's characterization of him playing the part of a human being; that is adopting the facade of a human being while embodying a deeply disturbing and monstrous nature.

Mengele's actions can be elucidated as playing God, as eloquently expressed by one of the twin survivors: "Mengele is God — we found it out very fast" (353) and continues to highlight the duality inherent in his behavior wavering between displays of apparent affection and violence: "He could be friendly but kill" (355) very akin to Tod Friendly who embodies this dichotomy in Mengele — manifesting as a friendly kill. Also, two other twins describe him as "like a dual personality, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (355), further highlights this dual nature. Mengele's doubling can be attributed to his ambition and fervent encouragement for scientific work, as endorsed by another Nazi doctor Earns. B who believed that: "it would be a sin … irresponsible [toward science], not to utilize the possibilities that Auschwitz had for twin research. There would never be another chance like it" (358). A prisoner doctor simply articulates that "[Mengele] wanted to be God — to create a new race" (359). His double, his "Auschwitz self" facilitated his zealous pursuit of playing God, channeling his passion into what he perceived as "pure" scientific research, while using Auschwitz conditions as a means for justification. The same rationale can be seen in the case of Odilo, who perceives selections as "impersonal" (Amis 137) and echoes Earns B.'s statement by asserting: "It would be criminal to *neglect* the opportunity which Auschwitz affords for the furtherance …" (142). This justification stems from the broader objective of repopulating Germany, multiplying the race of superior beings, and "breeding desirable leaders" (Lifton 359), consistent with the prevailing Nazi ideology.

Within the context of Odilo's narrative, another historical figure from the Nazi regime who emerges is Dr. Eduard Wirths, who is the epitome of the healing-killing conflict, notably referred to as the "decent Nazi." Wirths is introduced into the novel when Odilo mentions his "living quarters" in Auschwitz, noting that "Dr Wirths had made available the annex of his own living quarters — a delightful apartment (with its own kitchen and bathroom) beyond whose patterned lace curtains stood a high white fence" (137). This passage conveys a sense of admiration on Odilo's part as he wishes Herta, his wife, would accept residing with him in Auschwitz, much like Wirths family, as he articulates: "Dr Wirths has his wife and three children with him, at present. I hoped that Herta would spend some of her time playing with the little Wirthses" (138). This corresponds to the historical facts as Dr Eduard Wirths really had his family join him in Auschwitz (Lifton 396), evidenced with his letters to his family members. In addition to the anticipation and report on the preparations of their house in Auschwitz expressed in the letters, he also mentions feeling "embarrassed" by all the preparations necessary for their house, not because of the Auschwitz victims, but because of the other SS doctors having to team up in a single house (Lifton 397). This sentiment indicates his detachment from the grim reality of Auschwitz. He also deliberately requests "to erect the fence soon because of the children," (397) ostensibly with the aim of protecting his family from the harsh realities of the Auschwitz world.

Dr. Wirths embodied a profound duality, epitomizing the intricate interplay between the healing-killing conflict, while simultaneously demonstrating the delicate balance between life and death instincts. His having his family beside him while carrying out selections and navigating the entire killing process shows the dichotomy in his behavior. While his death instinct was holding onto his Auschwitz self and was being triggered with the murderous atmosphere of the camp, his normal self found nourishment through the life instinct symbolized and provided by his family. Even though he was a mass murderer during the day, at night he appeared to relish the lively solace of his familial interactions, effectively setting a clear boundary between the two selves. Interestingly, he was frequently characterized not only as a criminal but as "a tragic figure" (Lifton 384), and as a Dutch documentary articulates: "a good man becoming a leading figure in a project of unprecedented evil" (385). Notably, his death was distinctive, particularly in what provoked it. Upon his surrender, a British intelligence officer greeted him and remarked: "Now I've shaken hands with a man

who … bears responsibility for the death of four million human beings" (384). On that night, Wirths succumbed to suicide by hanging himself.

After his brief period of service at other concentration camps including Dachau and Neuengamme, Wirths was sent to Auschwitz where he served as a chief doctor since September 1942 (Lifton 286). His primary responsibilities included combatting the persistent typhus epidemics that increasingly affected SS personnel. He also exhibited a protective stance toward the prisoner doctors and other prisoners engaged in medical work. In fact, there is an account of him reproaching Irma Grese, the notorious female SS officer, when he witnessed her physically abusing a prisoner assigned to the medical block, rebuking her with the words: "Do not beat my people!" (387). This episode reveals the complex internal conflict within him, as well as the vulnerability that allowed him to be influenced by "a powerful personality" (388) such as Langbein (a Communist political prisoner) and enabled his humane side to retain its force. It was obvious that Wirths very often harbored a strong desire to leave Auschwitz; however, Langbein and others tried to persuade him into staying, highlighting the good he had done for the prisoners. Most prisoner doctors held a favorable opinion of him, yet one of them, Dr. Tadeusz S., described him as: "Surely a Nazi in spirit but not a cruel one" (389). This complex dynamic exemplified the Auschwitz paradox, wherein relatively humane interactions between perpetrators and victims occurred, resulting in lives being saved, while also assisting the Nazi doctor in adapting his functioning Nazi self in this death camp.

