



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

Witnesses to the Unpresentable:
Narratives of Memory and Trauma
at the End of History

Marc Di Sotto

PhD Thesis
University of Edinburgh
2014

Declaration

This is to certify that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Marc Di Sotto, MA (Hons) MSc

Abstract

This thesis investigates the problem of historical representation in the context of the contemporary turns to trauma and memory visible in cultural theory and in wider popular culture and contemporaneous with post-Cold war ‘end of history’ discourse. Rather than apply the theories of trauma to readings of contemporary texts, the present study proposes that trauma theory be seen as part of the wider cultural tendency towards memorialization, characterized by a privileging of the notion of witnessing, an emphasis on the punctuality of the traumatic moment, and the fetishization of the historical trace. This thesis argues that what unites these various features of memorial culture is a notion of history that emphasises *both* the impossibility of comprehension and representation *and* yet a sense of proximity to a literal past through the traces that remain. If postmodernism designates a ‘crisis of historicity’ which delegitimizes the authority of representations of history, to think history through the prisms of memory and trauma reasserts a notion of historical truth, albeit relocated in the traumatic memory of the survivor, in the ethical imperative to bear witness, or in an aesthetics of the aporia. The parallel discourses of history as trauma and history as memory conflate the problems of historical representation with problems of historical witnessing, and in doing so conceptualize a notion of an historical event with no actor, proposing instead a passive subject without agency and thus without politics. The thesis is organized through close readings of four key texts, each of which can be read to be in dialogue with wider memorial culture, but which also problematize the orthodoxies of contemporary trauma theory in its application to the literary text—Ian McEwan’s *Atonement*, Robert Harris’s *Fatherland*, Philip Roth’s *Operation Shylock* and Aleksandar Hemon’s *The Lazarus Project*. Focusing on notions of witnessing, testimony, traumatic memory and the trace, and drawing on the work of Slavoj Žižek and Jacques Rancière, this thesis sets out to resist the theoretical creep that would see all history as trauma and all text as testimony, and instead reasserts the necessary role of fiction and the imagination in constructing a relationship to the past.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank my supervisor, Dr Aaron Kelly, for his advice and support throughout this project—especially in the final months leading up to submission. I would also like to thank my examiners Prof Randall Stevenson and Dr Alan Gibbs for their constructive and encouraging feedback. I am also grateful to the College Research Scholarship which made this work possible.

I am fortunate to be surrounded by many people who have supported me and spurred me on in difficult moments, often without knowing it, for which I am very grateful. To my parents who instilled in me a passion for learning; my siblings, Carina, Laurence and John-Anthony, who make sure I never feel like I have understood anything; and to Aude, Calum, David, Gareth, Kajetan, Maxim and Pablo, for their friendship over the years.

But most of all, this piece of work is dedicated to Elodie, my co-conspirator, without whose love, patience, generosity and stubbornness I would never have made it through to the end.

Contents

I: Contexts	1
1: Remembering History after the End of History	2
I: The end of history 1	4
II: The end of history 2.....	9
III: History and memory	15
IV: The remembered past.....	21
2: Witnessing the Past	27
I: Traumatic memory.....	31
II: Witnessing history	37
III: Remembering realism.....	41
IV: Testimony.....	48
II: Texts	54
1: ‘But what really happened?’: History, Realism and the Aesthetics of Trauma in Ian McEwan’s <i>Atonement</i>	55
I: Separate minds: on seeing and knowing	58
II: Trauma and postmodernism	69
III: What <i>really</i> happened?: two absences, two deaths.....	81
2: Doubled Reality: Traces of Ideology in Robert Harris’s <i>Fatherland</i>	90
I: Holocaust memory and the archive.....	92
II: Man and uniform: the distorted mirror of ideology	103
III: The red brick: memory and recognition	114
3: ‘How could I be both that and this?’: Doubles and Documents in Philip Roth’s <i>Operation Shylock: A Confession</i>	124
I: That and this: testimony and realism	125
II: Documents of the real: the fiction of fact	137
III: An appropriate language: on the unrepresentable	149
4: ‘Something is always true’: Photography, Space, Memory and the Fictions of History in Aleksandar Hemon’s <i>The Lazarus Project</i>	159
I: Imagining history: archive, memory, space	162
II: True stories: fictions and memory	173
III: Living history: death and the photograph.....	183
Conclusion	193
Works Cited	201

