

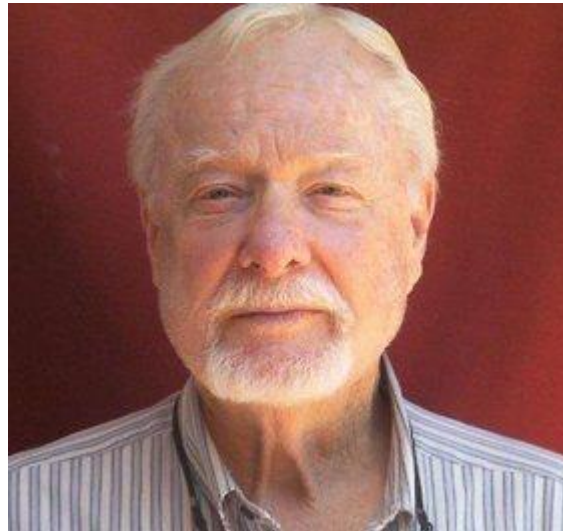
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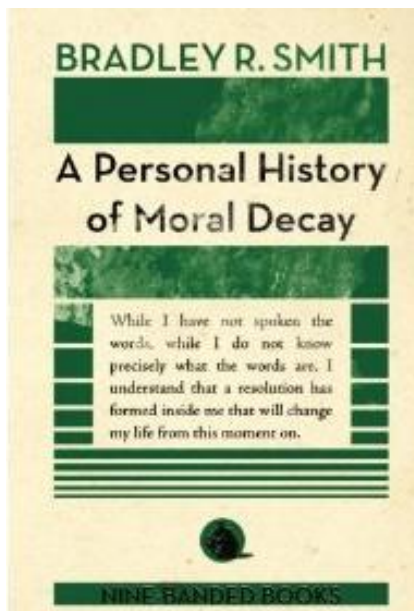


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Bradley Smith's use of the Hegelian life-giving dialectic thinking process enabled him to mature and to find love – Fredrick Töben

**Bradley R Smith:
A Personal History of Moral Decay
Reviewed by Fredrick Töben**



Introduction

What a delight it was to receive a copy of Bradley Smith's latest book in the old pocket-book size of 7x4 inches, a measure that translates into 18x10cm. It is of 316

pages and made in the USA at San Bernadino, CA on 15 June 2014 by www.NineBandedBooks.com, PO Box 1862, Charleston, WV 25327, USA. ISBN-10: 0989697282; ISBN-13 978-0989697286

In his May 2014 **Foreword** to the book Tito Perdue sums up Bradley Smith's character and world view:

What Bradley Smith has done is to call up instances from his own life, and in a calm, even whimsical voice to confide the adventures and sudden elucidations that have been granted him.

Perdue welcomes such an approach because in effect it puts an end to this pop-psychological approach of solving life's problems by seeking "closure" to events and incidents that disturb and challenge us throughout life. Life, indeed, is a journey that requires us to digest the experiences that come our way so that we are not overwhelmed by the inevitable painful

episodes. And Smith shows us how in his case such disagreeable episodes inevitably fade away – but only if you do not fall into the trap of *playing the victim*, something Holocaust Revisionists know about but would never fall into.

In other words, and Smith himself echoes in his own **Author's Note** placed at the end of the book, what the reader can expect from reading this book is finding some pearls of wisdom that Smith has gathered along the way of having lived a full life.

Smith claims not to be an intellectual – whatever that overrated word means! – and so

I could not give up on what my heart told me was the right thing to do ... I don't depend on thought to guide my actions, but on awareness. For me, thought comes after the moment I recognize what it is I am seeing, or understanding. After that first moment I can go on to reflect on what I saw, judge its value, its good sense or the absence of it. Then I can use my memory, my experience, to write about what I have in that moment become aware of.

This kind of wisdom reminds me of Goethe's simple maxim as he, as an old man, reflected on what was left for him to do: *Imbue the young with a little bit of wisdom and pay compliments to elderly ladies, so that they do not despair.* I would say that old men also need that kind of compliment as well.

And Smith is doing this, and has lived an exemplary life with his Mexican wife of over 40 years that resulted in two children and three grandchildren, of course after numerous detours that were part of his growing up process.

Now let's see what 84-year-old Bradley Smith has reflected upon in this his twenty-chapter-long fourth book.

Content

The title itself is challenging because over seventy years after World War Two we are witnessing an apparent moral decline of the so-called *free-and-democratic western world*, and I wonder whether Smith's

autobiographical account will focus on that aspect as well. Perhaps some defining moments in his life will have been his time as a soldier in Korea and as a reporter during the Vietnam War.

...then the memories slowed down until they hardly came at all, says Bradley after detailing how he cried when his younger twin brothers died in infancy. This is a normal human reaction to painful events, but in his case the death of his brothers re-surfaced when he was about 15 and then again when he was well into his 30s. His brothers had died of whooping cough, which he had transmitted to the twins by cuddling them, something his mother had expressly forbidden him to do.

This whole episode led him to develop an empathetic understanding of what I call the PRIME UGLY person/event, where sympathy and sadness arises instead of blinding hatred. I think this capacity enables individuals to survive traumatic experiences without falling into the victim trap, something that the social Internet media is so good at nurturing. Playing the victim is emotional parasitism that drains others of vitality – which is often the aim of those who encourage in others such infantile behaviour. The second chapter, again just on seven pages of small print, deals with Bradley's gruesome Korean war experience and how it led to his almost year-long convalescing from a sustained injury, and subsequent discharge from the Army. His quest to find any meaning in what he was doing continues, and I recall how William Joyce covers that period of essential soul searching in *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or William Blake in *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. Smith did not shy away from working at any job, and I can certainly relate to such a positive mindset, which however generally began to fade during the 1970s and early 1980s in most of the western democracies. A total degeneration set in when, for example in Australia, educators propagated the idea that students ought to

be taught how to survive on unemployment. Currently there is the story of student evaluation of lecturers in the USA that produced the delightful comment from a student to the effect: *I don't like my lecturer because he is teaching me things I didn't know!*

The next four-page chapter takes us into Smith's dark family secret – his father was a violent man who beat his mother. He discovered this from a conversation he had had with his uncle and aunt – and when he was about to confront his father on that particular night at home, his mother forbade him to intervene, and Smith obeyed his mother's command!

