

Dear Sandra

Holocaust Study Guide

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Dear Sandra

Teacher's Guide

Dear Sandra is a horror-mystery that takes place in a small New England coastal city in the year 1976. It traces the lives of several people who were mysteriously connected during the Holocaust over 30 years earlier. Their story is told through memories, flashbacks, a diary and other writings from the past and especially through some old letters to Sandra. The novel is based on sound historical research and while the contemporary characters and events are fictional, the historical references are accurate. As the plot unfolds the student gradually discovers more and more about the relevance of these people and their importance to an understanding of the causes of the historical Holocaust. In this way the novel becomes a catalyst for discussion and the basis for Socratic seminar sessions. Dear Sandra encourages students to think deeply about themselves within the context of the Holocaust and helps them to formulate astute questions to ask about real ethical dilemmas.

The teacher's guide is structured into a thirty day time frame sequenced to follow a reading of the novel at a rate of one chapter per day, and to allow five additional days for enrichment, follow up and evaluative activities. This is adequate for a comprehensive secondary school unit and allows the novel to be integrated with the routine study of World, United States or European history since Holocaust investigation need not fill all of each day and the 30 days can be spread over a longer period. Holocaust deliberation then becomes a change of pace activity fully integrated with the routine history program and can stretch across an entire marking term. In circumstances where an adequate Holocaust unit is already in place, it is also possible to assign the novel in longer segments with several focus sheets structured from questions selected from the Guide leading to two or three seminar discussions. In this way the novel helps students see the relevance of Holocaust study for their own lives today.

In the comprehensive plan students will be responsible for researching and presenting most of the factual historical information about the Holocaust. They will be divided into a number of cooperative groups for this purpose and will share what they learn. This research will relate directly to other information about the Holocaust emerging from the novel or in teacher presentations and videos.

Recommended Supplementary Materials

The following videos and books are readily available and are integral to the effective delivery of instruction. This collection will adequately support a comprehensive Holocaust study.

Videos

Nuit et brouillard (Night and Fog), 1955, Director: Alain Resnais. 31 minutes Source: Social Studies School Service.

The Chocolate War, 1988, Director: Keith Gordon, Rated R, readily available.

Europa, Europa, 1991, Director: Agnieszka Holland, Rated R, readily available.

World at War Series, Episode 20, Genocide, readily available.

America and the Holocaust: Deceit and Indifference, 81 minutes, Source: PBS Video.

Heil Hitler: Confessions of a Hitler Youth, 30 minutes Source: Ambrose Video Publishing.

The Longest Hatred: The History of Antisemitism, 2 videotapes, 75 minutes each Source: Films for the Humanities.

Books

Bower, Tom, *The Paperclip Conspiracy: The Hunt for Nazi Scientists*; Fromm, E.

Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics; Hunt, Linda, *Secret Agenda: The*

United States Government, Nazi Scientists, and Project Paperclip, 1945 to 1990; Lifton, R., *The*

Nazi Doctors.

Thinking Skill Objectives

1. (Knowledge)The student will recall significant facts about aspects of the history of the Holocaust.
2. (Comprehension)The student will comprehend the concepts of internal and external ethical authority and understand the nature and importance of individual ethical responsibility.
3. (Application)The student will apply the concepts of internal and external ethical authority to a new and not previously studied problem.
4. (Analysis)The student will analyze the factors which undermined individual ethical responsibility and led to the Holocaust.
5. (Synthesis/Evaluation)The student will write an essay in which he or she assesses responsibility for the Holocaust.
6. (Synthesis/Evaluation)The student will reflect on his or her own innate ethical sense and comment thoughtfully on how it can best be guided.

Knowledge Strategy: Report Topics

Much of the historical information that the class learns about the Holocaust will result from student research and reporting. Students should be divided into six cooperative groups and each assigned one of the topics listed below. Student reports should be strengthened by supporting teacher presentations and videos if possible.

1. **Eugenics and the Eugenics Movement** Due Day 6. *It is important to thoroughly examine the Eugenics movement, especially in the United States, since this underpins the slippery slope thesis upon which this teaching strategy is directly based. Eugenics is easily researched on the Internet. The Eugenics Archive is very useful. (www.eugenicsarchive.org)*

2. **Propaganda** Due Day 8. *This report should begin with an examination of propaganda techniques generally before embarking on Nazi propaganda. Students should be encouraged to study original sources whenever possible and the availability of Nazi propaganda on the Internet should be exploited. Reading some of the speeches and writings of Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels can be very useful. There are many good sites. The German Propaganda Archive is very useful. (<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/index.htm>)*

3. **Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls** Due Day 10. *The effort to indoctrinate the youth of Germany was a major part of the Nazi master plan. After 1933 all traditional boy's and girl's clubs, athletic teams and other youth organizations were disbanded and replaced by the Hitler Youth, which was an official organ of the Nazi Party. All activities and expectations were modified to meet the new Nazi worldview. Youth groups were seen as serving a single educational purpose. The National Socialist ideal was aimed toward promoting the spirit of the group and encouraging a lust for adventure within the bounds of a tightly knit race based society. The History Place has a complete rundown of the Hitler Youth. (<http://www.historyplace.com/index.html>) The Bund Deutscher Mädel History site (<http://www.bdmhistory.com/>) is quite comprehensive for the League of German Girls.*

4. **History of anti-Semitism** Due Day 14. *The presence of a virulent anti-Semitism in Christian Europe requires comprehensive consideration. The history and causes of anti-Semitism is easily researched on the internet. It is important to pursue this vigorously while avoiding the false trail of using anti-Semitism as a root cause of the Holocaust itself. There are many internet sites treating the subject of anti-Semitism. Students should be focused on anti-Semitism in Europe and the United States. The Jewish Virtual Library has a comprehensive collection of useful postings. (<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/antisem.html>)*

5. **Final Solution and Auschwitz** Due Day 21. *The term "final solution" refers to the ultimate attempted Nazi genocide of the Jews. The plan was hatched at a conference held in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee in 1942 and reached its most horrific peak at the infamous concentration camp at Auschwitz. This report can be readily researched on the internet but the experience can be overwhelming. Guide students to consider how pervasive and "routine" the killing machine became. The concentration*

camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau is heavily documented on the internet. The Auschwitz Memorial and Museum site has extensive postings and is very complete (<http://www.auschwitz-muzeum.oswiecim.pl/html/eng/start/index.php>). A good site for the Wannsee Conference that includes a translation of the protocols of the meeting is the History Place (<http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/holocaust/h-wannsee.htm>).

6. The Paperclip Conspiracy Due Day 23. *Immediately following the war American and Soviet intelligence agencies began a frantic search for German scientists. This was perhaps the first signal of the impending confrontation with the Soviet Union that led to the cold war as both sides rushed to get the best "brains" for themselves and to deny them to the other side. An estimated 1600 scientists, including former Nazi SS war criminals, were secretly brought into the United States. Many disappeared into American society. The codename "paperclip" was used for this project. Students should not lose sight of the role of the United States in the Holocaust and its aftermath. Project Paperclip can be difficult to research on the internet since it is controversial and generates partisanship. It also attracts conspiracy theorists that stretch its significance. The teacher should actively assist students if possible. There are two informative books on the Paperclip Conspiracy which can provide a solid basis for this assignment. Tom Bower. *The Paperclip Conspiracy: The Hunt for Nazi Scientists*. Little, Brown, 1987, Linda Hunt, *Secret Agenda: The United States Government and Operation Paperclip, 1945-1990* St. Martin's, 1991.*

Thinking Skill Strategy: Socratic Seminar Discussion Method

The Socratic Seminar is a time-honored strategy for the encouragement of active student participation; it forces students to think at higher cognitive levels; and it fosters an environment where the student is constantly the focus of attention. The Socratic Method has come to mean a process of creating and discussing questions which are open ended and inquisitive rather than conclusive. The primary components of the Socratic Method are systematic questioning and inductive reasoning. In the Socratic Seminar students, prompted by the teacher's provocative questions or statements, engage one another in thoughtful dialog. The role of the teacher during the discussion is secondary and supportive. It is always the students who have the primary responsibility of analyzing the assigned work. With this strategy, the teacher becomes the facilitator whose job is to maintain an environment that fosters participation. Students are encouraged to consider different and often conflicting ideas. Individually and as a group they are driven to think deeply and critically about issues.

