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American Holocausts : Narratology of Slave Captivity in William Styron's *Sophie's Choice*

Keiko SHIRAKAWA

1. Reproducible Holocaust

What kind of memory does *Sophie's Choice* (1979) represent? Whose memory of the Holocaust does this narrative explore? Perhaps one of the biggest questions that readers will pose is whether or not this novel can be called genuine Holocaust literature. How was it possible for the author without ever experiencing life in a concentration camp to reproduce the memories of the Pogrom? How can we connect the Nazi-Jewish massacre to American history when a white Southerner, who was too exiguous to render an essentialist recollection of the Holocaust, constructed the story of an Auschwitz survivor which was, interestingly enough, widely accepted in the United Stares?

For all its intricate details and on account of its complicated theme, *Sophie's Choice* has received higher acclaim : it won the American Book Award, has been translated into many languages, maintained bestseller-dom over a long period of time, and was made into a movie by Alan Pakula (1982). It is, so far, the latest novel by Styron and probably the most famous and significant of his works. Challenging George Steiner's insistence that silence is the best response to the Holocaust, Styron tried to present the tragic "choice" of a woman subjected to "the absolute evil" of the 20th century through his own autobiographical narrative. He intended to make ordinary Americans vicariously endure

the Holocaust, otherwise buried under the darkness of history, just as he did in *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967). From the unexpectedly tolerant reaction of Jewish critics, one can conclude that the criticism of and response to *Sophie's Choice* was, in general, favorable enough to regard it as a successful form of Holocaust narrative, even considering Styron's inexperience as a Holocaust survivor.

Styron's success, however, lies in his dexterous technique of avoiding severe criticism. As many critics have pointed out, Styron, who had learned his lesson from the previous Nat Turner controversy, substitutes a Polish woman for a Jewish victim and has Stingo, Styron's alter ego, narrate Sophie's story, including his own speculation and experience, as a form of his/her reminiscence, thereby eschewing the first person narrative of a Jew as well as establishing an effective framework of time in order to relate the Holocaust past to the American present (Pease 258, Sirlin 94). In addition, by directly documenting and then contemplating other Holocaust works such as the memoirs of Rudolf Höss, Elie Wiesel, and Olga Lengyel, and the writings of George Steiner, Richard L. Rubenstein, and Hannah Arendt, Styron completes the historiographic composition of his text without offering an "Author's Note"; the writer's "meditation on history" in his "Author's Note" of *The Confessions of Nat Turner* was one of the major targets of accusation mainly by black critics (West 415). Styron's narrative displacement contributes to the dissemination of the memory of the Holocaust, while it prolongs the easy popularization and oversimplification of the sufferers' experiences, something which Wiesel and Steiner warned against. In particular, the narrative structure paralleling Sophie's agonized confession with Stingo's farcical sexual obsession provides the text with an essence of pornography; as a result, it inevitably reveals the merits and demerits of a broad interpretation of the

Nazi Holocaust transformed into an American Holocaust, occasionally undermining the aesthetic attainment of the fine work.

Apart from the question of whether or not it can be called a masterpiece, *Sophie's Choice* has been commonly accepted as an example of Nazi Holocaust literature, where the subject matter has been analyzed, more or less, on humanitarian grounds. However, my focus is not on the artistic quality of the work nor the conventional understanding of the humanistic theme but on the author's intentional/original displacement, that is, Styron's reproduction of the memory of the Holocaust as an American narrative — the representation of American Holocausts — which I believe will give us a new perspective on reading other Holocaust literature in the United States. If *Sophie's Choice* is regarded not only as an epigonic writing of Auschwitz-Birkenau criticism but also as a story inheriting the American narrative tradition, one can bring up the analogy between the Polish-Holocaust experience and the American slave-captivity past in terms of racial extermination. What is important is that even in the United States, where the policy of conquering non-Europeans had been consistently practiced since Christopher Columbus, there existed other forms of Holocausts under the names of Negro slavery and Indian expulsion and genocide. The purpose of this paper is to see *Sophie's Choice* as an American Holocaust narrative, and thereupon to investigate the slave-captivity theme in stories of racial conflict in which the conqueror and the conquered alternately trade places with respect to rhetorical and/or political dominance. In the course of the argument it will be made clear that the Nazi-Holocaust memory devised by Sophie/Stingo/Styron — the white Southerner's recollection of American Holocausts — echoes similar formulae taken up in American slave-captivity narratives since the 17th century, and that both of these narratives were, intentionally or unintentionally,

sustained by the assumption of purported racial inferiority.