Smith's next experience indicates to him there is a moral dimension that is going to influence and shape his developing world view – as a bull fighter in Mexico. In concise language he portrays what this entails, then his illumination:

At the same time I couldn't get over my uneasiness at the barbarity of the way of life I was entering, because I knew that was what it was. I could never be able to convince myself it was right to perform cruel acts in public for pleasure and money.

This experience was compounded by an observation he made in the streets where from a truck full of workmen one had fallen and lay on the road. As he walked by the men expectantly watched how Smith would react to the scene – he did what they did, grin. It upset him later that he had been laughing at the dead, and as he strolled through a park he looked at a photo display of the revolutionaries who had been hanged – Zapata, Villa and Carranza. This enraged him because the display suggested it was an art exhibition, and he wanted to tear down the photos!

The eleven-page Chapter Five contains another typical Smith insight:

People see me laughing, I'm a big laugher, and they think I'm on top of things. I'm not on top of anything. I just like to laugh.

Smith recounts his time spent living in a room near Hollywood Boulevard with Marlow

and Worthington, and making acquaintances with their friend Katz. He relates in amusing detail how for lack of money Marlow and Katz regularly steal food at the local supermarket. His writing activity progresses ever so slowly.

Next Smith recounts an episode with his wife, Pamela, and remarks how his well-connected working wife had married below her social station. He temporarily leaves home and settles in a rented room, then over a four day stretch in bed devours Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn*. Then Smith returns home and had visions that his wife could not see or understand, and so as he routinely walks his wife to the bus stop Smith swoons about

...the vermilion sun...was a knockout. A real knockout!

And so Smith continues to recount and reflect on how he was down-and-out, his relationships with the two women he loved, **and/but** still yearning to become a writer, still yearning again to set off for Mexico.

In Chapter 8 Smith flashes back to his parents' home and we catch a glimpse of his mother's basic nurturing instinct still soundly expressed as she wakes her husband from a deep snore. She fears that such could lead to his death, something one would expect her to welcome after the way he treated his wife. Then Smith bewails the fact that Morgan, who works at Barney's Beanery, is driving him crazy, and he flippantly comments on the fact that she had had a couple of abortions but was now regaining her beauty. Smith is here slowly coming to terms that a woman's love, or rather that sexual freedom, so easily becomes an expression of hedonistic nihilism. But that is the essential euphoric phenomenon that took hold of the world after World War Two when *you can be anything/you can do anything* was driving the consumer society's value system, and which through the revolutionary Internet communication system has eagerly embraced. Advertisements now dominate

Internet media outlets to the extent that one wonders where this will lead to.

Smith's flashback to Barney's Beanery, again where he is well under the weather, and it indicates his instinctive moral perspective is taking shape. He hears about the latest magazines coming out of Greenwich Village, which does not impress him at all:

...what we have here is one more New York literary mag setting out to right the wrong of the people, of life itself. What do i care for those people? They think the final cure for every ill is to be fucked in the ass by some guy with a dark complexion and no inheritance. They're constructing their literature out of cowardice and perverted sexuality. American letters is being stunk up badly by these literary shit-lovers, these creepy purveyors of black romanticism who sprout like slimy weeds from the gutters and garbage of decaying cities...Under afternoon suns they exude the malodorous scents, the heavy fumes of steaming assholes.

This marked the end of Chapter Eight and now, after seeing Smith develop a moral framework with such clarity, I expect it to be a constant theme from now on. Chapter Nine, 39 pages long, may be the beginning of that journey towards a personal development, a deepening of an awareness of basic natural morality. At 35 and living, again, with his parents, Smith has experienced enough of the physical life that it appears to be a truism – a boy needs to be smacked on the bottom so that his brain starts to function. While having a bath at home Smith does go off again – he has another one of his daydreaming visionary spells.

The somewhat mundane diary entries, which for Smith are journal entries, meander from observing his father's steady decline into dementia-old age, and his mother's continued unconditional devotion both to her husband and to her son – who is still trying to find himself, still riding on life's merry-go-round. He has a hernia operation and while recuperating from that he comes across a book that mentions America's founder of Pragmatism-Fallibilism and of the logical form of abduction – and on whom I wrote

my thesis! Smith now regards his life so far as having been wasted, i.e. in comparison to the early start CS Peirce had on account of a nurturing father.

While whiling away his time at home Smith becomes irritable when he hears that a possible cease fire was coming into effect in Vietnam – he now had his mind set on getting there and report from the trenches: **Maybe I can make Vietnam my war. Maybe I can create a real war out of whatever is going on over there.**

And during his convalescing time he also read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* where a single line captured his attention:

Anything I do now I regard as urgent...

... and Smith bemoans the fact that he doesn't have the hatred Malcolm X expresses, and then goes back to his old haunt to meet his old comrades, one of whom is still waiting to find a fag that will get him connected with Hollywood and make him a star.

Smith's next chapter details the rawness of life on a tramp steamer that's taking him to Vietnam in 1968 – and with that of the accompanying humidity and sweat and dreams of becoming a famous writer. And following that Smith inserts a chapter – *Sue, Ann, Ruby, Jenny and Me* wherein he confesses to his adulterous temptations. After all, the ladies exclaim to him they need him – but he finds out none wait for him! This is followed by a chapter that reflects on his having reached the half century mark and how he nurses his volumous diary collection in the hope that one day they will turn into books. He then recounts how his long-time friend Marlow, just before the SS Explorer departs from Long Beach, also signs up as crew for that trip to the South China Seas. His attempt to jump ship at Saigon failed on account of the Tet Offensive and so he landed in Thailand.

