

HOLOCAUST TRAUMA: A WORKING CONFERENCE



Sponsored by the

Whitney Humanities Center at Yale University
Holocaust Survivors Film Project at New Haven
Yale Child Study Center

September 26-27, 1981
New Haven, Connecticut

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I. SATURDAY, September 26, 1981

- 9:00 - 9:30 A.M. 1. Opening Remarks (Peter Brooks and Geoffrey H. Hartman)
9:30 - 10:45 A.M. 2. Holocaust Trauma: Themes, Concerns, Phenomena

Presenter: Sigal
Moderator: Krystal

In this session the question will be asked: What are the specific psychic phenomena and salient themes that arise in the wake of severe trauma? These may include unique forms of grief, mourning, remembering, and other lifelong modes of living and coping that bear the imprint of the holocaust experience. Both the phenomenologic and psychodynamic aspects will be discussed, as well as the epidemiology and cognitive characteristics

- 11:00 - 12:15 P.M. 3. Elements of the Trauma Experience

Presenter: Klein
Moderator: DesPres

The ways in which extreme trauma is experienced and remembered will be elaborated. It has been postulated that under severe trauma altered states of consciousness may be attained, or that major experiential changes take place once the stimulus barrier is broken. Are psychological states such as numbing, derealization, unspeakable dread, profound desolation, and utter helplessness the ones that comprise the trauma experience and most accurately describe it? In addition, the memory traces of the trauma, both conscious and unconscious, may have unique characteristics, such as "flashbacks", nightmares, vivid memories, etc. Are new descriptive categories necessary for these experiences?

We are well aware of the fact that the interweaving of remembered and ongoing experiences may lead to distortions of current perceptions and revisions of past recollections. Can we identify and describe these complex processes and arrive at the underlying common denominators of the traumatic state?