2. Inundation of Holocaust, Transfiguration of Slave-Captivity

Contemporary America seems to be haunted by Holocaust consciousness: Hilene Flanzbaum shows the pervasive presence of an American cultural appropriation of the Holocaust which seems to have sprung loose from its origin; Peter Novick exposes the fact that memories of the Holocaust may be inflated, invented and abused, especially in the American political arena; Ward Churchill, David Stannard, and Russell Thornton use the term "Holocaust" for the (sub)title of each of their books dealing with the U. S. policy toward Native Americans since 1492, which the authors believe amounts to nothing less than genocide; S. E. Anderson calls the suffering of blacks taken from the African continent a "Black Holocaust." If "Holocaust" means the captivation and confinement of another race under brutal conditions in an attempt to eradicate that race, it is not surprising that polysemous Holocaust memories are pervasive in America, where the same kind of exploitation has been a significant part of its history; this is why the term "Holocaust" is interrelated with Indian-Puritan captivity narratives and slave narratives. For instance, about 30 years before Anderson, Alex Haley illustrates in his slave captivity narrative, *Roots* (1967), that life in the peculiar institution starts with the experience of captivity. Slavery is compatible with captivity. When some Puritans were captured by Indians, their theocratic society required them to make use of the rhetoric of Indian captivity narratives, underscoring the notion of Indians as savages that needed to be systematically ousted, a practice that would be established as national policy during Andrew Jackson's Presidency in the antebellum period. As Laurence Thomas explores, while it is true that American Negro slavery and Nazi death camps are

totally different systems whose ultimate purposes contradict each other, Indian captivity narratives, slave narratives, and Holocaust narratives all display the same thematic unity concerning an "inferior" race being preyed upon by a "superior" race.

In *Sophie's Choice*, Styron declares that Sophie's Nazi concentration camp experience is a form of slave captivity tribulation (156, 255, 397, 411-12, 531), and interestingly, her story coincides to a considerable degree with the narrative formulae of early Indian captivity literature. Katherine Zabelle Derounian-Stodola and James Arthur Levernier indicate that a large number of the remaining narratives known to us are by or about woman captives. Two significant features in the collected narratives are that female captives emphasize "the dramatic and decisive fracturing of the original family unit" (112) and often "allowed (male) editors to either ghostwrite, revise, or sponsor their stories for publication, for reasons ranging from imputed impropriety to inadequate literary skill or downright illiteracy" (114). More specifically, with regards to the family Diaspora and the female captives' sufferings, Derounian-Stodola and Levernier list five concrete patterns: "Typically, in the women's captivity literature, a husband and/or teenage sons died during the initial attack; a mother was either pregnant or had just given birth; an infant or newborn child might be killed at any time — but usually early on; surviving siblings were often deliberately separated to harden them for servitude or slavery, or increase their individual ransom, or to hasten their assimilation as substitute adapted children; and women always ran the risk of sexual harassment or abuse" (113). Another prominent instance of the relationship between the female sufferer and the male editor is shown in the case of "Increase and Cotton Mather's protagonists recasting Puritan women's captivity narratives" (114).

How do Sophie's experiences compare with these formulae of women's captivity in Styron's text? First of all, prior to the other members of her family, Sophie's father and husband are shot by the SS descent in the first attack. When arrested, she is not pregnant but pretends to be in order to smuggle the forbidden ham for her sick mother. She is a mother of two children, one of whom, little Eva, is killed by her own mother's "choice" immediately after the arrival at the Auschwitz. Although Sophie has no siblings, she loses her close comrades, Wanda and Jozef, sister-brother underground agents. Moreover, her conspicuous beauty makes her a tactical pawn in negotiations; she is also threatened to be raped by a female guard and/or fellow female captives, not just male Nazi officers. Furthermore, the strategy of the Puritan male editor who tried to modify and exaggerate the narratives of the female captives by Indians is applicable to the Styron-Stingo-Sophie relationship through the technique of re-narrating the other's experiences dramatically.

