THE HOLOCAUST AND HISTORY

The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed, and the Reexamined

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The Rescuer Self

Rescue of Jews under the Nazis was, in psychological parlance, a "rare behavior." Among a population of 700 million in Germany and the allied occupied countries, the thousands who risked their lives to save Jews and others from Nazi persecution constituted an aberration from the norm. The majority remained passive bystanders; many actively collaborated in the Final Solution.

The diversity among the rescuers[1] of Jews during the Holocaust is enough to dissuade any social scientist from generalizations about motivation. However, systematic analysis of their family backgrounds, personalities, and situations begins to suggest a way of understanding what enabled some people to take extraordinary risks to save the lives of others.[2]

Through the rescuing relationship, the values and innermost core of the rescuer were expressed. That core was nurtured in childhood, came to full expression during the Holocaust, and then continued in the postwar years as an integral part of the rescuer's identity, as, in essence, a rescuer self.

Most rescuers acknowledge that the initial act of such behavior was not premeditated and planned. Whether gradual or sudden, there was little mulling over of the moral dilemmas, conflicts, and life and death consequences involved in the decision to help. The decision to harbor Jews in extremis was often an impulsive response to an immediate situation—the reflection of an integrated self.

The ability to see beyond Nazi propaganda, to strip away the gauze of Nazi euphemisms, and to recognize that innocents were being murdered lies at the heart of what distinguishes most rescuers from the bystanders. It was the necessary first step that made the ensuing rescue activity possible and, in some cases, inevitable. What is disputed among researchers is how one develops this ability to see things differently. Some suggest that awareness of the imminent death of the Jews was a cognitive process that was not influenced by learned values or early socialization.[3] Most, however, emphasize the influence of early experiences, values, and the immediate situation, all of which may have impeded or enhanced the possibility to help.[4]

Bystanders who transformed themselves into rescuers held on to their innate empathy, while others who did not were swept up in a restructured social hierarchy that placed Aryans at the top and Jews at the bottom. Psychologist Daniel Goleman's theory of "psychic obtuseness" is applicable to most people under Nazi terror. People notice certain things (the "frame"); everything else, especially those matters that

cause anxiety or pain, are kept from consciousness. We crop our mental picture, says Goleman, and in so doing, ignore clues that indicate that things are amiss.[5]

The work of social psychologists Bib Latané and John Darley on bystander intervention is applicable to the initiation of rescue acts. Latané and Darley delineate a five-stage process by which observers become participants: noticing that something is amiss; interpreting the situation as one in which people need help; assuming responsibility to offer help; choosing a form of help; and, finally, implementing help.[6] Latané and Darley's first two stages—noticing and interpreting—are what I refer to as "awareness."

Becoming a rescuer meant becoming aware of the imminent danger to and probable death of Jews. It was a clear-eyed view—seeing what others did not. It took a determined effort to discover the truth, to be aware. Those who became rescuers made that effort. Their heightened sense of empathy overrode Nazi propaganda and their own instinct for self-preservation. They saw the victims of Nazi persecution as individuals, different, perhaps, but still part of the same human community. They felt empathy: the Jewish plight touched a deeply personal chord.

Interpreting a situation as one in which help is needed is the second stage in becoming a rescuer. While local citizens were aware that Jews were losing their civil liberties, most interpreted this change as temporary, not as fatal, and not necessarily as warranting intervention. Some circumstances were too dangerous or uncertain for bystanders to be of any help. Roundups were carried out quickly, before there was time to think, much less act.

Assuming responsibility is the third and most crucial stage in Latané and Darley's bystander's intervention model. It is the stage from which the final two phases, choosing a form of help and implementing it, logically flow. Psychologist Elizabeth Midlarsky feels that the willingness to take responsibility requires a perception of competency—the view that one can alter events to bring about the desired outcome, whether or not it is objectively true. Other psychologists call this belief in the ability to influence events an "internal locus of control."[7] Samuel and Pearl Oliner's findings in *The Altruistic Personality* support Midlarsky's view: rescuers strongly believed that they could influence events, and this made them feel that what they did, or failed to do, mattered.[8] Rescuers were neither fools nor suicidal. They were not about to offer help unless they felt there was a good chance that they could be effective. They had to have faith in their capacity to assess situations and find solutions. There was seldom time for measured thought, only for quick assessments. Rescuers framed the situation this way: "Can I live with myself if I say no?" Aware that turning down a request for help meant that Jews would die, rescuers weighed the double peril of saying no.

In most cases, transformation from bystander to rescuer was gradual and characterized by an increasing commitment. Most people did not initiate rescues on their own. A friend, an acquaintance, or a friend of a friend came and asked for help. Rescuers thought about the person in trouble, not how their help would endanger them and their family. As one thing led to another they experienced an "upward curve of risk," starting perhaps with smuggling food and messages into a ghetto, then transporting a Jew out of the ghetto, and gradually sheltering the Jew for several years.