Wirths' inner conflict continued throughout his Auschwitz activity. He was insisting that the killing must be medicalized echoing the slogan: "Let the syringe remain in the hand of the physician" (394). In fact, apart from merely asserting medical control over selections, Wirths assumed a role of organizational significance, became their "responsible person" who declared: "Let the syringe be in *my* hand. If anyone kills, let it be me as well" (394). Upon assuming this responsibility, Wirths became responsible for deciding the number of people to be subjected to gassing in order to reduce the overcrowding, and the risk of epidemics while also whether, or at what point, the mothers and children should be forcibly separated. This heavy burden of responsibility entrapped him in his healing-killing paradox, thereby defining his entire Auschwitz experience. The provided documents such as his letters to his family, wife, father and especially his apologia presents evidence for his psychologically torn condition, that is, his doubling process. In his first letter, upon arriving at Auschwitz,

he refers to his duty there as the "superhuman" task that he must fulfill, expressing that he is doing it "for you my life … for you and the children" and describing the project as needing "much German spirit, energy and German work" (396). This transformation from an initial state of shock to a belief in destiny and duty is discernible, with Auschwitz gradually assuming the role of a German national imperative on behalf of the absolute purity and security of its own family, future, and the immortal German spirit.

In his apologia, however, Wirths' detachment and defamiliarization from the Auschwitz reality, particularly, his conspicuous moral ignorance is apparent. Following his surrender, he expresses "my greatest guilt," though notably directed not toward the countless Auschwitz victims but rather toward his wife and children for having led them "into misery and situations of want" (398). Furthermore, his inquiry, "What is it that I have perpetrated? I do not know" (398), only underlines his moral obliviousness, and emotional and psychologically detached position from the atrocities he was complicit in. Another letter of his contains his assertion, "I can say that I have always done my duty and have never done anything contrary to what was expected of me" (404) emphasizing his blind commitment to the national mission dictated by the Nazi ideology. The guilt he exhibits is steeped in justification, manifesting as a guilt-denying form of religious resignation, as he claimed that he acted according to his "Christian and medical conscience" (405). Although part of his absurd remarks might result from the postwar desperation, they also serve as a reflection of his distorted, justified, and victimized self-image, enabling him to maintain his medical conscience through the adapted evil.

The rest of his letters to his wife are predominantly characterized by expressions of love in which Auschwitz takes no place or only acts as a source of their pain. He contemplates in one of his letters: "The essence of our life … a love that glorifies, understands, knows and overcomes everything" (398). A similar sentiment is echoed by Odilo as well, as he articulates on the touching of women: "Life and love must go on. Life and love must emphatically and resonantly go on: here, that's what we're all about" (Amis 130). However, unlike Dr. Wirths, who holds onto the emotional satisfaction and life/sex force that his wife and children provide him, Odilo receives nothing but the unforgiving face, ignoring eyes, and disapproving manner of his wife, Herta. She rejects joining him in Auschwitz and voices her disappointment in him with the disconcerting declaration: "You are a stranger to me … I don't know

you" (138). His life instinct cannot find its fulfillment through his wife, he becomes impotent throughout his involvement in the Nazi killing project, therefore, he seeks a sense of fulfillment through a perverse form of *jouissance* derived from the suffering of others, and through the narration's reversal chronology taking him back to his mother's womb, an event marking his initial separation from the concept of love and emotional intimacy and the primal experience of *jouissance*[11].

Similar dualistic remarks were made by Dr. Wirths in his contemplation of death. He embarks upon a reflective journey inspired by Nietzschean aphorisms such as "Oh, demolishing is easy, but building!" (Lifton 408). Likewise, Tod echoes a similar remark: "Creation is easy … is quick" (Amis 23) but "Destruction — is difficult. Destruction is slow (26). However, this logical inversion of the statement is a product of the narrative's temporal reversal, which imbues these concepts with a reversed meaning, thereby further corrupting the already corrupted concepts. After all, Nazis, in their dehumanizing ideology, essentially disregarded the intrinsic value of human life and instead accentuated the difficulty inherent in acts of creation, all the while paradoxically demonstrating the relative ease with which they could carry out acts of destruction. This shift in emphasis stemmed from their detachment from the fundamental humanity of individuals, "forgetting about the gentleness of human flesh" (Amis 120), ultimately highlighting the apparent ease of causing harm and destruction while minimizing the challenging obstacles associated with real acts of creation.

Wirths' remarks continue to show similarity with Odilo as he ponders how "finally, painful experiences, sad events, lead our heart back to the faith of our childhood" (Lifton 408). This is exactly what Odilo's reversed narrative journey demonstrates, marked by the pain and suffering that he has perpetrated, ultimately leading his heart — his soul back to his state of innocence reminiscent of his childhood. This narrative arc evokes similar sentiments given in the Latin phrase, "per aspera ad astra" meaning "through hardship to the stars." However, in the case of Nazis, this hardship is a perpetrated torment onto others, and the pursuit of celestial heights remains perpetually unattained, just like the unattained *jouissance*. In his post-

[11] When questioning "why jouissance is evil" (Lacan Ethics 179) Lacan uses the French word "le mal" which means both "suffering" and "evil." Jouissance demands the transgressing of boundaries, and "implies precisely the acceptance of death" (Lacan Ethics 189). This is why one either betrays the neighbor or resigns from one's, own jouissance — if possible. This is why the jouissance of the neighbor/of the Other is "malignant" and "harmful" (187) because my neighbor can transgress my boundaries as well while attempting to reach their own jouissance.