The 18-page Chapter Thirteen, *Waiting for Saigon to Fall*, reveals an interesting mindset that philosophically is labelled British Empiricism – the plodding along from one

particular to another without ever developing any overarching narrative that ties together such incidents. Such mindsets love to label anyone who has that overarching narrative of an event as a "conspiracy theorist", and thereby retaining for themselves a belief that any official government explanation of a catastrophic global event is factually true.

Smith senses, then expresses his emotional and mental maturation battle quite clearly:

If I wanted to right myself in my own eyes I'd have to take up a position against the American military in Vietnam and fighting it out to an ending. I won't do that, however; I've waited too long and now it's too late. I am going to have to postpone my ethical life. As a matter of fact, I have postponed it.

Smith is not the only one who had lost his moral compass. He reports on US soldiers, who had street orphans polish their shoes, and who would then readily pay these orphans extra to also perform oral sex on them. What comes to mind here is what my English teacher taught me:

You must know everything about life but you need not have done everything in life!

Then, after meandering in Saigon and recounting some horror stories about Cambodian mercenaries head-hunting VCs for the Americans – bringing in severed heads, Smith negates his moral awakening by stating:

The question of manners is no longer important to me. In America, the issue of good manners is academic.

Smith gains further insights about the war while hitching a ride, then meeting up with South Vietnamese Lieutenants Duong and Han. The casualness of it all – perhaps the banality of war moves him -

...I believe I still believed that I was convinced that in the process of risking death something significant could be identified.

And then while Smith tries to get some sleep he reads a copy of *Ramparts* that contains Che Guevar's *Letter to the Bolivian People* – and for once Smith aggressively monologues, albeit in a somewhat indistinct mumble:

Inwardly I began arguing with him. Inwardly I shouted: "Why don't you start at the top you asshole? Why are you starting at the bottom again?...Kill the rulers, you fucking intellectual....You always kill the people the tyrant rules, never the tyrant. Kill the generals, not the soldiers. Kill the politicians, not the citizen. When will you ever understand?"

Chapter Sixteen turns from the above expressed detached violence to reflective domesticity, and to that inevitable/continuous fixation on the writing process. Smith remarks on reading about a man who recently -

... died of alcohol, barbiturates, and self pity. He was a sot, a contemptible husband, pathetically unable to take care of himself. ... I was aware of how contemptuous I felt towards him. Where is the good in writing a book and living a life like Lowry? That isn't what my aim is. His attitude seemed to be that because he had written some work that was praised by literary people he could forego acting like an adult....This morning I woke thinking about him. I feel aimless, and wonder again what it is all about. Most likely the whole affair, this life, this living, is about absolutely nothing whatsoever. No meaning, no purpose, no consequence. Nothing but happiness, pain and boredom.

This is the first time that Smith clearly becomes judgmental, that concept so frowned upon by the Libertarians who condemn anyone for openly espousing moral values. It indicates to me how selfish such a viewpoint is because empathetic understanding is reduced to a degree of mere hedonistic gratification without responsibility. By talking about "acting like an adult" Smith embraces morals and manners, something he consciously attempted to reject. Until now he has been seeking the immediate and not the mediated life experience, much like Heidegger's endeavour to discovering what it is that makes up our BEING. He thereby rejects much of the Objectivism nonsense Ayn Rand espoused, and he recognized pure selfishness in the Rand/Darwinian sense cannot sustain relationships, much as the Talmudic-Marxist death dialectic of win-lose

cannot sustain societies, as is illustrated in the Zionist state of Israel.

Smith has now broken away from the constraints the various language philosophers have imposed on the thinking process, most notably Ludwig Wittgenstein who preached that all our human problems would disappear if only we correctly analyze our language. And I am reminded of an anecdote, told to me by Karl Popper, who opened that thought-structure by asking a simple question: 'What about moral problems?' It was at Cambridge where this exchange took place and where in his response to Popper Wittgenstein picked up a fire poker and exclaimed: 'There are no moral problems!', to which Popper replied: 'What about a host threatening his visitor with a fire poker?'

Smith recalls how while serving in Korea he asked his mother to send him a copy of Somerset Maugham's *Rain*, which he devoured but then found it wanting, and it was this evaluation of Maugham's book that made him decide he could write a better book. What helped solidify his dream of becoming a writer was his then months of convalescing in the hospital at Camp Cook, California. And later out of this experience Smith the philosopher emerges:

Why is it that the present moment most often is not so important as the past or the future? Probably, I see this now, it is that we figure out what the present moment is. I want to be able to describe it, and it is indescribable. It is too varied, too complicated, too full to describe, to identify, to delimit, to embrace. For the first time I see what is meant by the idea – of thought itself – as being limiting. Experience happens too quickly for thought to identify it and sort it out and understand the significance of it. By the time that process has even begun, that process of identifying, and then through comparison making a decision on what is important, the moment is gone and I am faced with a new one where I have to begin the thinking, identifying, comparing process all over again and then the moment too is gone.

I assume Smith doesn't know it yet but in this paragraph he has asked the four

questions that German philosopher Immanuel Kant asked, and which sums up philosophical enquiry: What can I know? – Epistemology/Theory of Knowledge/Science; What could I do? – Ethics; What can I believe – Religion; What is Man – Anthropology.

Obviously, Smith adds to this David Hume's distinct scepticism without falling into nihilism, and the truism of that is demonstrated by Smith's getting down to writing this book! A nihilist would never do anything like that.

Smith goes on:

With memory, on the other hand, I have all the time I need to dwell on the remembered and forgotten experience. I have the time with any certain memory to try to identify it, to explore it, to compare it to other experiences and to what I wanted during the first living out of the experience I can perhaps find out what was pleasurable in the original experience, why it was pleasurable, and think about how I could get a similar kind of pleasure from it.

