

Summer Reading Assignment: English II—All Levels

For questions before the start of the school year, contact Mrs. Melissa Melnicoff (melnicoffm@leonschools.net). Please direct questions to your English teacher once the year has begun.

Assignment

All rising 10th grade students, regardless of level, will complete the following assignment. All of the reading materials, tasks, and instructions needed for this assignment can be found in this packet. There are three (3) short texts—a short story and two (2) argument texts—each with an assigned task consisting of annotations and analytical responses. Please read all directions carefully and pay attention to word count requirements. The final task is a culminating activity that uses your knowledge from reading the texts to develop your own ideas. The Summer Reading Assignment will be due the second Friday of school, August 22nd, and will count as a summative grade in the first nine weeks. **Only your annotations should be handwritten; your responses to the analysis questions in each task must be typed and submitted to Canvas. Handwritten responses will not be accepted. Be sure to save your work as you go! You will hand in your annotations to your teacher and submit your typed responses digitally to Canvas where they will be run through Turnitin.com. Your teacher will give you instructions for submitting your assignment the first week of school.**

Close reading is a process that involves carefully analyzing the text by looking at an author's style choices and examining both the literal and figurative meanings. Close reading involves writing on the text (annotating) by underlining, writing notes in the margins, looking up unfamiliar words and references, and noting any questions you might have about meaning and author's purpose. See Figure A at the top of the next page for an example of acceptable annotations.

1. **ANNOTATE: Close read and annotate ALL THREE of these texts carefully, marking up the text with your thoughts and observations. Look up words you do not understand, and note your questions in the text. Your close reading/annotations will be checked when you return to school. This is not an optional part of the assignment!**
2. **ANSWER THE QUESTIONS: Answer each of these analysis questions thoroughly, using textual evidence to illustrate your claims.**
 - I. **Short Story: "Civil Peace"** | The short story "Civil Peace" takes place in Nigeria immediately after the Nigeria-Biafra War. Conduct brief research into how this conflict impacted people and communities in Nigeria. Then, write a short report that summarizes your research and explains how this information shapes your understanding of "Civil Peace." **(250+ words)**
 - II. **Argument Text: "A Plea for Global Education"** | This text opens with the question, "What is your message to humankind?" What is Rigoberta Menchú Tum's response to this question? What would your message to humankind be? In your response, explain how reading this text shaped your perspective and your own message to humankind. **(250+ words)**
 - III. **Argument Text: "The Perils of Indifference"** | Explain how Wiesel's cultural experience influenced his central idea and the purpose or goal for delivering this speech. Cite evidence from the text to support your understanding. **(250+ words)**
 - IV. All three of the above works explore the topics of power, responsibility, and change. **Briefly discuss how you see each work dealing with these issues. (250+ words)**

*****Essentially, you are reading, analyzing and annotating all three texts. Then, you will type your responses to the above questions. You can compose your responses in one typed document. Be sure to include a heading!**

Figure A

The morning of June 27th was clear and sunny, with the fresh warmth of a full-summer day; the flowers were blossoming profusely and the grass was richly green. The people of the village began to gather in the square, between the post office and the bank, around ten o'clock; in some towns there were so many people that the lottery took two days and had to be started on June 20th, but in this village, where there were only about three hundred people, the whole lottery took less than two hours, so it could begin at ten o'clock in the morning and still be through in time to allow the villagers to get home for noon dinner. *new beginning, early summer, positive, intensity of feeling, small town, old-fashioned? Rural?*

The children assembled first, of course. School was recently over for the summer, and the feeling of liberty sat uneasily on most of them; they tended to gather together quietly for a while before they broke into boisterous play, and their talk was still of the classroom and the teacher, of books and reprimands. Bobby Martin had already stuffed his pockets full of stones, and the other boys soon followed his example, selecting the smoothest and roundest stones; Bobby and Harry Jones and Dickie Delacroix—the villagers pronounced this name "Dellacroy"—eventually made a great pile of stones in one corner of the square and guarded it against the raids of the other boys. The girls stood aside, talking among themselves, looking over their shoulders at the boys, and the very small children rolled in the dirt or clung to the hands of their older brothers or sisters. *why of course?, why? contradiction, nervous, vs. people's books, generic name, why does this matter?, gender roles, nervous?, word working, relied on respected wisdom/age*

Text One

Background & Context Ruled for millennia by African empires, Nigeria became a British colony in 1914 and remained under British control for almost fifty years. Finally independent in 1960, Nigeria—its borders hastily sketched out by British generals—remained deeply divided by ethnic, linguistic, and cultural differences.