Auschwitz period, Tod/Odilo keeps having a recurrent dream "full of souls who form constellations like the stars I hate to see" to whom he conducts a "long argument, … telling the truth, but the invisible people who might hear and judge luckily refuse to believe him and turn away in silence, weariness and disgust" (Amis. 37). Odilo associates the stars with the departed souls of Jews that they executed. Once in Auschwitz he sees the Jews bending their heads back, perhaps to catch a bit of oxygen through the gassing, and articulates them to be "looking for the souls of their mothers … fathers … women … children, gathering in the heavens — awaiting human form, and union … The Sky above the Vistula is full of stars. I can see them now. They no longer hurt my eyes" (131). It is the Jews that ascend metaphorically to the stars through their agonizing hardship, albeit from the morally and religiously justified and thus distorted perspective of the Nazi doctors. However, as epitomized in Odilo's dreams, there is no redemption or forgiveness, but only weariness and disgust that these fugitives receive.

This unforgiven condition yields to a profound sense of despair, hopelessness, and, ultimately, suicidal tendencies as can be seen in the case of Dr. Wirths. Lifton explains that upon his surrender, due to postwar despair, Wirths was experiencing an "agitated depression, accompanied by extreme despair" which featured the components conductive to suicide: "the sense of entrapment and futurelessness … and the desire to convey an enduring principle best expressed by killing oneself" (Lifton 408) adding the fact that his condition contained affirmation of love for his wife and family together with a solution to the tormenting question of guilt. Notably, his suicide transpired subsequent to his participation in the horrors of Auschwitz, which effectively carried the overlooked acknowledgment of the dimension of his crimes to his grave. However, Lifton describes Dr. Wirths' experience in Auschwitz, by considering his despair as a part of his adaptation, a "life of suicide" (408) — a life in which suicide enables one to evade a genuine confrontation with questions of meaning. Among the prisoner doctors, Dr. Jan W., for instance, regarded his suicide not as an act of moral conscience but "because he couldn't face the responsibility [of what he had done]" (409). And Dr. Wanda J., another prisoner doctor, offered a remark on Dr. Wirths' suicide, asserting: "Anyhow, he did the decent thing. He killed himself" (409). In the end, Dr. Wirths' suicide acted as a mechanism to avoid the burdens of guilt and accountability for the atrocities he had committed.

### 3.4 Odilo Unverdorben

In Odilo/Tod's case, however, suicide was never an option, much akin to the Jewish inmates in Auschwitz. When contemplating on the question of suicide with Irene who exhibits clear suicidal tendencies, Tod warns her way of thinking primarily because it is "sinful" (Amis 33) and adds: "Personally, I think we can dismiss *suicide* as a hollow threat…. Suicide isn't an option, is it. Not in this world. Once you're here, once you're on board, you can't get off" (33). He expresses his entrapment in his torn condition, walled within the sense of guilt that he actively avoids confronting, knowing suicide would be an easy way out through free will. Odilo's psychological condition, along with other Nazi fugitives, resembles the despair of Prometheus, the mythological figure who defied the gods in order to bestow fire and knowledge upon humanity, leading to his eternal punishment and suffering. In the case of Nazi doctors, their scientific hubris, and the revelation of the dark side of human nature to humanity echo a similar thematic resonance. Another resonance to this situation is that suicide was prohibited in the confines of Auschwitz, for it posed a challenge to the authority of Nazi doctors who acted as life's gatekeepers. Odilo resonates this by expressing their collective hate against it: "… there's certainly no end of a palaver when a patient "takes matters into his own hands," with the electrified fence, for example. We all *hate* that … I am famed for my quiet dedication" (142). Lifton's study confirms this, emphasizing that "prisoners could not be permitted to kill themselves, suicide violated the logic of healing-killing paradox … such as running into the electric fence" since it was considered as the "first affirmation of freedom" (Lifton 150). In the reality of Auschwitz, freedom could only be attained through work, aligning with the German logic *Arbeit Macht Frei* — work liberates.

In a psychological place where suicide is not an option, any signifier of life instinct has waned, where impotence is overtly manifest, the perpetrator trauma persists and entrapment of guilt overwhelms, Odilo's response to these harrowing circumstances becomes a subject of inquiry. They gather people in the "Sprinkleroom" (Amis 128) which stands for the gas chambers disguised as shower rooms, deceiving inmates into believing they are about to partake in a communal shower, only to be subjected to gassing. After the gassing and monitoring the whole process, Odilo makes a significant confession: "The dead look so dead. Dead bodies have their dead body language. It says nothing. I always felt a gorgeous relief at the moment of the first stirring" (129). His statement resonates with an image of sexual ejaculation, as if Odilo

is equating the release of the deadly gas, "sprinkling," with the act of seminal emission, which is typically associated with the source of life. In this distorted context, he experiences a form of orgasm through the death of a room of Jewish inmates. This incident shows similarity with the concept of "la petite mort" that is "the little death" also connoting orgasm, referring to the sensation of post-orgasmic state akin to death. The whole idea of *jouissance*, too, although unattainable, can only be approachable through suffering, and in his case, it is the suffering of others through which he approaches his *jouissance*. The association between death and orgasm is an inevitable thematic consideration, as death is symbolically considered to be the ultimate orgasm. It can be deduced from the post-orgasmic state of unconsciousness experienced by some individuals following sexual intercourse, as well as postmortem observations in cases of male corpses who have been executed, particularly by hanging (Grube 455).