In the Socratic Seminar the teacher asks a general "opening" question addressing the central concept. As students respond to this question they look to each other for analysis and evaluation of the statements being made. As the students explore the material, responses become longer and more complex. Students begin to challenge their peers. Ideally the teacher leaves the stage, commenting only when it is necessary to provide direction or focus. At the end of the discussion, the teacher asks prepared closings questions that encourage the students to synthesize the various points of the discussion and form a conclusion. Follow up writing samples or reaction papers enhance the process. The Socratic Seminar is an open forum, which fosters both active student involvement and student engagement in higher level thinking. By manipulating the material in a number of thought provoking ways such as researching, generalizing about concepts, applying them to new situations, analyzing their component parts, synthesizing and then evaluating a thesis, the students are actively engaged in all of the levels of thinking according to Bloom's taxonomy.

The value of active learning cannot be overstated. In addition to keeping the students motivated, active learning strategies produce a number of positive outcomes. The research consistently links strategies where students are actively involved with higher degrees of learning and the higher the level of thought process, the more successfully the student internalizes the ideas. Active participation also gives students ownership of the learning process. In the seminar, the teacher is less of an authority and more of a colleague. The ability to construct meaning from a discussion and to generate thoughtful conclusions independent of an external authority provides a sense of empowerment for the students, a feeling that they have control over their own learning. In addition, active participation in discussion assists in the development of social skills. While students are given the opportunity to articulate their own thoughts and feelings, they are also required to be respectful of the thoughts and feelings of their classmates.

Concept Comprehension Strategy: Introductory Unit

The Holocaust was caused by a failure of individual internal ethical authority and a mindless reliance on external authority. It is important to devote some time to the concepts of internal and external ethical authority. The following 5 day preliminary strategy will serve this purpose and is recommended if time permits.

Materials:

Fromm, E. Man for himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics. Chapter 1 and parts of Chapter 2 (pages 13-23 paperback)
Cormier, R. The Chocolate War (Video)

Fromm's ethics is based on human nature and as such it is consistent with the belief in an innate ethical sense that is basic to ethics study. He correctly asserts that an urge for freedom is a fundamental part of human nature, but he believes that this freedom is frightening and people have difficulty coping with it, particularly after the spread of individualism in the modern West had isolated human beings by eliminating the old authoritarian communal life style model of the middle ages. Individual freedom and responsibility is daunting and people tend to find refuge in **external authority**. They easily submit to outside power. This represents the root cause of the Holocaust and is the conceptual base for this instructional strategy. Ethics is about knowing one's self and building a sense of **internal ethical authority** in order to actualize the innate human need to be free. It is in this specific way, that Fromm is useful.

Students read and discuss Chapter 1 and parts of Chapter 2 from Fromm's *Man for Himself* and apply some of these ideas to events in the film *The Chocolate War*. Student focus sheets for the reading and the film are included. The Socratic seminar discussion technique is recommended.

This strategy is based on the film version of the novel which is generally faithful to the book but with a seemingly radical remake of the ending. Students who have previously read the book should be advised to disregard this.

Day 1 It is important for students to understand the ethical concept of "slippery slope" and not to confuse it with the logical fallacy of the same name. Ethics is not a function of reason. As an exercise in logic it can be shown that most appeals to slippery slope are fallacious since no necessary causal relationship can be shown between the steps in the slope. For example, Marijuana cannot be shown conclusively to be a gateway drug leading to Heroin addiction. However, this is not to say that there must never be a causal connection between the steps, or that the slope is equally slippery for all people. Human ethics is innate and functions within the psychological parameters of human nature where slippery slopes most definitely do exist. Bad behavior escalates incrementally. Very few Heroin addicts began their drug use with Heroin. Students will instinctively know this is true. Discussion of the concept of slippery slope offers the opportunity to show that reason and logic is

not a reliable route to ethical truth. Students should always be encouraged to consider these concepts as they apply to their own lives.

Duplicate and handout the focus sheet and assign Fromm, E. *Man for himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics*. Chapter 1 and part of Chapter 2 (pages 13-23 paperback).

- Day 2.** Discuss Fromm; Begin video: *The Chocolate War*.
- Day 3.** View video.
- Day 4.** Complete video; Seminar discussion of *The Chocolate War*.
- Day 5.** Essay evaluation.

Focus Questions for *Man for Himself*:

Pg.14

What have been the historic successes of man's reason?

Why does Fromm say modern man feels uneasy?

Pg.15

Why has the modern world's rejection of both reason and religion as moral authority left man in a relativistic position?

Do you agree with Fromm that people cannot live without values and norms?

What conclusions does Fromm draw about the dangers this combination causes?

Pg.16

What does Fromm mean by "humanistic ethics"?

How is the study of humanistic ethics based on psychology?

Pg.17

Where, according to Fromm, can the norms of human ethical conduct be found?

Pg.19

What is the difference between rational and irrational authority?

Pg.20

In what two ways can humanistic ethics be differentiated from authoritarian ethics?

Pg.21-22

How do authoritarian and humanistic ethics differ in their definition of "good" and "bad"?

Pg.23

Why does Fromm reject the idea that ethical decision making transcends human beings?

Pg.24

What is meant by "ethical Hedonism?" Why is it rejected?"

Pg.26

According to Fromm, life is an art for which ethics provides the norms. What do you understand this to mean?

Pg.29

How does Fromm define good and evil?

Pg.30

What does Fromm mean by the science of man? What role does it play?

Seminar Discussion Questions for *The Chocolate War*:

Brother Leon tells the class to be **true to yourself**. What does it mean to be true to yourself? How would Fromm have answered this question?

What does the girl mean when she tells Renault not to miss his bus? How would Fromm have answered this question?

Interpret the very last scene in the film. What do you think the “point” of this scene is? What do you think the author is trying to say about bad behavior? Do you agree or disagree?

Essay Evaluation: *The Chocolate War*

How can Renault be said to represent Fromm’s thesis about the plight of modern man? Why does Renault feel uneasy? What is he searching for? What ethical dangers does he face in the form of authoritarian group ethical pressure? Even though he fights back he finally gives up and says: **I should have sold the chocolates. I played their game anyway.** Did he actually lose? What would Fromm have said about Renault’s ethical development?

Dear Sandra

30 Day Schedule

The following schedule should be fitted into the teacher's planning calendar. The guide assumes a traditional school schedule of 50 minute classes. Schools with block or other alternative schedules need to adapt it accordingly. It is not necessary for the days to be contiguous. This strategy is equally effective when spread over a longer study of the history of this period.

Day 1 Introduce the study of the Holocaust. Assign: *Dear Sandra*, Chapter 1.

Day 2 Discuss Chapter 1. Assign: Chapter 2.

Create cooperative groups and assign report topics as well as the dates on which reports are due. Be sure students understand the importance of their contribution and the need for it to be delivered on schedule. Reports may extend beyond one day; there is sufficient flexibility in the calendar to accommodate this but the teacher should be attentive to timing-out the unit as a whole.

Day 3 Discuss Chapter 2. Assign: Chapter 3. Begin video: *Genocide*.

Day 4 Discuss Chapter 3. Assign: Chapter 4. Continue: *Genocide*.

Day 5 Discuss Chapter 4. Assign: Chapter 5. Complete: *Genocide*.

Day 6 Discuss Chapter 5. Assign: Chapter 6. Hear report on Eugenics.