According to the case studies of Derounian-Stodola and Levernier, the images of the abuse of women are classified into three categories: physical victimization which includes torture, slavery exacerbated by occasional tattooing, and starvation sometimes accompanied by cannibalism; sexual victimization represented by rape; spiritual victimization that coerces conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism. These examples of oppression are also, more or less, described in Sophie's story, which testifies to how similar the contents of the two captivity narratives — Indian captivity narrative and Nazi captivity narrative — are and how effectively the Holocaust experience is Americanized, or to put it another way, Styronized. The only exception here is the change in Sophie's religious attitude. Converting from a faithful Catholic to a resolute atheist contradicts the capital element of early American

captivity narratives which were designed to arouse faith in Puritan doctrine. Disbelief in God under theocracy was, needless to say, heretical. However, through Sophie's rejection of the Catholic faith and God, one could say that Styron, who claims to have "an impeccable WASP background" (Duff and Mitchell 120), ends up supporting and endorsing the attitudes of American authorities as editors/administrators both toward the female captives/victims and toward the Puritan community ; this is reaffirmed by the fact that Sophie does at least become an acceptable survivor for America by rejecting Catholicism, whose French-Indian connections were perceived as the most abominable menace to WASP society.

Another reason to see *Sophie's Choice* as an American Holocaust narrative comes from Styron's emphasis on the resemblances between the American South and Poland. Sharing not only a "forlornly lovely nostalgic landscape," the South and Poland also have "sparkling cultural correspondences : the passion for horseflesh and military titles, domination over women (along with a sulky-sly lechery), a tradition of storytelling, addiction to the blessings of firewater" and "being the butt of mean jokes" in addition to "an entrenched religious hegemony, authoritarian and puritanical in spirit" (268-69). The most significant likenesses concern their defeated pride and racial issues. Styron repeatedly has his characters indicate the analogy between the Southern segregation and the Nazi outrage.

> Despoiled and exploited like the South, and like it, a poverty-ridden, agrarian, feudal society, Poland has shared with the Old South one bulwark against its immemorial humiliation, and that is pride. Pride and the recollection of vanished glories. Pride in ancestry and family name, and also, one must remember, in a

largely factitious aristocracy, or nobility. The names Radziwill and Ravenel are pronounced with the same intense albeit slightly hollow hauteur. In defeat both Poland and the American South bred a frenzied nationalism. (268-69)

Finally there is sinister zone of likeness between Poland and the American South which, although anything but superficial, causes the two cultures to blend so perfectly together as to seem almost one in their shared extravagance — and that has to do with the matter of race, which in both worlds has produced centuries-long, all-encompassing nightmare spells of schizophrenia. In Poland and the South the abiding presence of race has created at the same instant cruelty and compassion, bigotry and understanding, enmity and fellowship, exploitation and sacrifice, searing hatred and hopeless love. (269)

[W]asn't it in Poland that young, harmless Jewish students were segregated, made to sit on separate seats at school and treated worse than Negroes in Mississippi? What makes people think this couldn't happen in America, things like these 'ghetto benches' for the student? (357)

I [Nathan] say that the fate of Bobby Weed at the hands of white Southern Americans is as bottomlessly barbaric as any act preformed by the Nazis during the rule of Adolf Hitler!. . . . And that is that your [Stingo's] refusal to admit responsibility in the death of Bobby Weed is the same as that of those Germans who disavowed the Nazi party even as they watched blandly and unprotestingly as the thugs vandalized the synagogues and per-

petrated the *Kristallnacht*. Can't you see the truth about yourself? About the South? (75-76)

Why is the regional analogy between the American South and Poland reiteratedly stressed like this and why is it so significant to the narrative formation that Sophie be Polish instead of Jewish? This is because Styron's text is also penetrated by the narrative/political/racial agenda of captivity stories where the conqueror-conquered relationship gets transformed constantly depending on the situation. Although the coincidence that the model of Sophie happened to be Polish cannot be denied, Styron's intentional repetition of the analogy is more than just coincidence. Poland/Polish is by no means unimportant. Just as the American South performed black slave hunting, there was Jew hunting in Poland under the totalitarian system of Nazi control. With this notorious past as a background, ironically enough, both of them came to be hounded and marginalized by events later in history. Poland, therefore, functions as a knot connecting slave captivity narratives and Nazi captivity narratives in American narratology. Alternation from hunter/oppressor to hunted/oppressed is the common subject matter not only for *Sophie's Choice* but also for the structure of slave captivity narrative as a traditional American literary genre in general.