I: Contexts

1: Remembering History after the End of History

In the post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history. I can feel in myself, and see in others around me, a powerful nostalgia for the time when history existed. Such nostalgia, in fact, will continue to fuel competition and conflict even in the post-historical world for some time to come. Even though I recognize its inevitability, I have the most ambivalent feelings for the civilization that has been created in Europe since 1945, with its North Atlantic and Asian offshoots. Perhaps this very prospect of centuries of boredom at the end of history will serve to get history started once again.

Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?' (18)

The desire for narratives of the past, for re-creations, re-readings, reproductions, seems boundless at every level of our culture. History in a certain canonical form may be delegitimized as far as its core pedagogical and philosophical mission is concerned, but the seduction of the archive and its trove of stories of human achievement and suffering has never been greater.

Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts* (5)

We were stuck between meanings. Or we were the last dribbles of something. It was hard to figure. The fall of the Soviet Union, this was, the death of analog. The beginning of aggressively marketed nachos.

Sam Lipsyte, *The Ask* (31)

Andreas Huyssen observes the transformation from a postmodern culture 'once celebrated as a new departure beyond the modern and toward the future' into one 'of memory haunted by the past' ('Trauma' 18).¹ This turn to memory takes two distinct, though interconnected, forms. In the first place, there is a focus on the memory of the witness, which emphasises subjectivity and individual experience. This intersects with a trauma culture fascinated with the moment, the witness, the testimony, and the unmediated registration of the event, which can be read as a literalization of Jean-François Lyotard's local knowledges, the unrepresentable made material, literally inscribed in the mind of the survivor. Lyotard diagnosed the 'postmodern condition' as an 'incredulity toward master narratives' and a turn towards 'local knowledges' (*Postmodern Condition* xxiv). 'Let us wage a war on totality', he writes at the end of

¹ See the first chapter of Huyssen's *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (2003).

the appendix to *The Postmodern Condition*, ‘let us be witnesses to the unrepresentable’ (82). At the other extreme, notions of cultural or collective memory reconceptualize the idea of History *as* totality, though this totality is conceived of in terms of a totality of traces rather than of forces and processes; that is, a de-totalized totality.

Peter Middleton and Tim Woods write that postmodernism is ‘haunted by memory: memories of disaster, genocide, war, the Holocaust and the persistent destruction of human possibility by economic and political means; by the unrepresentable excess of these memories; and by the memory of memory itself’ (81). As Middleton and Woods suggest, the memory of ‘the dialectic of Enlightenment, colonialism, the Holocaust and total war’ result in postmodern culture’s ‘rejection . . . of history as grand narrative, its critiques of subjectivity, logocentrism and the elision of difference, and consequently, its relegation of memory to liminality’ (81-2).² It is in this sense that Amy J. Elias posits the notion of postmodernism as an attempt ‘to project a new Western relation to history’ (3).³ Elias describes the historical context of postmodernism in some detail:

The twentieth century has felt the aftershock of two world wars that sequentially threatened to obliterate human history and escalated the historical consequence of personal identity, social life, public and private discourse, and nationhood. The end of one age of empire, the globalization of political systems and market economies, the proliferating media technologies that mirror social life to itself in distorted reflections, and millennial hysteria of one form or another have all contributed to an increasing obsession about time and human events. (xxvii-iii)

When Ronald Granofsky proposes the ‘trauma novel’ as a sub-genre of contemporary fiction, it is to describe those attempts in literary form to come to terms with the aftermath of the Second World War, Auschwitz and the Gulag, and with the increasing awareness that the world may one day be destroyed either by

² Anne Whitehead writes that ‘Postmodernist fiction is part of the memory project. Its innovative forms and techniques critique the notion of history as grand narrative, and it calls attention to the complexity of memory. Trauma fiction emerges out of postmodernist fiction and shares its tendency to bring conventional narrative techniques to their limit. In testing formal boundaries, trauma fiction seeks to foreground the nature and limitations of narrative and to convey the damaging and distorting impact of the traumatic event’ (82).