Rescuers became outlaws in a Nazi no-man's-land. Their ideas of right and wrong were not widely held. Being isolated was new for them, since before the war, they had been very much part of their communities. Prior to the rescue they tended not to be loners or people who felt alienated from society.[9] But the secret of rescue effectively isolated them from everyone else. Neighbors who suspected people of harboring Jews viewed them as selfish and dangerous because they risked the lives of those around them.

A rescuer's life was intricate and terrifying. A careless word, a forgotten detail, or one wrong move could lead to death. Dutch rescuer Louisa Steenstra recalls that German soldiers arrested the sixteen-year-old daughter of a friend for merely saying "hello" to a resistance man in their custody. Sent to a concentration camp, a guard shot her one hour later for "insolence."

At home strains were often as great. Overnight, dynamics changed as families adjusted to the new "member" being sheltered. The atmosphere could become poisonous if one spouse did not support the other's rescue efforts. Comfortable routines were upset and new patterns had to be developed. Husbands and wives gave up their privacy. Children found themselves sleeping with strangers they had to learn to call brother, sister, aunt, uncle—whatever the situation or the occasion required. "Sibling" rivalries and jealousies developed. Again, core confidence, a strong sense of self, and a supportive situation allowed bystanders to undertake a rescue. But once the decision to help was reached and the rescue began, a different self, a rescuer self, emerged to do what had to be done and to keep the rescuer from becoming overwhelmed by new responsibilities and pressures.

A "transformation" took place. It was not simply behavior that changed. Successful rescuers became, in effect, different people. Psychohistorian Robert Jay Lifton explains the psychological process: when people find themselves in a world that no longer makes sense, their identities—the ways they behave, even notions of right and wrong—no longer seem to fit. They become "de-centered." In an effort to reestablish psychological equilibrium, they have to find new centers, to create new selves.[10] The new self is built on strong moral foundations. It allows the rescuers to do what normally might not seem moral or prudent—including plotting, stealing, lying, taking risks, enduring hardships, putting loved ones in jeopardy, and living in fear—all in the service of setting the world (and their place within it) on solid ground. These actions might not make sense to their former selves, but they become the new essence of rescuers.

Rescue often entailed great risk and anxiety; rescue acts could also unleash strong feelings of guilt (at not being able to do more, at risking one's family in the service of others); rage (at the oppressors); terror and grief (at witnessing atrocities and dehumanization), all of which could induce inner chaos. But it is apparent from my interviews that rescuers have a strong equilibrium. They can withstand intense decentering experiences and the accompanying pain and confusion. As Lifton points out, such experiences can help to recenter people, allowing them to achieve a new mode of flexible psychological coping.

The rescuer self kept the fear of death and the knowledge of Hitler's Final Solution at bay. French pastor and underground leader Marc Donadille summed it up this way:

> On some level we knew [the gassings] were true, incredible as it seemed—but we pushed it to the back of our minds and got on with the daily work of rescuing. It didn't make sense to say to the Jews we were rescuing, living side by side with, in our houses "Hitler is going to kill you all." What haunted us was to save the Jews that were there. We had enough to do to keep them hidden, safe and fed . . .[11]

The rescuer self had to be competent, resourceful, and practical to get through each day. Charges had to eat and shopping for food was a major problem. To avoid arousing suspicion by buying too much food at once, rescuers wandered far afield. In large cities such as Amsterdam this was not a problem at first. Miep Gies, who was buying groceries for seven people hiding above Otto Frank's spice business offices, as well as for herself and her husband, distributed her purchases among several stores. These ruses were not foolproof. One day Gies's local vegetable grocer noticed that she was buying in large quantities. Without saying anything, he began putting vegetables aside for her shopping visits. Months later when she stopped by to shop as usual, he was not there. He had been arrested for hiding two Jews.[12]

Each combination of rescuer, victim, and situation created a peculiar alchemy. Whatever its distinctive traits, the rescuer self that emerged never strayed from the person's basic, humanitarian values, which were solid and unchanging. They were democratic and humane in nature. It was easier, of course, to harbor a person who was likable than someone who was unpleasant or demanding. However, once a rescuing relationship began, it was not easily terminated because of mere personality differences.

The theme of the rescuing relationship was altruism, its product, the creation of a safe harbor in a hostile world. Its basic "contract" ran thus: the rescuer was committed to harboring a Jew—to taking care of daily needs, warning of danger, maintaining a facade of "normal life" behind which there would be safety. The Jew was dependent but was expected to cooperate—making as little trouble as possible, using personal resources to help out in daily life, and staying invisible.

