

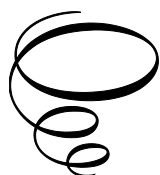
Rebooting Holocaust Remembrance

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Edited by

Nils Roemer and Mehak Burza

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CONTRIBUTORS

Originally from Terre Haute, Indiana, **Dr. Alex Kor** is the son of two Holocaust survivors (Michael and Eva Mozes Kor). He has a B.S. in Chemistry from Butler University and a M.S. in Exercise Physiology from Purdue University. He received his D.P.M. (Doctor of Podiatric Medicine) from the Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine in Chicago. Dr. Kor is a full-time podiatrist for Hendricks Regional Health in Danville, Indiana, and is a Clinical Assistant Professor for Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine. Knowing the importance of being the son of two Holocaust survivors who have both passed away in the last 5 1/2 years, Alex feels an obligation to tell their stories. Since 1985, he has travelled to Auschwitz more than twenty times with his late mother. He is a member of the CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center Board of Directors and assisted in establishing an exhibit (Eva Kor from Auschwitz to Indiana) to honor his mother in downtown Indianapolis at the Indiana Historical Society. His new book, co-authored with Graham Honaker, "A Blessing, Not a Burden" which chronicles his parents' lives as well as how they positively impacted Dr. Kor, is now available.

Alex Teplish is a seasoned digital innovator and technology leader with over 25 years of experience across various industries. Currently serving as the Vice President of Digital Services at Omnicom Health Group, the largest global network of healthcare marketing agencies, Alex spearheaded the establishment and expansion of the Global Development Center, driving digital transformation and process standardization. His expertise spans digital technology, graphic design, marketing, and technology team leadership. Prior to his current role, Alex ran his own agency focused on creative digital development and marketing campaigns for diverse clients. He is also an accomplished author, having written two graphic novels, including "Survivor: Aron's Story," an award-winning illustrated memoir of his grandfather's survival during WWII and the Holocaust. This work has been incorporated into school and college curricula and led to the creation of an innovative interactive virtual museum. Born in the former Soviet Union and raised in Brooklyn, Alex continues to push the boundaries of innovation through his professional endeavors and passion for cutting-edge technologies like generative AI. His unique background positions him as a

visionary at the intersection of technology, creativity, and human-centric storytelling. Alex holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from Stony Brook University and is a certified Scrum Master and PMP professional.

Dr. Atay Kozlovski is a Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) postdoctoral researcher and a visiting research fellow at the ‘Sociotechnical AI Systems Lab’ at the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. He holds a PhD in philosophy from the University of Zurich and his research explores the ethics and social impact of emerging technologies.

Victor Sorensen and Federico Szarfer form the core cultural team at the AEPJ, the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage, where they lead projects that connect Jewish heritage with contemporary cultural and social challenges across Europe. Together, they design and coordinate initiatives with a focus on participation, local engagement and plural narratives. Both are co-founders of Mozaika, a Jewish cultural platform based in Barcelona that promotes dialogue, diversity and creative exploration of identity. With backgrounds in political science and communication, they share a commitment to building spaces where memory becomes a shared, dynamic practice, open to questioning, reimagining, and belonging. Their work is rooted in trust, curiosity, and a belief in culture as a tool for building shared futures. They combine institutional responsibility with grassroots energy, always seeking ways to make Jewish culture visible, meaningful and relevant in today’s public sphere.

Dr. George Dalbo is an Assistant Professor of Education and Youth Studies at Beloit College and a former middle and high school social studies teacher. He earned a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction—Social Studies Education from the University of Minnesota. His research examines teaching and learning about genocide in U.S. curricula and classrooms.

Dr. Katie Fisher is an educator and arts programmer who facilitates collaborative, arts-based research projects. Her recent counter-mapping project, “Charting Lives: Memorial Histogram for Queer Men Imprisoned in Nazi Germany 1933-1945,” rematerialized perpetrator-collected data for men convicted under paragraph 175. Her training is in graphic design (BFA Concordia University), poetic theology (MA Dallas Theological Seminary), and visual and performing arts (PhD University of Texas at Dallas). She is currently at work on a book about artificial sinkholes in urban environments, which traces the degradation of urban wetlands, and is based on her

dissertation, “Tracing Landscape Dismemberment Through Time: Mapping Sinkholes as Symptoms of Slow Violence Against Landscape Assemblages in Mexico City and New Orleans” (2024).

Dr. Kenneth X. Robbins has published eighteen books and 158 articles and curated multiple exhibitions from his South Asian archives. Seven of these books have documented the history of Jews in India, and research on three more is under way. He is working with the University of Haifa to digitalize his diverse holdings. The Indian Ministry of Culture commissioned Dr. Robbins to create a comprehensive exhibition on the Jewish cultural heritage of India. He has used his collections to create multiple other shows on the history of Jews in India, Morocco, and the Ottoman Empire. There have been two exhibitions on Jews in Bollywood. He has initiated an Indian Jewish Heritage Trail with markers in the Cochin and Chendamangalam palaces. He is now working to place similar markers in Maharashtra, the Punjab, and all over India. Dr. Robbins has lectured across the globe about Indian Jewish topics ranging from community history and World War II refugees in India to stories of Jews, who contributed so much to Jews to medicine, art, architecture, and the military there.

Luca Baraldi is a geopolitical analyst and international relations advisor, working at the intersection of digital innovation, cultural transformation, and social evolution. His work explores how emerging technologies reshape collective memory, education, and public imagination, particularly through the lens of critical thinking and digital ethics. He has advised numerous cultural foundations and international organizations - including the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ) - and has led multiple international projects focused on the relationship between technology, social change, and heritage. He serves as a policy analyst and advisor for international institutions, and regularly contributes to journals focused on geopolitics, culture, and digital humanities. His research often addresses Jewish culture within broader frameworks of minority rights, cultural pluralism, and the challenges of preserving memory in the algorithmic age — with a focus on combating antisemitism, fostering intercultural dialogue, and rethinking heritage in digitally mediated societies. A frequent speaker at global conferences and academic forums, he is also a TEDx speaker.