Day 7 Discuss Chapter 6. Assign: Chapter 7. Complete report on Eugenics.

Day 8 Discuss Chapter 7. Assign: Chapter 8. Hear report on Propaganda.

Day 9 Discuss Chapter 8. Assign: Chapter 9. Complete report on Propaganda.

Day 10 Discuss Chapter 9. Assign: Chapter 10. Hear report on Hitler Youth.

Day 12 Discuss Chapter 10. Assign: Chapter 11. Complete Hitler Youth, Begin video: *Heil Hitler*.

Day 13 Discuss Chapter 11. Assign: Chapter 12. Complete video: *Heil Hitler*.

Day 14 Discuss Chapter 12. Assign: Chapter 13. Hear report on anti-Semitism.

- Day 15** Discuss Chapter 13. Assign: Chapter 14. Complete report on anti-Semitism. Begin video: *The Longest Hatred*.
- Day 16** Discuss Chapter 14. Assign: Chapter 15. Continue video: *The Longest Hatred*.
- Day 17** Discuss Chapter 15. Assign: Chapter 16. Continue video: *The Longest Hatred*.
- Day 18** Discuss Chapter 16. Assign: Chapter 17. Continue video: *The Longest Hatred*.
- Day 19** Discuss Chapter 17. Assign: Chapter 18. Continue video: *The Longest Hatred*.
- Day 20** Discuss Chapter 18. Assign: Chapter 19. Complete video: *The Longest Hatred*.
- Day 21** Discuss Chapter 19. Assign: Chapter 20. Hear report: Auschwitz.
- Day 22** Discuss Chapter 20. Assign: Chapter 21. Complete report: Auschwitz.
- Day 23** Discuss Chapter 21. Assign: Chapter 22. Hear report: Paperclip.
- Day 24** Discuss Chapter 22. Assign: Chapter 23. Complete report: Paperclip. Begin video: *America and the Holocaust*.
- Day 25** Discuss Chapter 23. Assign: Chapter 24. Complete video: *America and the Holocaust*.
- Day 26** Discuss Chapter 24. Assign: Chapter 25. Free discussion.
- Day 27** Discuss Chapter 25. Begin video: *Europa Europa*.
- Day 28** Continue video: *Europa Europa*.
- Day 29** Complete video: *Europa Europa*.
- Day 30** Final assessment.

Chapter One: Summary

The year is 1976. A Dr. named Treppenwitz has recently purchased the home and medical practice of a deceased Dr. Simonescu and becomes immediately implicated in a strange murder. The book begins with Dr. Treppenwitz recalling the events of the fateful previous night. We learn that he and a man named Eichler, a new acquaintance, a neighbor and a mortician killed a boy who had broken into Treppenwitz's house. Treppenwitz recalls having dinner with Eichler at a local restaurant earlier that evening and the mystery expands very rapidly when the two men return and discover a break-in at Treppenwitz's home. Treppenwitz is knocked unconscious in a scuffle with the intruder who is a 16 year old boy. Eichler then deliberately murders the intruder and stages the scene to convince Treppenwitz that he had done the killing. Eichler knows the boy and that he was after a 16mm movie film. Eichler finds the film. He conceals all of this from Treppenwitz. Eichler revives Treppenwitz and tells him that he, Treppenwitz, had killed the boy. Treppenwitz is frightened and believes him; the two plot to cover up the crime. In the process Treppenwitz finds a small key in the boy's pocket. He hides the key from Eichler. The two men carry the body to Eichler's car and Treppenwitz returns to clean the crime scene.

Chapter One: Seminar Discussion Questions

How does Treppenwitz deal with his fear and confusion? *Treppenwitz looks to Eichler to make the decisions for him.*

In crisis situations why is it easier to let someone else take charge? *People innately seek individual success through group associations and understand the value of teamwork. Being alone in a time of crisis is particularly frightening and challenging.*

How does Eichler convince Treppenwitz to cover up the murder? *By using the word "we" he appeals to the innate human ethical need for the group and thereby draws Treppenwitz into his scheme.*

How does Eichler diminish the boy's human worth? *He calls him scum and claims that he is a junkie addict trying to score some drugs from the Dr.'s office.*

Why is this important to do? *It masks the innate ethical sense of a wrong by diminishing the value of the victim. It is a psychological defense mechanism.*

Eichler tells Treppenwitz that he's an outsider and no one will believe him. Why did this ring true to Treppenwitz? *Treppenwitz's innate ethical sense tells him not to trust strangers and he worries as anyone would that he might not get fair treatment.*

In what ways did the lack of time to think contribute to Treppenwitz's decision to go along with Eichler's plan? *There is a natural urge to act quickly when faced with a crisis. The innate human ethical sense seeks balance and equilibrium and demands that turmoil be quieted. This is a cause of many poor ethical decisions.*

Treppenwitz tries to rely on reason to figure out how to act while Eichler tells him that people are motivated by emotion. Who is right? *This is a complex ethical issue since human beings are driven by innate ethical urges which are themselves directed by conscious thought.*

Ethical growth occurs when one understands his or her innate ethical sense and this allows reason to work through the ramifications of various courses of action and help mold better choices.

Chapter One: Reports for Discussion

No reports are due. Begin video history of the Holocaust. *Genocide*, 52 minutes, provides a manageable overview of the Holocaust or an introductory teacher lecture outlining background and history of the Holocaust is recommended.

Chapter Two: Summary

Treppenwitz awakens the next morning and is troubled by his conscience. His housekeeper, Elsa Tikhonin, makes breakfast and the two talk. Elsa had worked for old Dr. Simonescu and she agreed to stay on. Treppenwitz probes for information about the old doctor and Elsa tells him that he had been a prisoner of the Nazis at Dachau. The narrator tells us that this is true but not in the literal sense. Elsa tells Treppenwitz that Robbie Simonescu believed that his father had been murdered. She goes on to say that he and his father had secrets together and all of this involved the attic library. Treppenwitz asks about Simonescu's death and Elsa tells him that one night he swam out into the ocean and never returned. She goes on to say that on that night he said cryptically: *The spider-shark smiled*. Elsa then tells Treppenwitz that this was also the title of one of Simonescu's short stories. She translates the story, which is written in German. The story frightens Treppenwitz.

Chapter Two: Seminar Discussion Questions

Metaphorical images that appear in Simonescu's stories can generate useful discussion. In this first story, *The Spider-Shark Smiled*, Simonescu sees himself drowning in the sea while a symbol of evil lurks near him. A creature with both shark-like and spider-like characteristics will hunt either by constantly prowling as a shark or by waiting motionless as a spider. In Simonescu's story the spider-shark waits. *Students should discuss what they think Simonescu was trying to say. This and the several stories that follow don't have fixed interpretations but are rather vehicles through which the teacher can draw students out. Students will project themselves into the stories and their understanding of the Holocaust will deepen.*

Ask students to interpret some additional lines from Chapter Two.

Words were narcotic and they protected him from reality.

It what ways does language mold our judgments? *Language is a two edged sword in ethics education. People must rely on words to describe reality and words can mislead and deceive.*

It was at this point that a horrible thought surfaced from his lower self.

What do you think the author means by someone's "lower self"? Do you think people have a "lower self"? *The potential for bad behavior exists in all of us.*

In the attic library, they always talked up in the attic library.

Why do you think the author located the library in the attic? *The attic is the highest place in the house symbolizing either the idea that life's problems can be solved through brain power or that it is brain power that creates life's problems. Which is it? This is a difficult but important question. Help students to see both sides.*

Chapter Two: Reports for Discussion

No reports are due. Continue or complete overview of the Holocaust.