As in any relationship, life strained the original terms. Few if any involved in such relationships could have known in the beginning how long they would go on, or what new demands would be made as other victims needed help, or food ran out, or constant fear created family tension and strange behavior. As each set of expectations was replaced, roles and responsibilities had to be redefined, new problems overcome, and new strategies developed.

Motivation

Rescuers were not a monolithic group. Their initial motivations in large measure defined the essence of who they were. Rescuers saw themselves as helpful, competent people who took on the responsibility of saving Jews. Each had his or her own particular set of reasons.

My research discloses that the motivational category to which a rescuer belonged influenced not only how the rescue was carried out but also the way in which the rescuer self was integrated into postwar life. Assigning each rescuer to one of the ensuing five categories according to his initial motivation was therefore more than sorting piles. On the contrary, an examination of the circumstances and motives that

led each to his initial rescuing act pinpointed the salient aspect of the rescuer. It was this aspect—moral, Judeophile, ideological, professional, or of the duty-bound child—that continued after the war as a central part of the inner lives of these individuals, providing tremendous satisfaction and direction.

Sociologist Robert Wuthnow emphasizes the importance of a language for motivation:

> We must have a language that allows us to explain to ourselves and others why we are doing what we do. And in an individualistic society, where caring is sometimes seen as an abnormality, it becomes all the more important to be able to give an account of ourselves. An adequate language of motivation is thus one of the critical junctures at which the individual and the society intersect: being able to explain why is as important to our identity as a culture as it is to our sense of selfhood as individuals.[13]

The very question, "Why did you do it?" evokes discomfort and even annoyance in rescuers. The question challenges an instinctive response that stems from personal integrity, from the rescuer's humanity. Rescuers are often embarrassed with their answers because they are not eloquent or philosophical and because the interviewer may be disappointed at the simple, "It was the right thing to do." "I couldn't have lived with myself if I let this person die." Psychologically, the very word "why" often seems accusatory and puts the rescuer on the defensive. The answer to the question, even if it cannot be formulated verbally by the rescuers themselves, lies buried in the moment of the first act of rescue. Everything up until that act was part of the reason *why*.

Many psychoanalysts believe that rescuers' acts derive from self-centered, unconscious motivations: expressing rage against the Third Reich, for example, or undoing a sense of helplessness. Saving the lives of Jews is perceived as providing rescuers with the narcissistic gratification of outwitting their oppressors or of having someone totally dependent on them. Most analysts would argue that self-gratification rather than altruism underlay rescuers' help. Anna Freud, for one, felt that there was no such thing as altruistic motivation. People who help others do it for personal gratification. Unconscious motivation may have played a role in turning bystanders into rescuers, yet intangibles such as narcissistic gratification and enhanced self-image were small reward when weighed against the vast risks these people undertook.

Sequential analysis of in-depth interviews of three hundred rescuers and more than one hundred and fifty of those they saved readily allows one to categorize initial rescue efforts. Some rescuers were motivated by moral, ideological, or professional ends. Others were admirers of the Jewish people, or they were children who helped their families' rescue. The rescuer self took a quiet pride in its ability to maintain moral integrity, ideological beliefs, professional standards, or humane relationships.

Moral Rescuers

The most prevalent type of rescuer was the moral rescuer; these people, when asked why they risked their lives to save Jews, were most likely to look at the interviewer uncomprehendingly.[14] "How else should one react when a human life is

endangered?" some would reply indignantly. Their ideas of right and wrong were so ingrained, so much a part of who they were, that it was as if I had asked them why they breathed.

This clear sense of right and wrong is what child development expert Jean Piaget calls "autonomous" morality. According to Piaget, autonomous morality develops after age eight from both respect for peers' feelings and intellectual advances. Moral decisions are no longer absolute. Justice is a matter of reciprocal rights and obligations, the readings of an inner "moral compass."[15] Eli Sagan takes Piaget's notion a step further, arguing that morality, or conscience, is an independent psychic function that develops in infancy through a caretaker's nurturing and gradually comes to rule supreme. In Sagan's view, conscience reigns not through fear of punishment (or castration, as Freud believed) but through love. A child who receives love wants to give it back. In Sagan's terms, a moral rescuer was simply a person trying to return the love he received as a child.[16]

Moral rescuers, however, were doing more than just reciprocating affection. They had a strong sense of who they were and what they lived for. Their values were self-sustaining, not dependent on the approval of others. What mattered most was behaving in a way that maintained their own integrity; the knowledge that, unless they took action, people would die was enough.

