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Schemes of image and symbolic power: notes on some conceptions of interview in dispute

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Abstract
This article aims at regarding two U.S. research projects that used video as an important tool to collect data: the Fortunoff Video Archive (Yale) and the Shoah Foundation Institute (USC). Although they had similar goals - to provide a collection of testimonies of Nazism victims -, these institutions show distinct manners of conducting their work, such as: what is the most suitable location for the filming? Who could be at the filming? how and to what extent it should be registered the presence of the interviewer? Which "aesthetic" should the scene have? How to establish time in the interview (chronology of events, the interviewee's subjectivity) and how did it relate to what was shown in the video? Such questions, seemingly confined to the immediate context of the research, put into play deeper issues, such as the dispute over the symbolic power, as reflected by the assertion of a certain public image of the so-called "Holocaust survivor", through a struggle of different points of view with regard to the war and regimes of authenticity. Visual dimension was a central aspect, thus the importance of considering the schemes of image on this research.

Keywords:interview; audio-visual; memory; Holocaust

In 1993, *Schindler's List*, by Steven Spielberg, premiered. The movie was delivered to a large audience all over the world, and not only has it uplifted the career of Spielberg, and his acknowledgment in the industry as a "serious" filmmaker, but, most importantly, it has shown the changes in the social construction of Holocaust memory in the U.S.. It is possible to say that from the '70s, a particular point of view began to strongly emerge in the public space, bringing out conflict on an ethnic level, which slowly ceased to be what Michel Pollack had called "subterranean memory" (1987)1.

This can be measured not only from an increased visibility of this topic in the media of mass communication, but also from other indicators. For example, data from the 2001 Holocaust organizations catalog in the United States indicate that among the existing organizations (associations of survivors, educational institutions, museums, etc.), 90% emerged in late '70s and mid '80s. Among these institutions, it is worth noting the emergence of organizations of oral history, which was accompanied by an increasing academic interest on the subject, expressed both in teaching and research.

The aim of this paper is to discuss two organizations within this context, the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies and the 2Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education. These projects had as main object of research the so-called "Holocaust survivors", their objectives were, on one hand, guided by political and ideological issues - keeping alive the memory of this event through the testimonies of the *ones that lost*, which is entwined with the ethnic perspective, because they are initiatives of Jewish groups - and on the other, guided by academic reasons - the construction of a database, supported by renowned *scholars* from U.S. universities, for future research. Besides these factors, another strong point the two organizations had in common was how they collected data: the audiovisual record.

However, despite the similarities noted, what was really remarkable about their relation was an intense hostile debate where at every moment their differences were scored. The organizations discussed about several points, but in particular about the model of interview and all that it involved: How should people be interviewed? Who would be able to interview? How should interviewers be trained? What questions would be relevant to make, which would not be appropriate to ask? What would be the rules of this interaction? What does it mean to do this job?

My goal is to discuss such debate, considering it as space of ??struggle for the *symbolic power* – the

power "to make others see and believe" (BOURDIEU, 1998, p. 14) – which, in this case, regards the dispute over the testimony authority (who has the right to speak about the Holocaust?), the idea of ? ?authenticity (what kind of story is more "real"?) and the legitimacy of connection with the past (what is the correct way of representing the Holocaust?). In this discussion, different conceptions of the interview were at stake, which involved different schemes of image: who, how, and what should appear in the "screen"? What are the implications of these choices? As we shall see, these options entailed more than determining a good or bad technique, it entailed the whole concept of interviewing and a certain view about the past and the actors involved.

Brief presentation of projects

The Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies

According to their official website, the *Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies* was created in 1979 with the initiative of a TV journalist, Lauren Vlock, and Dori Laub, a "psychiatrist" and "survivor" according to the site. The text states that, after producing several interviews for channel 8 in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1978, the journalist would have realized the "power of the testimonies of survivors" and then started to meet with Dr. Laub to start the registration project of these testimonies. At the time the project was called the *Holocaust Survivors Film Project* and it was in New Haven. In 1981, when the collection gathered 200 interviews, it became an associate project with Yale University and open to the public the following year, changing its name to Fortunoff Video Archive ... in honor of one of its major donors.