The Biafran War—also known as the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970)—grew out of the uncertain peace and profound instability that were remnants of British colonial mismanagement.

A group to the southeast known as Biafra took control of the government. Other factions opposed this power grab, resulting in civil war. In 1967, the Nigerian Army invaded Biafra, expecting a quick victory. But the Biafrans stood their ground. The Nigerian Navy blockaded Biafra, depriving people of food and medical supplies. Between 3000 and 5000 people died every day during the three-year war, mostly from starvation.

"Civil Peace" by Chinua Achebe

Jonathan Iwegbu counted himself extra-ordinarily lucky. 'Happy survival!' meant so much more to him than just a current fashion of greeting old friends in the first hazy days of peace. It went deep to his heart. He had come out of the war with five inestimable blessings—his head, his wife Maria's head and the heads of three out of their four children. As a bonus he also had his old bicycle—a miracle too but naturally not to be compared to the safety of five human heads.

The bicycle had a little history of its own. One day at the height of the war it was commandeered "for urgent military action". Hard as its loss would have been to him he would still have let it go without a thought had he not had some doubts about the genuineness of the officer. It wasn't his disreputable rags, nor the toes peeping out of one blue and one brown canvas shoes, nor yet the two stars of his rank done obviously in a hurry in biro, that troubled Jonathan; many good and heroic soldiers looked the same or worse. It was rather a certain lack of grip and firmness in his manner. So Jonathan, suspecting he might be amenable to influence, rummaged in his raffia bag and produced the two pounds with which he had been going to buy firewood which his wife, Maria, retailed to camp officials for extra stock-fish and corn meal, and got his bicycle back. That night he buried it in the little clearing in the bush where the dead of the camp, including his own youngest son, were buried. When he dug it up again a year later after the surrender all it needed was a little palm-oil greasing. 'Nothing puzzles God,' he said in wonder.

He put it to immediate use as a taxi and accumulated a small pile of Biafran money ferrying camp officials and their families across the four-mile stretch to the nearest tarred road. His standard charge per trip was six pounds and those who had the money were only glad to be rid of some of it in this way. At the end of a fortnight he had made a small fortune of one hundred and fifteen pounds.

Then he made the journey to Enugu and found another miracle waiting for him. It was unbelievable. He rubbed his eyes and looked again and it was still standing there before him. But, needless to say, even that monumental blessing must be accounted also totally inferior to the five heads in the family. This newest miracle was his little house in Ogui Overside. Indeed nothing puzzles God! Only two houses away a huge concrete edifice some wealthy contractor had put up just before the war was a mountain of rubble. And here was Jonathan's little zinc house of no regrets built with mud blocks quite intact! Of course the doors and windows were missing and five sheets off the roof. But what was that? And anyhow he had returned to Enugu early enough to pick up bits of old zinc and wood and soggy sheets of cardboard lying around the neighbourhood before thousands more came out of their forest holes looking for the same things. He got a destitute carpenter with one old hammer, a blunt plane and a few bent and rusty nails in his tool bag to turn this assortment of wood, paper and metal into door and window shutters for five Nigerian shillings or fifty Biafran pounds. He paid the pounds, and moved in with his overjoyed family carrying five heads on their shoulders.

His children picked mangoes near the military cemetery and sold them to soldiers' wives for a few pennies--real pennies this time--and his wife started making breakfast akara balls for neighbours in a hurry to start life again. With his family earnings he took his bicycle to the villages around and bought fresh palm-wine which he mixed generously in his rooms with the water which had recently started running again in the public tap down the road, and opened up a bar for soldiers and other lucky people with good money.

At first he went daily, then every other day and finally once a week, to the offices of the Coal Corporation where he used to be a miner, to find out what was what. The only thing he did find out in the end was that that little house of his was even a greater blessing than he had thought. Some of his fellow ex-miners who had nowhere to return at the end of the day's waiting just slept outside the doors of the offices and cooked what meal they could scrounge together in Bournvita tins. As the weeks lengthened and still nobody could say what was what Jonathan discontinued his weekly visits altogether and faced his palm-wine bar.