In real life, the real present living moment, where the quality of experience changes from moment to moment quicker than the eye can see, what good does thinking do? Thinking cannot keep up with it. The problem, probably, then is to be in relationship, nothing more, nothing less, whatever that means. To be in relationship then means to be completely aware without thinking, completely open, the entire system experiencing the reality of the moment, not merely the mind. How can thought keep up with the moment?

...and so he goes on to reflect about what is the purpose of living, and when he drives along a street he sees a man watering his lawn, others "puttering in their gardens ... sitting on their front steps", and he cries.

In the 13 pages of Chapter Seventeen Smith deals with his 1979 illumination of another kind: he is confronted with the American Civil Liberties Union-ACLU. The issue is abortions on demand, which entails that ever fraught concept **freedom of choice** ... and he is then confronted with a Holocaust exhibition in the Martyrs Memorial at the Jewish Community Building on Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles. The American Jewish Committee aims to spread the

"Holocaust lessons" to all faiths, and Smith wonders what such lessons would be all about.

It creates "Jewishness" on the one hand, and on the other it creates a "space" for them to be...But the Holocaust was then, and here we are now. Why not get on with it. I've never met a fifteen-year-old kid who would think it proper to incinerate his neighbours. But I know plenty who were willing to grow up and incinerate foreigners under the direction of the United States Government, and I know one boy today who's looking forward to joining the Air Force where he will sign a contract with the American government agreeing to incinerate or otherwise destroy any living person that the government chooses in exchange for learning how to fly airplanes.

Smith expresses his moral awareness when he reflects on his own prejudicial reaction to a feminist's message:

To say that we live in sexist societies is one thing, to say that these societies have been created by men is to suggest an almost unimaginable lack of responsibility on the part of women, an abysmal failure of courage in the face of history, a profound weakness of character, lack of imagination, self-serving repression, and the pathetic cowardice of an entire gender.

In this single sentence Smith formulates his philosophical moral viewpoint, which, it would be safe to conclude, is a product of his basic obsession, of wishing to become a writer, and who has now also become a philosopher. It also proves that in order to do something in life an individual needs to have a certain amount of obsession in order to overcome that inner inertia enveloped in hedonism, or as the Germans would formulate it – "den inneren Schweinehund überwinden", to overcome the inner temptations, i.e. to modify sense gratification and not go along with what is currently propagated in the western media: enjoy yourself, have a good time, live for the day – carpe diem!

In Chapter Eighteen Smith recounts how at a Libertarian party convention a man hands him a photo copy of a newspaper article and then informs Smith the Holocaust stories,

especially the gassing stories, are not true. Smith captures this moment so well:

The first thing I want to do is to get away from the man. I'm excruciatingly aware of the many other people around us, that they can hear what he is saying. He has almost certainly proselytized those others before I arrived. The others, then, have already heard what I am hearing now, and in my imagination each of them has one eye on me, waiting to see what my first move will be, waiting to judge me.

I feel ashamed listening to the man talk about Jews. I feel ashamed holding the photocopied article in my hand. I'm listening, but after the first few words I don't understand anything he is saying. My brain has closed itself down in self-defence. And yet, at the same time, I'm aware that the man sounds knowledgeable, and even sincere.

I feel trapped between what I take to be the man's sincerity and my own embarrassment. I want to get away from him, to hand back his flyer and turn away so that those who are watching can see that I reject, out of hand, everything he is saying. At the same time, because of his honest and open manner, I don't want to cause him to feel ashamed by rejecting him publicly. I'm ignorant of the whole business. What right to I have to do something that will embarrass another simply because he's saying that he does not believe what I believe? And then the man makes my decision for me. He turns to a new arrival and begins his spiel all over again. ...

...As I approach the trash can I glance down at the flyer's headline. It's titled "The Problem of the Gas Chamber, or The Rumor of Auschwitz." What rumor, I wonder? What problem? There isn't anything there that rings a bell for me. The author of the article is a certain Professor Robert Faurisson, I've never heard of him. Then I notice that the article had originally appeared in Le Monde, the Paris daily. It's confusing. I have no idea at all what the "problem" of the gas chamber might be, or what the "rumor" of Auschwitz refers to. It sounds crazy. It sounds crazy. And I have never heard of Faurisson. But I'm familiar with Le Monde. Le Monde is one of a handful of world-class newspapers.

And so, Bradley Smith, forever the diplomat is in a bind – for once his usual constructive ambiguity cannot extricate his own mind from a meeting of objective reality and the abstract truth concept merging into a new proposition. However, his use of the Hegelian life-giving dialectic thinking process

enables him, ultimately, to mature and to find love.

I now understand why David Cole also had to break with Bradley Smith because Smith is one of the originals who also has not recanted his belief!

The man who handed Bradley Smith the article was none other than [John Bennett](#) of Melbourne, Australia, who at that time had co-founded the *Victorian Civil Liberties Union*. When he published in his own publication, *Your Rights*, Holocaust Revisionist material, the mainly Jewish-members expelled him. Upon that [Bennett](#) founded the Australian Civil Liberties Union-ACLU and continued to publish revisionist material until his death on [23 July 2013](#). It was, of course, Willis Carto, who appointed Bennett to the IHR board.

The penultimate chapter of 12 pages continues the story and Smith mentions *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* to his colleagues who grew up on the Holocaust story. A friend advises him:

You're going to be associated in everybody's mind with all the worst kind of people. It's all set up. It's all set up. It's right there waiting for you.

Smith wonders if Arthur Butz got it right when he called the Holocaust narrative a hoax.

In the final Chapter Twenty, also of 12 pages, Smith's Revisionism is beginning to ripple through his circle of friends, especially the ones he is close to such as Jenny and her daughter Marrassa. He is asked why he continues to write revisionist material when he knows it hurts his Jewish friends. Smith counters by asking them for empathetic understanding.

Think about it now. Put yourself in the place of a German girl. How would you feel.