They did not leap at every opportunity to correct wrongdoing. On the contrary, moral rescuers rarely initiated action. Unlike rescuers with other types of motivation (such as people who were propelled by hatred of the Third Reich), moral rescuers typically launched their activity only after being asked to help or after an encounter with suffering and death that reawakened their consciences. For the most part, when asked to help, moral rescuers could not say no.

These rescuers displayed emotional and cognitive types of morality: ideological, religious, and emotional. Ideological morality was based on ethical beliefs and notions of justice. Rescuers with this type of morality acted on a strong sense of right and wrong inculcated since early childhood. A congruence between morality and action was always a part of their lives. They had the ability to stand up for their beliefs; when asked to help, they did. They were more likely than others to be politically involved. Some belonged to socialist, communist, or in a few cases, even nationalist parties.

Religious-moral rescuers described their sense of right and wrong in religious rather than ethical terms. Their morality was based on tenets such as "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" and biblical precepts about how to live their lives. Religious values such as tolerance were unshakable and permanent. During the war and after, when faced with dire circumstances or morally complex questions, they relied on their faith to see them through.

Spiritual feelings were not limited to those affiliated with traditional religions. A deep spiritual conviction and dedication to the principles and practices of nonviolent action motivated pacifists such as Dutch rescuer Wilto Schortingnius. A registered conscientious objector well before the German invasion, Schortingnius, along with his wife, looked to Mahatma Gandhi and Albert Schweitzer for their inspiration and to their own consciences for motivation. When I asked Schortingnius why he and his wife hid twenty Jews on his farm, his answer was simple: "We feel life is sacred."

Lastly, emotional-moral rescuers felt a compassion for victims of Nazi persecution that compelled them to help. Emotional-moral rescuers were the rarest type among moral rescuers. They helped out of a feeling of compassion and pity. It was not an ideological sense of right and wrong but an immediate and intense emotional response. Theirs was a morality based on caring and responsibility, the same morality that Harvard University psychologist Carol Gilligan celebrated in her groundbreaking book, *In a Different Voice*.[17]

A majority of these emotional-moral rescuers carried out more than five separate rescues. More than any other category, emotional-moral rescuers engaged in rescuing children. Of course, not all of those who rescued children were emotional-moral rescuers, just as not everyone who rescued was motivated by exclusively moral considerations.

Judeophiles

Philosemites or Judeophiles were the second largest category of rescuers I interviewed—people who loved individual Jews or the Jewish people.[18] Some felt affinity toward Jews based on business relationships, intellectual pursuits, social interaction, love relationships, or religious closeness. Many Christians had childhood friends who were Jewish. Others remembered being "shabbos goyim," or non-Jews whose job it was to put on lights, light fires, and perform other minor household tasks for Jews who followed strictly the Jewish injunction not to do any work on the Sabbath. Non-Jewish children often received candy and other treats for their help, and they carried fond childhood memories of Jews.

A surprising number of Judeophiles suspected they were of Jewish descent.[19] Others had been romantically involved with Jews or had been forbidden by their families to continue involvements. In these cases, not only did the love for the lost sweetheart remain, it was extended to the Jewish people in general. Still others thought that they might be the illegitimate offspring of their mother's secret liaisons with Jews.

Closeness to the Jewish people could also come from reading and understanding the Hebrew Bible. Fundamentalist Christians who grew up with stories of the Hebrew Bible felt a love for the ancient people. Some of these Judeophiles had never met a Jew, but when given an opportunity to rescue one, they were more than willing. They felt a religious connection to Jesus, a Jew, or to those people the Hebrew Bible says were chosen by God.

Unlike moral rescuers, most Judeophiles began their rescuing activities by sheltering Jews they knew. Thus, despite centuries-old antisemitic attitudes, particularly in Eastern Europe, it was possible, under the right conditions, for some to overcome their bigotry.

How such relationships resolved themselves differed from person to person and situation to situation. For many rescuers, the relationship brought happiness and meaning to their lives. After the war, some married those whom they had saved; some converted to Judaism; some moved to Israel. Some did all three. For others, the relationship dissolved after the war into a muddle of guilt about not doing enough, of grief over losses, and of rage when their charges were never heard from again.

Relationships were cut off abruptly. Some were severed deliberately; others were torn apart inadvertently by the chaotic conditions of war.

Concerned Professionals

Not all rescuers felt emotional bonds with Jews. In fact members of one group, a group sociologists label "concerned-detached professionals," were drawn into their rescue efforts by virtue of their occupations. They were few, only 5 percent of those I interviewed, but they were a varied and fascinating group. These diplomats, doctors, nurses, social workers, and psychologists did not necessarily love Jews, or even much like them. But they were ideologically opposed to the Nazi regime. When social workers saw that, without help, Jewish families would be split apart and would have to face their deadly destinies alone, they felt obliged to help. When doctors saw men hunted by Third Reich butchers, they made an effort to intervene. And when diplomats saw people of different nationalities stripped of their basic citizenship rights, indeed of their dignity, they felt compelled to act. Unlike moral rescuers, who, through empathy, saw human beings just like themselves, these professionals saw what they were accustomed to seeing day in and day out: clients in trouble, patients in need, strangers in distress.

