

A black and white photograph of a desert landscape. The foreground and middle ground are dominated by sand dunes with distinct, wavy ripples. In the distance, a small, dark structure, possibly a tent or a small building, is visible on a higher dune. The sky is dark and appears to have some faint, wispy clouds or smoke. The overall mood is somber and desolate.

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# **EXTREMITIES**

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**Trauma, Testimony,  
and Community**

Edited by Nancy K. Miller  
and Jason Tougaw

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**EXTREMITIES**

## Holocaust Testimony, National Memory

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Orly Lubin

In June of 1943, a memorial service was held at kibbutz Yagur for Tossia Altman and Zivia Lubetkin, the young Polish Zionists who led the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in April and were assumed to be dead in its wake. Although the two women were “not granted success in rescuing the surviving remnant,” as Mair Ya’ari of the Hashomer Hatzair movement declared, they “did save our dignity,” and for that, they were “already legends.” Other eulogists followed Ya’ari’s logic to honor the dead women who lived on in the living collective. “Zivia-Tossia, these are not names,” said Emma Levin-Talmi, a leading educator. “They symbolize battalions and flocks of rebels. They are a symbol.” “Zivia,” another eulogist intoned, “the name has become an insignia, a symbol and a flag” (Shalev 209–10).

But it was soon discovered that if Tossia and Zivia survived the uprising symbolically, they survived it in the physical sense as well. Tossia Altman escaped her supposed death only to die soon after—she was killed one month later in a fire at the celluloid factory where she hid (Shalev 194)—but Zivia Lubetkin lived to emigrate to Palestine, where she founded a kibbutz with other survivors. Although Tossia and Zivia met dramatically different fates, their narratives serve similar functions in the symbolic history of the nation. The Zionist collective assumed ownership of their stories and used their bodies as symbols of the uprising, of resistance and force. This purpose is fundamentally different from that of their male

counterparts, who entered the collective memory as heroic personas, remembered for the specificity of their deeds. Lubetkin's companion Antek Zuckerman, for example, is remembered as the head of the uprising; K. Tzetnik is remembered as an author, and as the witness who fainted on the stand while testifying at the Eichmann trial in 1961.<sup>1</sup> Surrendering this kind of specificity, the stories of Tossia and Zivia were subsumed into the nation's, and remembered only in symbolic terms.

Lubetkin's testimonies worked to sustain the memory of the Holocaust, but they also represented a new Zionist ethos. In that ideological framework, they served at least three narratives. First, they supported the linear Zionist meta-narrative that traced the people's progress from the diaspora to redemption in Zion. Second, they absolved the guilt of Jews who lived in Palestine during the war by reassuring them that someone else had "stood in" for them when they failed to act on behalf of their brethren in Europe. Third and most important, they "proved" the existence of a "New Jew." Unlike the diasporic one, this New Jew was a fighter who protected herself and others; she was Western, secular, and socialist (thus excluding Orthodox Jews, Jews from Muslim countries, and the bourgeoisie).<sup>2</sup> Lubetkin fit this description perfectly, especially in light of Benedict Anderson's thesis that nations describe themselves in the feminized terms of kinship and home (Anderson 7, 143). As a woman, Lubetkin was well suited to symbolize the imagined community of Israel.

Her testimonies served this purpose through multiple layers of visual, physical, and semantic mediation. A documentary film made some fifty years later shows Lubetkin's sister recalling that Zivia's arrival on the shores of Tel Aviv was "like something from another world. You stand at the port and there on the boat you see her alive and life-size and even laughing, and I've boarded the ship and of course you hug, cry. You don't speak. Not a word. You don't ask. . . . You're struck speechless until the excitement subsides. And then we got off and of course she wasn't mine right away."<sup>3</sup> Upon her arrival, Lubetkin was immediately summoned to Yagur, where the Kibbutz Hameuchad movement held its convention. She was scheduled to bear witness on the site of her premature eulogy, where her resurrection would symbolize the new life of the Jewish nation. As she described the ghetto, the expulsions, and, most important, the events of the uprising, she was to describe how the rebels withstood their conditions, and how they fought against them.