Matthis Frickhoeffter is a German conceptual artist and a scholar of contemporary literary theory. Frickhoeffter holds degrees in Literature, Gender Studies as well as Fine Art. He joined the University of Texas at

Dallas in 2024 as a doctoral candidate in the literature program with a focus on critical theory and formalism.

Mykola Makhortykh is an Alfred Landecker lecturer at the Institute of Communication and Media Science (University of Bern), where he leads the project "Algorithmic turn in Holocaust memory transmission: Challenges, opportunities, threats." In his research, Mykola investigates the impact of artificial intelligence and algorithmic systems on politics- and history-centered information behavior in online environments. He combines traditional social science and humanities methods with novel computational approaches to achieve this goal. His other research interests include trauma and memory studies, armed conflict reporting, disinformation and computational propaganda research, cybersecurity and critical security studies, and bias in information retrieval systems.

Victoria Vziatysheva is a PhD student at the Institute of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Bern. She focuses on how users interact with algorithm-driven platforms, such as search engines or AI chatbots, to find information on different topics, including current events and politics. Her research interests also include algorithmic bias, misinformation, and factors that influence trust in digital content.

Maryna Sydorova is a data engineer and a scientific programmer at the Institute of Communication and Media Science at the University of Bern. Before working at the Institute, Maryna worked as a data scientist and cloud architect with a particular emphasis on AI. Currently, Maryna is a full-stack developer responsible for implementing a cloud-based cross-platform algorithm audit infrastructure. She is involved in several projects evaluating bias in text- and image-generative AI models. Her main research interests are artificial intelligence, deep learning, cloud computing, cybersecurity, privacy, and ethics in data science.

Zixuan Wang is a graduate student in European Studies at the University of Macau, with a strong academic foundation in Chinese Language and Literature from Hebei Normal University. Her research interests center on Nazi Germany, the Holocaust, and anti-Semitism. She has presented at major international conferences, including the Japan Studies Association and the International eConference on Holocaust Studies, and will represent her panel at the 2025 AAS-in-Asia in Kathmandu. Her publication on the Fabian Society's impact on UK health policy reflects her interest in social reform and historical policy development. Zixuan also researches Japan's unique anti-Semitism and its effects on the Axis alliance. Beyond academia, she has

worked as a Chinese teacher and led student teams in robotics competitions. Fluent in English and proficient in German and Yiddish, she is also trained in Chinese calligraphy, painting, and poetry. Zixuan currently serves as a student assistant at the University of Macau's Faculty of Social Sciences.

INTRODUCTION

DR. NILS ROEMER AND DR. MEHAK BURZA

The Holocaust, as both a historical catastrophe and a moral rupture, has long demanded remembrance. Currently, remembrance and "reboot" carries multiple valences. It suggests technological refreshment and creative reinvention. In digital parlance, a reboot is not simply a restart; it is often a reimagining of a narrative for new contexts and audiences. This metaphor is particularly apt for Holocaust remembrance in the 21st century. How can we remake Holocaust memory in ways that retain ethical rigor while also engaging contemporary modes of communication, cognition, and community? How can remembrance shift from being a backward-looking act of mourning to a forward-facing resource for democratic resistance, social justice, and ethical imagination? To reboot memory is to acknowledge both rupture and continuity. It is to re-engage the past not as a fixed archive but as a dynamic field of inquiry, interpretation, and intervention. This volume embraces such a stance, foregrounding interdisciplinary approaches that move beyond the traditional bounds of historiography, pedagogy, and memorialization.

The 2024 International eConference on Holocaust Studies, hosted by the Ackerman Center for Holocaust Studies at The University of Texas at Dallas, exemplified the growing importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in understanding one of the darkest chapters of human history. Held in a fully virtual format, the conference leveraged the power of digital technology to connect participants across continents, creating a global forum that transcended geographical boundaries. This accessibility enabled a truly diverse cohort of attendees—scholars, educators, students, and creators—each bringing unique perspectives to the table, united by a shared commitment to Holocaust remembrance and its contemporary relevance.

The central theme of the econference—the intersection of technology, Holocaust memory, and human rights—reflected the urgent need to grapple with the implications of our increasingly digitized world. As digital media platforms like social networks, online archives, and virtual museums become primary conduits for historical education, they shape how younger

generations perceive and engage with the Holocaust. Our discussions explored how these tools can preserve survivor testimonies, archival documents, and historical sites with unprecedented fidelity, ensuring that the visceral reality of the Holocaust remains accessible. However, it also confronted the darker side of this digital evolution: the proliferation of antisemitism, Holocaust denial, and hate speech online, often amplified by algorithms and echo chambers. Presenters examined how technology can either reinforce or dismantle these threats, emphasizing the dual role of digital platforms as both guardians of truth and potential vectors of distortion.

The focus on generative AI was particularly timely, given its rapid integration into education and advocacy. Current conversations about generative AI and Holocaust research center on immense technological opportunities and potential dangers. Today, AI is increasingly applied in Holocaust research and education through the digitization and semantic analysis of survivor testimonies. Machine learning in archives supports the identification and linking of fragmented archival documents across dispersed collections. AI-driven image recognition tools are used to analyze photographs and artifacts, such as matching faces or identifying locations in historical images. In education, conversational AI avatars simulate survivor testimonies, allowing students to ask questions and engage interactively with curated historical content. Generative AI also aids in virtual reconstructions of destroyed Jewish spaces and camps, creating immersive environments that enhance historical empathy and memory.