In conclusion, Bradley Smith done good, as the Americans would say, in capturing his own physical and mental maturation process. I do not, however, see how the title of the book *A Personal History of Moral*

Decay, can relate to his personal life. In contrast to David Cole's expressed hedonistic nihilism in his autobiographical book, *Republican Party Animal*, Smith enables the reader to rise above such basic self-destruction. And there is growth and development in Smith's intellectual grasp of what life is all about. He does develop a world view that certainly embraces traditional values of generational thinking. He expressed it so beautifully when referring to a woman he thought was a lesbian but he felt empathy for her cause when he realized she had given birth and raised her children.

I would certainly recommend his book to a younger audience, especially those who have been raised on the bread and circus diet of McDonalds and television, and also to those who are the Internet-savvy younger still. Smith's life has been a lived life and it will be interesting to see if he will write a sequel that offers a perspective from his home in Baja, Mexico. Literally, he has been a typical soldier of fortune who did make it ultimately to settle down and raise a family – and cope with all that this mammoth task entails.

*

**Fredrick Töben,
Adelaide**

29 August 2014

Postscript: 30 August 2014

After completing the above I glanced through the reviews offered by Amazon and found two items instructive because they exemplify what I have labelled material from PRIME UGLIES, which is self explanatory when you read the following:

This guy is a Holocaust revisionist, who like all of them, distorts a historical reality to serve the purpose of the anti-Israel machine. Steer clear of this sick crap.

*

Although this vile, antisemitic book is hardly worth the effort to disprove its ludicrous allegations, legitimate scholars have done so quite a few times. Its heavy reliance upon faulty reasoning is indicative of the ignorance embedded within it. Its author is a known holocaust denier. Only morons believe his tripe. One cannot know the source of his bigotry; one can only pity him. For as a historian he is pathetic, offensive, and slyly illogical. Only our allegiance to freedom of speech permits this offal to be disseminated; only the ignorance, antisemitism, and raw stupidity of the reader provoke its purchase.

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Teaching Kids About the Holocaust: How Young Is Too Young?

'Let the Celebrations Begin,' an acclaimed and controversial

Australian children's book, raises questions about Holocaust education

By [Elissa Goldstein](#) | August 29, 2014 12:00 AM

Let the Celebrations Begin has all the hallmarks of a successful children's picture book: simple language with just the right amount of repetitive phrasing, watercolor illustrations, grumpy-yet-charming elders, and wide-eyed children who must learn to accept the difficult realities of their small universe. But—to paraphrase that very Jewish question—there's one thing that makes this picture book different from all other picture books: The story takes place in a concentration camp on the eve of liberation, and all the characters are starving.

The book was originally published to great acclaim, and some controversy, in Australia in 1991, when I was growing up in Melbourne. Author Margaret Wild and illustrator Julie Vivas are both beloved and prolific contributors to the corpus of Australian kid-lit. There's not a bookseller Down Under who doesn't recommend Wild's *Harry & Hopper*; and *Possum Magic*, illustrated by Vivas, is the country's unofficial national picture book.

There was a copy in my school library, which I read many times; I must have been around 9 when I first read it, and I returned to it often as a teenager. *Let the Celebrations Begin* has been out of print in the United States for over a decade, but this September it will be [republished](#). (Which is great, because it means I can finally stop scouring secondhand bookstores for battered, decommissioned library copies.) But even after more than 20 years, the book still raises the same questions it did when it first came out: How young is too young to learn about the Holocaust? And how frank and explicit can a book about the Holocaust be while still being appropriate for children?

For a story set in a concentration camp, the opening sentence is incongruous: "We are planning a party, a very special party, the women and I." The narrator is a girl of about 10, Miriam, who lives in hut 18 with a group of older women, a younger girl named Sarah, and a 4-year-old named David. Unlike Sarah and David, Miriam is old enough to remember a time before the war, when she had a mother and a father and her "very own bedroom" with her "very own toys." Here, in this unnamed place of horror, there are none of those things, only a longing for what once was. But the people in Miriam's hut are resourceful and hopeful; emboldened by rumors of impending liberation, they are making toys for the children with whatever scraps of fabric and thread they can find. The story is fictional but inspired by true events: Wild includes two quotations as a foreword and afterword, one describing the stuffed toys made by women in Belsen for the first children's party after the liberation, the other from a first-hand account of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen by [Dr. Hadassah Rosensaft](#).

Miriam narrates the story in simple, unsentimental language, at times reminiscent of a 1950s primer. Describing David, she says: "See him there in the corner with his mama's old black shawl. See his hungry eyes and legs." Later, when the camp is finally liberated: "Everyone, everyone, the soldiers are here! See their guns and their tanks and the big gates swinging open!" For adult readers, this phrasing is incongruous. Instead of Dick and Jane, we see the mechanisms of oppression and war from a child's point of view, told in a child's voice. If we're disturbed by the

simplicity and naivety of the language, it's because we're supposed to be. For younger readers, especially those unfamiliar with the Holocaust, the text reads differently: Miriam is simply a peer describing her experiences in a straightforward way with minimal historical context, as any child would.

Like the text, Vivas' illustrations—rendered in a muted, pastel palette—juxtapose the horrors of the camps with a more naive, childlike, storybook world. The women and children have skinny legs and shaved, almost bulbous, heads. Their clothes (not uniforms) are threadbare and torn. But Vivas draws them in a way that restores their dignity: Their watercolor eyes are wide and expressive, alternately fearful and mirthful; their meager figures fill the large pages. Their proportions, and the fact that we do not actually see the liberators, reinforce the message that the prisoners are the heroes of the story, not its victims.

These narrative and illustrative choices are incredibly moving, but not without their weaknesses. When the book was first published, some reviewers expressed disappointment at how the topic was handled, concerned that the themes and imagery were inappropriate for young readers. The *Publishers Weekly* review took umbrage at its "improbable plot" and "grotesque figures," concluding that there was "something monstrous about forcing the moribund into cheerful attitudes." Most reviews were positive, however, and the book was short-listed by the Children's Book Council of Australia for Picture Book of the Year in 1992.

