

## Holocaust and Genocide Studies Symposium

### Dr. Amir Teicher, TAU

This talk proposes a new paradigm of understanding eugenics in Nazi Germany. In lieu of Darwinist theory, in Holocaust Germany Gregor Mendel was widely perceived as the father of genetics. The Mendelist paradigm was existent in education, entertainment, and academia, and also influenced the racial definition of Jewish *mischlinge* under the Nuremberg Laws. The Nazi understanding of Mendelism maintained that recessive genes were the cause of mutation and disease, and therefore dangerous to society. With the dismissal of racial theory after WWII, Mendelism was disassociated with it and was given new credence as genetic theory.

### Dr. Hannah Polin-Galay, TAU

Dr. Polin-Galay differentiates between learning *with* and learning *from* testimony. The latter method focuses on a formal tradition of translation in the hopes of extracting knowledge, whereas the former seeks to give agency to the linguistic culture of the testimony and its unique context. Dr. Polin-Galay claims that we need to engage with other linguistic communities as “thinking languages”. Specifically, she makes the claim that Yiddish testimonies offer a closer, more intimate relation to Eastern European collaborators of the Nazis during the Holocaust. Testimonies in other languages, such as Hebrew, omit intimate details. Such is the case with testimonies of Jewish prisoners held at the Seventh Fort in Lithuania; Yiddish testimonies offer a localized context of events while other descriptions tend to collectivize victims as a symbol of the suffering of the Jewish people as a whole.

### Prof. Robert Franciosi, Grand Valley State University

Prof. Franciosi maintains that books have biographies, just like people. Such is the case of John Hersey’s *The Wall*. Published in 1950, *The Wall* was one of the first fictional accounts of the Holocaust, and subsequently one of the first and most important means with which Holocaust memory was disseminated around the world. Inspired by living testimony, Hersey’s novel imitated real life, including such details as a hidden archive and military resistance, two parts of the Warsaw Ghetto. *The Wall*’s fiction was so close to the truth, that it garnered widespread belief in the actuality of the events depicted therein, and subsequent criticism when it was known to be a work of fiction.

### Prof. Babafemi Akinrinade, Western Washington University

Dr. Akinrinade categorizes different kinds of justice after mass atrocities: Victor’s Justice, Bystander’s Justice, and Victim’s Justice. The agency of justice brings about questions of quality: does everyone get justice, or just the victors? Does Victor’s Justice necessarily taint the legitimacy of the law? Does it undermine confidence in the law? Does Victim’s Justice have to be vengeful, and if so, is it better than having no justice at all? It is Dr. Akinrinade’s belief that these types of justice do not serve as a deterrence for other atrocities, but do serve to bring about the healing of social wounds.

[Ms. Meghan Lundrigan, Carleton University](#)

Meghan Lundrigan is researching Holocaust memory in the digital age, and how to bridge the rift between social media memory and pre-digital memory. Showcasing the Instagram account of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Lundrigan showed that social media can be used to engage with a wider audience, but it can also be used both as a close and as a distant research tool. One of the main questions that occupies her research is how agents of memory transfer museum policy into the digital space.