→ But Lubetkin did not go directly to Yagur. The leaders of the Kibbutz Hameuchad movement took her to Bet Oren, where she gave her testimo-

ny first in private. In the documentary, Yoske Rabinovitz reported that he and Tabenkin, two of the leaders of the movement, sat with Lubetkin for "two nights and three days, part of the time in the wood and part of the time in the room. She told us—in tears, with pauses, in Yiddish, in Hebrew, in silences—what was in her heart. The story was unimaginably tragic. There was nothing in it of heroism, no glory, but it was as if she herself was bearing the entire six million."

Reflecting on the difference between Lubetkin's first testimony and her second, the documentary's narrator says that, "two days later at the convention at Yagur, Zivia's tears dried up." She rewarded her comrades' efforts to unify her fragmented past into a narrative that would unite the members of its audience. Seemingly risen from the dead, she offered her story to the nation's history. From the details of alleyways and bunkers, she built a city out of language; from specific acts of self-assertion, she constructed historical meaning. This act of construction was recapitulated in her miraculous "resurrection," which gave the dead a physical presence, suggesting that they participated symbolically in the national effort at Yagur.

This affirmation was desperately needed. Before Lubetkin spoke, other orators expressed their hope that she would explain the behavior of Jews during the war. "We were tortured by the question: Why did the Jews act this way," one reflected. "This way of annihilation without resistance bore into us and ate away at us: For haven't we turned over a new leaf in the history of Israel? Haven't we created a new, different kind of Jew? . . . In the depths of our souls burnt the anticipation for news of a rebellion and an uprising in the Diaspora. Therefore, we urgently await this testimony, the tidings of this testimony, the word of active reaction."<sup>4</sup>

Zivia Lubetkin complied with her listeners' demands. Relinquishing the first-person grammatical form, she translated her personal experience into a collective narrative. That act of translation is captured and repeated on the thirty-five seconds of film—visuals with no audio—which are all that remain of the convention's documentary. Edited to serve the movement's purpose, the film begins with Lubetkin facing the camera and the audience standing behind her; wearing a pinafore and shot from below, she speaks to the void, her head moving slightly. The camera seems to prefer the audience to the speaker as it then pans to a long shot of the crowd standing outside the tent, smiling. For a few seconds, the entire screen is filled with people, and then the camera pans away, framing them against the stark, surrounding landscape. This movement from figure to

ground represents a movement from the individual to the collective, and at the same time, it represents a movement from the old Jew to the new one who is “local born,” settling the land that the Zionist ethos holds to be abandoned. In the end, the camera unites Lubetkin’s listeners by severing them from her and from the terror of her testimony.

As it is recorded, Lubetkin’s speech deviates from the generic conventions of testimony. It does not seem to reach for catharsis, or to perform the labor of mourning, or to inscribe material traces of the truth that must be told, much as it defies telling (Felman and Laub 57–63; Friedlander 1–21). It does not strive to generate an historical truth or to represent a life experience, even with the two additional sections that formed the autobiographical book *In the Days of Destruction and Revolt*. It does not reflect the constitution of the single subject through the act of writing, as Georges Gusdorf suggests that autobiography does (Gusdorf 28–48). Rather, refusing to present herself primarily as a survivor of trauma, Lubetkin constructs herself as a symbol of the New Jew, as evidence of the new nation.

Dori Laub shows that the listeners of a survivor’s testimony assume a position that is both essential and perilous. Following a “journey fraught with dangers,” the listener must “be unobtrusively yet imminently present, active, in the lead,” so that “when the flow of fragments falters, the listener has to enhance them and induce their free expression” (Felman and Laub 71–72). Lubetkin rehearses her testimony to prepare it for its imperiled listener, who, as Laub writes, “comes to partially experience trauma in himself” (Felman and Laub 57). But Lubetkin allows her listeners to do more than enable the testimony; she allows them to mold it, to determine its narrative form and its symbolic use. Making herself subservient to the group, she tells a story that they need to hear. She aims to offer a testimony that will not rupture her audience’s psyches but will, on the contrary, gather them together into a coherent, collective whole.