Chapter Three: Summary

Elsa's flashback memory takes us to Cologne, Germany in February, 1935 and we discover that she is Sandra. She is hurrying to the train station with Rolf Schilling, who we learn is her fiancé. He is a young medical doctor and is late for his train. As they walk in front of the façade of the Cathedral, ***Ugly gargoyles perched high on the roof's ridge, like an evil presence lurking on the edges of life waiting for a way to enter, glanced down and saw two souls disappear into the night and fog*** This sentence offers fruitful avenues for discussion. This term night and fog refers to an order given by Hitler in December of 1941 called the Night and Fog Decree (Nacht und Nebel Erlass) that ordered German authorities to disregard the law in dealing with resistance elements. The words night and fog represent the descent into terror. Night and Fog was also chosen as the title of the first documentary film about the Holocaust, *Nuit et brouillard*, made in 1955 by French director Alain Resnais. It is a powerful and provocative look at the Auschwitz concentration camp and if possible should be shown as a kind of motivational foreshadow. After Rolf's train leaves Sandra hurries to catch her own train and we learn that she has joined the underground resistance. It is 1935; she is 18 years old and has just received her diploma (Arbitur) from the Gymnasium (equivalent of an American high school). *The resistance efforts described represents a composite and were not as active in 1935 as they would become.*

Chapter Three: Seminar Discussion Questions

Return to the sentence: ***Ugly gargoyles perched high on the roof's ridge, like an evil presence lurking on the edges of life waiting for a way to enter, glanced down and saw two souls disappear into the night and fog*** Ask: Is evil lurking on the edges of life? *It is important to challenge the notion of evil and to begin to help students understand that evil really doesn't exist in any meaningful ethical sense. To pursue evil is to miss the opportunity to examine how unethical behavior really flows from good intentions.*

From: Freedom and Equality

...the atrocities of the Holocaust (need) to be put into perspective for students who naturally ask why and how. No ethical growth will occur when the answer is simply that evil Nazis did it. Since students are neither Nazis nor evil they will not be personally challenged by this approach. They will empathize with the suffering of the victims but be equally fascinated by the power of the oppressors

since the innate human sense of reciprocity will work to cause them to assume that the victims must have done something to deserve their fate. The real question for ethical consideration is how did ordinary people go so wrong and do such horror while trying to do good. Or, might I have done this too? For ethics education to be effective students need to identify personally with root causes which require study of the doers of the deed. It (is) clear that this is about each person's internal ethical authority and ethical growth results from looking into one's self.

Chapter Three: Reports for Discussion

No reports are due. Show the video: *Nuit et brouillard* (31 minutes).

Chapter Four: Summary

Treppenwitz goes to the mortuary to meet Eichler. Eichler tells him that they must dismember the body of the boy in order to hide it in the casket with another person he is preparing for burial. Treppenwitz resists but is intimidated by bullying tactics into participating in the brutal butchering of Robbie Simonescu's body. The two men hide the remains in the casket with the body of a man named Watson scheduled to be interred the next day. Eichler foreshadows future problems when he worries that because Watson was being buried with valuable jewelry that this would tempt the gravedigger to pilfer the coffin. Treppenwitz leaves the funeral parlor depressed and in shock; remembering Simonescu's story about the spider-shark he resolves to commit suicide by drowning himself in the ocean. As Treppenwitz tries to die in the sea, Elsa reads another of the old Dr.'s short stories. When she finishes the story she looks down toward the beach and sees Treppenwitz lying unconscious.

Chapter Four: Seminar Discussion Questions

The role of brute force in perpetuating the Holocaust and the role of fear in motivating individuals to participate was great and while students are not yet ready to fully consider these issues, preliminary discussion creates focus for later study. Try to encourage students to relate this to their own experiences.

When Treppenwitz helps Eichler dismember the body, Eichler tells him to: ***Pretend it's somebody else Treppenwitz... pretend it's nobody.*** Ask about the role of this psychological defense mechanism in human behavior. *This ability to find refuge in a kind of make believe world plays a large role in understanding human actions during the Holocaust.*

Later the narrator tells us: ***It was too horrible to accept, too horrible to admit. He wouldn't have been strong enough to stay sane if he had admitted it. ..It was better to pretend.*** *Students should be asked about their own experiences with these kinds of feelings. Ethics education begins by learning to understand one's own innate ethical urges.*

Ask students to try to interpret the second of Simonescu's stories, ***The Very Lonely Man***. What do you think the man's shadow represents? Why does the man hope to escape from his shadow? Why can't he escape? *There are no "right" answers to these kinds of open ended questions and they should be used by the teacher to encourage students to explore the personal aspects of ethical decision making*

Chapter Four: Reports for Discussion

No reports are due. Complete *Nuit et Brouillard*.

Chapter Five: Summary

The police arrive on the beach where Elsa has found Dr. Treppenwitz and a detective Sullivan begins his investigation. Treppenwitz pretends to be unconscious and listens to the detective speculate while fashioning a plausible story to explain events. He then lies to the detective about what had happened. Elsa knows he is lying but helps him anyway. The detective suspects that there is more to the incident than he was led to believe. He secretly removes a bloody handkerchief from Treppenwitz's pocket and plans to have it analyzed. Later Sullivan takes the opportunity to interview Eichler about the disappearance of Robbie Simonescu. Eichler tries to mislead him by suggesting a drug involvement and introducing a junkie named Raphael Ortiz. Sullivan then asks Elsa about the relationship between Ortiz and Robbie and learns that Ortiz had often visited old Dr. Simonescu. Elsa is defensive and evasive.

Chapter Five: Seminar Discussion Questions

Read the following sentence from Chapter Five: ***Barely above the whitecaps, a single sea gull fought the wet wind homeward or at least to Elsa Tikhonin it seemed to be hurrying home.*** Once again we encounter the image of a lonely creature struggling to get home. This image recurs often in the story. Ask students what they think the author is trying to say. *Everyone in the story is alone and this strongly symbolizes the solitary nature of ethical decision making*

Nearly everyone in the story seems to distrust strangers and to be at least somewhat manipulative and secretive. Discuss with the class how accurately this describes typical human behavior.

Chapter Five: Reports for Discussion

Report One: Eugenics and the Eugenics Movement is due.

Chapter Six: Summary

Treppenwitz finds some old letters in the attic library. They are addressed to Sandra and are signed R. Since the story is titled “Dear Sandra” the importance of the letters is obvious. *We know that Sandra is actually Elsa, but Treppenwitz does not yet know this. We know that Sandra’s fiancé was named Rolf and we know the letters are from him. Students should begin to suspect that Radu Simonescu is actually an alias for Rolf Schilling.* Treppenwitz asks Elsa to translate the letters. As in the short stories there are some words and parts of sentences written in German. This sets a realistic mood and also serves to expand the horizons for American students. We know that R was a medical doctor in Germany during the Nazi period and that he was plagued by the memory of things that he had done and needed to better understand why he did them. Elsa translates the first letter which was written in December of 1936 and makes reference to the infamous Nuremberg Laws. *The Nuremberg Laws officially called: Laws for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor were passed on September 15, 1935 and mark the beginning of the persecution of Jews. The first laws outlawed marriage between Jews and Aryans, as well as sexual relationships between members of these groups. It is useful to compare these laws with the post reconstruction American Jim Crow miscegenation statutes.* Other letters put a human face on Rolf Schilling’s increasing involvement with Nazi eugenic practices, which begin with sterilization.

Chapter 1, Sterilization and the Nazi Biomedical Vision, from The Nazi Doctors by Robert Lifton should be read by the teacher to prepare for discussion of this aspect of the early Holocaust. It is important for students to see how ordinary good people were drawn into this horror.

Chapter Six: Seminar Discussion Questions

How does the desire to be successful and to get ahead motivate Rolf Schilling to rationalize his actions? *The perceived importance of job and career drive many unethical decisions. Students should be asked to respond to the pressure of expectations in their own lives.*

Discuss the following lines. Ask students to relate from their own experiences the relevance of these decisions to the developing Holocaust.