Portrayed as impotent, and erotically a failure, Odilo receives "Herta's glance sometimes, and her mother's glance, and even her father's glance, which is hard and countervailing" (Amis 148). Under the crushing glance of Herta and her family, he realizes that "these glances say that in my hands there rests a mortal and miserable power. I am omnipotent. Also impotent. I am powerful and powerless" (148). The entire dehumanizing Nazi killing project emasculates him, corroding his ideologically ingrained phallic power. The very "bomb baby" he encounters is in one of the early moments of executions, as he notices a naked mother and her weeping baby. In this scene, Odilo and his fellow doctors are described as having their "dangling stethoscopes," "their laughter and their cigarettes, waiting for the familiar volley of shouts and thumps from within" (150). Contrary to what he experiences, he portrays himself as phallicly assertive: "I myself toyed with a philosophical perfecto…" (150) with a pipe in his hand, while observing the executions, numbing his emotions, even though his physical and subconscious responses betray him. His impotence is further emphasized through his linguistic experience as well: "*I* sounds notably erect … but *Ich*? It's like the sound a child makes when it confronts its own … Perhaps that's part of the point" (134). The fact that he does not feel "erect" in German but in English corresponds to his experiences, a sense of agency and psychological dissonance, while using the language associated with the morally corrosive milieu of Nazi atrocities.

As times regresses, the abjection and the ideological toxication in him slowly fades away. His double abandons him as he states: "He walks on, alone, Odilo Unverdorben" (155), this is because this moment marks the inception of his doubling

process; and as the temporal reversal continues, he duality within him reconciles, leading to the eventual eradication of the double's existence within Odilo. The double, who "ha[s] no name and no body … slipped out from under him and now scattered above like flakes of ash-blonde hair" (155-156). He expresses his emotional fatigue as he is unable to bear with the "ruined god, betrayed and beaten by his own magic" (156), who called on "powers best left unsummoned, he took human beings apart — and then put them back together again (156). A parallel theme of scientific hubris is apparent in *Frankenstein* (or Modern Prometheus) in the case of the scientist Victor), and Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus,* along with the examples of Robert Louis Stevenson's work *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* through the theme of dual personality (as well as "The Body Snatcher" by the same author). When his double ascends into the sky, Odilo is portrayed in solitude, "I'll always be here. But he's on his own (156). Now Odilo is "innocent" "emotional" "popular" and "stupid" and particularly, "potent" (157), shedding the burdens of his abjection and ideological contamination. His innocence grants him his potency, and he finally assumes the meaning of "Odilo" that he lost a long time ago, that is, unspoiled, uncorrupted.

He goes to the medical school where National Socialism is nothing more than "applied biology" (157), conditioning Odilo to function as a "biological soldier" (158) in alignment with the prevailing Nazi doctrine (previously elaborated on pages 47, and 81). Odilo's perception of his wife, Herta, as his "chimpanzee" for her hairy body, reveals the extent to which he has internalized Nazi notions, contrasting her with the notion of the "natural" German girls who conform to Aryan ideals (158). The indoctrination of racial inferiority of Jews becomes apparent as he acknowledges: "I am told … [that] Jews come from monkeys" (140). The historically accurate racial discrimination against the Jews becomes progressively pronounced, as Odilo and his friends are "infuriated" with the Jews walking into the "medical profession" (163). However, the reversed narrative employs a reversal of lexical meanings of the actions toward Jews: "Jews permitted to buy meat, cheese and eggs," "Jews empowered to have friendly relations with Aryans," "Curfew for Jews lifted" (164), while all along they signify their opposite meanings, which is a deceitful reflection of the concealed hostility underlying such measures. On the infamous *Krystalnacht*, Odilo ostensibly "helps" the Jews while, in fact, he only contributes to the violent attacks on Jews and their properties. These are the early moments wherein Odilo is undergoing a gradual

corruption, polluting his innocence through dictated Nazi ideology, imposed fascism and normalization of racism within his. surroundings.

Ironically, Odilo finds himself at a hospital as he visits his mother, Margaret, where she sees "doctors for sick souls" (165), which the narrator believes is the "kind of doctor [he] needs" (165), emphasizing the Nazified sickness inherit in his soul. His mother is receiving mental treatment in a mental institution, and leading a life which, in his later life, he will be considering "life unworthy of life" and subjecting to injections, sterilization or gassing. However, Odilo desperately needs to tell his mother whose head is in an inaccessible place, who is oblivious to her surroundings: "You are on a globe that looks like a crystal ball or a marble in a light bed of cotton wool. Birds fly around it. Mother, you are on the planet earth" (166). From the reversed chronological point of view, this seems to be karma doing its job by terminating his mother in a mental institution where Odilo sterilized or executed thousands of people only for their mental illness.

Following the reversed movement of time, Odilo grows younger, serves his military and labor service. He travels for the first time to the places where Nazi cruelty took place, where he was "in harmony with the engine of nature" and "everything was miserable and innocent" but most importantly, "all the power and wonder had been washed away by time and weather" (170). It is in juvenile judgement, washed away from all the Nazified power and ideology, that he questions "why so many children and babies" and admits the "mistake," that they were "cruel" and that he "choiced" his cruelty (171). Ironically, his reasoning and admission of the cruelty he committed as an adult comes from his immature reasoning as a child. This is right after his mind is only inhabited by ignorance and innocence and knowing only his mother. This is the moment he is one with the mother, "kissing her breasts", having an intimate bond — a bond that will get even more intimate once their "corporal bond will be tied, with Solingen scissors" after he "enters" her, (171) describing his birth. His wording the birth process as entering the mother — invoking the image of a devourer mother, and having a corporal bond unite, only underlines his need for reuniting with the maternal womb, which is both homely and familiar (*heimlich*) for him and makes him appear unknown and concealed (*unheimlich*) from all his sins. In this way, the maternal womb serves as an eternal shelter, an eternal tomb, enabling him to lose himself in the ineffable maternal infinity.