Michelle Praver, who taught English at Jewish schools in Melbourne (including the one I attended) for many years, and is now a Ph.D. student in literary studies, recently wrote to me in an email that she found the illustrations alarming when she first read the book: "They are stylized depictions of survivors, distorted for effect, but they are quite haunting." At the time of publication, she explained, there would not have been "many attempts to depict the Holocaust in a picture book for such young readers, and this in itself would have been confronting."

The promise of "celebration" is certainly an unorthodox entry point to a story about the Holocaust. Miriam's focus (and thus, the reader's) is on life and imagination and the comfort of memory. The final message is a hopeful one. The arrival of the soldiers represents the restoration of order and justice, chicken soup is abundant, the children receive their toys, the human spirit reigns triumphant. This is entirely appropriate for young children—why should a 9-year-old expect anything else from the world? And yet, *Let the Celebrations Begin* is a fantasy of survival, one which elides the truth of Holocaust, in which 1.5 million children died, and very few as young as Miriam and David survived the camps. Should Wild or the publishers have included more historical facts within the text of the story? Or does that responsibility fall to us, the adults who will read and teach this book to children?

Though the critic in me is cognizant of the book's limitations, the reader in me loves it and finds solace in it. I cannot read *Let the Celebrations Begin* without tearing up, especially when we are told that the liberators stare at the inmates "oh, so strangely, making soft noises in their throats." Their horror is inarticulate. In that moment, multiple perspectives are masterfully layered: We are close to Miriam's point-of-view

and her jubilation, but we also gaze upon the characters as the liberators would have, their cachectic faces peering out from the page. This poignancy is heightened by our own knowledge of the incomprehensible scale of the Holocaust, of which neither Miriam nor her liberators are yet aware. The effect is haunting.

For me and I think other Australian Jews of my generation, *Let the Celebrations Begin* is more than just a book about the Holocaust. It's a portal into a dark, mostly inaccessible world that once contained our grandparents, and many more family members who did not survive. This perhaps speaks more to the bubble of my community and the myopia of childhood, but I remember being truly shocked to learn that there was a country with *millions* of Jews—America!—and most of them had no direct connection to the camps. Almost all of my peers in Melbourne had grandparents who were survivors, and this simple fact explained the quirks, or neuroses, of our loving but overprotective families. (One of my friends once wryly commented that some sort of collective Holocaust memory dust must have been added to our milk in preschool, like a supplement.) I have no memory of learning about the Holocaust for the first time—I simply always knew that millions had died in horrific circumstances, that my grandparents were lucky to have survived, and that my existence, therefore, was a small but miraculous accident of history.

Reading *Let the Celebrations Begin*, I think, was how I first began to empathize with my grandparents' experiences. Up until that point I had imagined all the survivors I knew enduring the war in their elderly bodies, speaking heavily accented English peppered with Yiddish and the occasional, surprising Aussie idiom. Now I realized that like me, they, too, were once young, and native to a different world. Color started to creep into a narrative that I had always imagined in grayscale, mirroring the scene in which Miriam recalls her home and her toys—the only spread rendered by Vivas in the vibrant primary hues of childhood. I could suddenly imagine myself in that inarticulate world or at least imagine *them* as young people in that world. In one of the most poignant scenes, Miriam recalls the simple act of eating chicken:

It is years since I chewed on a chicken leg. Back then, I didn't like the skin or fat. Now I would gobble it all up—skin, fat and bones. I would lick the plate and pull the wishbone and make sure David had second helpings, third helpings, fourth helpings of everything!

This is exactly how I learned to eat chicken: skin, flesh, marrow, and all. At the end of each Shabbos meal my father would gather the bones from our plates and systematically bite them open vertically, down the center, sucking out the marrow, till all that remained on his plate was a graveyard of bone fragments. It's not the most genteel way to eat chicken, but it's certainly the most gratifying, and the least wasteful. Like a magic pen, Miriam's hunger and wistfulness highlighted for me the invisible connections between my present and my family's past. I suppose I didn't need the fact of death spelled out for me explicitly in the story; it was always amorphously present.

Of course, this isn't so for all readers, and criticisms of the book tend to focus on its vagueness and lack of historicity, and also on the question of whether it is even appropriate for children. The text contains no mention of the terms "Nazi," "Holocaust," "concentration camp," or even "Jews" although the title page shows a hand-sewn Star of David, and a larger spread shows barracks surrounded by barbed wire. The *Publishers Weekly* review recommended the book for

children aged 4-7, which wrongly conflates the format with its intended audience. "The book is not meant for 4-year-olds," Wild cautions in an author's note in the new edition, "yet because it is in picture book format, some people automatically think it can be read to little kids." Praver echoed this sentiment, recommending the book for "a secondary classroom [seventh grade up] rather than a primary one," citing the emergence of picture books as a genre for older readers. Based on my own experience, I'd recommend *Let the Celebrations Begin* for older children—say, 8 and up—as long as an adult or teacher is available initially to provide context.

"These days I don't think the book is regarded as so radical," Wild wrote to me this week in an email, highlighting the popularity of novels such as John Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* and Morris Gleitzman's *Once* series, which have accustomed readers and reviewers to Holocaust stories for children set in concentration camps. Kids are always more emotionally resilient, and book-curious, than we realize. (How many of us read [Maus](#) before we were teens?) We may want to protect young children, especially Jewish children, from the trauma of the Holocaust, but we shouldn't underestimate their ability to grasp basic concepts of war, persecution, and genocide—after all, the world looks pretty grim right now. The challenge lies in striking the right balance between objective historical facts and age-appropriate storytelling.