Who has time to dwell on such nasty things? *The common American idiom, “out of sight out of mind” describes a human psychological defense mechanism everyone can relate to. Ask students why they think it is true.*

We’ll just have to wait and see. *Hoping for the best while doing nothing is a common human failing. Ask students to relate to this personally if they can.*

Chapter Six: Reports for Discussion

Complete Report on Eugenics if necessary.

Chapter Seven: Summary

In a flashback Elsa remembers attending an important film premier in Berlin. The first paragraph hints at the seductive nature of Nazi propaganda which stressed tradition and what is sometime referred to today as family values. *This aspect of the Nazi experience is often obscured by too much emphasis on jack boots. It is important for students to get a sense of why average people approved of the regime.* The film being premiered is the propaganda film Victim of the Past (Öpfer der Vergangenheit) one of the first Nazi efforts to sell their sterilization program to the German people. Sandra attends the premier with Rolf and is plunged into the midst of German high society hinting at the support Hitler received from the wealthy. *The phrase "life unworthy of life" (Lebensunwertesleben) became an infamous Nazi catch word for people who could not contribute productively to society. The term "useless eaters" (nutzloser Esser) was also used. The propaganda machine worked tirelessly to bring about their extermination.*

Chapter Seven: Seminar Discussion Questions

What indications do you get from this chapter that some Germans are on the slippery slope to the Holocaust? *The chapter indicates how reasoned arguments arise to bolster conclusions and is the root of the slippery slope into the Holocaust as the discussion of sterilization leads to discussion of euthanasia.*

Chapter Seven: Reports for Discussion

Report on Propaganda is due.

Chapter Eight: Summary

The scene returns to the present and the process of preparing the grave for Josh Watson. Two devious schemes are unfolding simultaneously during the digging of a grave as the gravedigger, a darkly comic character named Russo, schemes to rob the coffin while Eichler tries to ensure that no one discovers the hidden body of the boy. Each man thinks he is manipulating the other trying to pursue his short term immediate self interest.

Chapter Eight: Seminar Discussion Questions

Ask students to describe the symbolism in this chapter. Digging downward; Russo gets caught in the roots while hatching his plan to trick the vault truck driver.

What happens to Eichler's plan to trick Russo? Why didn't it matter? Both men are so consumed by their own schemes that they are blinded to the world around them.

What did the woman who spoke at the grave site mean when she said that a man needs a mirror to see where the dirt is before he can wash himself clean? It's very difficult to be self critical and objective about one's self but this is necessary to make proper ethical choices. The narrator comments that her words may well have been meant for Russo, but in what way are her words appropriate for everyone? Everyone has difficulty being objective about themselves; hence it is important to listen to others.

Chapter Eight: Reports for Discussion

Complete report on Propaganda.

Chapter Nine: Summary

Treppenwitz searches the attic library for clues to unravel the mystery of Simonescu's past. He uses the key he had taken from the dead boy's pocket to open a cabinet and finds a small diary hidden in a hollowed out copy of Nietzsche's, *Beyond Good and Evil*. Using an old dictionary Treppenwitz laboriously translates the first entry in the diary which is a short poem written in German. Treppenwitz is shaken by the poem and puts the diary back into its hiding place. Later he asks Elsa to read him more of Simonescu's letters and stories. She agrees but wonders why he seems so obsessed.

Chapter Nine: Seminar Discussion Questions

This chapter is very cryptic and encourages students to speculate philosophically. Have students interpret the following lines from the chapter.

When the drive to survive dominates, truth is twisted, twisted by torrents of emotion, twisted to suit any circumstance until a lie appears as virtue. Lying is rampant in this story and implies that people routinely lie. Ask if this is true. Students should relate this to their own lives.

... thousands of words, tens... hundreds of thousands of words held in his hands. How much they really are our thoughts, our beliefs, and our truths. How much does language control and corrupt the way we interpret the world around us?

Doesn't everything have its opposite, happen in opposites, be given meaning by its opposite? The teacher should direct this discussion to ethical issues like good and evil, rights and duties, freedom and responsibility.

Ask students why they think Simonescu's poem frightened Treppenwitz. Within the context of this story the poem which creates an image of mindless round and round, down and down seems to be a reflection of Treppenwitz's own plight.

Chapter Nine: Reports for Discussion

Hear report on Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls.

Chapter Ten: Summary

Sullivan and his partner Manny Mota bully Raphael Ortiz and drive him into fabricating a story about Robbie Simonescu's drug involvement. Sullivan denigrates Treppenwitz's name by calling him Step-in-shits; later he correctly pronounces it but emphasizes the witz almost as though he understood the meaning of the name. *Treppenwitz is a German idiom that means "stairway wit" and refers to the agonizing realization, too late, of what one should have said or done in a critical exchange. It differs from the American idiom: "hindsight is always 20-20" in the sense that it is immediate and spontaneous rather than reflective and reasoned.* We learn that Sullivan had a youthful relationship with Simonescu's widow Lotte and that he still had feelings for her.

Chapter Ten: Seminar Discussion Questions

Ask students how Treppenwitz's name reflects the man. Why does he miss so many opportunities to "do the right things"? Nearly everyone in the story is always trying to do the right thing; the outcomes are not always good.

Most of the characters in this story live in a world of lies and intimidation where fear and narrow self-interest are primary motivators. This is a basically unethical world because it lacks balance between freedom and group responsibility. Students should explore the thesis that bad behavior begets more bad behavior and then explore the opposite possibility that good behavior encourages more good behavior. Once again ask students to relate this to their own lives and experiences. Sullivan is a good example of how far astray human reason can lead a person. The lies, assumptions and misrepresentations take on a life of their own. It is also very important for students to be sensitized to the frame of reference problem illustrated in this story. No one is entirely who they appear to be and no one operates on a clear understanding of the truth. Introduce this idea and ask students to reflect on whether this is a legitimate portrayal of real life.

Chapter Ten: Reports for Discussion

Complete report on Hitler Youth and The League of German Girls. Show Video: *Heil Hitler: Confessions of a Hitler Youth*, (30 minutes)

Chapter Eleven: Summary

Elsa reads another of Rolf's letters which describes the Kristallnacht and Treppenwitz introduces the question of how good people could stand by and let this happen. *The Night of Broken Glass, or the Reichskristallnacht was an SS inspired pogrom which took place on the night of November 9, 1938 and signals an all out persecution of Jews in Germany.* Elsa reads several more Dear Sandra letters that describe the early euthanasia program.

Chapter 2, "Euthanasia: Direct Medical Killing", from The Nazi Doctors by Robert Lifton should be read by the teacher to prepare for discussion of this aspect of the early Holocaust.

Chapter Eleven: Seminar Discussion Questions

Implied in Treppenwitz's question is the belief that good people let the Holocaust happen. It is important to discuss this false trail thesis. Elsa hints at the answer when she says: ***Good people did more that let it happen..good people did it.***

From **Freedom and Equality**: *This simplistic approach to Holocaust study is actually dangerous since it identifies some people as good and others as bad and advocates conflict. It is very dangerous to believe that we good people must be ever vigilant and must stand together against those bad people intent on doing harm. This mindset is at the root of the Holocaust itself and the ironic appeal to it is absurd on its face.*

Chapter Eleven: Reports for Discussion

Complete video: *Heil Hitler.*

Chapter Twelve: Summary

Treppenwitz is tormented by what he has done and in a surreal dream scene he asks God what he should do. God tells him he must decide for himself. Treppenwitz says he will rely on reason and God mocks him. In his argument with God Treppenwitz relies on the belief that as a rational being he can figure out right from wrong and therefore reason will set him free. God tells him that he is a prisoner of reason and merely uses it to justify his actions. *This scene seems to imply that people are caught in the trap of society's aggressive moralism and don't even suspect that they are merely puppets.* God tells him to look into his heart and that ***Eritis sicut Deus, Scientes bonum et malum.*** *"Be as God and know the difference between right and wrong" is from Genesis Chapter 3 but this reference seems to be to Goethe's Faust where Mephistopheles pretending to be a university professor mocks the power of reason and here God seems to agree.* Treppenwitz awakens from his nightmare and is driven to find Raphael Ortiz. He goes to the Dockside and meets Ortiz agreeing to give him morphine in exchange for information.

