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The Genocidal Gaze

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Acknowledgments

I often turn to the acknowledgments as I open a new book, curious to know what the author reveals about her/himself, and who the author's influences have been. Did the author get financial support for the project? Do archival research? Rely on other scholars for critiques? Who brought coffee?

As I think back over a long career and the work on this, my fifth scholarly book, I have many debts to acknowledge and much gratitude to express. I want to begin with profound thanks to the people who have been important teachers, many of whom are no longer living. These include my parents, who so highly valued education; Sister Emma, a Dominican nun who taught me the joy of research in seventh and eighth grade; and Terry Plunkett, a professor of American literature at Manhattanville College, who pushed his students to think critically and theoretically. In graduate school, at Indiana University, I had the enormous good fortune to study with Susan Gubar, whose pioneering work in women's studies literally opened new worlds for me and gave voice to what I was dimly beginning to grasp. Vladka and Ben Meed, of blessed memory, survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto, took me to Poland and Israel with the Jewish Labor Committee, teaching me at every step about the Holocaust in a visceral and unforgettable way.

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She told me, “You are not writing everything you know,” which somehow gave me permission to do so. My sister Pamela Bonina is an exemplar of generosity and caring, of which I have been the frequent beneficiary. My students over the years at Gustavus, the University of Minnesota, and Stockton University made many contributions to my understanding of the Holocaust, postcolonial literature, and theory.

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Granddaughters Della and Flora brought joy to my life as I wrote about a dark topic.

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