Presenters highlighted its potential to revolutionize Holocaust education by personalizing learning experiences—imagine an AI-driven platform that tailors lessons to the student’s interests, drawing connections between the Holocaust and modern human rights crises. In memorialization, AI could enhance virtual exhibits, making them more immersive and emotionally resonant. For genocide prevention, machine learning algorithms might predict early warning signs of mass atrocities by scanning global data streams, offering a proactive tool for intervention. Yet, these advancements came with ethical caveats. Discussions probed the risks of AI perpetuating biases if trained on skewed datasets, the moral quandary of “speaking” for survivors through synthetic voices, and the danger of over-reliance on technology at the expense of human judgment. These debates underscored a recurring theme: technology is not a panacea but a tool whose impact depends on how we wield it.

The 2024 eConference was more than an academic exercise; it was a call to action. By fostering dialogue across disciplines, it illuminated the complex interplay between technology and memory, urging participants to harness digital tools responsibly. The presenters' contributions—ranging from theoretical frameworks to practical innovations—offered a roadmap for leveraging technology to honor the past, confront present injustices, and prevent future atrocities. As the world grapples with rising extremism and eroding historical awareness, the conference reaffirmed the Holocaust's enduring lesson: vigilance, empathy, and critical inquiry remain essential in any age, digital or otherwise.

The keynote address was delivered by **Dr. Stephen Smith**, Executive Director Emeritus of the USC Shoah Foundation and Co-Founder of Aegis Trust. His keynote, titled “The Future of Our Past: Holocaust Education in 2045” traced the evolution of Holocaust memory from early survivor testimonies to today's complex landscape shaped by education, digital media and societal shifts. Using the story of Hela Goldstein, a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, he emphasized how Holocaust remembrance has moved from documentation to widespread public interpretation, often creating tensions between historical accuracy and modern relevance. The second half of his talk focused on harnessing AI and immersive technologies to preserve survivor voices. He showcased projects like “Dimensions in Testimony” and “Story File”, which enable interactive conversations with Holocaust survivors even after their passing, thereby extending their voices into the future. Projects like “Tell Me Inge” and VR experiences on contemporary antisemitic violence demonstrate the application of AI and VR across age groups and historical contexts. Smith emphasized that educators and scholars must proactively shape AI's use—not merely resist it—to ensure ethical, meaningful engagement with Holocaust memory. His closing message underscored the urgency of adapting Holocaust education to evolving technology and social realities without losing historical truth or human connection. Dr. Smith's expertise in Holocaust education and genocide prevention provided invaluable insights into the evolving landscape of digital memory and the responsibilities of future generations in safeguarding historical truth.

Eleven distinguished presenters from diverse fields enriched the conference with a tapestry of their insights. The presenters showcased cutting-edge applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Holocaust studies. AI's role ranged from analyzing vast troves of archival data to detect patterns of persecution, to powering chatbots that simulate conversations with Holocaust survivors, preserving their voices for posterity. Beyond AI, the

conference addressed broader questions about digital media's role in shaping collective memory. Presenters analyzed how social media platforms both amplify survivor stories and provide fertile ground for misinformation campaigns.

Paper Contributions

Dr. Alex Kor's chapter "A Conversation with my Mother, Eva Mozes Kor, after July 4, 2019" recounts his experiences as the son of Holocaust survivors Eva Mozes Kor and Mickey Kor. Eva and her twin sister Miriam survived Dr. Josef Mengele's deadly experiments at Auschwitz-Birkenau when they were just ten years old. After founding CANDLES (Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors) in 1984, Eva gained recognition for her remarkable act of forgiving former Nazi doctor Hans Münch in 1995, which brought her personal healing. Eva became a tireless advocate for remembrance and forgiveness, delivering hundreds of speeches annually. In 2014, she participated in USC Shoah Foundation's Dimensions in Testimony project, allowing her story to live on through interactive holographic technology after her death in Poland on July 4, 2019. The essay highlights the intersection of technology, memory, and human rights, emphasizing Eva's enduring message that forgiveness is a path to healing, even in the face of unimaginable suffering.

The chapter by **Alex Teplish**, *Life and History Come Full Circle: A Family's Survival and Its Reflection in Today's Global Struggles*, weaves together personal history, Holocaust memory, and contemporary reflections on Jewish resilience. Teplish recounts his family's survival through the Holocaust in Odessa, Ukraine, highlighting the brutality faced from both Nazi and Romanian forces, as well as local collaborators. His grandparents endured starvation, forced exile, and the loss of loved ones, emblematic of the centuries-long persecution of Jews. Their eventual emigration from the Soviet Union reflects the persistent struggle for Jewish survival amid systemic antisemitism. Drawing parallels to modern conflicts, Teplish explores how history echoes in current global struggles, including antisemitism and the plight of Ukrainian refugees. His passion for Holocaust education culminated in his multimedia project, *Survivor: Aron's Story*, honoring his grandfather's survival while promoting awareness through digital storytelling. The narrative emphasizes resilience, remembrance, and the pursuit of global kindness and unity.

The chapter *A Taxonomy of Digital Duplicates and Their Use in Holocaust Remembrance* by **Atay Kozlovski** explores the emerging role of Digital

Duplicates (DDs) in Holocaust education and memory preservation. Kozlovski introduces the concept of DDs—AI-driven avatars that replicate human behavior, voice, and appearance—and proposes a 2×2 taxonomy based on two criteria: whether the person is living or deceased and whether consent was given. This results in four categories: Authorized AI Replicas, Unauthorised Deepfakes, Legacy Avatars, and Posthumous Reconstructions. Each category raises unique ethical concerns, such as issues of consent, exploitation, and historical misrepresentation. The chapter emphasizes the potential of DDs in Holocaust remembrance, especially as the last generation of survivors passes away. Initiatives like *Dimensions in Testimony* and *Tell Me, Inge* demonstrate how AI can preserve survivor narratives, allowing future generations to engage interactively. However, Kozlovski also warns of risks, including ethical dilemmas in recreating testimonies without consent and the potential for historical distortion through generative AI's "hallucinations." While DDs offer a promising bridge for Holocaust education, their deployment demands careful consideration of moral, historical, and educational responsibilities to maintain the dignity and truth of survivor stories.