According to the movement’s journal, Zivia began her testimony by posing four questions, which are stricken from the book (*Mibifnim* 1–8). “How did it happen,” Zivia asked rhetorically, “that an entire people, millions of Jews went to the slaughter? What was the fate of our movement and its members? How did we work in the movement? What was the source of the strength we needed for the stand we took?” These are the same questions that her listeners raised before her arrival, and Lubetkin offers only factual answers; she does not provide the far-reaching explanations that her audience evidently wanted. She does, however, suggest that they might do what she does not. At the beginning of her speech, she ex-

presses her wish “to tell, to speak simply, and you will put together the picture yourselves” (*Mibifnim* 5). Subsequent speakers reminded the audience that Lubetkin had put her narrative in their hands, to do with it what they would. “Zivia said,” one speaker chided, “I shall tell so that you shall hear and so that you shall know, and so that you shall judge and so that you shall learn” (*Mibifnim* 5). Another speaker took this didactic move one step farther, aiming to control the audience’s interpretation of the events that Lubetkin reported. The Jews who led the uprising demonstrated courage and self-determination, the speaker argued, and “they could not have done otherwise. They walked a hundred paths until they reached the clear understanding that there was no other way. And how did they find the strength?—Man was not alone, an individual; these were groups, kibbutzim, collectives” (*Mibifnim* 5). With this retrospection, the speakers turned Lubetkin’s autobiographical narrative into a Zionist allegory.

Testimony is a duty fulfilled to the community of listeners, but as Shoshana Felman writes, it is also a declaration that this duty is unfulfillable. Ruz’ka Korchak acknowledged both of these functions in the testimonies she gave. To the executive committee of *Hakibbutz Ha’artzi*, she said that “what I tell you will not be a report. It will be a greeting, greetings from the other side” (Tuvim, Drot, and Rav 87); at the Women Workers’ Council one month later, she said that “one thing was always clear to us: that we wouldn’t be understood. . . . Human beings are incapable of understanding what took place there. . . . You already know a lot about the genocide and its form. What it was like, you’ll never understand anyway” (101). Like Chayka Grossman, Korchak addressed this paradox by collecting her memories of the war into an autobiographical book that is highly detailed. Working on a local level, both Grossman and Korchak document history almost hour-by-hour, describing who said what to whom, and who met whom under what circumstances. But while these women survivors avoid focusing on the self in their testimonies the better to serve the collective’s needs, they serve the self as well. By testifying about an extreme event, they gain entrance into the national narrative as full participants. Their testimonies, therefore, simultaneously constitute “the self” autobiographically and submerge it in collective history.<sup>6</sup>

But it is not only the combination of gender, genre, and national demands that enables “I” to accede to “we.” It is also the extreme event that these women witness and try to represent in testimonial language. Dori Laub distinguishes Buber’s loss of the “thou” from the survivors’ loss of the “I”: for the Jewish people, he reflects, “there was no longer an other

to which one could say "Thou" in the hope of being heard, of being recognized as a subject, of being answered. The historical reality of the Holocaust became, thus, a reality which relinquished philosophically the very possibility of address, the possibility of appealing, or of turning to, another. But when one cannot turn to a 'you' one cannot say 'thou' even to oneself. . . . This loss of the capacity to be a witness to oneself and thus to witness from the inside is perhaps the true meaning of annihilation" (Felman and Laub 82). Thus, the Holocaust is what Laub calls "an event without a witness" (Felman and Laub 80–81). Even when she testifies to the events of the uprising, the witness cannot be "a witness to herself," because she is not an "I." She is something else.

To protect that version of herself, she entrusts it to the collective to which she belongs. Zivia Lubetkin had no interest in the "I"—neither in its uniqueness, nor in its relations with the others. "I'll never forget," she began in one of the extremely rare instances when she used the first person; "I'll never forget the night when the whole ghetto went up in flames on every side. I rushed out of my hiding place at night and behold it was alight like daylight. This great light aroused such wonder." The testimonial subject disappears into the disaster she witnesses. Lubetkin becomes even less present as her testimony continues. In the transcription of the oral testimony she still gives a first-person account, but now she describes what she has heard rather than what she has seen, and in the book version that subjective account moves even further toward objectivity. "Surrounding me" was "a burst of blazing flames, the din of falling buildings, breaking windows, pillars of smoke rose sky high, and the fire spreads and gnaws away, spread and gnaws away" (Lubetkin, *In the Days of Destruction and Revolt* 141). The first person disappears into a self that is disembodied, attributing its eyes and its ears to everybody.