In my fieldwork I found a complementary version of its myth of origin. It considered its origin immediately after the broadcasting of the miniseries called *Holocaust:* the story of the (fictional) Weiss family, aired by NBC in 1978. The initiative of the project was the result of a strong negative reaction to this series, since many survivors would have felt extremely uncomfortable with its format. Among the main arguments, the show was said to have a "Hollywood" type of language that would trivialize the tragic event and that the insertion of commercials was disrespectful (either by the cutting and introduction of "worldly" topics, or by the content of certain advertisements, for instance the case of insecticides, which referred to a product that was used in the gas chambers, the Zyklon B, derived of insecticide). They then decided to create an organization that allowed survivors to tell their stories themselves, thus enabling to print content and format (according to them) that were more appropriate to the topic.

> Since its foundation, the organization has brought together more than 4,100 testimonies, and its main group of respondents consist of Jewish survivors who had different experiences in the war, followed by the so-called "bystanders" (non-Jewish witnesses, who were there and were complicit), resistant and liberators (HARTMAN, 2001).

I had a chance to interview Joanne Rudof, one of the people responsible for developing the project interview model, so I could better understand the format adopted by the Fortunoff Archive and watch one of them. Mrs. Rudof informed me that the purpose of the interview was to learn about the entire life history of the survivors, from their childhood up to the time of the interview. However, there was no chronological time to it; the established sequence of the events was determined by their flow of memories, with information in alternating time periods. There was a fast initial contact with each survivor to obtain basic ideas for the structuring of the script, but she stresses that this first contact was as brief as possible, because the meeting should effectively happen in the day of recording. The recordings took place in a studio that had a black background, and family members or others were not allowed in the room. There was no time limit, and she mentioned, as examples, interviews that lasted several days.

The Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education

The *Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation* (Shoah means Holocaust in Hebrew)3 is a nonprofit organization created in 1994 by U.S. filmmaker Steven Spielberg. His goal was to record on video the experience of victims of Nazism rooted in the United States and throughout the world. Focusing initially on the experience of Jews, then later expanding its target audience including gypsies, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, political prisoners and other groups involved in the event (people who helped save the persecuted, the soldiers who liberated the camps , participants from courts-martial). This project took place in 57 countries worldwide, including Brazil, and so far has collected more than 52,000 interviews.

Its myth of origin refers to the period in which Steven Spielberg was making the movie *Schindler's List* (1992). According to Spielberg, several survivors had approached and asked him to make other films telling their stories. The aggressiveness of their reports affected Spielberg and since it was

impossible for him to make hundreds of films about the same topic, he decided to create something that in his opinion was even better: create an organization to give the opportunity for survivors to tell their own stories.

According to the organization, the structure of the interview consisted of two meetings, the first, called "Pre-interview," was aimed at employing a detailed questionnaire that would provide the interviewer with information for the script, and that would make the interviewed survivors aware of how the interview would be conducted (selecting photos and documents to be recorded in the filming, inviting the family to participate if they wished, explaning how to proceed with the authorization for use of image document, etc.).

The second was the interview itself, which lasted about two hours. At this point the interviewer sought to cover the life histories of the interviewees, in chronological order, generally dividing the timeline as 20% for the pre-war period, 60% for the period of the war, and the remaining 20% ??for the period of post war.

Within the interview there were also subdivisions. The first step, which took most of the meeting, consisted of the testimony of the survivor, as described above. Then, they were shown documents and photographs that had been previously selected and in the final minutes, their family could appear, if so desired. The meeting took place "wherever the survivor felt more comfortable," which was usually in their homes. No one was allowed in the room for the interview, except for the interviewee, and the staff (people were allowed to come in the last minutes of interview).

As I had emphasized earlier, however they have staged a heated debate, there are both differences and similarities of these two organizations. Their first similarity regards the origin of their work, which clearly highlights the relationship between memory and mass media. In both cases the reason why they have arisen is related to a response to a media product; for the Fortunoff Video Archive, it was the *negative* reaction (to the Holocaust series) and, for the Shoah Foundation, it was the *positive*reaction - the strong impact of the *Schindler's List*, both on the filmmaker and among the survivors, who consider Spielberg a watershed for the public image of the survivor and the position of society towards this group.