His father, on the other hand, is described with a "furious, unforgiving, defeated look: his eyes are grimed with it, his face is nutcrackered with defeat and with unhealed wounds" (172). He represents the remains of Germany's devastating defeat of WWI, a severed veteran pictured as starving and poverty stricken. The German despair embodied in him is described as "starving" and "as thin as a *Musselmann*" (172), akin to the real *Musselmanner* (see page 42-43) who are characterized as succumbing to their ill fate, or rather, impending death which contradicts the ideal German resistance. His father is nameless because the *name of the Father*[12], that is, the patriarchal beliefs are shaken, gone, and defeated. His father has a "ruined foot" because of the War and the narrator expresses how "he cannot forgive [him] for what he will have to do to me. He will come in and kill me with his body" (172). The father's foot image resembles that of Sylvia Plath's poem "Daddy" where the speaker expresses how she lived in her Aryan father's black shoe like a foot (lines 2-3), and that she had to kill him (line 6). Even though in Plath's poem, the paternal foot has a crushing power on the speaker, in Odilo's case, the paternal foot loses its phallic power due to a lost war. Thus, through the reversed narrative, the paternal figure kills him with his phallus lest the son replaces his own patriarchal role. A phallic transmission of defeat, unforgiveness and fury, ignited with the Nazi ideology. Therefore, the narrator hopes the doctor that will take his childhood away by delivering him into the world does not wear the white coat and the black boots (Amis 173), an image he ultimately describes as: "Myself, Mistake. Mistake" (173). The narration concludes with the narrator's evaluation of himself being within Odilo's heart, "who came at the wrong time — either too soon, or after it was all too late" (173), which in fact, can be seen in Odilo's unsynchronized moral judgment over his actions.

In the end, the voice ends in the maternal womb which serves as a restart point for the male character, perhaps to reimagine himself. Throughout his Nazi involvement, he can never openly discuss or acknowledge his criminal deeds as criminal, rather he always comes up with a valid ground of justification thanks to the collective German understanding of the national body, doing it for the sake of the *Volk*,

[12] Through language acquisition, individuals enter the Lacanian Symbolic stage, learning norms, rules, and encountering the Name of the Father, the big Other, a key concept in Lacanian psychoanalysis. Unlike the real father, this is a symbolic, purely linguistic construct—an essential "paternal metaphor" denoting recognition and authority ("On a Question Preliminary" Lacan 220). Lacan emphasizes that the "phallus," a symbolic representation of power, is not confined to the literal penis but encompasses any signifier of phallic influence, hence phallocentrism.

for a great cause, and for the revival of the Third Reich. His perpetrator trauma leaks through unconscious forms, particularly through his dreams, revealing the repressed material, that is, the haunting image of the Holocaust, remnants of humanity that is violated, corrupted, and left behind. The very reversed nature of the narration demonstrates the distorted ways the Nazi mind works, the resulting reversal of meaning emphasizes the justified ways the Nazis thought, and the reversal of time underlines the corruption that the human mind is capable of, starting from the very reality of its nature. The corruption inhabits in many different notions that we, as humans, accept and believe as pre-established norms and doctrines; however, even the fundamental and holy beliefs such as religion, and Hippocratic oath show its man-caused corruptions. Men made; men corrupted. And Martin Amis, through his employment of reversed narration, distorted narrative voice, and a controversial protagonist, Odilo, a Nazi doctor, demonstrates the extreme dual nature of humanity, the extent to which this extremity can go, and the lengths which human psyche can justify, refigure, manage, and grapple with the atrocity that he himself has caused.

## CONCLUSION

This dissertation has delved into the horrifying depths of history's darkest chapter, into the minds of Nazi doctors, dissecting their descent into moral abyss, eclipse of reason, betrayal of the Hippocratic oath and their farfetched ability to avoid responsibility. Psychoanalytic theories have contributed more detailed explanations in exploring the dark depths of human psyche, along with the perpetrator studies focusing on the question of evil and the perpetrator's trauma, as well as the "doubling" theory and socio-historical context provided by Robert Jay Lifton's comprehensive study on the particular subject of this dissertation, Nazi doctors. While it is perhaps futile to discuss any possible justice aspect of this atrocity, which has a historical consequence, it is to some extent possible to see what it teaches us about humanity by examining its effects on Nazi doctors. What caused these rather "ordinary" and more importantly civilized people to commit extraordinary evil raises important questions about the potentials of human nature. Every human being can be capable of doing such evil under the certain circumstances that necessitate it. The factors to this incident might be universalistic and multicausal, but it is grimly there for us humans to explore. Although individual crimes served merely as minor cogs in the bigger machine of destruction, it should be noted that this destruction mechanism was collectively perpetrated. In drawing this examination to a close, it is important to reflect on the haunting lessons of the past and the implications they hold for the present and future of humanity.

Under specific circumstances, any of us may be driven to commit acts of mass violence; this is a disturbing reality about humanity that we must confront. To protect our societies from degenerating into genocide, we must acknowledge that even in the most advanced periods of history, like the 20th century, which witnessed mad-made atrocities such as two world wars, and numerous genocidal events, our species retains a potential for profound violence, demonstrating that progress does not always yield positive outcomes, and extreme greed for technological and scientific progress might result in regression in humanity, as can be seen in the case of the atrocities of Holocaust. The capacity for evil exists within every individual, whether through direct action or complicity, as exemplified by the Holocaust, where each of us, while not directly responsible, inherits the legacy of this past catastrophe and destruction. Consequently, we are tasked with finding meaning in seemingly senseless tragedies. Thus, this dissertation seeks to explore the depths of the perpetrator's mind, with a

specific center of focus: Nazi doctors, who were perhaps the most reliable units of the society, promising to protect human life no matter what. And perhaps that is exactly why their transgression of the boundaries between good and evil is the most appalling revelation about the dual and unpredictable nature of humanity.