Chapter Twelve: Seminar Discussion Questions

God tells Treppenwitz that **reason only replays the past.** Ask what students think is meant by this. Is it true?

Treppenwitz says that **his whole life had been a drive to success measured by society's standards. He was a victim of authority. He was directed and driven by it until he hardly knew why he thought what he thought or did what he did.** *It is important for students to consider how much external authority influences our behavior and how much of our lives is a mindless chase. Students will identify with this issue and should be encouraged to respond from personal experience and feelings.*

Chapter Twelve: Reports for Discussion

Hear report on anti-Semitism. While a clear understanding of the depths of historic anti-Semitism in Christian Europe and in the United States is necessary, the teacher should avoid the common Holocaust false trail of blaming the Holocaust on anti-Semitism.

From: **Freedom and Equality** *The persecution of Jews by the Nazis was, in fact, an outcome of the Holocaust, not the cause. To use this misreading of history as a vehicle for ethics study will once again fail because students will not identify with the problem. They will dismiss it as an unfortunate past disaster and feel free of it themselves knowing that neither they nor their society is generally anti-Semitic. Ethics always needs to be reduced to real people making real decisions. This is the only way students can relate the Holocaust or any other ethical issue to themselves and to the world they actually live in.*

Chapter Thirteen: Summary

Elsa takes the early morning train to New York City and translates more of Simonescu's stories. She reaches New York City and goes immediately to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine which reminded her of home. *The Cathedral of Cologne is one of the largest and most beautiful gothic Cathedrals in Europe.* She translates another of Simonescu's stories. Elsa leaves the cathedral somewhat shaken and completes her clandestine mission to the city by secretly wiring money to a bank account in Cologne. We learn that she had been doing this routinely for many years but do not yet know to whom the money was sent or why she is so secretive.

Chapter Thirteen: Seminar Discussion Questions

The first story called **The Caveman** contains the same images of a lonely man and a purposeful descending downward. There is also deceit and deception. The next story, **Popcorn** is also about a lonely man but this time there is envy and resentment, as well as the continued lack of trust and connectedness. In **The Confessor** we again

encounter an isolated individual, this time a priest practicing his sermon. All of his efforts end in absurd failure yet he continues almost unfazed. *Students should discuss what they think Simonescu was trying to say. These stories don't have fixed interpretations but are rather vehicles through which the teacher can draw students out. Students will project themselves into the stories and their understanding of the Holocaust will deepen.*

Chapter Thirteen: Reports for Discussion

Complete report on [anti-Semitism](#). Begin Video: *The Longest Hatred: The History of Anti-Semitism*, 150 minutes.

Chapter Fourteen: Summary

It's Saturday and while Treppenwitz is waiting for the arrival of Raphael Ortiz, he contemplates suicide and is startled by the surprise visit of Lotte Simonescu. She is desperate to find her lost son and had come to see Elsa; she was disappointed not to find her. She tells Treppenwitz that she suspects foul play in Robbie's disappearance. Treppenwitz is attracted to her and wants to help her but is plagued by conflicting emotions from which he is unable to extricate himself. The awkward encounter is finally interrupted by the arrival of Ortiz. Lotte leaves by the front as Ortiz enters unseen by the back door. Treppenwitz's carefully staged plan to interrogate Ortiz is put into motion but Ortiz turns the tables on him by saying that he knows that Robbie was murdered and implying that he also knows who did it. Although completely speculative, his extortion scheme works, Treppenwitz gives him the morphine and worries that he will surely be caught.

Chapter Fourteen: Seminar Discussion Questions

Ask students to consider the following lines in which Treppenwitz briefly weighs two possible courses of action. ***The stark contrast Ortiz created by his appearance seemed to symbolize, as well as anything could, the reality of choice and here again was a chance to change direction. He wanted to call her back and confess everything, but he couldn't. Fear prevented it. Ortiz waited while Treppenwitz pulled the blinds on Lotte Simonescu and once again on himself.*** *Ethics is about making choices and the ramifications of those choices can have profound consequences. Students should reflect on how often they are called upon to make ethical choices in their own lives.*

Chapter Fourteen: Reports for Discussion

Continue with video: *The Longest Hatred*.

Chapter Fifteen: Summary

Elsa begins to translate Simonescu's diary which outlines the start of the euthanasia program. Treppenwitz reacts in ways that hint at the seductive appeal of the Nazi propaganda. *Students should reflect on this. The chapter touches upon several important steps in the downward spiraling slippery slope that Simonescu was on and closely parallels actual places and events. Elsa fills in many of the gaps but also suggests new questions that can lead to high levels of student participation in discussion of the union of eugenics with Nazi philosophy.*

Chapter Fifteen: Seminar Discussion Questions

There are several interesting comments in Simonescu's diary that can stimulate creative discussion. *Once again remember it is more important to encourage students to respond to these puzzles than to arrive at a correct answer.*

Simonescu seems to blame capitalism for the sterilization and later euthanasia programs when he says, **capitalism cut the semen tube**. Why do you think he believed this? *Nazism was a racist group ethic that measured human worth by productive contributions to society. Life was a cutthroat competition in which some thrived and others did not, seemingly much like the classic free market.*

The absurdity of rabid Nazi anti-Semitism is revealed when Elsa tells us of the Nazi contention that the Jews invented the fifth Commandment (Thou shalt not kill) as well as Christianity itself which was part of the master plot to destroy civilization. Students should be asked to describe the basis for this charge. *Christianity stressed the other regarding side of the innate human ethical sense which expected the strong to help the weak. This would burden the productive members of group with more and more free riders until they were overwhelmed according to Nazi assessment.*

Elsa suggests that many people were caught in positions where they became reluctant participants in the atrocities and that they suffered psychological damage. While it's understandable that many victims were forced to assist in order to survive and that this too was a torture, her effort to find a defense for Simonescu is not convincing, even for herself. *The fact that so many otherwise good people "reluctantly" participated and in fact made the Holocaust possible is the lynchpin of Holocaust study. The answer cannot be found in resorting to the common Holocaust false trail of focusing on the failure of good people to stand up against evil.*

Chapter Fifteen: Reports for Discussion

Continue video: *The Longest Hatred.*

Chapter Sixteen: Summary

Treppenwitz arranges to meet with Eichler at the funeral parlor. It is very late at night. Meanwhile Elsa searches the remnants of her own past and finds more Dear Sandra letters. She reads a letter written on the same day as Simonescu's diary revealed he had done some horrific things, yet in the letter he talks about attending a New Year's Eve party. She thinks about how this dual existence can be. *This can open a discussion of the psychology of masking harsh realities.* Treppenwitz meets with Eichler and tells him that Ortiz is on to them. They determine to kill Ortiz when he returns to Treppenwitz's house the following Saturday. Treppenwitz is frightened but Eichler convinces him to do the murder. *Much like the Holocaust itself, events tend to escalate and worsen as the story progresses putting Treppenwitz on an almost irreversible course.*

Chapter Sixteen: Seminar Discussion Questions

Consider the following lines and, reflecting on Fromm's thesis, ask if students think it is true that personal ethical choice is difficult.

Once again he found himself willing to follow, and find accommodation with danger, by accepting the dictates of the assertive voice. It relieved him of the personal need to decide.

Discuss Eichler's argument to convince Treppenwitz to murder Ortiz which is eerily like the one used by the Nazis to promote euthanasia.

Nobody gives a shit about him, don't you understand..the cops won't even look for us; he's shit Treppenwitz, society is better off without him." Eichler laughed again, mockingly, "We'll murder him for the betterment of mankind.." Eichler laughed again, "You're a doctor, consider it a sanitation measure; it's your duty Treppenwitz; you're ridding the world of a disease that's all.