However, despite the similarities, there was still a virulent confrontation that greatly emphasized their differences. It is important to mention that much of the hostility came from the Fortunoff Video Archive, that emerged more than a decade before the Shoah Foundation. One of the main accusations that pervaded many of the arguments was that the Shoah Foundation was a "movie" business, and it regarded no ordinary movie, but "Hollywood", or "show-biz". This relationship with cinema was seen as deeply diminishing, and was what greatly distinguished this organization's work from other similar works.

To further qualify this discussion, I list below, schematically, some major points of the discussion:

I - Timeline: the idea of ??"rush"
Several newspaper reports indicate that the Shoah Foundation imposed a pace of data collection work in interviews that was just too fast. However, rushing was not the only problem noted, the way they conducted the interviews at the Shoah Foundation was also seen as "rescue in the classic Hollywood style", and rushing was compared to a dramatic "movie chase scene." They caused a damaging effect, for not "honoring" the survivors appropriately, according to those that criticized the Foundation. Articles in general compared the Shoah Foundation's pace to that of the Yale University, described as "intense effort"5.

The exemplification of the different timelines unfolded in qualifying their work: according to such view, Yale would have taken 15 years to record 3200 tapes, which would characterize as a craft work, while "Spielberg" was taking only three years to collect tens of thousands of testimonials - what characterizes the work of the Shoah Foundation as "industrial".

II - The "poor quality" of interviewers
The rushing was also affecting the selection and training of interviewers. According to the critics, the interviewers were not "well-trained" and the antithesis of such "non-trained" interviewers were the "*Holocaust scholars*", ie, the "academics of the field of Holocaust."

III - Resources involved
Another source of criticism was the amount of funds involved in each organization. Various critical statements of newspapers claimed that the Foundation hoped to spend millions of dollars in its first

year, an amount that represented more than the Yale project had spent since it had been founded.

IV - The personalist bias
Another important criticism regarded the central role of the filmmaker in the project and the accusation that the filmmaker had identified himself with the character he portrayed in the film. According to several articles, Spielberg would have assumed a "heroic" figure: as much as Schindler had been the protagonist of his story, Spielberg himself would be the main figure of his project.

V - Personalist bias + resources = the role of Spielberg
In this sense, the nature of his purposes was questioned: why had Spielberg decided to create his own organization? Why hadn't he donated the money to other existing organizations, which were supposedly more competent and that had appropriate *knowledge* to develop this kind of work? Why didn't Spielberg fund the project entirely, since he can afford it?6

Thus, alongside the public image of great philanthropist that had created this project and made donations to other organizations, another opinion raised, that his generosity was actually "vanity"and "greed". They accused him of selling the first videos (the existing term, *"Shoah Business"* started to be used). This mistrust extended to the rest of the organization (in particular high position employees), they said they had gotten involved in the project to "take advantage" of it with Spielberg.

VI - Breaking hierarchy
In the newspapers Spielberg was portrayed as a "beginner" (or "newcomer"), as if he was breaking the hierarchy of researchers and institutions, placing himself ahead of those who had been there long before.

The other side: critique to *scholars*
When responding to the accusations, members of the Foundation also criticized the academy, noting their loss of time with "useless discussions," criticizing the "boredom" of their projects, their lack of mettle and pragmatism; they said that while students were wasting time discussing how to interview, whom to interview, etc.. the survivors were dying.

Another point they mentioned was the "vanity of *scholars"*; they claimed that the discomfort of the academics referred to a matter of ego and lack of generosity, and was restricted to *honored scholars*. According to them, many other scholars that were related to oral history projects and that were not "famous" "had given free advice" and had never criticized the project that way.

When facing this exchange of accusations, I found myself often tempted to express my opinion. Wouldn't academics be right to criticize the Hollywood banality? Wouldn't their discomfort be legitimate when, after years of hard work, a wealthy filmmaker appeared to compete in the rare market of donations and research? Shouldn't I, as an academic, end up agreeing with their arguments? Moreover, it wouldn't be important to reflect on the other arguments – the question of vanity, the arrogance of scholarly knowledge, the immobility of the academy ... However, I knew this was a dangerous trap. My role as an anthropologist was not to "buy" accusatory arguments, but instead, try to understand what they meant. What were the motives for those fights; were they "good to think about"?