But nothing puzzles God. Came the day of the windfall when after five days of endless scuffles in queues and counter-queues in the sun outside the Treasury he had twenty pounds counted into his palms as exgratia award for the rebel money he had turned in. It was like Christmas for him and for many others like him when the payments began. They called it (since few could manage its proper official name) *egg-rasher*.

As soon as the pound notes were placed in his palm Jonathan simply closed it tight over them and buried fist and money inside his trouser pocket. He had to be extra careful because he had seen a man a couple of days earlier collapse into near-madness in an instant before that oceanic crowd because no sooner had he got his twenty pounds than some heartless ruffian picked it off him. Though it was not right that a man in such an extremity of agony should be blamed yet many in the queues that day were able to remark quietly on the victim's carelessness, especially after he pulled out the innards of his pocket and revealed a hole in it big enough to pass a thief's head. But of course he had insisted that the money had been in the other pocket, pulling it out too to show its comparative wholeness. So one had to be careful.

Jonathan soon transferred the money to his left hand and pocket so as to leave his right free for shaking hands should the need arise, though by fixing his gaze at such an elevation as to miss all approaching human faces he made sure that the need did not arise, until he got home.

He was normally a heavy sleeper but that night he heard all the neighbourhood noises die down one after another. Even the night watchman who knocked the hour on some metal somewhere in the distance had fallen silent after knocking one o'clock. That must have been the last thought in Jonathan's mind before he was finally carried away himself. He couldn't have been gone for long, though, when he was violently awakened again.

'Who is knocking?' whispered his wife lying beside him on the floor.

'I don't know,' he whispered back breathlessly.

The second time the knocking came it was so loud and imperious that the rickety old door could have fallen down.

'Who is knocking?' he asked then, his voice parched and trembling.

'Na tief-man and him people,' came the cool reply. 'Make you hopen de door.' This was followed by the heaviest knocking of all.

Maria was the first to raise the alarm, then he followed and all their children.

'Police-o! Thieves-o! Neighbours-o! Police-o! We are lost! We are dead! Neighbours, are you asleep? Wake up! Police-o!'

This went on for a long time and then stopped suddenly. Perhaps they had scared the thief away. There was total silence. But only for a short while.

'You done finish?' asked the voice outside. 'Make we help you small. Oya, everybody!'

'Police-o! Tief-man-o! Neighbours-o! we done loss-o! Police-o!...'

There were at least five other voices besides the leader's.

Jonathan and his family were now completely paralysed by terror. Maria and the children sobbed inaudibly like lost souls. Jonathan groaned continuously.

The silence that followed the thieves' alarm vibrated horribly. Jonathan all but begged their leader to speak again and be done with it.

'My frien,' said he at long last, 'we don try our best for call dem but I tink say dem all done sleep-o... So wetin we go do now? Sometaim you wan call soja? Or you wan make we call dem for you? Soja better pass police. No be so?'

'Na so!' replied his men. Jonathan thought he heard even more voices now than before and groaned heavily. His legs were sagging under him and his throat felt like sand-paper.

'My frien, why you no de talk again. I de ask you say you wan make we call soja?'

'No'.

'Awrighto. Now make we talk business. We no be bad tief. We no like for make trouble. Trouble done finish. War done finish and all the katakata wey de for inside. No Civil War again. This time na Civil Peace. No be so?'

'Na so!' answered the horrible chorus.

'What do you want from me? I am a poor man. Everything I had went with this war. Why do you come to me? You know people who have money. We...'

'Awright! We know say you no get plenty money. But we sef no get even anini. So derefore make you open dis window and give us one hundred pound and we go commot. Orderwise we de come for inside now to show you guitar-boy like dis...'

A volley of automatic fire rang through the sky. Maria and the children began to weep aloud again.

'Ah, missisi de cry again. No need for dat. We done talk say we na good tief. We just take our small money and go nwayorly. No molest. Abi we de molest?'

'At all!' sang the chorus.

'My friends,' began Jonathan hoarsely. 'I hear what you say and I thank you. If I had one hundred pounds...'

'Lookia my frien, no be play we come play for your house. If we make mistake and step for inside you no go like am-o. So derefore...'

'To God who made me; if you come inside and find one hundred pounds, take it and shoot me and shoot my wife and children. I swear to God. The only money I have in this life is this twenty-pounds *egg-rasher* they gave me today...'

'OK. Time de go. Make you open dis window and bring the twenty pound. We go manage am like dat.'

