

HITLER'S CHILDREN

Discussion Guide

1. When Israeli journalist Eldad Beck accompanies Rudolf Hoess to Auschwitz, he says of the latter's experience there: "it was too quick." While Hoess and the other subjects of the film do need to face their family histories, should they be required to atone for it, as Beck seems to suggest?
2. Holocaust scholarship offers that there were three categories of participants: victims, bystanders, and perpetrators. While the film subjects' fathers were all certainly perpetrators, they, as children during that time, do not fit into any of the three groups. How are we to consider them?
3. Bettina Goering and Katrin Himmler have dealt with their legacies in near-opposite ways – the former by sterilizing herself to end the family name, and the latter decrying that notion as an extension of Nazi ideology. While the focus on bloodlines can indeed be seen through the lens of Nazism, it seems impossible to denounce Goering's psychological response completely. Himmler, meanwhile, married a Holocaust survivor, which can be read as another type of psychological compensation, and is equally difficult to criticize. In other words, what kind of judgment, if any, can we pass on how these men and women have dealt with their parents' actions?
4. While the Holocaust remains a unique event, genocide is not specific to WWII Germany. America, for example, has its own history of genocidal acts against Native Americans. Are we responsible for similar reflection?