At the moment of testimony, however, a chasm opens up between the "individual I" and the symbol: the "I" refuses to accede to its collective purpose in a moment when the creation of the symbol is briefly postponed. It is a moment like that of Zivia Lubetkin's testimony at the Eichmann trial in 1961, when her body is put on display.<sup>7</sup> A woman who exists as a national symbol appears, briefly, as an actual person. But this appearance of the corporeal "I" must be repeated endlessly—hence, the repetition of annual rituals, in which the witnesses repeat their testimonies to audiences in schools, public centers, and on TV. Ruz'ka Korchak offered her testimony to the executive committee of Hakibbutz Ha'hartzi and again at the Women Workers' Council; Zivia Lubetkin repeated hers

at Bet Oren and then, again, before the convention at Yagur. This repetition works through a duality that is characteristic of the testimonial act: the duality between the symbol and the corporeal body. Both a symbolic effort of mourning and an actual act of violence, testimony is inherently dual. At the same time as it represents its speaker's experience with violence, it enacts violence against its listeners. It forces the knowledge of trauma upon them, which traumatizes them as well. In this way, it doubles with every telling; it is at once the story of an individual and a contribution to a memory that is collective.

The filmed sequences of Lubetkin's testimony demonstrate this duality. Moving swiftly from Lubetkin to the listeners who left the tent where she spoke, the camera allows the retreating listeners to override the witness, to control her testimony and its interpretation. But even as the camera locates Lubetkin within a single, symbolic frame, it also allows her to escape it by helping her to create a testimonial site. Even as her corporeal body disappears into the national landscape, it also provides a locus for all of the locations she describes. Once "there" in Warsaw, it is now "here" in Yagur, where it defies immediate symbolization. As it becomes a visual object, it betrays its testimonial role: it does not testify to her specificity, but rather, to her symbolic function.

The extremes that Lubetkin represents are determined by the symbolic distance between Warsaw and Eretz-Israel. As she represents the Warsaw Ghetto and its surroundings in terms of the Zionist narrative, she creates a continuum from the dying diaspora to the site of Zion. She links the bodies that perished in Europe to the laboring ones that occupy the newly captured—and supposedly deserted—territories. Emphasizing the newness of the land and its people, she brings continuity to the national narrative she helps create; speaking from one site about another that is lost, she knits the two in one body that occupied both. Her corporeality dissolves in the heroism of "there" and its origin "here," in Zionist ideology. Relegating the distant diaspora to history, this ideology locates the present in Eretz-Israel. It associates the site of the past with (feminine) passivity and erases the female body.<sup>8</sup> Like diasporic sites, the female body no longer exists except in memory, in testimony that is unspeakable. The principal problem of Lubetkin's testimony is not the struggle to create a female voice; it is the struggle to find the site from which she can speak. As she constitutes that site, she becomes a full participant in a history that typically excluded women. Using the dualities of testimony, she creates a dual presence in the nation's meta-narrative: both as a symbol and an

active member of the community. However, at the same time, she resists assuming a strictly allegorical status, as the image of the female body has historically done. She retains her individual specificity not through the autobiographical tale, but through the materiality of her body—by insisting upon its relationship to the site, binding its presence to the place where it appears.

Using her body as a voice for thousands, Lubetkin represented people who were without a place, without a site. Continually displaced, her body was removed again and again—in the false reports of her death, in her concealment at Bet Oren, and in the movement of the camera, away from her body to the body of the collective. Distanced from public life through her own actions and the actions of others, she was finally buried at Lochamei Hageta'ot in the north, away from the national leaders' cemeteries. Yet the repressed body repeatedly returned: it rose from the dead, bore witness at Yagur, testified at the Eichmann trial. All the while, it remained a symbol, addressing the national order not as a voice and a body, but rather as a myth, a flag. Undermining the unity of this symbol, Lubetkin divides her history into "there" and "here," Warsaw and the kibbutz—and as she represented each site, she divided it yet again. "Here" is comprised of Bet Oren and Yagur, of Yagur and Lochamei Hageta'ot—and the speaker of her story is also fragmentary. The speaker shifted from alleyway to alleyway, crossed to the Aryan side of the ghetto wall through a hole and back into the ghetto through the sewer pipes. The unity of her narrative is continually shattered by the rebels' lack of control over the events, by the arbitrariness of life and death, by the individual names that make up the collective. It is also disrupted by the singularity of each individual body that was burned, tortured, starved to death, gassed inside the headquarters' bunker, wounded on the Aryan side. The unity of the city decomposed as the roofs caved in, as the hidden escape shafts of the bunker were sealed, as the sewage pipes filled up with gas. All of these things fragmented the site, rendering it unsuitable to house a unified narrative or a unified territory.