There were now loud murmurs of dissent among the chorus: 'Na lie de man de lie; e get plenty money... Make we go inside and search properly well... Wetin be twenty pound?...'

'Shurrup!' rang the leader's voice like a lone shot in the sky and silenced the murmuring at once. 'Are you dere? Bring the money quick!'

'I am coming,' said Jonathan fumbling in the darkness with the key of the small wooden box he kept by his side on the mat.

At the first sign of light as neighbours and others assembled to commiserate with him he was already strapping his five-gallon demijohn to his bicycle carrier and his wife, sweating in the open fire, was turning over akara balls in a wide clay bowl of boiling oil. In the corner his eldest son was rinsing out dregs of yesterday's palm wine from old beer bottles.

'I count it as nothing,' he told his sympathizers, his eyes on the rope he was tying. 'What is *egg-rasher*? Did I depend on it last week? Or is it greater than other things that went with the war? I say, let *egg-rasher* perish in the flames! Let it go where everything else has gone. Nothing puzzles God.'

Text Two

Background & Context *The Maya are Mesoamerican Indians descended from one of the greatest civilizations in the Western Hemisphere, before the Spanish conquered Mexico and Central America.*

From 1978-1982, military agents enlisted by Guatemala's elite ruling class committed systematic acts of violence against their political opponents. This campaign originally targeted political opponents but resulted in the genocide of the Maya. This difference between intent and outcome broadened how the international community understands genocide. According to the UN, acts of genocide aim "to destroy" a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group; however, this definition has not historically accounted for the mass murder of indigenous groups. In 1999, the UN concluded that the events in Guatemala constituted genocide.

Political representation is uneven for indigenous peoples in Guatemala. White indigenous populations have representation at the local level, the Maya are not unified through a national political party representing their interests.

"A Plea for Global Education" by Rigoberta Menchú Tum

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE TO HUMANKIND?

We are living in a troubled world, in a time of great uncertainty. It's a time to reflect about many things, especially about humankind as a whole, and the balance between collective values and individual values.

The world right now is preoccupied with business, buying, and selling and making monkey. But solutions can be found in our community, among the indigenous peoples who are the victims of terrible repression and violations of the law in many parts of the world. You can find experience, people who have educated themselves, and a whole side of science which is not well known.

There is a big change going on in the way people see the world: change in the concept of development, in the way people live together. But for this change to bear fruit, we need education on a global scale. Humankind will not recover from its mistakes without global education. The United Nations, human rights organizations, indigenous peoples, and all the countries of the world should concentrate their efforts on education. Solutions will come when the world becomes educated about global values, the common values of its inhabitants and communities.

We have to focus on solutions in this time of great challenges. If we just wait around, the problems will overwhelm us. We need to take the initiative, to launch local, regional and global project, to unite our efforts, and really listen to indigenous peoples. We have to listen to people to find out what they want, to discover the solutions they have to offer for the future.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO PROTECT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES?

It is very important to understand that we indigenous peoples don't need "protection." What we do need is simply to be allowed to exist, to live, to let our own culture develop, and to recover the meaning of our own history. Indigenous peoples have always depended on their traditional wisdom and culture. Our cosmological vision, our way of thinking, our lifestyle have empowered us to survive through many difficult times in the

past. Now that we stand at the close of the twentieth century, this fact should send a very clear message to the conscience of the world. We indigenous reaffirm our struggle to survive!

To me, the most important thing is that indigenous people still possess a balance, an equilibrium with Mother Nature, a balance between human life and the earth itself. For us, the Earth is the source of knowledge, of historical memory, of life! But the rest of the world does not share this vision, and so they keep on destroying Mother Earth. Indigenous people aren't strange. We may be special, but we are also part of the modern world in which we all live. We are part of the diversity of cultures, the plurality of races, and the mixture of societies on all the continents where we live today. Indigenous people are not some myth from the past, a myth that survives only in legends and in ruins!

You should find out what indigenous people can contribute toward a global vision, a vision of nature, of development, of community based on the oral transmission of our ancestors' knowledge from generation to generation. You should also look at the way we think about nature. Around the world, there have been many struggles in which indigenous peoples have played an important role. But their names are never mentioned, their contributions have been ignored. Others have given new names to these concerns which indigenous peoples have always cared about.

The fact that indigenous people are among the most marginalized of the marginalized people on Earth, among those whose rights have been violated for so long, is a call to conscience. I hope this call will be answered in the new millennium which now awaits us.