The chapter *Reclaiming Silence: Digital Memory, Jewish Heritage, and the Ethics of Place* by **Victor Sorensen and Federico Szarfer** explores the evolving role of memory in the digital age, emphasizing the challenges of preserving Jewish heritage amidst rapid technological change and historical amnesia. Sorensen and Szarfer argue that memory is not merely a personal recollection but a collective, political act that shapes identity and community. They critique passive approaches to Holocaust remembrance, advocating for dynamic, co-imaginative spaces that transform museums and cultural institutions into living laboratories of memory. The authors emphasize that Jewish memory, far from being confined to narratives of suffering, is a generative force capable of inspiring cultural renewal and democratic engagement. They call for a rethinking of Jewish cultural institutions to foster active, community-driven remembrance that resists historical revisionism and engages with contemporary social challenges. Through initiatives like the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ), the authors highlight the importance of cultural dialogue, local engagement, and collective responsibility in sustaining Jewish memory as a living, transformative practice.

Dr. George Dalbo reflects on his experience teaching a virtual high school course on genocide and human rights, focusing on the challenges and opportunities of Holocaust and genocide education in online settings. Through narrative vignettes, he explores themes of distance, community,

connection, and locality, highlighting emotional and pedagogical complexities. The chapter underscores the difficulty of teaching traumatic histories virtually, where building trust and community is harder. Dalbo emphasizes the importance of centering students' needs, designing lessons specifically for digital platforms, and acknowledging the limitations of virtual learning. He critiques the lack of research and resources for online Holocaust education, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and calls for more scholarly attention to this evolving field. Drawing from reflective journaling and autoethnographic methods, Dalbo offers insights and recommendations for educators navigating difficult knowledge in digital classrooms, advocating for thoughtful, student-centered, and emotionally aware virtual pedagogy.

Dr. Katie Fisher and Dr Roemer's collaborative research explores how data collected by the Nazi regime to persecute queer men under Paragraph 175 can be recontextualized for memorialization and education. The chapter critiques the ideological underpinnings of Nazi data collection and highlights the ethical challenges of using perpetrator-generated records. Through counter-mapping and practice-based research, the project reclaims dehumanizing data, turning it into a tool for remembrance and reflection. It demonstrates how creative methodologies can challenge dominant narratives, foster empathy, and make marginalized histories visible. Dr. Katie Fisher's project, *Charting Lives*, transforms archival records from three concentration camps into a large-scale, participatory art installation. Using yarn, beads, and pins, the installation visualizes the lives and persecution of nearly 800 queer men, emphasizing community, identity, and the human cost of bureaucratic violence. Ultimately, the work bridges digital humanities and memorial art to honor lives once reduced to data points.

Kenneth X. Robbins explores the little-known history of Jewish refugees who fled Nazi persecution and found temporary refuge in India. Though India was not a primary destination, a few thousand Jews arrived via complex routes, often facing British visa restrictions and internment as "enemy aliens." Despite these challenges, many refugees found support from local Jewish communities, princely states, and cultural institutions. Prominent individuals contributed significantly to Indian society in fields like medicine, architecture, music, and art. However, most viewed India as a temporary haven before migrating elsewhere. Robbins highlights the lack of a unified refugee identity and the absence of widespread Indian advocacy for Jewish settlement. Through personal stories, artistic contributions, and historical analysis, the chapter underscores both the opportunities and limitations faced by Jewish refugees in India, while reflecting on broader

themes of displacement, identity, and the enduring need for safe havens in times of persecution.

Zixuan Wang in her chapter A “False” Alliance: Effect of Japanese Anti-Semitism on the German Japanese Alliance during World War II explores the origins and impact of Japanese anti-Semitism and how it influenced Japan’s alliance with Nazi Germany during World War II. Drawing on religious, cultural, and geopolitical factors, it traces anti-Semitic attitudes in Japan to early 20th-century Westernization, exposure to Christian and Bolshevik ideologies, and the influence of anti-Semitic texts like *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Despite their alliance, Japan’s Jewish policy was moderate compared to Germany’s, aiming to exploit Jewish financial and political power for economic and diplomatic gains rather than pursuing genocide. Regional policies varied: in Manchuria and Shanghai, Jews found refuge; in Southeast Asia, Japan adopted harsher, Nazi-influenced measures. These inconsistencies weakened German Japanese trust and limited the alliance’s cohesion. Ultimately, Japan’s pragmatic and utilitarian approach to Jews reflected its broader strategic interests, complicating Axis unity and offering partial humanitarian relief during the Holocaust.

In an age marked by disinformation, digital overload, and post-truth politics, memory—especially Holocaust memory—faces erosion, distortion, and commodification. In his chapter, Re-Designing Cultural Dignity: Memory as an Act of Resistance in the Post-Truth Age, **Luca Baraldi** argues for transforming memory from a passive archive into a generative, future-oriented cultural practice. It critiques the dominance of “negative memory,” rooted in trauma and mourning, proposing instead a “proactive memory” that fosters ethical responsibility, civic imagination, and critical thought. The author calls for interdisciplinary, participatory “memory design” to reshape public policies and educational models, ensuring memory remains a tool of resistance, not nostalgia. Emphasizing the impact of digital platforms, the chapter urges a new pedagogy attuned to algorithmic logic, disinformation, and attention economies. Ultimately, it positions Holocaust memory as both a moral compass and a democratic resource—one that challenges conformity and inspires transformative action in a fragmented world. Memory, reimagined, becomes a commitment to complexity, responsibility, and the shared project of shaping a more just future.