This fragmentary movement between one place and another prevents the reification of "the other," for as the "other" changes with every movement, "otherness" changes, too. Zivia Lubetkin inhabited the status of the "other"—as a Jew, a woman, and most important, as a diasporic immigrant coming from "there." But at the same time, her testimony creates other "others"—Germans, Poles, Polish collaborators, Jewish traitors, Jews who did not perceive the gravity of the situation, and Jews in Palestine

who divided all the pioneering movements after the war. She does not demonize the others she creates, however, because to do so would jeopardize her entry into the national narrative. She avoids the definitive determination of her otherness by avoiding the crystallization of a foreign, hostile otherness, as well; she moves incessantly, shifting from one place to another.

Without solid ground beneath her feet, Lubetkin constructs herself in movement. In this way, she resists the construction of Zion as a fixed site from which to speak. The Zionist meta-narrative constitutes itself vis-à-vis the Palestinian "other," which erases other forms of difference (women, Arab Jews—Jews from Muslim countries—diasporic Jews). Lubetkin's narrative, in contrast, represents many others, even the body of the refugee, which appears both "there" and "here"—"there" as erased speech, and "here" erased into "human dust," as the refugees were called.

The human body reappears in Lubetkin's testimony when the site disappears—when the ghetto burns. She describes the fighters coming out of the bunker at 18 Mila Street "looking horrible—creatures covered in filth and sand, weak and shivering as if not of this world. Someone faints and another breathes with difficulty. Yehuda Wangrover, of Hashomer Hatzair, takes rattling, strangled breaths, and Tossia Altman lies there wounded in her head and leg. We're surrounded by broken pieces of people" (Lubetkin, *In the Days of Destruction and Revolt* 160).

In this geography, the new site of testimony is constructed as the site of the Jewish people's resurrection and also the place where the body accedes to the collective. But where does that collective belong? Does it belong "there," where the events in the testimony happened, or "here," where the people listen to the testimony, where formerly they refused to hear? Given these two choices, Lubetkin selects a third: a new site, which she helps constitute. She joined Antek Zuckerman and other core groups of survivors to create the Museum of Heroism and founded the kibbutz of Lochamei Hageta'ot. They did not constitute their site through testimony, to reflect the hopes of the nation; rather, they built a museum at the site the nation needed to occupy. "You see," Ruz'ka wrote, "today I live the past, and the present and future are vague. I always thought that when you came we would found a kibbutz, our kibbutz, that would reflect everything we went through" (Tuvim, Dror, and Rav 128). An alternative national site, the survivors' site belonged to the nation only in its kibbutz structure and its territorial holding. It remained as liminal as the location of Lubetkin's testimony, which exists between "here" and "there."

Through a series of performative acts on stage, Lubetkin constitutes a self that shifts from the Warsaw Ghetto to the convention, the kibbutz, the courthouse, and the museum. With this shifting self, she strives to become part of the national narrative without "othering" her Palestinian neighbors through the occupation of territory.

The conditions of testimony allow Lubetkin to transform herself into a symbol, but they also enable her to maintain some notion of her body and how it occupies a specific space. She enters the national discourse through a paradox: she constitutes an "I" by submerging it in the collective. Both integral to the nation and indelibly severed from it, Lubetkin's testimony reconciles the injured individual and the newly formed collective. She gives up the specificity of her experience so that she can symbolize the heroism and rebirth of her nation—and as a symbol, she can actively participate in the creation of her nation's narrative.

#### NOTES

I thank Rela Mezali for translating this essay into English and Gloria Fisk for her careful editing.

1. "Katzetnik" is Yehiel Dinur's literary name. Dinur (then Feiner) wrote his first novel in a British army camp near Naples, Italy, after his release from Auschwitz. "I sat down to write, and did not get up for almost two and a half weeks," he recalls. "I gave the manuscript to a soldier, to pass it on to Eretz-Israel. The soldier [...] bent his head towards me and whispered: 'the name of the writer?!' Them who went to the crematorium, they wrote this book! Write down their name. Katzetnik" (qtd. in Segev).

2. The nation's need for those three narratives to represent a fighter symbolically continued through the Eichmann trial. Until then, the Holocaust was represented exclusively through heroism; only following the trial did the victims' stories gain national legitimacy. For a discussion of the evolution of the national narrative, see Felman, "Theaters of Justice." The trial, she contends, narrates "a story at the same time of the victims' suffering and of the victims' recovery of language. . . . The newly acquired semantic and historical authority of this revolutionary story [for the first time] create what we know today as the Holocaust: a theme of international discussion and of world conversation designating the experience of the victims and referring to the crime against the Jewish people independently from the political and military story of the Second World War" (Felman 201, 234).