To be sure, Nazi persecution made cases of Jews more urgent than those of ordinary clients. Rescuing professionals were confident about their ability to help. It was what they were trained to do. They were competent, independent, and dedicated to doing their jobs well. They were also a bit aloof, keeping a professional distance between themselves and their charges, a distance that might seem cold-hearted to a Judeophile. As a result, they did not maintain relationships with those whom they rescued, and survivors most often did not provide testimony for their recognition at Yad Vashem.

As with rescuers in other motivational categories, concerned professionals had a sense of obeying a higher law. Whatever their particular job— social worker, nurse, diplomat—these rescuing professionals applied to the highest ideals of their professions.[20] Nowhere was the determination to uphold professional ideals more apparent than in the case of those diplomats who disobeyed their countries' foreign service directives to save Jews. As diplomats, disobeying home office directives took on added significance. Since the actions of a diplomat were seen as representing the political thinking of his or her country, the Third Reich interpreted it as a deliberate political message.

Network Rescuers

It is axiomatic among sociologists that ideology can only be defeated through group effort. Individual attempts to counteract prevailing beliefs are futile. People for whom Nazism was anathema instinctively knew this. They sought out others who saw the world as they did, felt the same way about it, and wanted to change it. They gathered in political halls, fraternity houses, church basements, and public school classrooms. They met in social welfare offices and hospital staff rooms. They rallied in churches with reputations for humanitarian endeavors, for instance Holland's

Anti-Revolutionary Church and Germany's Confessing Church. And in towns such as France's Le Mazet, Fay, Tence, La Suchere, Montbuzat, and Le Chambon, Italy's Assisi—towns with traditions of harboring the religiously persecuted—they worked together to shelter strangers. They joined in what sociologist Georg Simmel calls "secret societies."[21]

Secret society members were both Jews and non-Jews bound by a common interest or a similar emotional bias. Unlike moral rescuers or Judeophiles, who acted from empathy with others, these rescuers were motivated by fear and abhorrence of the Third Reich's racist and dictatorial policies. Nazism was the very antithesis of the deeply held beliefs and humanitarian values that defined who they were. They felt personally defiled.

Members of the "secret societies" were a strikingly homogeneous group. Most came from business or professional families. Many were young adults who had started their anti-Nazi activities as university students. More than half had attended college or graduate school and all had at least some high school education.[22]

These people were early opponents of Hitler. They passed out anti-Nazi literature, organized protest strikes, and eventually undertook acts of sabotage. They were likely to have shown their defiance of Hitler early on by ignoring the racial laws that prohibited non-Jews from having sexual, social, or business contacts with Jews. Disobeying those laws constituted their first acts of resistance. Their focus was on opposing Hitler, not on saving Jews. Resistance came first. Later, at the urging of Jewish friends and as the plight of the Jews became more desperate, rescue efforts became part of their general resistance.

Some moral rescuers, who started their rescuing relationships in isolation, began to join groups. This gave them resources they needed to continue and provided them with extra ration cards, money, counterintelligence, and hideouts. The sense of being one of many, of belonging to a group, strengthened rescuers' resolve and gave them psychological support. With a group behind them, rescuers felt what Freud described as "an unlimited power and an insurmountable peril." Such psychological support permitted some rescuers to step outside ordinary parameters to lie, steal, and do whatever had to be done to save lives.[23]

While groups gave support and additional resources to their members, they also enmeshed them in a tangle of operations and sometimes conflicting obligations. If caught, rescuers had information to reveal that could jeopardize the lives of others. Danger and urgency drew members into what felt like large enveloping families.

Saving Jews became an all-important, all-consuming task. Rescuers' activities infused their lives with meaning and purpose; theirs was an active defense of values and beliefs. For many, it was an experience so deeply gratifying that they would spend the rest of their lives trying to engage in another compelling act.

Child Rescuers

Like adults, child rescuers had to protect and care for their charges, but there were important differences in their motivations. They were enlisted in a cause; they did not volunteer. Their initial motivation was the wish to please their parents. Children who took the initiative on their own were extremely rare.