When trying to answer this question, I struggled to understand the conflict better. There were disputes on many levels**,** for example, very specific issues: the fight for resources (even research institutions from the U.S. have funding problems), for prestige and visibility (which also generated money). However, I would like to suggest that there were other issues related to different disputes; and I now return to the issues posed initially.

Different strategies of legitimacy and disputes for authority of testimony

> But I think there was some movement within the community of historians and scholars that cause resenting or being negative about the idea that ??a Hollywood filmmaker could really contribute to history, the memory of history, historical preservation, and the pursuit of knowledge. (JAMES MOLL).

Arguably, one of the main pillars of legitimacy of the Fortunoff Video Archive organization – considering this institution as an expression of "scholars" in general – was built by scientific knowledge. Needless to say, their work received massive involvement of the community of intellectuals. The space that housed the collection had a seal of quality that was "unquestionable"

within the spirit of intellectual discourse, after all, we must not forget that Yale is one of the most prestigious universities in the U.S.. Yale's rhetoric has been guided by the values ??that underlie this type of knowledge, which is "objectivity", "reason", and "sobriety", conducted by those who master their code (and those who have been through an intense process of academic training). No wonder the work of the Foundation was pejoratively described in terms of "subjectivity" and "emotionality," as an article pointed out accusing that the parameter of a successful interview for them was when "the survivor came to tears."

It is interesting to note, however, that even though this project used the arguments of historical discourse and of objectivity as a bastion of its validity, it also contemplated, in a different manner (and sometimes not so much) similar elements. Emotion (which they had differed by not being "corny") is not excluded from this project and the training of its professionals in not exactly for the field of history, but instead in psychiatry and psychoanalysis, and on its origin, people engaged in television work. Neither does the structure of the interview rely specifically on factuality, because its primary objective, rather than the rescue of historical facts, is to "honor the survivors and give them the opportunity to tell their experiences – featuring, as you may note, the same dimension of morality of that in the speech of the Foundation.

In contrast, the Shoah Foundation based its legitimacy in the speech of the survivors. One of its remarkable traits as an organization is the "represent them" attitude and their trump card is the great (and unique) collection of experiences, which received, according to James Moll, one of its founders, massive membership.

However, it is noteworthy that part of this quest for legitimacy had conflicts with regard to survivors, because the Yale University also pleaded for the same membership, and with very similar arguments. As mentioned, its myth of origin lies in an effort of survivors to acquire opportunity of speech to talk about their experiences, turning it into a more legitimate and authentic space for that topic when compared to the series *Holocaust*.

This struggle for authority of testimony was associated with other conflicts, for example, the "right" way of obtaining information, related to how to conduct the interviews: filming location, duration of conversation, structure of questions, and end of the meeting.

> The Fortunoff Video Archivehas conducted its interviews in a neutral environment, for instance. The Foundation conducts them at the survivors' homes. The Foundation has encouraged a chronological approach. Not Fortunoff. "We think if we make people stick to the chronological order, we may lose information because the stream of consciousness does not happen in chronological order," said Rudolf.
>
> Finally, at the end of the interview, the foundation calls the family of the survivor to meet the survivor in front of the camera to show the triumph of the family over Holocaust. This approach, reminiscent of the final scene of the "Schindler's List," irritates academics.
>
> "I think the hardest part for me was the ending: He wants them to be happy, "said Bolkosky. "Forcing them to that kind of Hollywood behavior is not fair." (NEWSDAY, 1997).
>
> Spielberg's producers also make what can be interpreted as an effort to give a happy ending to the testimonies. In the last fifteen minutes of each videotaped testimony, the family of the survivor is asked to join them on camera. "That shows how people rebuilt their lives," said Moll. Beallor added, "It is one of the most exciting parts of the testimonies." (...) Lawrence Langer, whose award-winning book *Holocaust Testimonies* discusses the various ways in which memory distorts testimonies, as well as gives awareness to the gaps between the interviewer and the survivor, specifically questions this strategy. "There are certain things that the survivors will not speak in their homes, even if their families are not being filmed, Langer said during the interview. "It's kind of a manipulated scenario. The family in the video creates the impression that the Holocaust can be overcome and that people can recover. It's the Hollywood style. " (ROCKY..., 1996).