The time has come now to stop feeling sorry for all the wrongs that have been done to indigenous people. The time has come to go beyond blame, beyond sympathy with our cause, beyond identifying with our worldview. It's time to implement programs—alternative projects and technologies that combine the benefits of science and the benefits of nature, that respect the traditional ethno-botanical knowledge of peasants and the age-old experience through which they have survived—and to combine these with the advances of technology and science. We indigenous peoples have nothing against the innovations of technology and science when they are shown to be appropriate. But we are against such innovations if they are applied in opposition to the values which indigenous people protect, which are those of life, nature, and historical memory.

No people can flourish who do not know their own past. The past is a good foundation for the present, and an inspiration for the future. People owe it to history and to the present to prepare for the future. Finally, I sincerely hope that now, at the end of the twentieth century, indigenous people will never again be forced into extinction on the face of this Earth. We need international law, national legislation, the legal protection of our human rights, as well as the respect and acceptance of society in general, in order to face the future.

To listen to indigenous peoples is to listen to the women and to those who know how to love this earth. We may be only a small grain of sand, but it is one which will prove important for the challenges humankind must face in the next millennium.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS?

Among the nations which have suffered the most widespread human rights abuses, unpunished atrocities, murders, terror and fear, is Guatemala. The recent historical events in Guatemala have fragmented the culture of the Mayas in many places. Displacement, refuge, exile are daily facts of life in my country. However, these things have also allowed us to learn something more in our experience of the world. In Guatemala today, there are some very courageous women who are making a stand, indigenous women, who are leading the struggle! We believe the war in Guatemala is no disgrace for the Mayas. It's a disgrace for the people of Guatemala . . .

Unfortunately, the rest of the world has turned a blind eye on the situation. Atrocities still go unpunished, and many governments have helped to cover up the problem. I think it's important to say this, because the Guatemalan people know it, and we feel offended again and again when we realize that our country has been silenced. This has also made us aware of the plight of other people. Solidarity between nations must be militant, constant, and continuous. There is a need for international organizations to which the victims can turn for help, to which people can go to defend their lives and to protect their human rights.

Finally, I believe that peace in Guatemala is not a myth. Peace in Guatemala is not a myth, neither is it a myth for Central America, or for the people of this continent or other continents. Rather, it is a process which requires effort and consciousness-raising around the world, especially among those in governments and in large organizations who have the power to make important decisions.

Peace requires work in the heart of the small society that is Guatemala. But Guatemala is also part of humankind, and what has been going on in Guatemala is a very bad example for the world and for future generations. I hope that the world will one day acknowledge its responsibility and will not be indifferent to any war, no matter where it happens, or to any violation of human rights, no matter where it may occur, because the massacre [there] is a wound in the heart of humankind.

WHAT IS GOING ON IN GUATEMALA NOW? (i.e. March 1993)

It's a very complex situation. The war is officially over, yet there are continuous assassinations, enormous suffering and grinding poverty. But the greatest problem in Guatemala is that most people cannot participate in the political negotiations, because they don't speak Spanish! An emergency parliament needs to be formed immediately to address the problem. Blatant disregard for the law is rampant. We must put an end not only to these violations of law, but also to the suppression of truth, to the repression and persecution of over a million civilians who take part in our self-defense patrols.

About a million people have been displaced within the country. Some have sought refuge in the mountains, where they suffer a great deal of bombing. Over two hundred thousand Guatemalans are refugees. Many people have been forced to permanently abandon their farms or leave their towns. In other words, the war is not just the armed conflict which occurs every day, but it's also the general persecution which afflicts the whole economy and society, and which also—as a routine matter—limits our freedom of speech. In the end, the people of Guatemala are paying a very high price for all of this. If we don't recognize the magnitude of the problem in Guatemala, we will never come to grips with the whole issue of development both in Central America and throughout the continent. Guatemala has suffered a lot of repression, and especially, many unpunished crimes. I would say that ninety percent of the people who suffer from the war, the widows and the orphaned children in the streets, are indigenous people. This is a fact. It's not only a racial issue; it is just a reality which happens to fall on the heads of the indigenous people.

Text Three:

Background & Context In 1978, Congress established the annual Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust (DRVH). Speaking at the first national DRVH ceremony, President Carter said, "To truly commemorate the victims of the Holocaust, we must harness the outrage of our memories to banish all human oppression from the world."