The nature of the help varied. One-fourth of the rescuers I interviewed had risked the lives of their children. Half of the latter were involved in passive rescue activity: living in the same house as the Jews their parents hid, or helping elsewhere.[24] All the same, children were subject to risks. If a raid found Jews hiding in their home, children were as likely as adults to be hung, shot, or shipped to a concentration camp. The immediate situation called upon children to become trusted lieutenants in their parents' rescue operations, doing whatever was needed for the job at hand. They became couriers, espionage agents, and guides. They learned to lie convincingly to authorities or feign innocence if caught. Their presence lent even the most dangerous activities an air of guilelessness. Often it was Christian children, rather than adults, who were sent to guide Jews out of ghettos.

Twelve percent of those whom I talked with had become rescuers as children; they ranged in age from five to twenty-one at the time. Many of them attributed their courage to naiveté, a youthful sense of immortality that made their activities seem a lark or a storybook adventure.

Many had ambivalent feelings about their family's involvement in saving Jews. On the one hand, children felt proud that, due to their efforts, lives were being saved. Their work enhanced their self-esteem and gave them a tremendous feeling of competence and importance. Often children were included in the family councils and given a voice in rescue decisions. Parents listened to their concerns and children felt their contributions were valued.

On the other hand, rescue took over every aspect of family life. Other concerns were pushed aside in the face of the daily struggle with life-and-death issues. No matter what troubles or problems a child might have, they appeared insignificant compared to those that faced the Jews. Nevertheless, these children sometimes resented their own loss of center stage. They were angry at their parents for undertaking a task in which they were forced to participate, though they admired them for their altruism. Teenagers were particularly affected. Adolescents depend on support and yearn for approval from their peers. But rescue efforts erected walls that separated them from their friends. They could not be part of the Nazi youth movement, they eschewed antisemitic slurs, and they avoided inviting friends home.

Sometimes the children's sensitivity and conscience outdistanced those of their parents. At other times, the unpredictability of war thrust children into roles their parents had never intended or foreseen, such as caring for those hidden once the parents were caught. The rescuer self thus fostered survived the war. For most, having saved lives was a source of pride and inner satisfaction.

The Postliberation Rescuer Self

Each motivational category incorporated the rescuer self into postwar life in its own way. Moral rescuers continued to channel their altruistic efforts into new situations as they arose. The religious-moral rescuers had little difficulty integrating their rescuer selves into postwar life, continuing to live according to the same Christian principles of compassion and charity they had during the war.

For others, however, rescue and the relationship with Jews were of central importance. These Judeophiles continued to feel a special closeness to Jews. Friend-

ships formed before or during the war continued to play a big part in their lives. For the rest of their lives, Miep Gies and her husband would be known around the world as the would-be rescuers of Anne Frank; and Oskar Schindler would find emotional and financial surety only among his former factory workers.

Among all the groups, concerned professionals experienced the most seamless transition from rescuer to civilian life, continuing their careers after the war. Their professional identities, of which their rescuer self became a part, remained intact. War had not altered their professional outlook. They continued to help people in their usual way.

Diplomats were the exceptions to the concerned professionals' generally smooth entry into postwar life. Aristides de Sousa Mendes and Sempo Sugihara, for example, were drummed out of the diplomatic service for disobeying orders and were ostracized by their countrymen. Raoul Wallenberg was arrested by Soviet liberators as a spy and thrown into jail. He was never heard from again.

While the lack of a personal relationship with their charges generally did not affect concerned professionals, it did make it more difficult for some to integrate their rescuer self into postwar life.

After the war, the fortunates who knew others in their group were better able to heal themselves by confronting the past along with others. By sharing, they overcame neuroses associated with shame for their countrymen, or guilt for not doing more themselves. By talking about what formerly could not be revealed, rescuers made their peace with the past. Their rescuer selves were validated and became part of a collective consciousness.

For others, no such postwar conversation was possible. Some did not get to know others well. The camaraderie engendered by having faced a common danger dissipated, friends drifted away. Most network rescuers continued to be politically active. The same political instincts that made them oppose Hitler compelled them to fight other politically oppressive parties.

Child rescuers seem to have had the greatest difficulty in integrating their rescuer selves into their current lives. Most were *not* too young to understand the terrific risks they had run. Yet their contribution to the family's efforts were rarely mentioned. Some parents downplayed their children's help because acknowledgment was an admission of reckless disregard for their safety. Others felt guilty when their children awoke with nightmares, or continued in the habit of secrecy developed during the war. This habit hindered some adolescents from engaging in intimate relationships and from discussing their problem with their parents.

Conclusion

Each rescuer was unique. Yet research reveals patterns in the ways people became involved in rescue, and these patterns provide useful ideas as to how to nurture humane behavior.

It is not possible to predict who will risk his or her life for total strangers or even loved ones. No single personality type is apparent. However, certain features of family background, values, and personality increase the likelihood that certain people will resist tyranny.