It is as important to know what it means to be human as it is to know what it means to be without humanity and what causes this situation. Psychoanalytic theories contribute profound insight into how the human mind works, how it manages the heavy concepts such as suffering, evil and trauma; how the self is formed and how it adapts to its environment in which *Others* are present. The most important explanation that it offers is the psychological construction of the *Other*, emerging from the early stages of human life lasting until the end. The very first Other is the parents of an individual, constructing the first structure one is introduced to; then follows the society that one belongs to, and the structure extends, including many others inside. This increasingly large bubble of social structure carries not only one's own desires, but also the desires, discourses, pre-established norms, rules, and laws of the others as well, such as parents, societies, and government. One realizes oneself to be a cog in a bigger machine, and if one cannot function properly, accordingly, one is at risk of being ostracized from the larger totality. This fear of expulsion actually first emerges at the moment of birth, where the individual experiences an unconscious sensation of being expelled, realizing that they are expulsed from the maternal womb — a place where the wholeness with the mother was complete.

This expulsion from the mother, or in other words, the first separation from the mother acts as a drama for the individual, because they will no longer experience the soothing serenity of the mother's wholeness, untroubled with the heavy burden of existence by societal norms and regulations, encapsulated within the framework of the Lacanian Symbolic realm, or the "big Other," denoting the name of the Father. Societies are phallocentric and patriarchal, therefore, impose distinct roles, particularly of a phallic nature, which individuals, especially males, are expected to fulfill. In a society full of others, one needs to learn how to coexist with them. Within the context of the German male individual, historical victimhood, suffering, economic hardship, social upheaval, and the intricate interplay of phallic pursuits rendered the individual susceptible to manipulation and radicalization. Various mechanisms such as propaganda, Othering, moral rationalization, conformity, and the cultivation of national unity caused them to create the enemy within. In the case of Germany, Jews

were systematically othered and vilified, and referred to as the "Jewish problem." Germany's devastated condition after the WWI misdirected their victimhood and tragically metamorphosed into the victimization of the Jewish people. There are factors to this incident; first victim-blaming and demonizing of the Jews, perpetuating the notion of their eternal enmity with the German race, as explicated in Lifton's scholarly investigation.

Chapter II is dedicated to portraying the systematic demonization of the Jews and building the ground for the radically Nazified units such as medicine, academics, and military. Robert Jay Lifton's study *Nazi Doctors* contributes extensive inside information about the Nazi mass killing project from its early days of issuing sterilization, euthanasia and finally to the *Final Solution*, that is, the extermination of each and every Jew. Gradually, these German individuals were indoctrinated and intoxicated by the Nazi ideology that promised the unity and prosperity of the German people, provided that firstly the impaired, weak, and most importantly the Jewish people were to be executed. All the murderous activity was justified, rationalized, and done for the sake of a greater healing for Germany.

Based on his interviews with former Nazi doctors and historical figures Josef Mengele, Earnst B. and Eduard Wirths, Lifton asserts that factors such as "doubling" that is, the creation of a mental split in one's psyche which separates the Auschwitz self from the normal self, while this double Auschwitz self is to blame for the dirty business, "psychic numbing," "defamiliarization," and "demoralization", were involved in the process that turned these doctors from healers into killers, which was in violation of the true nature of their profession. At this point, the Nazi perpetrator does not even consider his murderous acts as wrong and simplifies them as merely doing his job. Similarly, James Waller discusses how these ordinary German individuals came to commit such extraordinary evil, emphasizing their process of psychologically forming the enemy — the Other. Through this process, there is the mental division of us-them thinking, inherent drive for social dominance, moral disengagement, as well as moral justification, while all along dehumanizing and blaming the victim, as can be seen in the statement: "Jewish problem." Moreover, Christopher focuses on the situational factors that led and enabled the Nazi perpetrators to commit and justify their murderous acts. Whether succumbing to peer pressure or adopting the authoritarian persona endorsed by Nazism, these individuals transformed into willing killers. Their evil stemmed from the ideology of racial purification, and

national revival, collectively adhering to, and justifying their actions within the Nazi milieu, wherein each member considered themselves part of a sacred mission.

A new lens is needed for understanding the incomprehensibility of this extraordinary human evil. Through literature, it is possible to see historical events with a new lens, as Martin Amis did with *Time's Arrow*. His employment of reversed temporal order, double sounding narrator (as can be seen in the shift from third person to first person once the split occurs), reversed dialogues, reversed meaning, hence reversed morality, and the narrator's distorted way of interpreting the events, contribute a new perspective and voice for the historical events; the perspective and voice of the perpetrator. Voicing the perpetrator's mind is not an easy task, requires one to see eye to eye with their mentality. However, Amis' distorted narrative technique projects how distorted, incomprehensible and difficult it is to read the perpetrator's mind and his perspective. By challenging his reader to contribute a mental engagement in the course of his narration, he, in a way, presents the difficulty of understanding and meeting their mentality, as well as showcasing the disruption, traumatic fractions and moral blocking in their psyche.