³ This new relation to history is characterised by doubt and uncertainty. Comparing Walter Scott’s historical romances with Charles Frazier’s *Cold Mountain* (1997), Elias argues that Scott’s romances are ‘about specific cultures that had supposedly reached “higher” modern phases of culture, whereas postmodern romance is about history itself and expresses the loss not of culture but of certainty, precisely the certainty about history that Scott was able to experience’ (*Sublime* 19).

nuclear war or environmental catastrophe or some other as yet unimaginable form of destruction. In such a world '[t]he rational mind is in abeyance', Granofsky argues, 'an existential horror fills the vacuum of reason since no reasonable explanation is even remotely possible for the reality experienced. The known world can provide no precedent for what is occurring' (1).

The turns to memory and trauma draw together a period of cultural, political, ecological, technological and economic ruptures that have characterised the post-Cold War world. Much as we have tended to describe events such as the fall of Communism or September 11 as traumatic breaks, it is in our willingness to see such events through the lenses of trauma and memory that continuity can be found between the world before and after. Our 'desire for the past' privileges the experience of witnessing, testimony, and traumas, fragmented and, by their very nature, incomplete, yet all the more authentic for their incompleteness, as they are seen to resist the totalizing grand narratives of history. At the same time, another continuity can be found in the persistence of neoliberalism. Indeed, the gradual global implementation of neoliberal policy over the last decades shows that not everyone gave up on a notion of totality.

I: The end of history 1

Francis Fukuyama, in his 1989 essay 'The End of History?', later expanded into *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), argues that the latter half of the twentieth century had seen the final 'unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism' over its rivals, communism, fascism and hereditary monarchism (3). While Fukuyama acknowledges that liberal democracy, based on the 'twin principles of liberty and equality', had not yet been achieved on a global scale, it had nevertheless proved itself to be an '*ideal . . . that could not be improved on*' (*End xi*, original emphasis). Its eventual predominance would come to be the 'end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the

final form of human government' ('End' 4).⁴ As Walter Benn Michaels notes, this fantasy of global consensus amounted to no less than 'the end of contradiction, which is the end of history' (22). What Fukuyama celebrates as the victory of 'liberal democracy' is inseparable from his celebration of the victory of deregulated, expansionist free market capitalism:

[L]iberal principles in economics—the “free market”—have spread, and have succeeded in producing unprecedented levels of material prosperity, both in industrially developed countries and in countries that had been, at the close of World War II, part of the impoverished Third World. A liberal revolution in economic thinking has sometimes preceded, sometimes followed, the move toward political freedom around the globe. (Fukuyama, *End* xiii)

That is to say, Fukuyama's thesis is founded upon a certain (rhetorical) equation of liberal democracy with capitalism that is characteristic of neoliberal ideology, one which masks a fundamental antagonism between democracy and the market.

Wendy Brown disambiguates the term *neoliberalism* from *liberalism*. In political thought, Brown explains, liberalism signifies 'an order in which the state exists to secure the freedom of individuals on a formally egalitarian basis'. In this sense, Brown continues, a 'liberal political order may harbor either liberal or Keynesian economic policies. . . . [I]t is no more or less a liberal democracy because of one leaning or the other' ('Neo-liberalism'). The confusion that surrounds the notion of neoliberalism then arises from the ambiguity of the root of the word. Its 'liberalism' is specifically economic liberalism; the 'neo-' points to the fact that it is not merely a 'set of economic policies' aimed towards 'facilitating free trade, maximizing corporate profits, and challenging welfarism' but also a 'social analysis that, when deployed as a form of governmentality, reaches from the soul of the citizen-subject to education policies to practices of empire' (Brown, 'Neo-