Let us then explore the reversal process in *Sophie's Choice*. Sophie's father (Professor Bieganski), an ardent anti-Semitist, is easily killed during the Nazi invasion of Poland even though he pledges his utter loyalty to the third Reich and advocates the radical settlement of the Jewish extermination prior to Eichmann. Sophie's lover in Warsaw (Jozef) is an underground activist who kills Polish betrayers and informants to the SS. The murder of a Nazi double agent winds up by exposing and killing Jozef himself. Sophie's position is much more

complicated. Whereas she indirectly assists the Jewish expulsion by being forced to cooperate and devote herself to her father and husband, she cannot help but resist the servitude she finds herself in. Yet, after getting arrested by the Nazis, she hides her father's pamphlet proposing the ultimate solution to the Jewish problem and watches for a chance to testify how her family has been pro-Nazi. More ironically, after surviving Auschwitz, she falls in love with a Jewish "golem," Nathan, who obsessively doubts her safe return, and as a consequence of their destructive love, she commits double suicide with him in the free country of the United States. This means that Sophie's sin of pro-Nazi acts in Poland are revealed and liquidated by a Jewish avenger, that is to say, her Holocaust experience is completed not in German Auschwitz but in Jewish America. Even Nathan, denouncing and leading her to death, might himself be captured by the delusions of racial extermination that is his own doom, which Sophie's existence inevitably reflects upon. The narrator, Stingo, is also embarrassed and trapped by Sophie's mysterious/deceiving confessions, while at the same time, his story itself snares readers with the ambiguous memory of the three narrative providers, Styron=Stingo=Sophie ; the boundaries of each one's recollections are intentionally blurred by the indeterminate relationship between the narrative presenter and the presented. In any case, if *Sophie's Choice* is an American Holocaust story in which the inverted status of the characters reminds readers of both racial antagonism and the fact that America is haunted by similar slavery-captivity scenes, it is natural that the narrative/political structure of Styron's text parallels that of the three types of traditional American racial conflicting narratives: Indian captivity narratives, Negro slave narratives, and Barbary captivity narratives.

American literary history designates how close Indian captivity

narratives and Negro slave narratives originally are, and many critics have remarked that the stories of two blacks, those of Briton Hammon (1760) and John Marrant (1820), include the Indian captivity experience. The tale of Marrant, a black preacher, in particular, follows the literary strategy of white Puritan authorities, where liberation from Indian captivity is assumed to be the grace of God. As Richard Slotkin points out, the allegory of physical/spiritual liberation from a heretic race that is often a part of conversion narratives is the theme not only for the white Puritans' captivity by Indians but also for the Negro slaves' captivity by white masters. The plot for the Puritans' escape from Indians is applied to that of the Negro slaves' escape from white fiends (441-42). Slotkin, furthermore, states that the narrative of Josiah Henson, seemingly unrelated to Indian captivity, is one of the best examples of the blacks' physical/spiritual liberation ; this shows a strong connection among the three races — red, white and black — in early America as to the racial domination and the transformation of the ruling structure.

It is evident that Indian captivity narratives involve further conflict among the three races over the alternating position of the ruler-ruled, and that the Puritans' narrative formulae have been transfigured and duplicated in the other narratives. Comparing the texts of the white female captives Mary Rowlandson and Elizabeth Hanson with those of the black male captives Briton Hammon and John Marrant, Rafia Zafer concludes that the former reveals Indian inferiority and white literary imperialism while the latter summons religious faith and conversion just as the white captivity narratives do, establishing the foundation for black literary history. The tactics translating Puritan captivity by Indians to Negro captivity by whites becomes clearer if it is taken into consideration with another captivity narrative genre: the

Barbary captivity narratives — the so-called white slavery in North Africa where whites were captured by African blacks. Lotifi Ben Rejeb suggests that the affinity between American Negro slavery and African white slavery was fair game for the propaganda campaign of abolitionist, at the same time that this also helps develop the pro-slavery argument. Introducing and analyzing the first American Barbary captivity narrative of Joshua Gee, Paul Baepler reveals that these heathen captivity experiences narrated by white captives — Indian captivity narratives and Barbary captivity narratives — prolonged the approval of Indian expulsion and Negro slavery in the United States based upon the conviction of white supremacy.

Early American captivity narratives thereby demonstrate how the American Holocaust was justified on the racial battlefield and how it was later developed into political operations. It is less disputable that a white Southerner's American Holocaust narrative, *Sophie's Choice*, juxtaposes the various racial conflicts whose potential of reversing positions, turning the ruler/hunter to the ruled/hunted and *vice versa*, corresponds with the characteristics of early American captivity narratives. The representation of the memory of Holocaust by Sophie=Stingo=Styron therefore serves as a Holocaust metafiction that spontaneously discloses the rhetoric and politics of captivity narratives in the United States.