As Amis states, he was immensely inspired by Robert Jay Lifton's book *Nazi Doctors,* and the traces of this inspiration can be seen through the rich symbolism and references Amis makes in his book *Time's Arrow*. The narration is crucial in understanding the psychological effects on the perpetrator, yet it also defamiliarizes the connection lest the reader can easily sympathize with the Nazi fugitive in the novel. That is, the narration, through its narrative absurdities and obstacles, challenges the reader for mental engagement while at the same time draws a certain gap between the reader and the protagonist to convey the incomprehensibility of his actions. The reversed meaning of historic actions, making sense of meaningless brutality, ironically showcases how the mind of a Nazi perpetrator worked, was conditioned, and affected by the very crimes and atrocities he himself caused.

Therefore, in *Time's Arrow*, Odilo serves as a theoretical character who embodies the effects of the Nazi perpetration on the perpetrator, how it disrupts his reality, shatter his psyche, changes his perspective, and generates justification for his criminal acts. Odilo, like many other Nazi fugitives, cannot undo what he has done; however, he also cannot easily move away from the consequences of his actions because no matter how effectively he escapes from his reality, the effects of his perpetration remain. These psychological remnants on his psyche can be traced

through the small hints, covert symbolisms and most importantly through the reverse narration technique employed in the novel. Whether consciously or not, Amis' use of such narration method metaphorically mirrors the regressive tendencies that Odilo exhibits throughout the story. His regressing into the innocence of childhood, and ultimately back to his mother's womb reveals how human psyche tries to seek shelter in the innocent childhood memories and the serene presence of the maternal womb in the times of crisis that they initiated. This instinctual response is an attempt to reconstruct his shattered identity. To illustrate this process, I have tried to show the profound fragility of Odilo's psyche that lies in the background of the story by reading through the lines of each reverse experience Odilo goes through in the novel in the light of psychoanalytic theories.

The reversed narration puts Odilo into a reversed spiral where his death concludes with his birth. Throughout this reversed cycle, Amis provides Odilo with an opportunity for redemption, allowing him to reinterpret the meaning and consequences of his actions, and essentially absolving his entire existence, reinterpreting the meaning of Auschwitz, and ultimately finding solace within the forgiving presence of his mother's womb. Through this mode of narration, what goes around comes back around; acts of destruction become acts of creation, genocide turns into genesis. Within this narration, repression, women, abjection, and doubling are among the major themes that navigate the explanation for the psychological process in Odilo's reversed time travel**.** His fears revolve around the repressed material, the fear of mutilation, which goes in line with the male fear of maternal engulfment and castration, all of which manifest themselves symbolically in some way throughout the narrative.

Odilo's fears and traumas are repressed materials that come to the surface in unconscious forms including jokes and dreams throughout the novel. I have tried to detect these forms and offer psychoanalytical explanation to what kind of effects they left on Odilo's psyche and draw connections to psychoanalytic concepts offered by Freud, Lacan and Kristeva. Apart from jokes, dreams play a big part in Odilo's repressed memory. Since he could never confront what he has done, take on responsibility and actually do something good in order to compensate for his crimes, he begins to see in his nightmares what he has swept under the rug, the things he has been avoiding facing: the innocent babies and the women he has executed. I have shown how the moment of bursting into tears after seeing weeping babies in his dream parallels his vulnerable, guilty, impotent, and powerless state after Auschwitz. What

he cannot verbalize, what he cannot physically act upon, is reflected in his conscious mind and torments him psychologically.

In examining Odilo's post-Auschwitz years, I have underscored the impact of his repressed emotions on his relationships with women, particularly Irene, Herta, and his mother. Odilo's epiphany that all the world is a woman holds a significant weight, and I have linked it to the established male perspective on women in psychoanalytic theories. The entire narrative is set to bring him back to the comforting and forgiving female presence in order to fulfill his need for metaphorical purification, sexual desires and forgiveness; all in all, the ultimate symbol of *jouissance*. In the post-war years he has affairs with many women — especially women in inferior positions, but the most prominent one is with the maid Irene. The fact that Irene has lost a child and does not have one makes Odilo unconsciously drawn to her because it reminds him of his own lost child, lost potency, and his lost future. However, Irene also makes him secure for she does not demand a future from him, thus, the unfulfilled patriarchal role does not threaten him while he is with Irene. Also, Irene's penetrating naked female stare serves as a metaphorical lens, compelling Odilo to confront the truths he has concealed from himself, thereby shaping his complex psyche.

Herta, on the other hand, embodies a harsh reality. Unlike Irene and his mother, Herta does not have a forgiving presence, in fact, she has unforgiving eyes, disapproving words, and a rejecting attitude toward his Auschwitz self. The loss of their child symbolizes not only Odilo's lost future but also the future of countless innocent lives he has slaughtered. Thus, I have established a link between Herta's rejection and the symbolism of the maternal womb, evoking a sense of abjection within Odilo. This rejection from a female figure reminds him of his own expulsion from his mother, which is a nostalgia for the wholeness with the mother experienced by male individuals throughout their entire lives. I have pointed out how this sense of expulsion triggers the death drive in the protagonist, emphasizing his abject state – all of which sets the protagonist to undo himself through the reversed narration and find solace in the ineffable feminine infinity. That karmic spiral render him impotent throughout his Auschwitz years, berefting him from his phallic powers despite his apparent dominance over the vulnerable. Therefore, since the world is a woman to him, the narration is set to bring him to the roots of the world, to the maternal womb, to regenerate himself by washed away his Nazi evil. I have tried to highlight the significance of the image of the maternal womb for Odilo, just like many other male

individuals, through the key concepts from Jacques Lacan regarding human mental development.