The problem is, we can't have it both ways: A book cannot frankly convey all the facts of the Holocaust (or any violent historical event) *and* be suitable for all young readers at the same time. Maturity and literacy levels vary. There's no such thing as the perfect Holocaust book for children, just as no novel can fully convey the experience for adults. The only way to subvert this dilemma would be to restrict our reading to nonfiction and memoir, but those genres have their own limitations. Fiction is one of the best ways to cultivate empathy and curiosity in children. If the point is to gently assimilate knowledge of the Holocaust into a child's consciousness with emotional honesty and hope for humanity, *Let the Celebrations Begin* is a compelling place to start.



[Two Excellent New Picture Books Help Kids Learn About the Holocaust](#)

'The Whispering Town' and 'Hidden' are among the best contributions in years to Holocaust literature for young children – By [Marjorie Ingall](#)

[Fear Factor](#) Holocaust books for children can be terrifying—for adults. How do we teach our kids about history without scarring them for life? – By [Marjorie Ingall](#)

[My First Holocaust](#) The children's books that traumatized a generation – By [Marjorie Ingall](#)

<http://www.tabletmag.com/jewishlifeandreligion/183320/let-the-celebrationsbegin?all=1>

Anti-Israel Galloway beaten in street attack

Controversial British MP George Galloway who declared city in UK 'Israel-free zone' taken to hospital suffering suspected broken jaw after he was assaulted in a London street; MP's spokesman says assailant 'shouted about the Holocaust' before beating him.

AFP, 08.30.14, 09:55

George Galloway, a British lawmaker known for his anti-Israel positions, was taken to a hospital with a suspected broken jaw after he was assaulted in a London street.

The Respect Party MP for Bradford West sustained a suspected broken rib and bruising to his face in the attack which occurred on Friday evening as he posed for pictures with people in the Ladbroke Grove area.

A man shouted a comment about the Holocaust and attacked the MP, the 60-year-old's spokesman said.

"George was posing for pictures with people and this guy just attacked him, leapt on him and started punching him," said the spokesman.

"It appears to be connected with his comments about Israel because the guy was shouting about the Holocaust." Galloway was interviewed by police earlier this month following a speech in Leeds in which he claimed Bradford was an Israeli-free area.

Galloway was questioned voluntarily following complaints made after he urged his constituents to boycott Israeli goods, services, academics and tourists in a speech he made on August 2. His spokesman said he cooperated with police.

Galloway had described himself as being in "pretty bad shape" following the assault Friday, the spokesman said.

A Metropolitan Police spokesman said: "Police were called at approximately 1940 hours to Golborne Road, W10, after a man was assaulted in the street.

"Officers attended. The suspect was found a short time later and stopped.

"He was arrested on suspicion of ABH (actual bodily harm) and taken to the south London police station where he remains."

Related stories:

* [British MP declares constituency 'Israel-free zone'](#)

* [Police questions British MP who declared Bradford 'Israel-free zone'](#)

* [Israeli tourists visit Bradford after area declared 'Israel-free'](#)

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-4565659.00.html>

Elvis Was Our Shabbos Goy

By [Vox Tablet](#) | August 25, 2014 12:00 AM

Some people lean on neighbors for a cup of sugar. The Fruchters, of Memphis, Tennessee, needed theirs to help them keep the Sabbath.

We've all got our go-to story about brushes with fame, but Harold Fruchter's is truly a conversation stopper. Fruchter, a singer and guitarist in a [Jewish wedding band](#), and the son of a rabbi, was born in 1952. When he was a baby, and up to the age of 2, his family lived in the upstairs apartment of a two-story flat in Memphis. Their downstairs neighbors were

the Presleys. The two families formed a friendship, and the future King of Rock, just a teenager then, learned to pick up the cues when the Fruchters needed someone to turn on a light or unlock a door on Shabbos. The Fruchters, for their part, helped Elvis out materially (if not spiritually) on occasion. Here's the story of that friendship, told by Harold Fruchter. The piece was produced by Rob Sachs, with help from Bob Carlson, and first aired on KCRW's [UnFictional](#).

<http://www.tabletmag.com/podcasts/182703/elvis-was-our-shabbos-goy>

Oil tanker with \$100 million cargo goes missing off Texas coast



Missing ship is latest sign of growing tensions between Iraqi government and Kurds. An oil tanker loaded with \$100 million of disputed Iraqi Kurdish crude has disappeared off the coast of Texas in the latest development in a high stakes game of cat-and-mouse between Baghdad and the Kurds.

The AIS ship tracking system used by the U.S. Coast Guard and Reuters on Thursday showed no known position for the United Kalavryta, which was carrying 1 million barrels of crude and 95 percent full when it went dark.

Several other tankers carrying disputed crude from Iran or Iraqi Kurdistan have unloaded cargoes after switching off their transponders, which makes their movements hard to track.

Days ago, the partially full Kamari tanker carrying Kurdish crude disappeared from satellite tracking north of Egypt's Sinai. It reappeared empty two days later near Israel.

The United Kalavryta arrived near Galveston Bay on Saturday, but has since disappeared. And in late July, the tanker United Emblem offloaded part of its cargo of Kurdish crude onto another ship in the South China Sea.

Baghdad, which says it has the exclusive right to export the crude, has filed a lawsuit in a U.S. court to reclaim control of the United Kalavryta cargo and block the Kurdistan Regional Government from delivering it.

The suit shows Baghdad is stepping up a legal and diplomatic push to stop Kurdistan from exporting crude, which the Kurds say is crucial to their own dreams of independence.

The court on Monday threw out an order issued to seize the cargo, saying it lacked jurisdiction because the tanker was some 60 miles offshore.

The judge has invited Iraq to re-plead its case over the rightful ownership of the cargo. Baghdad could file claims against anyone taking delivery of the oil.

A Coast Guard official said the vessel in the Gulf of Mexico might have turned off its beacon, sailed beyond antennas that monitor transponders, or perhaps some antennas might have been taken out of service.