National and international Holocaust remembrance events memorialize Holocaust victims and spread awareness, seeking to prevent genocide from happening again.

Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel led the commission that founded the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Wiesel devoted the rest of his life to speaking out against human rights abuses and calling world leaders to action against systemic violence against ethnic minorities, such as in the former Yugoslavia region of Kosovo. Wiesel said in his 1986 Nobel Prize acceptance speech, "I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides."

"The Perils of Indifferences" by Elie Wiesel

Mr. President, Mrs. Clinton, members of Congress, Ambassador Holbrooke, Excellencies, friends:

Fifty-four years ago to the day, a young Jewish boy from a small town in the Carpathian Mountains woke up, not far from Goethe's beloved Weimar, in a place of eternal infamy called Buchenwald. He was finally free, but there was no joy in his heart. He thought there never would be again. Liberated a day earlier by American soldiers, he remembers their rage at what they saw. And even if he lives to be a very old man, he will always be grateful to them for that rage, and also for their compassion. Though he did not understand their language, their eyes told him what he needed to know — that they, too, would remember, and bear witness.

And now, I stand before you, Mr. President — Commander-in-Chief of the army that freed me, and tens of thousands of others — and I am filled with a profound and abiding gratitude to the American people. "Gratitude" is a word that I cherish. Gratitude is what defines the humanity of the human being. And I am grateful to you, Hillary, or Mrs. Clinton, for what you said, and for what you are doing for children in the

world, for the homeless, for the victims of injustice, the victims of destiny and society. And I thank all of you for being here.

We are on the threshold of a new century, a new millennium. What will the legacy of this vanishing century be? How will it be remembered in the new millennium? Surely it will be judged, and judged severely, in both moral and metaphysical terms. These failures have cast a dark shadow over humanity: two World Wars, countless civil wars, the senseless chain of assassinations (Gandhi, the Kennedys, Martin Luther King, Sadat, Rabin), bloodbaths in Cambodia and Algeria, India and Pakistan, Ireland and Rwanda, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Sarajevo and Kosovo; the inhumanity in the Gulag and the tragedy of Hiroshima. And, on a different level, of course, Auschwitz and Treblinka. So much violence; so much indifference.

What is indifference? Etymologically, the word means “no difference.” A strange and unnatural state in which the lines blur between light and darkness, dusk and dawn, crime and punishment, cruelty and compassion, good and evil. What are its courses and inescapable consequences? Is it a philosophy? Is there a philosophy of indifference conceivable? Can one possibly view indifference as a virtue? Is it necessary at times to practice it simply to keep one’s sanity, live normally, enjoy a fine meal and a glass of wine, as the world around us experiences harrowing upheavals?

Of course, indifference can be tempting more than that, seductive. It is so much easier to look away from victims. It is so much easier to avoid such rude interruptions to our work, our dreams, our hopes. It is, after all, awkward, troublesome, to be involved in another person’s pain and despair. Yet, for the person who is indifferent, his or her neighbor are of no consequence. And, therefore, their lives are meaningless. Their hidden or even visible anguish is of no interest. Indifference reduces the Other to an abstraction.

Over there, behind the black gates of Auschwitz, the most tragic of all prisoners were the “Muselmänner,” as they were called. Wrapped in their torn blankets, they would sit or lie on the ground, staring vacantly into space, unaware of who or where they were — strangers to their surroundings. They no longer felt pain, hunger, thirst. They feared nothing. They felt nothing. They were dead and did not know it.

Rooted in our tradition, some of us felt that to be abandoned by humanity then was not the ultimate. We felt that to be abandoned by God was worse than to be punished by Him. Better an unjust God than an indifferent one. For us to be ignored by God was a harsher punishment than to be a victim of His anger. Man can live far from God — not outside God. God is wherever we are. Even in suffering? Even in suffering.

In a way, to be indifferent to that suffering is what makes the human being inhuman. Indifference, after all, is more dangerous than anger and hatred. Anger can at times be creative. One writes a great poem, a great symphony. One does something special for the sake of humanity because one is angry at the injustice that one witnesses. But indifference is never creative. Even hatred at times may elicit a response. You fight it. You denounce it. You disarm it.

Indifference elicits no response. Indifference is not a response. Indifference is not a beginning; it is an end. And, therefore, indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor — never his victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feels forgotten. The political prisoner in his cell, the hungry children, the homeless refugees — not to respond to their plight, not to relieve their solitude by offering them a spark of hope is to exile them from human memory. And in denying their humanity, we betray our own.

