Carrying over key concepts in *Still Alive* from last week’s section meeting

- Modifying reader’s expectations of the memoir (137-138)

- Interpellating the reader as a woman / strong feminist voice in the text (183)

- Recounting various reactions to Klüger’s story from Holocaust survivors, Germans of the immediate WWII generation and thereafter, Americans, etc. (151)

- Issues of naming Shoah/Holocaust (moment when what was understood as European “civilization” catastrophically broke down) (168, 181)

- Agency / freedom / self-determination (130)
Klüger’s mother and mental illness

- Mother’s mental illness (paranoia) met with “objective correlative” in the real world (104, 123)
  - objective correlative: the physical equivalent or manifestation of an immaterial thing or abstract idea (OED)

- Mother’s suggestion that Klüger walk into the electric barbed wire on the first night in Auschwitz

  Perhaps a certain wild, destructive pleasure was at the root of her proposal. But more probably she was quite serious and quite desperate. As I think back, I ask myself if I have ever forgiven her that worst evening of my life. . . . Only when I had children of my own did I realize that one might well decide to kill them in Auschwitz rather than wait.” (97)

- The idea that there might be a certain pleasure (Eros) in a destructive death-driven impulse (Thanatos) is a deeply Freudian concept.
The Legacy of Sigmund Freud and psychoanalysis in *Still Alive*

- Vienna as “Sigmund Freud’s town” (27)
- “Freud was an optimist” (54)
- Klüger’s failed postwar analysis (186-192) with Dr. Fessler suggests the insufficiency of psychoanalysis to deal with trauma originating from the outside:

  Fessler had an office in midtown Manhattan and was doing well, for psychiatry was a field in which a Viennese accent was an asset. The garden-variety psychiatry which flourished in New York in those days avoided all social criticism and any connection between individual suffering and historical evil—it was in full flight from the excess of history which we had just managed to put behind us. Hence all psychic suffering had to have its origin inside, in the mind of the patient. No cold winds from the outside could affect the hothouse of the psyche. (186)

  I would have liked to show him my poems. There he could have read the words I had found for my grief. For his part, he had not provided the words. Not even the word *Trauerarbeit* [the work of mourning], which he must have known and I didn’t. The work of mourning, the recognition that it’s hard work. (190)
Pervasiveness of the language and concepts of psychoanalysis in *Still Alive*

- Arrested or incomplete mourning (80, 190)
  - melancholia: deep sadness or gloom, a mental condition marked by persistent depression and ill-founded fears (*OED*). In Freud’s “Mourning and Melancholia” (1917), the two conditions are distinguished by the fact that mourning is temporary, while melancholia is indeterminate/ceaseless.

- Radically conflicting emotions described as “moral ambivalence” (44) / love and hate towards Theresienstadt (86)
  - ambivalence: the state of having mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about something or someone (*OED*). In psychoanalysis, ambivalence plays an important role in the development of the individual, especially as the subject learns to tolerate the simultaneous feeling of love and hate.

- Self-awareness of the enormity of her situation upon the arrival at the death camp; projection toward the moment when she would write a memoir (98)
  - sublimation: in psychoanalytic theory, to divert or modify (an instinctual impulse) into a culturally higher or socially more acceptable activity (*OED*)
**Documentary** (nonfiction film that “documents” an aspect of reality, usually for educational purposes or to maintain a historical record)

Documentaries are all methods of recording on film any aspect of reality interpreted either by sincere and justifiable reconstruction, so as to appeal either to reason or emotion, for the purpose of stimulating the desire for, and the widening of human knowledge and understanding, and of truthfully posing problems and their solutions in the spheres of economics, culture, and human relations. (*World Union of Documentary*, 1948)

- What is reconstructed, and through what formal strategies is that reconstruction achieved? What is the purpose or intended objective of that reconstruction?
Blog Post 3: Brainstorming Disciplinary Approaches and Humanistic Research Questions

- Due Sunday, May 1
- Extended prompt on section website

While you will certainly ask and answer *who, what, where,* and *when* questions of your artifact, your research paper will be based on several central humanistic research questions, that is, questions that ask *how* and *why* meaning is generated by this artifact in a given cultural context.

Different humanities disciplines (history, philosophy, literature, art history, musicology, cultural studies) ask different kinds of questions and publish secondary sources in different kinds of academic journals. Thus you need to brainstorm not only the questions you will ask of your artifact, but what discipline(s) you will draw from. I am open to your projects being interdisciplinary and even drawing from disciplines outside of the humanities, but you must still pose some research questions from a humanistic perspective.
Questions to Ask of Your Primary Source

1. What is to be gained by studying my primary source in a specific historical and cultural context?

2. Which fields of the humanities would study a primary source like mine?

3. How would those fields analyze my primary source differently?

4. Which features of my primary source illuminate or highlight controversy?

5. How does my primary source give a voice to a silenced element of a population?

6. How does my primary source relate to the major themes explored this year?

7. What are the ethos, logos, and pathos of my primary source?
Primary Sources ("Artifacts") from the Nanking Massacre

An article on the "Contest to kill 100 people using a sword" published in the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun* (13 December 1937)

Possible humanistic research questions: How was the rape of Nanking represented in popular media to the Japanese public? What cultural conceptions of masculinity and the warrior ethos shaped these representations? How did the initial and subsequent framing of this event perpetuate collective denial about the rape of Nanking in Japanese culture?
Primary Sources (“Artifacts”) from the Nanking Massacre

Photograph of a Chinese POW about to be beheaded by a Japanese officer with a shin gunto (July 1938).

Photographer unknown, first published in Harold Timperley’s *The Japanese Atrocities in China* (1938), one of the first journalistic accounts of the Nanking Massacre for Western audiences.

Possible humanistic research questions: How were the mass murders and rapes in Nanking framed to the Western world by journalists and historians like Harold Timperley? What forms of Orientalism shaped Western representations of Asian warfare?
Primary Sources ("Artifacts") from the Nanking Massacre

Telegram written by journalist Harold Timperley describing the atrocities (17 January 1938). Used as primary evidence in the 1946 war crimes tribunals against Japanese military figures.

Possible humanistic research questions: What role did Western play in evidence gathered for the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and the Nanjing War Crimes Tribunal? How did the witness accounts of other Westerners like Robert O. Wilson and John Magee shape the proceedings? How might we compare the so-called Nuremberg Defense to the defense of General Iwane Masui? How and why would it conform to Hannah Arendt’s thesis about the “banality of evil”? 
Primary Sources ("Artifacts") from the Nanking Massacre

Two sculptures at the Memorial for Compatriots Killed in the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Forces of Aggression located in Jiangdongmen, Nanjing, near a site where thousands of bodies were buried, called a "pit of ten thousand corpses."

Possible humanistic research questions: What forms of collective remembrance led to the construction of the Nanjing Massacre memorial site? How did the artists commissioned to make sculptures for the site conceptualize of their works? What forms of public mourning and education take place at this site, and has this changed over time?
Historian Iris Chang with her bestselling study, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (Basic Books, 1997)

Possible humanistic research questions generated from a secondary source: How does family folklore shape scholarly projects? How do cultural biases shape respective national interpretations of the historical events that took place between 1937-8 in Nanking? In what ways do scholars disagree about the Japanese government’s attempts (or lack thereof) to redress the atrocities?