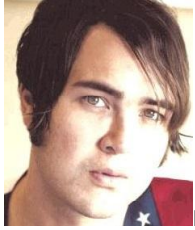
However, dozens of vessels were visible on Thursday in the Galveston Offshore Lightering Area, where the Kurdish tanker was last seen.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/oil-tanker-with-100-million-cargo-goes-missing-off-texas-coast-9699555.html>

Video: Friday, August 29, 2014

Aerial view of Israel's savage destruction of Gaza's City's Shujaiya neighborhood
<http://1newsjunkie.blogspot.com.au/2014/08/aerial-view-of-israels-savage.html>

The Israeli Blackmail Machine: The Clintons Weren't the Only Ones



Dean Ryan, August 29, 2014 By [21wire](#)

At a time when the Oval Office was renamed the *Oral Office*, and cigars became a favourite past time of presidents and kinksters alike, the leader of the free world was at the mercy of Israel's impressive blackmail machine.

A powerful new book released at the end of July has brought to light how racy phone sex conversations between Bill Clinton and White House intern Monica Lewinsky were wiretapped circa 1997-98, and [used as a blackmail against the White House](#) by Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu**.

Clinton Inc. :The Audacious Rebuilding of a Political Machine, states that Netanyahu was using intercepted phone sex conversations between the president and Lewinsky to force the release of American **Jonathan Pollard**, who had been caught spying on behalf of the Israelis. Clinton was keen to play ball with Netanyahu and soon followed with a desperate plea to release Pollard but was denied at the time by CIA director George Tenet.

The book written by Weekly Standard Editor Daniel Halper, who also claims that other sex calls with other women were intercepted by the British and Russians. "Foreign spies weren't the only ones who knew about the couple's phone sex," the book states. One thing is certain here: the Clinton administration was one of the most compromised and vulnerable presidencies in American history.

These and other revelation should put a crimp in the Hillary 2016 campaign, as Americans begin to ask whether or not Hillary only stayed married to Bill to further her own aspirations of power – meaning the marriage – at least from 1995 (conservative estimate), has been one big public act.

Majority of the book was compiled by using paperwork named the "Monica Files" obtained by a team of lawyers and investigators hired by Lewinsky as a legal defense in case action was taken against the President, and obtained exclusively by Halper. During a 1998 meeting in Maryland, Netanyahu revealed to Clinton that the Israelis had listened to his sex calls with Lewinsky but told the President he'd "threw away the tapes," assuming Clinton would arrange for the release of Pollard. Of course, "threw away the tapes" is code for, 'we still have them and if you want them to stay buried then play ball with us'.

According to the "Monica Files," Clinton often used the White House theater just steps away from First Lady Hillary Clinton's East Wing office, for many of his sexual escapades. The President would then pleasure himself while describing what he was wearing which consisted of his "blue tighties" and a gray University of Arkansas sweatshirt.

All this comes on the heels of a recent lawsuit that identifies **Bill Clinton** and his good friend and fundraiser, **Jeffrey Epstein**, as [part of a child sex ring run from billionaire Epstein's private island](#), *Little St James*, in the Caribbean.

According to eyewitnesses and flight logs, Clinton took multiple trips to [Epstein's island of horrors where he kept under-aged girls as sex slaves](#). Considering Bill's well documented sexual proclivities going all the way back to his

rise to power in Arkansas, it's near impossible that Bill would be on such an island and not partake.

Epstein's ties to the Jewish elite and Israel are not hard to find. Epstein managed the money of ultra-elite US-Israeli power broker, billionaire **Leslie Wexner**. The two parted company after Epstein's fall from grace in 2008.

Other prominent passengers on his private jets include former **Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak**, Prince Andrew, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson and former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers. Imagine the blackmail potential of keeping reports on Epstein's VIP circle. Was Ehud Barak collating such reports, or was he just a punter?

The Israeli dirt gathering operation may have also extended into British elite circles. Clear back to the 1980s, Britain's premiere sex criminal and paedophile ring leader, **Jimmy Savile**, [made regular trips to Israel and was 'good friends' with the Israeli PM](#) and others. Imagine what information Savile could pass on to the Israelis. For some odd reason, Savile found many friends amongst Zionists and Israeli leaders. The UK Jewish Chronicle saw him as a 'Dear Friend' of the Jewish people and their State. *Strange but true.*

Billary 2016

What does this mean for a potential Hillary Clinton 2016 presidential bid, and more importantly Israeli-US relations? There is an abundance of meanings to go around. The tainted legacy of the Clinton's never seems to disappear. The stench of countless scandals, battered women and dead witnesses stretching from Mena, Arkansas to Washington DC – still lingers in the consciousness of the American public.

While families were still figuring out the Macarena, households were being introduced to the Starr Report and having to explain definitions of what sex is to their loved ones. The Lewinsky/Clinton Oval Office *stained* romance gave us quite the shameful ending to the 90's, and cheapened the White House in the eyes of many Americans. No doubt that GOP rivals will be making Bill and their non-marriage a major feature during the campaign cycle.

Perhaps the bigger issue is the stranglehold over the US Presidency by Israel and the tricks they have still yet to unleash.

How valuable would these type of sex tapes be when Israel is carpet bombing Gaza in the face of Washington? When nothing seems to ever add up – as is the case with the US-Israel waltz, maybe that's because of blackmail material kept in a safe place.

The reality that our elected officials are one Franklin Scandal away from complete political castration is an unsettling reality. The secret sex cabal and recordings that reside in Benjamin Netanyahu's private collection may point to the very reasons many US Presidents are never forthcoming to the atrocities committed by the Netanyahu regime.

Are US leaders like the Clintons set-up to fail or are they picked from a batch of failures?

As we can see, history will not vindicate Bill Clinton. The deeper you look, the worse it gets.

It's true: the White House was blackmailed by our 'friend' Israel, and we can only guess how often this goes on, and who else has been compromised.

The US Presidency seems to be nothing more than a puppetry post that only hires sexually compromised lap dogs who know to take orders from their foreign masters while wiping their feet with the American Constitution.

<http://21stcenturywire.com/2014/08/29/the-israeli-blackmail-machine-the-clintons-werent-the-only-ones/>