Matthis Frickhoeffter analyzes W.G. Sebald’s *The Rings of Saturn* as a powerful intermedial work that confronts the Holocaust’s representational limits. Sebald intertwines prose with historical photographs and documents, not to clarify but to create interpretive gaps—“caesurae”—inviting critical

reflection. This aesthetic strategy resists conventional narrative coherence, particularly around the Holocaust, a subject Sebald approaches obliquely. Images like fishery photos and a concentration camp forest disturb the text's flow, questioning realism and historical authority. Frickhoeffler explores how Sebald deconstructs visual media's truth-claims, invoking Adorno's dictum that poetry is impossible after Auschwitz. By destabilizing image-text relationships, Sebald critiques postwar memory and subjectivity, shifting the narrative focus from representation to the unspeakable. The chapter argues that Sebald's refusal of explicit Holocaust depiction opens ethical and interpretive space, turning memory into a fragmented, reflective practice. Ultimately, Sebald's work offers a model for remembrance that confronts absence, ambiguity, and the failures of traditional historiography.

Mykola Mykorkh's chapter investigates how large language model (LLM)-powered chatbots such as ChatGPT, Bard (now Gemini), and Copilot represent the Holocaust in Ukraine—a subject fraught with historical complexity and political instrumentalization. Through an audit of 37 prompts in English, Ukrainian, and Russian, the authors assess the chatbots' accuracy, ethical framing, and susceptibility to hallucinations. Results reveal significant inaccuracies and troubling inconsistencies, especially in non-English outputs. Bard was notably prone to hallucinating false historical claims, including fabricated events and testimony, which could reinforce disinformation narratives—especially those aligned with Kremlin propaganda. The chapter highlights the ethical risks of deploying general-use LLMs in memory-related domains like Holocaust education, arguing for atrocity-sensitive AI designed with historical nuance and moral responsibility. It also underscores the need for empirical scrutiny of genAI tools in contested memory spaces, warning that their probabilistic nature may both homogenize and distort collective memory. The findings call for cautious adoption and further research into AI's role in digital remembrance.

A CONVERSATION WITH MY MOTHER, EVA MOZES KOR, AFTER JULY 4, 2019

ALEX KOR

“Alex! Nothing lasts forever! All good things come to an end...” (Mickey Kor, direct communication to author, Oct. 16, 2021)

These were my dad’s last words in October of 2021. Only three days later, on October 19, 2021, (Indy Star Newspaper, October 19, 2021, 4:24 PM, www.indystar.com) five days shy of his 96th birthday, my father, Mickey Kor, a Holocaust survivor of three concentration camps, passed away. I will never speak to my father again. Conversely, using technology created by Heather Maio- Smith, her husband, Stephen Smith, and the USC Shoah Project via the Dimensions in Testimony (www.iwitness.usc.edu n.d.), I can speak with my late mother, Eva Mozes Kor, every single day, with just a few clicks. There is a definite poignancy to that stark reality.

My name is Dr. Alex Kor, and I am the son of two Holocaust survivors both of whom have passed away in the last six years. There is not a day that passes wherein I do not think about my parents. There is not a single day that I do not wish that I could have one more conversation with them. I miss them dearly.

How did it all begin? How did this life as a second generation, advocating for the memories of my parents and their experiences, become my destiny? On January 31, 1934 (Kor and Buccieri, 2009, 1-2), Jaffa Mozes, wife of Alexander gave birth to Miriam Mozes in Portz, Romania (<https://candleholocaustmuseum.org/our-survivors/eva-kor/her-story/her-story.html> n.d.). But the midwife informed the couple that another child was on the way. Hoping to be blessed with a son, Alexander was soon disappointed to learn that Eva Mozes, Miriam’s twin, was the other child. With two older sisters, Eva always felt as if her father blamed her for not being the son that he longed for. It always seemed to my mother that whenever any of the Mozes girls were found guilty of childish pranks or mischief, my mom was the daughter who was blamed and punished.

For the first several years of Eva and Miriam's life, they enjoyed growing up in the Transylvanian Valley with the Carpathian Mountains in the distance (Kor and Wright, 2006, 11-14). They helped on the family farm, went to school, looked up to their older sisters, Edit and Aliz, and took full advantage of being identical twins. They looked alike and were always dressed alike. But life began to change in 1940 as the northern Transylvania region was ceded to Hungary by Romania. Soon, my mother overheard her parents listening to someone screaming in German, blaming Jews for the world's problems. That someone was Adolph Hitler (Kor and Buccieri, 2009, 10). She begged of her father,

"Daddy, we should leave now!" Brushing off her suggestion as nonsense and childish, the Mozes family continued to farm their land. They adapted to their ever-changing lives amid the growing restrictions imposed upon them. Their local teacher was replaced by two Hungarian teachers who were supportive of Nazi ideology. One day, in math class, one of the new teachers asked,

"If you have five Jews and you kill three Jews, how many Jews are left?" The twin girls complained to their mother, Jaffa, but her response did not calm their concerns. The torment of my mother's family continued; Rocks and vegetables were thrown at the house. Obscenities were screamed. Sometimes it would go on for days on end. In September 1943, the family made an unsuccessful attempt to escape into Romania. They were trapped (Kor and Buccieri, 2009, 11).

Unfortunately, my mother's fears were justified when, in March 1944, the Mozes family was forcibly taken from their home and transported by wagon to the Cehei Ghetto and guarded by Hungarian Gendarmes (Kor and Buccieri, 2009, 18-19). With minimal food and shelter and having no idea if they would live another day, my mother's family stayed together for approximately two months in the ghetto. Then, in May, with no explanation, the ghetto was liquidated, and the family was forced into a cattle car. For three and a half days, their only hydration came from a spritz of water provided in exchange for gold watches via one peephole per cattle car. When the last exchange was in German, Alexander Mozes soon realized that the cattle car had entered Nazi Germany, and the family was in trouble (Kor and Buccieri, 2009, 21-25).