Yet another point I have underscored was the Lifton's theory "doubling" and how Odilo experienced such a mental process during his Auschwitz years. A notable proof lies in the narrative shift in the narrator's voice at the points where Odilo arrives at and leaves Auschwitz; Odilo is no longer the narrated but the narrator. This suggests that the narrator, which is the soul/unconscious of Odilo, finally reunites with his psyche, forming an Auschwitz self, whom Odilo blames for his criminal activity conducted in Auschwitz. This is how easily he could avoid guilt, responsibility, and defamiliarize himself from his murderous acts. I have demonstrated how Odilo's normal self needs a familial bond that can preserve his life instinct intact by having his wife beside him in Auschwitz, just like the real-life Nazi doctor figure Dr. Eduard Wirths and his family in Auschwitz. However, Herta's rejection of this bond catalyzes Odilo's descent into extreme murderous acts. Rather, he finds his progressive purpose in the scientific experiments conducted on innocent victims with Josef Mengele, in the name of science and so-called progress. Additionally, I have presented textual and factual evidence from Lifton, including real-life examples of Eduard Wirths and Josef Mengele, aligning Odilo's actions with those of these historical Nazi figures.

The juxtaposition of the historical and fictional figure of Josef Mengele offers insight into how such a Nazi figure was perceived within the Nazi environment. Mengele's godlike, omnipresent presence instilled fear, admiration, and power in the camp among the camp inmates and staff. This reverence stemmed from the dual nature of Nazi doctors, as well as from the medical indoctrination these Nazi doctors underwent during the Nazi era, which advocated for the "biological soldiers" and Nazism as applied biology. This is evident in Odilo's adolescent years when he was a medical student. I have tried to offer real-life evidence and compare it to the textual evidence to show how propaganda, indoctrination, extreme ideology can play a big part on one's perception. In fact, as I pointed out, Odilo's medical training period is the very first time he is engaged in committing evil; starting his duty at Schloss Hartheim and engaging in the notorious Krystal Nacht where he and his peers attack and loot Jewish properties. His entire evolution indicates how the evil in him does not emerge overnight, but it is a process in which he has become an active participant. This type of evil is dangerous, as it can be triggered in the most civilized individuals. I have tried to demonstrate the fact that such evil actions cause trauma not only to the

victims but also leave a lasting impact on those responsible for such perpetration. This is why the narrator considers his childhood soul as innocent and unspoiled by such evil. Even though he is named as Odilo, 'unspoiled', it is only at the end of the story, when he is completely cleansed of his Nazism and the evil it brings, can he become Odilo, uncorrupted and unspoiled by all the evil that Nazism bears, and it is in his mother's womb that he is able to completely achieve that.

Within the reverse narration, the narrator is free of guilt, responsibility and the burden of trauma that weighs heavily on Odilo throughout his entire life. This technique highlights the torn condition of humanity, and Odilo's psyche, offering a perspective that allows for the reinterpretation of past events. This approach is applicable not only to the perpetrator but also to the reader, enabling the reexamination of historical events, especially the appalling atrocities like the Holocaust, through a contemporary lens. Even though Holocaust cannot be undone, this narration serves as a poetic unraveling of it. In this morally and psychologically inverted world, only a backwards narration could make it sensible. I have attempted to show how the delusional Aryan superiority, the belief in the national body, the fantasy of "biosoldier", Nazi doctors' eagerness for scientific research, the belief in the revival of the Third Reich, anti-Semitic hatred, ideological brainwashing, propaganda, and indoctrination led to the reverse outcome of Nazi progress. The entire narration ironically comments on this paradox.

Consequently, although the Holocaust was one of the most heinous massacres of humankind that we have experienced in recent world history, these massacres continue to happen in one way or the other, and humanity has obviously not realized its full potential yet. Evil is not foreign to our nature, even though it is not truly inherent in us. Even the most civilized individuals have the potential to commit extraordinary evil, as exemplified in the Holocaust with the German people of the Nazi era. I would like to conclude with a poignant verse from a child survivor of Terezin, questioning the world's state then, a query which is still relevant today:

> The poor thing stands there vainly.
> Vainly he strains his voice.
> Perhaps he'll die. Then can you say
> How beautiful is the world today? (Volavkova, 77)

This question can still be asked but the answer will never be certain, as echoed by subsequent events. The aftermath of WWII saw the Cold War, the threat of Nuclear War, the never-ending strife in the Middle East, the disturbing rise of extremist ideologies, and the formation of numerous terrorist groups. The world has witnessed countless conflicts and massacres, with suffering persisting in different areas, notably in recent events such as the Ukraine-Russia War, the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, and the enduring Palestine-Israel struggle, claiming countless innocent lives. Can we still say how beautiful the world is today? Almost a century has passed since the Holocaust, yet humanity still perpetrates persecution, marginalization, brutality, and dehumanization, asserting their own superiority over others. Those who were once victims, should not transform into aggressors. If that is the case, then clearly humanity has not closed the book on this issue. As a new generation, it is our responsibility to confront and delve into this question. We should actively pursue peace in our globalized world, seeking ways to quell the darkness within us and our societies that any form of political and social power could potentially ignite. Considering the potential for evil in humans, it becomes crucial to address this issue, humanize our world, and educate one another to thrive in a civilized society. This is the least we can do for humanity as the torchbearers of a new era.

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