Despite the external differences, there are commonalities in rescuers' upbringing. The most significant link is that most were taught to tolerate people who were different from themselves.[25] The altruism of parents provided role models for future rescuers. Involving the children in helping others enhanced "virtue as a habit." Being taught independence and self reliance as children provided the ego strength to withstand conformity.

Empathy with the victims of Nazi persecution came from several sources: warm, nurturing, and cohesive family environments;[26] discipline by reasoning rather than corporal punishment for misbehavior; a personal separation, loss, or an illness experienced in childhood; group moral support and personal experience of Nazi mistreatment.

The passivity of the majority was crucial to the success of the Final Solution, ultimately implicating the bystanders in the Nazi machinery of death. It is therefore crucial to understand those who did not remain mere bystanders but risked their lives to save the innocent. As this study shows, rescuers were neither angels, saints, nor mythic heroes. They were complex, often contradictory, yet unquestionably flesh-and-blood human beings. They came from all socioeconomic classes, educational backgrounds, and political persuasions; the factors were so diverse that it was not possible to predict who would help.

The rescuers acted humanely for a number of reasons. Some were motivated by religious, ideological, or emotionally based morality. Occasionally the motivation was born out of a transforming encounter with death. Others felt a sense of connection to Jews. Some combined a professional concern for the welfare of innocent victims with cool, professional distance. Some pledged allegiance to an anti-Nazi ideological movement, while others, much younger, obeyed the orders of desperate but committed parents. All possessed deep unconscious needs satisfied through their altruistic behavior. What was basic to all, however, was awareness, courage, and the ability to accept personal responsibility and acknowledge that "these human beings will die if I do not intervene."

Further Research

It will never be possible to predict who will disobey a malevolent authority and become a rescuer. Nonetheless, there is much to be learned from studying the rescuers of Jews during the Nazi period.

The majority of rescuers did not initiate help on their own but were asked by others. Therefore, we need more studies of those bystanders who were asked and refused. This group can teach us what forces impeded rescue behavior. (Anecdotal data and small samples point to the lack of sufficient resources and overwhelming fear.) It would be important to know whether social supports or fundamental personality traits distinguished those who refused from those who felt they could not live with themselves if they let a person die.

Certain people were motivated for religious and moral reasons to "do the right thing," while others with the same convictions remained passive or even became involved in the persecution. Study of different people from the same churches would shed light on how religious beliefs are transformed into concrete action.

Third, the rescuers have much to teach us about developing altruistic communities. Although members of such networks have been interviewed, the technique of network analysis has not been applied to their rescue efforts, which at times even crossed national borders. We need an analysis of the types of networks and their effectiveness or limitations under conditions of terror. This study, and the study of other types of rescuers, can teach us much about human nature, the bystanders' response to inhumanity, and those characteristics that shaped the "rescuer self."

NOTES

1. For purposes of exploring the social-psychological phenomenon of aid under conditions of terror, the focus will be on those non-Jews whom Yad Vashem deems Hasidei Umot Ha'Olam, "righteous among the nations of the world," that is, on those whose acts of rescue that were not performed for external reward.

2. E. Fogelman, *Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust* (New York: Doubleday, 1994); and idem, "The Rescuers: A Socio-psychological Study of Altruistic Behavior during the Nazi Era," Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1987.

3. K. R. Monroe, "John Donne's People: Explaining Altruism through Cognitive Frameworks," *Journal of Politics* 53 (1991): 394–433.

4. Fogelman, "Rescuers" and *Conscience and Courage*; S. P. Oliner and P. M. Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: Free Press, 1988); U. Klingemann and J. W. Falter, "Hilfe für Juden während des Holocaust: Sozialpsychologische Merkmale der Nichtjüdischen Helfer und Charakteristik der Situation" (in press); J. Ryeykowski, "Cognitive and Motivational Prerequisites of Altruistic Helping: The Study of People Who Rescued Jews during the Holocaust," paper presented at the Scholar's Roundtable on Altruism under Nazi Terror: Implications for the Post-Holocaust World, Princeton, 1993; D. Rosenhan, "What Qualifies as Altruistic Behavior during the Holocaust?" paper presented at the Scholar's Roundtable on Altruism.

5. D. Goleman, *Vital Lies, Simple Truths: The Psychology of Self-Deception* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985).

6. B. Latané and J. Darley, *The Unresponsive Bystander: Why Doesn't He Help?* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970).

7. E. Midlarsky, "Competence and Helping: Notes toward a Model," in idem, *Development and Maintenance of Prosocial Behavior: International Perspectives on Positive Morality* (New York: Plenum, 1984), pp. 291–308.