⁴ Annie McClanahan has noted how Fukuyama 'triumphantly heralded the end of scarcity and limit precisely whilst economic contradictions (and contractions) were becoming ever more visible' (McClanahan 80). For McClanahan, the notion that we had reached an end point of historical development thus served as an 'ideological response' which 'allowed late-capitalist rhetoric to deny that productive labour was fleeing the US for the global south and being replaced by casualized, precarious forms of administrative and service labour. The language of "investing in the future", in turn, corresponded to a kind of "temporal fix" enabled by financialization. Given the extent of economic volatility, profitability had to be located in a just-barely deferred tomorrow. This temporal fix had to work on the level of the domestic as well as national economy' (McClanahan 83). The model of the future as projected by Fukuyama, and economists such as Alan Greenspan and Rudiger Dornbusch, is one that had 'launched itself free of the historical burden of booms and busts, financial bubbles and financial panics, enabling it to fulfil capital's mission of continually accelerated and expanding accumulation' (McClanahan 81).

liberalism’). It is in this sense that Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval argue that neoliberalism should be understood as ‘firstly and fundamentally a *rationality*’ that applies to the conduct of both the rulers and the ruled, its principal characteristic being ‘the generalization of competition as a behavioural norm and of the enterprise as a model of subjectivation’ (4, original emphasis). One of the key features of neoliberalism is a market fundamentalism which extends and disseminates the values of the market to all institutions and society (Brown, ‘Neo-liberalism’). As Thomas Lemke explains in his analysis of Foucault’s lectures at the Collège de France, the key element of the neoliberal shift is its ‘consistent expansion of the economic form to apply to the social sphere, thus eliding any difference between the economy and the social’. The role of government under such conditions is to be ‘a sort of enterprise whose task it is to universalize competition and invent market-shaped systems of action for individuals, groups and institutions’ (Lemke 197). Thus neoliberalism masks a profoundly antidemocratic worldview in a democratic language that posits the market as a more reliable indicator of popular will than the volatilities of the democratic process.⁵

However, as Phillip E. Wegner suggests, the triumph of liberal democracy over its ideological rivals was the result of good fortune rather than strength or strategy (138). Much as Fukuyama had trumpeted its ‘victory’, it was more the case that liberal democracy was the last man standing, to echo the title of Fukuyama’s book, as its rivals collapsed unexpectedly around it.⁶ The ‘end of history’ thesis appeared at a fortuitous historical confluence between the rise of the neoliberal

⁵ As Thomas Frank writes, markets are no longer seen simply as ‘mediums of exchange’ but are seen now to be ‘mediums of consent’: ‘Markets expressed the popular will more articulately and more meaningfully than mere elections. Markets conferred democratic legitimacy; markets were a friend of the little guy; markets brought down the pompous and the snooty; markets gave us what we wanted; markets looked out for our interests’ (Frank xiv).

⁶ Fukuyama’s tone, as James Berger explains, had echoes in the ‘post-apocalyptic triumphalism’ of the Reaganism of the 1980s to which it was the ‘corollary’: ‘The traumatic, apocalyptic moment of American history has come, and gone, unnoticed; the wound, which was never suffered, is now healed. America has already entered its future, which was implicit in its origin. In Reaganism, the apocalypse has already happened: America is triumphant, communism is dead’ (James Berger, *After* 152). However, it is curious to note that, far from triumphant, Fukuyama ends on a rather melancholic note: ‘The end of history will be a very sad time. The struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one’s life for a purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands’ (‘End’ 18).

consensus and the unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union. It is important then to be wary of the subtle message concealed within the bombastic announcement; namely, Fukuyama's use of the ambiguous and overdetermined language of 'history' invites the counterargument that history did not end with the collapse of communism; however, such arguments miss the point. The declaration of the 'end of history', much as it takes centre stage in the discussion, is really only secondary to the notion of a sort of ideological malaise, which resonates with Lyotard's diagnosis of postmodern incredulity. Mark Fisher coins the term 'capitalist realism' to describe the way neoliberal ideology actively effaces its own contingency and historicity. Capitalist realism describes the 'sense of resignation, of fatalism' felt in response to this ideological self-effacement, the notion that 'whether we like it or not, the world is governed by neoliberal ideas, and that won't change' (Fisher and Gilbert 90).⁷ As Slavoj Žižek argues, 'most people today *are* Fukuyamean, accepting liberal-democratic capitalism as the finally found formula of the best possible society, such that all that one can do is to try to make it more just, more tolerant, and so on' (*First* 88).⁸ As Margaret Thatcher used to say, 'there is no alternative'.