3. Nazi Connection Reconsidered

In *Sophie's Choice*, there is a scene in which Stingo receives a terrible shock in hearing about Sophie's awful experience in Warsaw and speculates on how childish a life he was leading during her predicament (388). Although it was not until the post World War II era that, like Stingo, innocent Americans were astonished and horrified by the reality

of Auschwitz, even in the 1910s, in the years preceding the Hitler Administration, German eugenics had already put in place a system of annihilating inferior genes that had become the model for American eugenics ; a strong tie that Stephen Kühl called "the Nazi connection" in America existed between the two as they cooperated and collaborated with each other.

The German-American eugenics connection is, however, not that surprising. America had always been fascinated with the pseudo-science, which distinguished the dominant from the recessive, and made full use of its definition of inferior elements in order to subjugate ethnic minorities. This was especially true in the antebellum period when popular pseudo-sciences such as phrenology, physiognomy, craniology, and ethnobiology were so prevalent that it, along with 19th century Imperialism, helped sustain the dream of establishing an American Empire. What is interesting is that the "racial examinations" of skull anatomy and measurements prescribed by SS doctors are astonishingly similar to those of O. S. Fowler and L. N. Fowler as well as those of Samuel George Morton and Thomas Sewall, whose braincase inspections of different races were popular in 19th century America. In both countries, once a dominant race was determined to be superior, differences between it and other races were deemed negative and much effort was put into identifying them ; such "scientific" speculations were also reflected in national narrative policies. The 19th century American Imperialism made a visionary compact with the 20th century Nazism in terms of racial eugenics.

It is ironic that Sophie, "the bewitching replica of a fraülein of whom not even the most committed racial purist in the Reich could disapprove" (416), and her son, Yan, who is "racially pure" (528) and the most "suitable" for the Lebensborn program, are eventually terminated

in the story. As the corruption of racial canonization by the Nazi authorities is compensated through the presumed death of Yan, the indeterminacy of proper/improper genes is in the end concluded by the author's determination to make a clean sweep of the extraordinary couple, Sophie and Nathan. In a way, *Sophie's Choice* is a story about "freaks," or more precisely, a story about the death of "freaks." In fact, there are such many extraordinary characters and situations in the text that it is rather difficult to find "normal" people and moderate scenes. Most characters are burdened by repressed sexuality and their appearances are, to some extent, weird. Among them, the combination of Nathan, a schizophrenic Jewish junky, and Sophie, an alcoholic Polish flunky, is the most conspicuous example of freakishness. Like the savages/freaks in American captivity narratives, Sophie's body is deformed and stigmatized by a tattooed number : "there was something a little strange about it — nothing visibly missing and not so much deficient as reassembled. And that was precisely *it*, I could see. The odd quality proclaimed itself through the skin" (55). Nathan, too, is literally described as a "golem," a kind of "monster," as is often the case with the depiction of the racial devil in slave captivity stories : "He's invented, that's what, like Frankenstein, see, only he's been invented by a rabbi. He's made out of clay or some kind of shit like that, only he looks like a human. Anyway, you can't control him. I mean, sometimes he acts normal, just like a normal human. But deep down he's a runaway fuckin' *monster*. That's a golem. That's what I mean about Nathan. He acts like a fuckin' golem" (63).

Besides their purported racial/physical/mental inferiority, the theatrical frame is also prepared for their erratic behavior. Repeating eccentric sex and self-destructive violence in Yetta Zimmerman's unusually painted "pink palace," which Stingo calls "the façade of some

back-lot castle left over from the MGM movie version of *The Wizard of Oz*" (35), Sophie and Nathan are continuously showcased as if they were on a stage of spectacles and their perversions and outrageous brawls were some of entertainment for a peculiar species. By demonstrating their monstrosity in accordance with the definition of inferiority practiced by German/American eugenics, they remind us of the eyes of the early/antebellum American public, who considered racial others and freaks as not only horrible demons that should be eradicated but also sentimental and sensational objects that should only be confined to the theatrical platform. As the story goes on, Sophie and Nathan actually appear wearing "the unexpected and farcical costumery" (67) which later becomes their death garments. Their "suicide pact" is garishly illustrated on page three of the *Daily News* and described as "unmarried lovers dwelling in sin, suggestive beauty and good looks, the instigator of the tragedy of a young man with a history of psychotic episodes, and so on — this was the stuff of superscandal in the year 1947" (555). What a "superscandal" it must have been; it was an execution of "criminals" as well as a spectacle of a tattooed Polish "wraith"/ "wreck" (69) and a Jewish sadistic "golem."