8. Oliner and Oliner, *Altruistic Personality*.

9. Perry London suggested an element of "social marginality" among rescuers. Their alienation made them more sympathetic to another outside group. See Perry London, "The Rescuers: Motivational Hypotheses about Christians Who Saved Jews from the Nazis," in *Altruism and Helping Behavior*, ed. J. Macauley and L. Berkowitz (New York: Academic Press, 1970), pp. 241–50. Like London, Nechama Tec, in her study of Polish rescuers, *When Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), found that rescuers stood out within their environment as, for example, an intellectual among peasants or a communist among Catholic believers. But she explains this as individualism that enabled them to stand up for their beliefs. These individualists could stand up to malevolent authority and resist racist norms. I too found rescuers to be independent people. However, the vast majority of rescuers felt a sense of belonging to their community. In my initial interviews of 100 rescuers, only twenty-nine felt they were atypical. This difference may be attributed to the fact that my sample and the altruistic personality study include rescuers from different occupied countries. To be a rescuer in a country known for its antisemitism required a rare individual indeed.

10. R. J. Lifton, *The Life of the Self: Toward a New Psychology* (New York: Touchstone, 1976).

11. See P. Joutard, J. Poujol, and P. Cabanel, eds., *Cévennes terre de refuge, 1940–1944* (Montpellier: Presses Du Languedoc/Club Cevenol, 1987), p. 242.

12. Miep Gies, *Anne Frank Remembered: The Story of the Woman Who Helped Hide the Frank Family* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), pp. 121, 150.

13. R. Wuthnow, *Acts of Compassion: Caring for Others and Helping Ourselves* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 49–50.

14. Thirty-two percent of those interviewed for my study, The Rescuer Project, Graduate Center of City University of New York, were coded as belonging to the moral rescuer category. Within that group, 14 percent were ideological-moral rescuers; 12 percent were religious, and 6 percent were emotional rescuers. In general, emotional-moral and religious-moral rescuers were more involved in saving children than ideological moral rescuers.

15. Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgement of the Child* (New York: Free Press, 1965).

16. Eli Sagan, *Freud, Women, and Morality: The Psychology of Good and Evil* (New York: Basic Books, 1988). Sagan's contention of a separate conscience that limits the superego has informed and influenced my work. His notion of a conscience that passes judgment on the conflicting pulls in the superego is one that I share.

17. Gilligan describes two different moralities based on cognition and affect. Like her predecessor Lawrence Kohlberg, she found that morality can stem from an individual's sense of justice and fairness or from a sense of responsibility embedded in compassion and caring and pity. Unlike Kohlberg, Gilligan does not consider justice a higher morality than caring and responsibility. See Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

18. The Rescuer Project found that Judeophiles comprised 28 percent of those who risked their lives to save Jews, which ranked them just behind those in the moral rescuer category. Eighty-two percent of those classified as Judeophiles came from apolitical families and some 29 percent of them came from mixed marriages. "Philosemitism," as used by various scholars, is a vague, generalized term, usually applied descriptively to indicate the supposed attitude of specific individuals who, in the opinion of the scholar, benefit or assist Jews. There have been few efforts to examine the term, to offer any detailed definition of it, or to analyze its causes or specific applications. Cecil Roth is unique in suggesting a basis for philosemitism, but he does not discuss what is meant by the term itself. Moreover, Roth's analysis is limited, being concerned essentially with the period in English history when Jews were readmitted to that nation. There has been, in short, no systematic inquiry into the meaning, application, or types of philosemitism. Allan Edelstein of Towson University has undertaken the task of developing a systematic analysis of philosemitism. See A. Edelstein, *An Unacknowledged Harmony* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982).

19. The fact that many of the rescuers suspected they had Jewish blood had escaped my attention until Harvey Sarner pointed it out to me. Sarner, a retired California businessman, has dedicated his energies to finding those East European rescuers honored by Yad Vashem and flying them to Israel for the public recognition they deserve. Sarner observed that many of the rescuers he talked with told him they suspected that they had Jewish blood.

20. Professionals who obeyed a higher law, one that involved upholding an oath of office to serve mankind, did not necessarily have to take death-defying risks. In southern France, some gendarmes protected their citizenry and themselves by following their orders to the letter. Before carrying out an arrest, for instance, two gendarmes would go to a local bistro for lunch first. In a loud voice, one might say to the other: "Look Pierre I see here that we have to pick up Max Cohen at Rue Jacob 15." They would continue to enjoy their meal, hoping all the while that someone would pass the word on to Cohen. After lunch, they would go to arrest Cohen, only to be told he had left the day before. They would then place an X next to the man's name. They had fulfilled their assignment. Alas, they had come a day too late to make the required arrest.

21. Georg Simmel, "The Secret and the Secret Society," in *The Sociology of George Simmel*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (New York: Free Press, 1950).