'[N]o society', Fredric Jameson writes, 'has ever been so standardized as this one . . . the stream of human, social and historical temporality has never flowed quite so homogeneously' ('Antinomies' 59). And yet despite the overwhelming sameness of contemporary life, it is the very opposite that is often said to be the case. How is it possible, Jameson asks,

for the most standardized and uniform social reality in history, by the merest ideological flick of the thumbnail, the most imperceptible of displacements, to emerge as the rich oil-smear sheen of absolute diversity and of the most unimaginable and unclassifiable forms of human freedoms. Here homogeneity has become heterogeneity, in a movement complementary to that in which absolute change turned into absolute stasis, and without the slightest modification of a real

⁷ See Fisher's *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (2009). Immanuel Wallerstein argues in his exploration of 'historical capitalism' that the very origins of capitalism, traced back to feudal Europe, were part of a response to a trend towards more egalitarian forms of society. With the transformation towards the early capitalist model, the 'upper strata were once again in firm control politically and ideologically' (42).

⁸ Jameson makes a similar point when he argues that 'It seems to be easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than the breakdown of late capitalism; perhaps that is due to some weakness in our imagination' ('Antinomies' 50).

history that there was thought to be at an end, while here it has seemed finally to realize itself. ('Antinomies' 72)

In this sense, Jameson shares some ground with Fukuyama; both agree that we live in an unprecedented moment in the history of capitalism. However, Jameson is critical of the notion that 'the entrance of capitalism into a new third stage' coincides with the end of history ('End of Art' 90). It is not that in late capitalism we have reached the culmination of all human history, it is that our imaginative capacities seem to have failed to envision human development beyond the terms of market expansion. At this 'late' stage of capitalism, with the market pushing at its geographic limits, 'further development becomes unthinkable' (Jameson, 'End of Art' 91). This expansion of the market to its limit induces a 'blockage of the historical imagination' that frustrates our capacity to envisage alternatives, while the 'sheer systematicity' of the expansion, gained through its technological efficiency, finds the 'entire world . . . suddenly sewn up into a total system' (Jameson, 'End of Art' 91). Some would argue that this very unthinkability is not merely the by-product of global expansion, but a feeling that is deliberately fostered by the system itself.

This crisis of historical imagination can be traced through Jameson's discussion of postmodernism as a 'crisis of historicity' in *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (25). Jameson defines 'historicity' as

neither a representation of the past nor a representation of the future (although its various forms *use* such representations): it can first and foremost be defined as a perception of the present as history; that is, as a relationship to the present which somehow defamiliarizes it and allows us that distance from immediacy which is at length characterized as a historical perspective.

(*Postmodernism* 284, original emphasis)

Jameson is concerned about the way the tendency towards simulacral images of history reduces the idea of history as a product of human action and social struggle. Instead, we find ourselves 'condemned to seek History by way of our own pop images and simulacra of that history, which itself remains forever out of reach'. The referent of the past has been bracketed off leaving 'nothing but texts'. 'Cultural production', he argues, is no longer able to 'gaze directly on some putative real world, at some reconstruction of a past history which was once itself a present' (*Postmodernism* 25). The historical novel in these conditions 'can no longer set out

to represent the historical past; it can only “represent” our ideas and stereotypes about that past’ (*Postmodernism* 71). History in postmodern times is, for Jameson, just another image bank that cultural production draws on in its perpetual recycling of imagery, flattening our capacity to see our place in the world from a historical perspective. It is interesting to situate Jameson’s critique alongside Charles S.

Maier’s argument about the ideological function of the memory turn as

a sign not of historical confidence but of a retreat from transformative politics. It testifies to the loss of a future orientation, of progress towards civic enfranchisement and growing equality. It reflects a new focus on narrow ethnicity as a replacement for encompassing communities based on constitutions, legislation and widening attributes of citizenship. (150)⁹

Before turning specifically to how we might understand memory in these contexts, it is worth considering how these various ideas about postmodernism and the ‘end of history’ intersect.