The more they showed their abnormality both as "inferior" races and as deviators from wholesome society, the more they became the objects of sterilization that German and American eugenics promoted, getting marginalized within slave captivity in the American Holocaust scene. Just when Nathan's brother consults with Stingo, worrying about the worst case scenario of Sophie's pregnancy and Nathan's all-out insanity after their marriage, the couple meets their final collapse following the last stage. The scandal of their double suicide is the most sarcastic climax of the narrative. While attaining vengeance against Sophie, that is, against the reluctant agent of anti-Semitism, Nathan simultaneously

duplicates the Holocaust in the U.S. both by killing the "inferior" self and by, as a consequence, stressing that the Jews and the Polish are to perish together again, this time in a democratic country that had approved of its Nazi connection. Nathan, himself a Jew, ironically becomes the agent who completes the American Holocaust.

As for the Nazi connection, by invoking Christopher S. Durer's "*Moby-Dick* and Nazi Germany," Rhoda Sirlin searches for the same theme between *Moby-Dick* and *Sophie's Choice*: "an American voyage into the mystery of iniquity." Indeed, many critics including Styron himself have admitted that these two stories, both of which start with "Call me Ishmael/Stingo," have in common the technique of autobiographical narration and the theme of the quest for absolute evil. However, could it be that the most striking similarity between the two lies not so much in the inquiry into iniquity as in the decisive factor of genetic superiority that provides the narrator with the perfect trait to be the authentic survivor? In *Moby-Dick*, after the catastrophic battle with the whale that devastates all the "inferior" beings — the freakish white whale itself, the one-legged insane captain, the tattooed heathen, the black/red savages, and the lower class seamen — the only person who survives is Ishmael, the alter ego of Melville and the personified figure of 19th century American Imperialism. Likewise, after seeing an end to a ferocious Jewish drug addict and a sinful Polish lunatic by double suicide, the person who represents the memory of the Nazi slave captivity narrative is Stingo, namely Styron. This means that after being captured in a slavery setting either on board the *Pequod* or in Auschwitz and after being displayed on the American stage of narrative entertainment, these extraordinary freaks are extinguished, in one way or another, as the "inferior" species by the "superior" WASP protagonist/author.

If *Sophie's Choice* has a Nazi connection with *Moby-Dick*, Melville's other slave captivity narrative, *Typee*, also has a tattooed racial freak connection with Styron's Holocaust story. Showing fear of being inscribed with an inferior stigma forever on his skin, Tommo/Melville finally reveals his hidden prejudice toward the tattooed Polynesian savages. Considering the cultural background of the antebellum period when many tattooed freaks such as Jean Baptiste Cabri, John Rutherford, James O'Connell, and Captain Constentenus were introduced and ridiculed in the world of showbiz, it is understandable how acute Tommo's apprehension was. The appearances and experiences of these tattooed freaks, originally whites who had been captured and tattooed by pagans and had gone native themselves, entertained people, at the same time that they provoked the fearful possibility that the normal could become abnormal. For Tommo, execution of tattooing represented the most critical step in the process of transfiguration from superior to inferior, from human to inhuman beings, just as the Nazis had adopted serial number tattooing on people of "perishing" races. The fate of Sophie, a tattooed freak in the 20th century, cannot be promising ; her existence as a spectacle of the "inferior" race is exposed to the public/the readers and then snuffed out in order to comply with the captivity narrative discourse.

Sophie's Choice is a sort of hypertext that automatically represents various scenes from American Holocausts : following the formulae of the traditional American slave captivity narratives, it reminds readers of the history of Native American and African American Holocausts in the United States ; it also explains the white Southern author's understanding of the Nazi Holocaust experience by foregrounding the analogy between the old South and Poland ; finally, it succeeds in illustrating the extermination of "inferior" race — the Sophie-Nathan Holo-

caust — in the United States and suggesting an American connection with German eugenics. Therefore, *Sophie's Choice* is the story of what can be called Styron's choices. In addition to the alterability between the captor and the captive, the author's intentional narrative displacement that exterminates the extraordinary freaks not in Auschwitz but in the United States enables us to regard this fiction as an American Holocaust narrative. In doing so, Styron recreates a memory of the Holocausts that transcends the framework of race, region, and time.

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