Two perspectives about the past: the epic and the novel

It is possible to say that the "stylistic differences" were the different types of speech made by each institution (BAKHTIN, 1992). They revealed not only different conceptions about the interview, but mainly their particular world views, their forms of representation of the past and of society, showing very specific conceptions of time, history, and subjectivity.

In each of the cases, a particular rhetorical strategy was emphasized, and it could be compared to the definitions of Mikhail Bakhtin to distinguish two narrative genres, epic and novel (BAKHTIN, 1981), which had "elective affinities" with the genres of Yale and of the Foundation, respectively. Such differences needed careful investigation on how they manifested.

Bakhtin claims that the epic genre is characterized by three fundamental points: a) its main theme was *national past history*, and b) the epic narrative source was a *national tradition* (not personal experience) and c) in the epic narratives there was an *absolute distance between the world of narrative and the world of daily reality 7*.

Looking more closely at the principles involved on the activity of collecting information at Yale, it is possible to notice some points that agree with this perspective. The first point refers to the hierarchical dominance of the past over the present: as it is in epic narrative, it is absolute, sacred, never to be subjected to a relative point of view, it does not establish communication with the present. Joanne Rudof's explanation about the choice for the place of the interview is very clear:

> To begin with, a home is not a neutral environment, it is someone's home, thus it is very emotionally charged. It is very possible that people won't be willing to talk about certain subjects in their homes. (...) This also creates too great a strain on the survivor or witness, because they have to prepare the house for guests, they have a number of things to think about, and we want them to focus on their past experiences, instead of worrying about tea, or boiling water, or if there is enough coffee, and snacks, or if they remembered to clean behind the fridge, because we turn off the refrigerator to avoid noise. For technical reasons we prefer a lot more to work in a studio. It is sound proof. It is interruption proof. The lighting is much better; it is totally private,]we can create a psychological environment that is reliable and safe, and it is then left behind after the interview is over. (...) It is very important that they have a trusting relationship with us, which we build from scratch. It is also important that they may be able to go away once they have finished, because if the recording goes well, and regarding their return to the place of the interview, since they have to go back in the past and relive that war experience for the interview, I believe it's important for them to move away from the place that brought back those past moments. (...) Because we have been on a journey through time with them, and it is best that they can come out and say: "Oh, we're back, we're in New Haven again and it goes on."

One of the explicit foundations of this methodology was the attempt to eliminate any influence of the present moment, the sound (such as the noise coming from the fridge), the light (preferably artificial lighting) or any other outside stimulus (concern with tea, coffee, food) . The preference for the studio (and hence the fierce criticism of the interviews conducted at home) is justified by criteria that go beyond mere technical factors, because the studio provides absolute isolation which was crucial for this perspective.

That is why the studio is less "stressful", because not only it guaranteed that the interviewed people focused in their past, but it also avoided the traces of their current life (justified the "emotional weight" for having pictures of children and grandchildren, for lack of "privacy", ie, the presence of other people - who are part of the *present moment*).

> (...) the epic past is closed within itself and kept away from all subsequent periods of time by an impenetrable boundary, isolated (and this is what is most important) from the eternal present of children and descendants where the epic narrator and listeners are located (...). (BAKHTIN, 1981)

They sought to restrict contact zones between these two spheres as much as possible: neither bringing the past to the present - once back to New Haven the process would be over ("it is necessary to move away") – neither bringing the present to the past (using the strategies of isolation), separating the world of the narrative from the world of everyday reality.8

This belief in the almost absolute non-mediation also affected the nature of interaction with the interviewer. The ruling idea was that the survivor could avoid relating to any other human being, thus not setting expectations regarding the intentions of the project, to supposedly what the interviewer would want to hear and so on. From this point some care is required, such as not to limit the duration of the interview and not to lead the conversation (two premises to "let them speak freely"), so to avoid chronology or even to introduce the survivor:

> From the beginning, we made it clear to the survivors, this belongs to you, you should lead it. It's your story, you tell it however you want to tell us. You say whatever you want us to hear, not what you think we want to hear. One subtle way that we do it is (...) [by explaining to the survivor, before starting:] "when the camera is turned on, I'll say my name, I am the interviewer, the name of my partner, date and location, just for documentation purposes and my partner will say his name, then we'll ask you to introduce yourself, say your name, location and date of birth, and they can start talking about their earliest memories. " So, we do not introduce them, they introduce themselves. It seems subtle, but it is not. It is a very important way of giving them what belongs to them, by saying,

"this is yours." If I introduce you, then I am in command. If you introduce yourself, you are in charge. (JOANNE RUDOLF).

Joanne explained that it would eventually be necessary to ask questions for clarification of time and location, however, it was necessary to be very careful with such questions. The idea was to ask at a later time, so as to not interrupt the flow of speech and prevent the person from losing focus, leaving aside the rest of the narrative. This type of proceeding was also intended to avoid any type of embarrassment to the survivors, because if they did not remember, they could feel "stupid" or that they had "failed" somehow.

We observed an attitude that was especially "respectful" to the survivor, where it is made clear that he is the one that "has got the power" (power of speech). In such interaction, the idea of ??non-interference was designed to allow free "stream of consciousness", to show that the "memory of the Holocaust" was actually driving that interview, even more than the survivor himself, a concept on which it would seem like the past would come up almost "intact". That is the reason why the first contact was so brief (they had a brief telephone conversation in order to raise essential information), because they did not want the story to come up prior to the recording, and thus, the "spontaneity" of the story was being preserved.

The rhetoric of legitimation of the Foundation, in turn, was based on an entirely different assumption, which had many similarities with a novel. According to Bakhtin, this genre brings different languages ??and cultures, points of view that interact, opposite mechanism of that isolation on the epic narrative. In addition, the novel changed the hierarchy of the past, which access was given only by tradition; the present moment would become superior, and personal experience and everyday life would be valued (BAKHTIN, 1981)..

This dialogical perspective was clear in the way interviews were conducted: past and present came together, where the narrative about the Holocaust was accompanied by the survivor's image with his grandson's photo strategically positioned next to his armchair, and at the end with his family around him, in the aesthetics of the survivors which referred to the current time (like hair and makeup made especially for the occasion). June Beallour, a founder of the organization, along with James Moll, says that shooting at home "added other dimensions to the story," expliciting this interpenetration of worlds and periods of time:

(...) we decided that we wanted to be in people's homes, where they have their things around and where they feel comfortable. (...) If we had used a studio, we could have saved money from traveling to people's homes, but I think that it was important and I think that it certainly added to the dimensions of their statements, people were at home, looking at their objects, and in their environment, with their families, it was their home. This is how they have actually built their lives, so that was the main decision, something that seemed so little turned out to be a big decision. (JUNE BEALLOUR)

Moreover, the present in evidence was perceived positively, as shown in the recurrent conscience that the footage would be made to "be seen in the museum" or "by Spielberg," the idea of ?? continuity after the movie *Schindler's List* (which final scene shows the survivors in color paying homage at the grave of Oskar Schindler), this last item is a powerful element, as we have seen, was a major catalyst for the participation of survivors in the "Spielberg project."

James expresses a similar perspective. He made comments about the criticism of the "*happy end"*, he vehemently defends the possibility of the survivor not being restricted to a definition of the past, offering a different point of view, made from their identity *today*. James argued that the survivors did not exist "only to teach us about the terrors of the war", but they were also grandparents, parents, businessmen and so on.