As the cattle car began to come to a stop, Alexander gathered the family, realizing that end may be near. Looking at his wife and four daughters, he said,

“Promise me that if any of you survives this terrible war, you will go to Palestine where your uncle Aaron lives and where Jews can live in peace! (Kor and Buccieri, 2009, 24)”. Within seconds, the doors of the cattle cars opened to expose mass hysteria; German voices yelling orders; Vicious barking dogs. Eva and Miriam, 10 years old, held tight to their mother as she desperately grabbed their hands while climbing down from the cattle car onto the selection platform. Amid the mass of inhumanity, the sounds of people screaming and crying for one another, and a foul stench, Eva and Miriam realized that their two older sisters and Papa were no longer with them. They had been swallowed up into the crowd. Now, a Nazi was running up and down the selection platform yelling in German, “Twins! Twins!”. Eva and Miriam still looked alike and were still dressed alike. A Nazi approached Jaffa, and asked, “Are they twins? When she responded that they were, indeed, twins, Eva and Miriam were pulled away from their screaming and crying mother who was being pulled in another direction, arms outstretched in despair (Kor and Buccieri, 2009, 28-29). My mom would later say,

“I had one regret. I did not know that this would be the last time that I would see my mother. I never had a chance to say goodbye (Eva Kor, to author, 1984).” Eva and Miriam no longer had a family. They could only rely on each other.

They were taken to a barracks where they were given a new identity: A-7064 and A-7063, their Auschwitz tattoo numbers (Kor and Buccieri, 2009, 31-32). And, then with no explanation, the twins were transported to their new home in Birkenau, a barrack of girls, all twins, aged 3-13 years old. Eva and Miriam were given dinner, something that resembled bread and a brownish fluid, but responded saying,

“We will not eat because we are kosher (Kor and Buccieri, 2009, 32), and we will not eat until we see our parents!”. One of the older twins yelled out, “You better eat that bread. It is the only food that you will get tonight. Don’t worry about seeing your parents! See the smoke in the distance. That is where your parents are now!” Eva responded, “Oh that is crazy. Who would be burning people?”. The older twin snapped back, “The Nazis do. They want to burn all the Jews.” My mom then learned that they were selected for the purpose of experiments conducted by Dr. Mengele, who they would meet the next day (Kor and Buccieri, 2009, 34).

The following morning, as promised, Dr. Mengele and his entourage made their way to the twins’ barracks. They inspected their new set of ‘guinea

pigs' which included Eva and Miriam Mozes. With their arrival to Auschwitz in May of 1944, Eva and Miriam joined a group of approximately 3,000 twins, boys and girls, who were subjects in Mengele's sadistic lab (<https://candleholocaustmuseum.org/educational-resources/mengele-twins.html>, n.d.). If one twin died during the experiments, the other twin was killed with an injection to the heart and comparative autopsies were performed. Four to six days per week, the twins were injected, prodded, examined, measured, blood was drawn, etc (Kor and Buccieri, 2009, 44-47). While the experiments were dangerous, they were also very demeaning. But my mom's goal was to live another day; Survive one more experiment.

At the conclusion of 1944, the frequency of the experiments decreased. The twins were hoping that, maybe, one day they might be free, but asked themselves what freedom would look like? On January 27, 1945, the world that was Auschwitz seemed eerily silent. Eva and Miriam had found shelter in Block 23 on the second floor when a woman yelled out, "We are free! We are free!" Everyone ran to the door to peer outside through the swirling snow. Suddenly, the Ukrainian unit of the Red Army became visible through the snowstorm and were liberating Auschwitz and the Mengele twins! Eva and Miriam were free. They had defied the odds (Kor and Buccieri, 2009, 91-93).

As the son of Eva Mozes Kor and Mickey Kor, these memories were just some of those shared during my own childhood. Although being the son of two Holocaust survivors and growing up in Indiana was far from normal, I never dreamed that my parents' stories would become a source of interest to others. I mean, to be truthful, at times they were barely a source of interest to me. I was embarrassed the majority of the time. It never occurred to me until after I was in high school that my parents' pasts might lead to a future for me that focused on advocacy and remembrance.

In 1984, prior to the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in 1985, Eva and Miriam founded CANDLES, Children of Auschwitz NAZI Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors (<https://candleholocaustmuseum.org/candles/our-story.html>, n.d.) to remember the past. While planning a reunion of the Mengele twins, my mom went to Auschwitz by herself to make sure that there was indeed such a place. After all, they had not spoken of this awful place for 40 years. Did all of those awful things really happen to them? To capture her immediate thoughts, my mom brought a tape recorder and as she was walking through this miserable piece of ground, she said,

“Here I am in Birkenau. The closest place to Hell on this Earth. I’m standing here at the entrance to the camp where all the trains came in. And I cannot believe that so many millions have crossed these (train tracks) and the world has done nothing about it. And I’m trying to think as I’m walking, ‘What happened here? What exactly happened here?’ Oh God! And I see them taking mother and father directly and she held her arms stretched out and.... Where did she vanish? Where did she vanish? Where to? Mom, I will tell our story. I will tell our story because the world must know. (Kor, 2018)”

Either intentionally or instinctively, my mom, at that very moment, somehow realized the importance of bearing witness and remembering, while at the same time documenting that remembrance with nothing more than a simple tape recorder. Shortly after, on January 27, 1985, the reunion at Auschwitz of the Mengele twins occurred, followed by a mock trial of Dr. Mengele. All of this was an effort to call attention to their respective stories, and it worked. Josef Mengele soon became the focus of a world-wide manhunt. However, in June of 1985, it was claimed that Mengele’s bones were found in a shallow grave in Embu, Brazil. My mom, aunt Miriam, and many of the Mengele did not believe that these were indeed his bones (Soble, 1989).

The twins were now amid middle age, many with health issues. My aunt Miriam was experiencing kidney failure and did not want to be on dialysis. So, in the fall of 1987, my mom donated one of her kidneys to my aunt (Kor, 2018). Once removed, it was discovered that my aunt’s kidney had not developed beyond the age of 10, when the experiments were performed at Auschwitz. For a few years, the transplant was successful. But, in 1991, my aunt began to have urinary tract polyps. One became cancerous and she died in Israel on June 6, 1993 (Kor, 2018).