Indifference, then, is not only a sin, it is a punishment.

And this is one of the most important lessons of this outgoing century’s wide-ranging experiments in good and evil.

In the place that I come from, society was composed of three simple categories: the killers, the victims, and the bystanders. During the darkest of times, inside the ghettos and death camps — and I’m glad that Mrs. Clinton mentioned that we are now commemorating that event, that period, that we are now in the Days of Remembrance — but then, we felt abandoned, forgotten. All of us did.

And our only miserable consolation was that we believed that Auschwitz and Treblinka were closely guarded secrets; that the leaders of the free world did not know what was going on behind those black gates and barbed wire; that they had no knowledge of the war against the Jews that Hitler’s armies and their accomplices waged as part of the war against the Allies. If they knew, we thought, surely those leaders would

have moved heaven and earth to intervene. They would have spoken out with great outrage and conviction. They would have bombed the railways leading to Birkenau, just the railways, just once.

And now we knew, we learned, we discovered that the Pentagon knew, the State Department knew. And the illustrious occupant of the White House then, who was a great leader — and I say it with some anguish and pain, because, today is exactly 54 years marking his death — Franklin Delano Roosevelt died on April the 12th, 1945. So he is very much present to me and to us. No doubt, he was a great leader. He mobilized the American people and the world, going into battle, bringing hundreds and thousands of valiant and brave soldiers in America to fight fascism, to fight dictatorship, to fight Hitler. And so many of the young people fell in battle. And, nevertheless, his image in Jewish history — I must say it — his image in Jewish history is flawed.

The depressing tale of the St. Louis is a case in point. Sixty years ago, its human cargo — nearly 1,000 Jews — was turned back to Nazi Germany. And that happened after the Kristallnacht, after the first state sponsored pogrom, with hundreds of Jewish shops destroyed, synagogues burned, thousands of people put in concentration camps. And that ship, which was already in the shores of the United States, was sent back. I don't understand. Roosevelt was a good man, with a heart. He understood those who needed help. Why didn't he allow these refugees to disembark? A thousand people — in America, the great country, the greatest democracy, the most generous of all new nations in modern history. What happened? I don't understand. Why the indifference, on the highest level, to the suffering of the victims?

But then, there were human beings who were sensitive to our tragedy. Those non-Jews, those Christians, that we call the "Righteous Gentiles," whose selfless acts of heroism saved the honor of their faith. Why were they so few? Why was there a greater effort to save SS murderers after the war than to save their victims during the war? Why did some of America's largest corporations continue to do business with Hitler's Germany until 1942? It has been suggested, and it was documented, that the Wehrmacht could not have conducted its invasion of France without oil obtained from American sources. How is one to explain their indifference?

And yet, my friends, good things have also happened in this traumatic century: the defeat of Nazism, the collapse of communism, the rebirth of Israel on its ancestral soil, the demise of apartheid, Israel's peace treaty with Egypt, the peace accord in Ireland. And let us remember the meeting, filled with drama and emotion, between Rabin and Arafat that you, Mr. President, convened in this very place. I was here and I will never forget it.

And then, of course, the joint decision of the United States and NATO to intervene in Kosovo and save those victims, those refugees, those who were uprooted by a man, whom I believe that because of his crimes, should be charged with crimes against humanity.

But this time, the world was not silent. This time, we do respond. This time, we intervene.

Does it mean that we have learned from the past? Does it mean that society has changed? Has the human being become less indifferent and more human? Have we really learned from our experiences? Are we less insensitive to the plight of victims of ethnic cleansing and other forms of injustices in places near and far? Is today's justified intervention in Kosovo, led by you, Mr. President, a lasting warning that never again will the deportation, the terrorization of children and their parents, be allowed anywhere in the world? Will it discourage other dictators in other lands to do the same?

What about the children? Oh, we see them on television, we read about them in the papers, and we do so with a broken heart. Their fate is always the most tragic, inevitably. When adults wage war, children perish. We see their faces, their eyes. Do we hear their pleas? Do we feel their pain, their agony? Every minute one of them dies of disease, violence, famine.

Some of them — so many of them — could be saved.

And so, once again, I think of the young Jewish boy from the Carpathian Mountains. He has accompanied the old man I have become throughout these years of quest and struggle. And together we walk towards the new millennium, carried by profound fear and extraordinary hope.