Chapter Sixteen: Reports for Discussion

It is useful at this point to pause to be sure students are not confused about the relationships between the characters. It should be obvious that Elsa is in fact Sandra and that Simonescu is Rolf Schilling. They were Germans with a past involvement in the Holocaust. Sandra was a part of the resistance but Rolf was probably a Nazi. That they have assumed new identities indicates that they have something to hide and we can surmise that Rolf was wanted for something he did then. Eichler, who is probably also German, is obviously deeply involved and the fact that he killed the boy and probably also killed Schilling suggests that his connection also goes back to

events of the Holocaust. What those events were and how they unfolded in the lives of the three is yet to be discovered.

Continue video: *The Longest Hatred*.

Chapter Seventeen: Summary

Detective Sullivan and officer Mota are discussing the Simonescu case in Sullivan's office. Sullivan speculates that Treppenwitz murdered Robbie Simonescu but has little evidence. He nevertheless is determined to make a case against Treppenwitz which will require illegal break-ins and wiretaps. Mota thinks he is obsessed because of his past relationship with the boy's mother. Sullivan reveals his resentment about the way things turned out between himself and Lotte and it is clear that this has clearly influenced his decisions. Mota is caught between his self-regarding urge to protect his career and his other-regarding urge to support his partner. *This is a classic ethical conflict that can yield a rich discussion.*

Chapter Seventeen: Seminar Discussion Questions

This chapter offers an opportunity to discuss the human ethical weakness inherent in reciprocity when it leads to grudges and a mindless drive for revenge. Sullivan feels that he had been essentially cheated out of his chance to be with Lotte by Dr. Simonescu, who was a rich doctor, and he cannot escape the urge to strike back at Treppenwitz who symbolizes the same wealth and privilege. Sullivan's innate human ethical need to maintain equality was assaulted and his natural human urge to pay back was misdirected by rationale. Students should spend some time discussing their own feelings for revenge and what motivates them. Human beings define their ethical standards within groups where loyalty is a very powerful natural human ethical expectation. Mota struggles with this as he tries to fashion a way out of Sullivan's problematic scheme. Students should analyze this idea of loyalty and explore its limits.

Chapter Seventeen: Reports for Discussion

Continue video: *The Longest Hatred*.

Chapter Eighteen: Summary

Elsa and Treppenwitz return to the translation of the diary which concentrates on Dachau. The diary tells about the infamous high altitude and low temperature experiments done at Dachau in 1942. The diary traces Simonescu's ethical dilemma and how he rationalized his involvement. *Through the diary which is based on actual autopsy and other medical evidence from the Nuremberg Trials a very graphic picture of the horrors emerges. As Elsa reads the diary's relentless step by step destruction of a human life*

she reflects on its symbolic significance for the equally relentless ethical slippery slope they were all on.

Chapter Eighteen: Seminar Discussion Questions

Ask students to interpret the following lines:

..there was a kind of limit which events, when they begin to roll, give to future choices. The path narrows at every turn. Ask students to reflect on how choices create parameters for future choices. Consider how lies lead to more lies.

As far as these experiments are concerned, I believe they must have an overwhelmingly important purpose. This is typical human ethical rationale.

Does it matter that I didn't mean to do it? Considering intent in assessing ethical responsibility is consistent with the innate human sense of fairness.

The chapter ends with the following:

Elsa retorted "I can't believe it... not for a minute that educated Germans would follow the authority of a government whose dictates could not have been made compatible with their own rational conclusions."

"They must have been compatible then," Treppenwitz added, "or they made their rational conclusions compatible with the dictates."

"Yes... I suppose," Elsa said beginning to understand how thinking people can accept themselves as murderers. "How can they avoid the fact that they are murderers?" Her words drove deep into Treppenwitz's soul. Or perhaps it's because they do think, she added to herself.

This seems to imply that man's reason contributed in a causal way to the Holocaust. Ask students to reflect on what they think Elsa meant by this.

Chapter Eighteen: Reports for Discussion

Complete video: *The Longest Hatred*.

Chapter Nineteen: Summary

Treppenwitz meets Lotte Simonescu for lunch and to discuss her son's disappearance. Treppenwitz is once again attracted to the woman but resists realizing how impossible it would be. Treppenwitz probes for information and learns that Simonescu had a very cold relationship with Eichler. She also tells Treppenwitz about a secret 16mm film that she believed was made at Dachau during the war which held the key to explain everything. Lotte tells Treppenwitz that she

has another reason for meeting him. She tells him that Robbie's girl friend is pregnant and is planning an abortion. She seems desperate to stop the abortion believing her son is dead and that this child is his. Treppenwitz too feels a need to stop the abortion and agrees to talk to the girl at the free clinic.

Chapter Nineteen: Seminar Discussion Questions

The narrator comments that this was the first time Treppenwitz had thought of an unborn fetus as a child. ***It was the first time he had ever thought of it that way... as an unborn human being. It was so much easier, cleaner and more clinical, to think about an embryo or a fetus, but he couldn't, not this time, not ever again.*** This is a good opportunity to have students once again ponder the issue of frame of reference in ethical decision making. *Most ethical dispute results from differing group loyalties and a different understanding of the facts rather than fundamentally conflicting moral values.*

Chapter Nineteen: Reports for Discussion

Hear report on The Final Solution and Auschwitz.

Chapter Twenty: Summary

Treppenwitz relives the murder of Raphael Ortiz that he and Eichler had done that afternoon. He sees the terrible mistakes that he has been making and recognizes his kinship with old Dr. Simonescu. Like Simonescu he struggles to understand how he could have done evil things. When Elsa returns home he asks her about evil. Elsa answers him in a spiritual way which he cannot comprehend.

Chapter Twenty: Seminar Discussion Questions

When Treppenwitz insists that there is a right and wrong Elsa says: ***When you find what you think is right you will find, with it, its opposite to condemn... The more good you find, the more evil there will be to slay.*** *Pondering these kinds of philosophical questions can stimulate important insights in students and are worth the time to pursue. This is also a good opportunity to determine informally if students have moved beyond a superficial understanding of the Holocaust.*

Chapter Twenty: Reports for Discussion

Complete report on The Final Solution and Auschwitz.

Chapter Twenty-One: Summary

Treppenwitz is at the free clinic and finds himself in the midst of an antiabortion demonstration. The issue of abortion suddenly seems very important to him and he wonders why. ***But beneath it he knew that it was somehow all interwoven like a rich and tragic fabric and that he was tied tight by it and could never escape it.*** *It is important for students to see the contemporary relevance of their study of the Holocaust which is significant for helping to cope with the medical, especially genetic issues such as cloning and stem cell research facing them today. Encourage a free discussion of these issues and of how their Holocaust study is relevant to them.*

Chapter Twenty-One: Seminar Discussion Questions

The debate between the pro-life and pro-choice women once again illustrates the frame of reference problem in ethics and Treppenwitz's reliance on reason to solve ethical impasses shows the futility of that approach. After all of his logic Treppenwitz finds himself back in the same frame of reference dilemma where he started. Ask students to respond to the pro-life woman's allegation that ***you're no better than fascist pigs... when you would kill babies to improve the quality of your own life. That's what the Nazis did; they killed babies, for all the right reasons. Just like you. This is no different from the Holocaust and you're no better than a Nazi pig.*** *Ethical conflict cannot be resolved until there is agreement on the facts. Sometimes this is difficult, as it is in the issue of abortion. In these cases society relies on artificial mechanisms to decide. In a constitutional democracy this is the role of the courts. The ethics of those decisions relies on the manner in which they were made and the accordance of prima facie equality to all those impacted by them. This was certainly not the case in Nazi Germany.*

Chapter Twenty-One: Reports for Discussion

Hear report: [Paperclip Conspiracy](#).