As my mom would later say, “Not only did I lose my beloved sister, but I lost a kidney” (Kor, 2018). Heartbroken and becoming despondent in her grief, my mom’s anger grew. She was on a mission and looking for answers. A few months after Miriam died, she received a phone call which would begin the journey to end all journeys.

“Eva, would you be interested in lecturing to physicians at a medical ethics meeting in Boston?” This request came from Dr. John Michalczyk. My mom responded, (John Michalczyk, personal communication, 4/20/25) “Of course, I enjoy speaking to doctors!” Then he asked, “By the way, Eva, maybe, you could bring with you one of those Nazi Doctors?” My mom answered, “Where do you think that I can find one of those guys? The last

time that I looked, they were not advertising in the yellow pages (John Michalczyk, personal communication, 4/20/25).” Michalczyk replied that he was sure she would think of something. And think of something she did. The last project my mother had worked on with her late twin included a Nazi Doctor, Hans Munch. My mom, never one to waste time, contacted his family and asked if Dr. Munch would come to Boston. The response was, “Eva, he will give you an interview. But you need to come to Germany!” My mother was petrified to return to Germany (Kor, 2018). Ultimately, a family friend arranged that a Dutch TV crew would accompany my mother to the home of Dr. Hans Munch in the fall of 1993. She was very scared to meet a Nazi doctor 48 years after her initial encounter. Armed with a new purpose and a way to channel her grief after the untimely death of Miriam, she asked Dr. Munch,

“I am trying to help the other Mengele twins avoid the same fate as my sister. What do you know about Mengele’s experiments?” Munch said,

“Eva, I know nothing about those experiments. He kept everything to himself. I am sorry. But I do have nightmares.”

My mom quickly responded, “You have nightmares? I thought we were the only ones with nightmares. Why do you have nightmares? (Kor, 2018)” Beyond helping approximately 20 Jewish doctors stay alive by making up fictitious experiments, Munch periodically stood outside the gas chamber. When the last body stopped moving, he signed one death certificate. In his living room, he went on to describe the operation of the gas chambers in detail. My mom was stunned. Being a quick thinker, she asked Dr. Munch, “What you just told me here in your home, you need to tell the whole world. Dr. Munch, in over a year, we are going to Auschwitz to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the liberation. Would you go with us to Auschwitz in January of 1995?” He responded with no hesitation, “Yes, I will! (Kor, 2018)”

Upon returning to Terre Haute, my mother informed me of the outcome of her recent trip to Germany, but then asked, “How do you thank a Nazi Doctor? I need to thank him for what he is going to do, which is to document history.” She went to the local Hallmark shop. She went to a liquor store. Nothing seemed appropriate. For many months she tried to think of a meaningful gift for Dr. Munch. Then one day, she figured it out. In her name only, she would forgive Dr. Munch for being a Nazi. She realized that this was the most meaningful gift that she could give another person (Kor, 2018). She prepared a document that would serve as proof of her forgiveness

but was concerned with her spelling and punctuation, so she enlisted the help of her former English professor, Dr. Susan Kaufman, to proofread for mistakes. Dr. Kaufman reviewed the document and told my mom, “Eva, your statement is very good, but I think that you are forgiving the wrong guy! Your problem isn’t with Dr. Munch; it’s with Dr. Mengele.” My mom responded, “No I just want to thank Dr. Munch by forgiving him (Kor, 2018).”

On January 27, 1995, while standing at the ruins of a gas chamber in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dr. Hans Munch did indeed tell his story, just as he had done at his home over a year earlier. For the entire world to hear, he documented the gas chambers, including how they operated and his role (<https://candleholocaustmuseum.org/educational-resources/dr-hans-munch.html>). Not knowing what my mom had planned, Dr. Munch surrendered the floor to my mother. As she had intended, she announced that she was thanking Dr. Munch for telling his story by forgiving him, in her name only. She knew that she was giving Dr. Munch a gift, but not until many months later did she begin to realize that she had also given herself a gift. She no longer had a “chip on her shoulder”. She no longer despised her parents. She no longer cringed when she heard the German language. She no longer hated herself for these innermost feelings. She realized forgiveness was a healthier way to live and then decided to forgive everyone in her name only. As her son, I truly believe that this gift allowed my mom to live happier for another 24 years.

Since 1995, my mom placed a heavy emphasis on remembrance, memory, and education. Not only did she lecture around the world, giving over 200 speeches per year, but she continued to take trips back to Auschwitz on almost a yearly basis. She recognized the extreme importance of taking people of all ages, all demographics, all religions, etc. to Auschwitz to learn and experience the past. Initially, sharing her story in this manner was her version of recording her story for future generations.

In 2014, she was made aware of an unusual project started by Steven Spielberg and the USC Shoah Project. Known as Dimensions in Testimony (www.iwitness.usc.edu n.d.), she was told that the goal was to create holograms of Holocaust survivors. Somewhat naïve to the process involved but determined to be included, she contacted the Director of the USC Shoah Foundation, Stephen Smith. “I hear you are making Holograms. I need to talk to you about my participation! We need to meet (33)”. Stephen responded, “Yes, I would like to meet with you as well, but I will be traveling next week”. Eva responds, “Where will you be going?” Stephen

informed her that he would be in New York and then Washington, DC for a survivor's reunion. My mom immediately and abruptly let him know that she would also be in Washington, DC, and they could meet there. Then, she hung up. That was Stephen's first real experience with the whirlwind who was my mother (<https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/eva-7063/clip/celebration-life-dr-stephen-d-smith-bc6en7>).

At that time, I was living and working in Washington, DC. Not aware of this initial conversation between my mom and Stephen, my mom told me that she was coming into DC to meet with someone at a hotel, as she was selected to be a Hologram. I did not question her and just assumed this to be true. After all, she said it as a matter of fact. So, I dropped her off at the hotel on my way to work. When she sat down with Stephen, he naively had every intention to pleasantly decline her offer to be included in the DiT project (Stephen Smith, personal communication author, July 13, 2019). But my mother in her unique way, standing 4'10", wearing her electrifying bright blue was so persuasive that Stephen decided that her journey to forgiveness after surviving Dr. Mengele's medical experiments was worthwhile of being immortalized as a DiT story.