3. *Zivia Lubetkin: A Life*, documentary film; script, Rivka Yogev and Ayelet Heller; executive producer, Shelly Sadot; producers, Gidon Ganeni and Amit Breuer, 1998.

4. *Mibifnim* 1–8. This text precedes the chapter entitled "The Last Days of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising," published in the periodical of the General Histadrut

[Labor Union] of Hebrew Workers in Eretz-Yisrael and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing, Ein Charod, 1946. This introduction is absent from *In the Days of Death and Rebellion*, which also contains this chapter, in combination with the testimony (published in installments in the daily *Davar*, during and after the convention, and again in the "Proceedings of the 15th Convention of Hakibbutz Hameuchad at Yagur," under the title "The Last Guards on the Wall") and with Lubetkin's text published in the *Dror Book* of 1947.

5. On the place, the function, and the effect of the listener in the process of the witness's attaining consciousness, and especially the effect of the testimony on the listener, see particularly Dori Laub (Felman and Laub 57–75).

6. This double function recalls the Latin American *testimonio*, which, Mary Beth Tierny-Tello argues, "seems to promise an authentic representation of the subaltern's voice in Latin America: previously silenced voices, given access to the written word by sympathetic scribes, have the opportunity to make their particular and collective plights (which may include poverty, exploitation, imprisonment, or genocide) known to a wide reading public and possibly to garner that public's support and solidarity" (Tierny-Tello 79). *Testimonio*, Arturo Arias notes, is a "collective, communal account of a person's life" (76). The similarities between the *testimonio* and the case of women bearing witness of the Holocaust within the national Zionist context are even stronger when one remembers that "*testimonio* constitutes an affirmation of the individual self in a collective mode" (Beverly 97). Like Lubetkin's testimony, *testimonio* springs from "a desire to impose oneself on an institution of power, such as literature, from the position of the excluded or the marginal" (Beverly 96).

7. In the documentary film on Lubetkin, her sister tells of a conversation between them: "During the Eichmann trial she came to consult me about which dress to wear to the trial, and I was beside myself—how could it even occur to her to ask such a thing, why should she care at all? And she said, 'Look I'll be standing for thousands behind me, and I need to be correct.'" Being on display necessitates "being correct," when "correct" is a perfect adherence to the demands of the spectators.

8. On the erasure of gender in the Holocaust, and then also in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, see Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, "Gendered Translations: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*" (Cooke 3–19). Hirsch and Spitzer argue that "in the elaborate 'final solution' devised by the Nazis during the early 1940s, all victims were to be stripped of difference and rendered powerless. The Holocaust victims were thus to be 'degendered' by the process of persecution and extermination" (3). Although Lanzmann similarly treats gender as "irrelevant to the death machinery," they continue, "traces of gender difference are nonetheless reinscribed in his film" (5–6).

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## SEVEN

## Unbearable Witness: Toward a Politics of Listening

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun

On Wednesday, December 6, 1989, around 5:00 P.M., Marc Lepine (né Gamil Roderigue Gharbi), dressed in hunting garb, entered a classroom in the École Polytechnique. Disturbing a presentation by Eric Chavarie, he waved a .22-caliber rifle and ordered the men and women into opposite corners of the classroom. Thinking it was a joke arranged to relieve the tedium of the last hour of the term, no one moved. A single gunshot persuaded them otherwise. Next, Lepine ordered the men to leave. Alone with the women, he stated, "I am here to fight against feminism, that is why I am here." Nathalie Provost, a twenty-three-year-old mechanical engineering student, argued, "Look, we are just women studying engineering, not necessarily feminists ready to march on the streets to shout we are against men, just students intent on leading a normal life." Lepine responded, "You're women, you're going to be engineers. You're all a bunch of feminists. I hate feminists." He then opened fire, killing six women—and closing the discussion. After leaving the classroom, Lepine stalked through the halls of the school saying, "I want the women." Lepine killed himself at approximately 5:35 P.M., his gun still loaded and the police not yet in sight. The total death count: fourteen women and Marc Lepine.

And then the discussion reopened.