Chapter Twenty-Two: Summary

Treppenwitz and Lotte meet at the library while Sullivan, hiding in the stacks, secretly watches them. Treppenwitz believes that reason and science can answer all of life's questions and he is studying books for an answer to the abortion dilemma and to prepare to convince the pregnant girl. The two disagree about the morality of abortion and the conversation is animated and emotional. Sullivan watches their actions but cannot hear their words. He misinterprets their gestures and expressions offering an opportunity to consider how much we all function on incomplete or inaccurate knowledge. *This is in fact a cardinal problem for ethics in an extended cooperative group where access to truth is very limited. Students should be asked to consider what they really know and what they only think they know. Jealousy is also an important innate ethical urge that is worth discussing.* Treppenwitz is convinced that Eichler killed Dr. Simonescu in retribution for something that happened during the Holocaust and

he has an idea about how to prove it. When Lotte leaves he begins his research in the library periodicals room.

Chapter Twenty-Two: Seminar Discussion Questions

Review the following lines from Chapter Twenty-Two: ***It's legal.. A woman has a right to have an abortion. It repeated again in his mind: it's not murder... it's legal. He remembered Simonescu's letter, written on the eve of massive euthanasia in Nazi Germany. The judges in Berlin have all agreed he remembered Simonescu saying ...*** This highlights the distinction between ethics and the law which may or may not be ethical. It is important for students to understand that the rules of the group are not always ethical.

Attempting to convince Treppenwitz to try to stop the abortion Lotte says: ***Tell her how the baby is ripped apart, then scraped loose, and sucked out with a vacuum pump... show her pictures... stop her, you're a doctor, she'll listen to you.*** There is much of the Holocaust in these words which seek the acceptance of external medical authority through propaganda techniques. Ask students to comment on how these words reflect the causes of the Holocaust itself.

Chapter Twenty-Two: Reports for Discussion

Complete report on the Paper Clip Conspiracy. Begin Video: *America and the Holocaust: Deceit and Indifference*.

Chapter Twenty-Three: Summary

Elsa takes Treppenwitz to Quick's Point where Simonescu had disappeared. The two engage in a philosophical discussion of ethical imperatives. The considerable symbolism of the surroundings strikes Treppenwitz. Elsa suddenly tells him that Russo died the previous night from a heart attack and that Eichler told her to be sure to tell him that he has the body. Treppenwitz realizes that Eichler is warning him that he will be next. He asks Elsa to tell him about Simonescu. She remembers the final days of the war as the Americans press into Cologne. She tells Treppenwitz how Schilling escaped and reached America.

Chapter Twenty-Three: Seminar Discussion Questions

Free discussion.

Chapter Twenty-Three: Reports for Discussion

Complete report on the Paper Clip Conspiracy. View video: *America and the Holocaust: Deceit and Indifference*, (81 minutes).

Chapter Twenty-Four: Summary

It's late at night and Elsa listens to Treppenwitz's footsteps in the attic library. She remembers more details about her experience since the war. Treppenwitz then quietly leaves the house intending to break into Eichler's office to find proof that Eichler had murdered Simonescu. He finds the proof as well as the 16mm film; he watches it and sees the reason for Simonescu's murder. *It is important for students to understand the hideous nature of the atrocities in a way that hits home. This chapter, while graphic, is not gratuitous, and it is historically accurate.*

Chapter Twenty-Four: Seminar Discussion Questions

Free discussion. *This chapter will generate questions. The teacher is cautioned to be prepared.*

Chapter Twenty-Four: Reports for Discussion

Complete video: *America and the Holocaust*

Chapter Twenty-Five: Summary

Elsa hears Treppenwitz run back into the house; she hides as Eichler follows. She suspects the worst and tries to call detective Sullivan but he cannot hear her whispers on the phone. She waits several hours until morning before daring to go into the attic where she finds a note from Treppenwitz.

Chapter Twenty-Five: Seminar Discussion Questions

Eichler has committed several murders and will probably get away with them. His motive was revenge but most of his victims were accidentally caught in the maelstrom of his actions and were not guilty of anything. Eichler represents the innate human ethical sense, relying on reciprocity not tempered by reason; he is ethically out of control and symbolizes the Nazis. Treppenwitz cannot muster enough internal ethical authority to control his own decision making and as a result is driven by external authorities; he is typical of Germans who enabled the Holocaust. Treppenwitz turns to logic and reason but it never helps him because it is a mechanism of rationales to support his emotionally driven decisions. Elsa tries to make sense of it all and tries to save him but her whispers are not heard. She seems to represent the feeble efforts of so many Germans to slow the slide. *Human beings have an innate ethical sense that urges them to make predictable choices. Although most people believe that their actions are guided by logic and reason, reason often acts only as a mechanism to justify these choices. Language allows people to construct sophisticated rationales which support what are often genetically driven decisions. Ethics education is about recognizing the real power of one's innate ethical sense and how it influences our behavior. In this way we can free reason to become a tool to truly guide our actions. Without the wisdom that results from*

understanding one's innate ethical self, reason remains a powerful propaganda prop for unchallenged intrinsic human ethical imperatives.

Chapter Twenty-Five: Reports for Discussion

Begin final assessment video: *Europa, Europa*.

The teacher should keep in mind that the student's ability to identify with and meaningfully interpret the film results from having completed a comprehensive Holocaust study. This film is not recommended as a stand alone or as a cursory introduction to Holocaust study, nor should it be used with younger students. The teacher should carefully preview the film to determine its appropriateness for any particular class.

Final Assessment

It is important to bring the Holocaust study to a conclusion in a way that encourages students to reflect honestly on what they have learned. The film *Europa, Europa* is an effective tool in helping to achieve this. This film traces the fantastic true story of a Jewish boy, Solomon Perel, from the Kristallnacht to the end of the war. In an ironic and powerful way Perel's decisions display the kinds of human ethical urges that motivate us all and are at the roots of the Holocaust itself. Perel is 16 years old when his odyssey begins and students will identify with him and be captivated by his story.

Solomon Perel was born on April 20, 1925. His family personally suffers the death of Solomon's sister, Berta, who was killed during the rioting on the fateful Reichskristallnacht of November 1938. The Perel family then flees to Lodz (Poland) the ancestral home of Solomon's father. As German troops overrun Poland Solomon and his brother Isaak flee to the east. In the confusion the two are separated; Solomon is captured by the Russians and spends two years in a Russian orphanage where he assumes the role of a Soviet patriot and devout Communist. After Hitler breaks the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact and the German army invades the Soviet Union, Solomon is once again facing the Nazis. He avoids execution by convincing the Germans that he is a displaced Aryan German named Josef Peters. His knowledge of Russian makes him useful as a translator and he becomes an unofficial member of a German army unit. Hiding his true Jewish identity is very difficult and the pressure of the war causes him to try to defect back to the Russians. His plan oddly backfires and accidentally leads to a German victory over the Russians in a way that makes him appear to have been a hero. This comes to the attention of his commanding officer who designates him for return to Germany as part of the SS program to repatriate Aryan German children to the homeland. Solomon, alias Josef Peters, is admitted to an elite Nazi school where he becomes an outstanding student and Nazi. Solomon continues to struggle with his dual existence and his denial of his true identity is confirmed by his circumcision which if seen will immediately reveal his secret. His efforts to keep his secret are severely tested when he meets and falls

in love with a beautiful girl named Leni. She is a confirmed Nazi and wants to bear a child for the fatherland. She wants Solomon to be the father and this creates a severe conflict. The war goes badly for the Germans and Solomon's school brigade is pressed into action. Solomon is finally captured by the Russians where he is reunited with his brother. After the war both brothers emigrate to Palestine.

Students should view the film without teacher comment and then be asked to write a reflective essay interpreting the story on the basis of their understanding of the causes of the Holocaust. Some of these essays should then become the focus for a culminating Socratic seminar.

Notes