Within six months, she flew to Los Angeles to begin the taping for the Hologram. On the morning of the initial session, my mom woke up with facial swelling, and it was discovered that she had an allergic reaction to the sheets from the hotel bed. She was taken to the local emergency room for treatment. Within a few hours and after the swelling was resolved, her recording sessions commenced. More than one thousand questions. Hour after hour for 20 hours, my mom answered Stephen's questions. "What is your favorite food? Do you think that justice was done? How can you forgive something so evil? Do you trust doctors? Can you tell us about your family? (<https://iwitness.usc.edu/dit/evakor> , n.d.)"

In the middle of the week, on her day off, never missing an opportunity to speak to kids, she lectured to a school in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts. She related well to the students because they had to overcome their own difficult upbringing but did not understand their fashion statement of wearing hoodies. Not understanding the current trends, she found this disrespectful. Fast forward to the completion of the week-long grueling interview process. Stephen hosted a party for my mom at his house to celebrate the process and honor my mom. So, at the party, Stephen gave my mom a gift which was a hoodie with this phrase on the back: "I went through Auschwitz, and you subjected me to this? (<https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/eva-7063/clip/celebration-life-dr-stephen-d-smith-bc6en7>)"

Several months later, my mom's USC DiT was ready for use and was now functional at the CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Terre Haute, Indiana. So, without hesitation, my mom would frequently talk to herself and, at times, have arguments with the hologram version of herself. She enjoyed having the DiT now available and understood the role it would serve for future generations. She knew her mortality and she was excited. It became and is still a major asset for all interested parties to utilize.

We can take the opportunity to ask my mom a few questions at any moment.

The first question is (<https://iwitness.usc.edu/dit/evakor,n.d.>): "Is justice possible? Her response is that "justice is a very fickle word, and I don't think, in my opinion, justice really exists. I had not personally thought about the word justice, but from the time I became seriously involved in lecturing, I realized that people were using that word as an ultimate goal. That, if justice is handed out in a manner prescribed by the people in charge of dispersing justice, that the poor victim would feel vindicated and live happily ever after. That is a false premise. I ask myself, that if even as far back as maybe as 1986, '87, '88, every Nazi had received some form of justice whether it be being put to death or imprisoned, would it my life change one iota? I came back from the camp as an 11-year-old kid. There was very little help. Yes, we had a little bit of food and my aunt tried to take care of us, so what difference would it have made if Mengele was killed? Actually, it would have been ten times better for me than the twins who survived Auschwitz. What if Mengele was kept alive and in return for his freedom, he could have given us all the answers of what he did to us? But that is not what happened. And ultimately, I see today, the sad situations that a family loses a loved one to a murderer. Yes, the murderer deserves to be brought to justice and even hanged and I think I feel sorry for the families who think that if the perpetrator was hanged, that justice would be done and their life would be turning back to what it was before. It will never, ever vindicate or heal the victims just because a perpetrator was brought back to justice. That does not mean in any way that I want killers and murders and rapists roaming the streets of the United States or the world. But I'm just, I have a strange idea that the world and the judicial system and all these wonderful, so many well educated, smart people, don't they understand one simple fact that I, the survivor of Auschwitz understand, that if they paid as much attention to the victims, healing the victims and feel so dedicated in bringing the perpetrators to justice, that they would be way, way ahead because in my opinion, every unhealed victim is a potential perpetrator. What....our jails are filled with people. What happened to those people from

the time they were born to the time that they committed a crime? Were they loved, cared for, nurtured, respected? Or were they abused and neglected? So something happened to them to make them murderers and rapists. And if we cannot heal them, the population of the perpetrators is going to grow and it is sad for me to realize that these poor victims could be helped. Even after they committed the crime, young people are rotting in jail because what they need to be taught...is the most difficult thing to teach, which is to forgive themselves or find some way to take responsibility for their actions and do some good in society. It would help a lot more than them rotting in jail. So, I don't know. I can relate all of that little information that I have in my head, but I know that from what I can see...I can see the victims of survivors of Auschwitz...and I still call them victims...seventy years after liberation. One of them threw himself to the floor and began screaming, "I am going to die here where my parents died!" And that was his way of remembering his parents. Well, I chose to forgive them, and I hope their souls are there somewhere above the universe and that they will be proud that they raised a little girl who loved life more than anything else and did not find any joy in getting even."

The second question (<https://iWitness.usc.edu/dit/evakor> n.d.) "What is your favorite food? "I don't know. I like all kinds of things. I like McDonald's, my favorite restaurant. Chicken McNuggets. I like peanut butter and jelly. But I like all the fattening sweet stuff except I can't eat it. Not good for me."

And the third question (<https://iWitness.usc.edu/dit/evakor> , n.d.) "What is your favorite song?" "Well, my most, most favorite song is the Man from LaMancha, *The Impossible Dream*. I'll try. (Her hologram image sings) To dream the impossible dream. To fight the unbeatable foe. To try when your arms are too weary. To reach the unreachable star. This is my quest to follow that star, no matter how hopeless, no matter how far, to...I think that's about it, I can remember right now. I know to reach the impossible dream."

On July 2, 2019, during our yearly pilgrimage back to Auschwitz, my mother was on social media in our hotel room, and I asked, "Mom, you are not getting any younger. You are 85 years old. Should you think about slowing down a little bit? You are traveling so much giving speeches throughout the world." She looked at me like I had two heads and said, "Alex, my dear, I cannot slow down. There is so much hate, bigotry, racism, and antisemitism in our world. Unfortunately, my work is needed more than ever! (Eva Kor, author, 7/2/2019)". I think about that conversation nearly every day. Two days later, on July 4, 2019, my mother died in front of my eyes in that same hotel room. My seemingly invincible mom, the little girl