Oh, the *happy end*, it is crazy, and it drives me mad. Now that I have concluded the movie *The Last Days*, it is a documentary, when I think about the interviews that I have conducted myself... At the end of the film there is a scene where we talk about what people do with their lives today and they all managed to rebuild their lives and have children, and family, and someone has also criticized this too, saying it was too "happy ending" like, it is the end of Spielberg. I, for anyone who says they're wrong, I say, how dare you not allow survivors to redefine themselves in terms of who they are at present? They are not only Holocaust survivors who are there to teach you about the terrors and the horrors of what happened during the Second World War. They are also grandmothers, grandfathers, fathers, businessmen, housewives, and countless other things. These are people with "live" lives and they have every right to be identified as such. And to deny them the opportunity to have that identity today is as bad as ... well I rather not say it, but I think it is tragic. (...) But it's important to

> recognize that and allow them to be what they are today and allow them to say: "Yes, I survived, and yes, I'm happy today." (…) (JAMES MOLL)

This updated and more worldly perception of the survivor (that values daily life, the transformation of time in history that constantly talks about the future) differs radically from the reverential attitude of Yale (on which what defines the survivors is their experiences in the Holocaust, ie, *in the past*), helping us to better understand the conflicts between the two perspectives and the accusations of "disrespect" and "treason" regarding the SF.

Such conceptions of time brought with them another idea: the struggle for ways to represent that past, that is, the Holocaust, leading to disagreements over the meaning of the event:

> [And why the family at the end?] Maybe to show what happened to people's lives and make them speak also of their parents and grandparents ... it just seemed right ... [The ending is a target of criticism on SF ... What do you think of that?] (Laughs) I cannot even understand ...(...) I remember looking at the tapes and hear them say "this is my response to Hitler, you tried to destroy me but look I have 20 grandchildren, you tried to attack the Jewish people and you did not win." It's a great response (laughs), you could not bring us down. (DAVID)

In an ascetic rhetoric, marked by the "minimum interference", the ruling idea that the Holocaust was a dark event, the "absolute evil" in a pure state. The nature of those testimonies was based on the suffering of innocents and the abuse of power (PROSONO, [19--?], p. 21). The Holocaust, as past event, to be remembered reverently and soberly.

In a different rhetoric, where different timelines coexist, where time is continuous, this perspective would express precisely the "outcome" not only of the interview, but of history itself: the family's victory over Hitler, the idea that he did not win the war). The interview involved suffering but could also include pleasure, the end – accused as "Redeemer" – was actually the climax of a *therapeutic* process which brought positive feelings ("relief", "lessons" etc.). In the midst of a narrative about "terror and horror."

These two perspectives evoke a discussion on different views about the Holocaust, a progressive narrative and a tragic tale. According to Jeffrey Alexander (2001), shortly after the war there was what he called "progressive narrative", where the murder of Jews was not seen as an end, but as the beginning of an era driven by optimism arising from the establishment of a new social order. This idea of ??"optimism" is present in the discourse of the Foundation, as we have noted in the words of its participants as well as in the "accusations" made to it. However, it is not exactly configured like the emphasis on the triumphalist representation of the U.S. nation, but the idea that the survivor, despite having gone through the horrors of war can be "reset", thus becoming an open time for the future. Such "optimism" extended to the perception of work by the other participants who felt they were ("*making a difference*"), a term that expresses the belief in the transformative power of the individual to change the world, the other (and consequently themselves, improving).

The second narrative, the "tragic" one, considered the murder of Jews as an end point, a "trauma of death," cause of despair and not of hope. It is this sense of "end" that determines its *telos*, focusing not in progress, but instead in suffering. In this conception of the tragic tale of the "sacred evil" the murder of Jews turned into an event "outside history", an "archetype", something bigger that can not be defined by religion, race, class, region or any social category or history situation with a transcendental status. Thus, there would be no possibility of redemption in the traditional Judeo-Christian sense, there is no happy ending, no sense of what could have been done something else or even the belief that the future would necessarily or can be modified (ALEXANDER, 2001).

These were, in general, some of the tensions that marked the debate between the institutions. As mentioned before, what was at stake were different conceptions of the interview, which involved different schemes of image. The choices taken (where to film, who should appear on the screen, how to present and introduce the interviewee etc..) translated a certain way of representing the past and a specific way of dealing with it, expressed from different narrative genres. And when talking about the social world they were also helping to constitute it, what Bourdieu calls symbolic power: bringing a certain view about the Holocaust, making people see and believe enough in those events according to specific concepts.

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Notes

1 In an immediate post-war, the way Americans viewed the conflict represented a universalistic perspective, where the victims were perceived in political terms, not in ethnical terms. Although it was known that the Jews had been the most affected by Nazi policy, there was not any recognition of their suffering, but rather vigorously questionings about their moral conduct, with accusations of collaboration or passivity. The descriptions of the survivors of the concentration camps were "undead" and "walking corpses", a direct association with the dead. It is therefore not surprising that films produced up to the 50's treated the conflict from the "larger" point of view of the American nation, a view consistent with the "integrationist" perspective prevailing at the time (to use an expression of Peter Novick [2000], referring to the elimination of differences, diluted or "mainstreamed" throughout the nation), and that the victims of war were to be represented universally, with little or no reference to the Jewish issue. This perception would transform only from the 70's when a new and more positive representation of this group emerged. This transformation is due to numerous factors, some related to issues concerning the Holocaust itself, as the Eichmann Trial in 1961 by Israel, which brought about an intense debate on the subject and for the first time, the incorporation of the survivors this process by promoting them to the status of "witnesses", others related to issues of American society itself, as the change that occurred in its policy of national identity, with the so-called *multiculturalism*.. At this time the ethnic groups began to appreciate not only their specific thematize like them in public space, as demonstrated by the miniseries *Roots*, shown in 1977, which chronicled the saga of a family descended from African slaves, and *Holocaust*, shown in 1978 (SHANDLER, 1999: 155). There is, therefore, various elements in this change of perspective: the framing of the war from the perspective particularist, the emergence of surviving as a social actor and differentiated, as illustrated by the movie *Schindler's List*, the reversal of its negative to a liminal view more positively valued .. For more details on this process, see LERNER, 2004 and 2005.

2Since January 2006 this organization was built by the University of Southern California (USC) and received a new designation: *USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education.* As the survey was conducted before this change, I chose to designate it under its original naming.

3The arguments which I quote below were taken from my research with major American newspapers from 1994 to 2001 they published some sort of news about the Shoah Foundation. For space reasons I will not quote in detail, but only the wider arguments. For more information, see LERNER, 2004.

4It is clear that the presence of the idea of ??"urgent / rush" is characteristic of the discourse of the Holocaust from the 80's. An emphasis was in force on the need to record all interviews as soon as possible. On one hand, this reflected a specific question: the survivors were in an advanced age and were slowly dying. But what was at stake was more concrete than this dimension, because it involved a full evaluation of the practice. It was necessary to run and obtain the testimony of these people to *pay off a moral debt* given the aging of the survivors, it would be impracticable to pay. The testimony was seen as an activity of "repair", hence the reason for its urgency and the demand to "special care" to survivors.

5Spielberg injected the initial resources to create the organization and, although he continued as a leading donor, he used his personal prestige to raise funds from various donors.

6summarizing the main features of the first point, Gonçalves emphasizes the following elements: "It's a world made up of founders, heroes considered the first and best, who set a specific national community. But the point is precisely not the issue, but the fact that in the epic narratives represented world is transferred to the past. This world is frozen in the past. The author's position is that of someone who speaks of a past that is unaffordable, with the reverential attitude of a descendant. It is far from a speech by a contemporary author who speaks to contemporary readers. Between this past and the author is tradition. The past is thus narrated based on what is transmitted by this tradition, and not based on personal experience. (...) It is actually the memory (transmitted by tradition) and not knowledge (made possible by personal experience) that serves as a source of creative impulse. This past is sacred, absolute, never subjected to a relative point of view. " (GONÇALVES, 2002: 112)

7 A comparison with the interview of *Regenerations* should be made here. It regards the project of interviews recorded in videos by the *Japanese American National Museum*, from Los Angeles. This project, unlike Yale, gives the present a special place, once the beginning of the tape does not show introductions, but the interviewer appears talking to the interviewee in the room, looking at the pictures to be shown in the video, the interviewer talks a lot, commenting on his work experience, why he is doing that type of work, and so forth. In other words, the present is depicted in a natural manner, in a way that it does not diminish the content of the narrative or cause any disrespect to the interviewee.