II: The end of history 2

In ‘The End of Temporality’ (2003), Jameson retraces his own steps in an articulation of the transformation of experience from modernity to postmodernity, through a reassessment of the notion (one that he practically instigated himself in *Postmodernism*) that this could be understood as a shift from a temporal to a spatial dominant. Drawing on the work of Arno Mayer, Jameson notes the effects of a ‘counterintuitive lag in the modernization of Europe’ in the early twentieth century (‘End of Temporality’ 699). Modernism should, Jameson argues, be more precisely ‘grasped as a culture of incomplete modernization’ (699). This is to say that at the turn of the twentieth century ‘only a minute percentage of the social and physical space of the West could be considered either fully modern in technology or production or substantially bourgeois in its class culture’ (699). Against this background, Jameson conjectures a revision of the historical stereotypes of modernism:

⁹ Pierre Nora suggests conversely that ‘we speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left’ (7).

the protagonists of those aesthetic and philosophical revolutions were people who still lived in two distinct worlds simultaneously; born in those agricultural villages we still sometimes characterize as medieval or premodern, they developed their vocations in the new agglomerations with their radically distinct and “modern” spaces and temporalities. The sensitivity to deep time in the moderns then registers this comparatist perception of the two socioeconomic temporalities, which the first modernists had to negotiate in their own lived experience. (‘End of Temporality’ 699)

If the modernists were thus sensibly predisposed to the temporal effects of technological and industrial change because they had lived experience of the ‘premodern’ world, then, Jameson suggests, this can be usefully compared to the experience of postmodernity, where all traces of previous forms of life have all but vanished and where ‘suburbs replace the villages and modernity reigns triumphant and homogeneous over all space’,

the very sense of an alternate temporality disappears as well, and postmodern generations are dispossessed (without even knowing it) of any differential sense of that deep time the first moderns sought to inscribe in their writing. (‘End of Temporality’ 699)

In this sense, what Jameson once described as a ‘crisis of historicity’ can be understood as an effect of the endpoint of processes of modernization. If the moderns were nostalgic for a time before the fall, it was because they were sensitive to the industrial transformations for having lived through those very changes. The postmoderns, on the other hand, born to the permanent revolutions and crises of late capitalism, have nothing with which to compare their experience.

David Harvey explains his concept of *time-space compression* as the effect of expanded global markets and perpetual technological innovation on the lived experience of space and time:

As space appears to shrink to a “global village” of telecommunications and a “spaceship earth” of economic and ecological interdependencies—to use just two familiar and everyday images—and as time horizons shorten to the point where the present is all there is (the world of the schizophrenic), so we have to learn how to cope with an overwhelming sense of *compression* of our spatial and temporal worlds. (240, original emphasis)

Time-space compression thus describes the cumulative effect of two parallel forces. In the first place, the spatial expansion of the market means a more frequent movement across greater distances around the globe of people, commodities and

capital. At the same time, advances in communication technology—for Harvey, this was satellite broadcasting, today the internet and the smartphone—means these greater distances are collapsed almost to nothing. Increased connectivity, in terms of transportation, communication and trade, means space becomes compressed, in that far off places begin to feel more familiar and less distant. These transformations in the material conditions of life, Harvey argues, ‘so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves’ (240).

We can understand this in terms of Fredric Jameson’s notion of the dialectic of ‘essence and appearance, structure and lived experience’ as seen from the perspective of the centre of nineteenth-century imperialism:

[T]he truth of . . . experience no longer coincides with the place in which it takes place. The truth of that limited daily experience of London lies, rather, in India or Jamaica or Hong Kong; it is bound up with the whole colonial system of the British Empire that determines the very quality of the individual’s subjective life. Yet those structural coordinates are no longer accessible to immediate lived experience and are often not even conceptualizable for most people.

(*Postmodernism* 411)

This creates a situation where ‘if individual experience is authentic, then it cannot be true; and that if a scientific model of the same content is true, then it escapes individual experience’ (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 411). As Jameson writes, ‘[i]f this is so for the age of imperialism, how much more must it hold for our own moment’ (*Postmodernism* 412). The subject of contemporary global capitalism is thrown into a world that is too vast to make sense of. Information and culture is produced and transmitted at such speed and in such great quantity that it is impossible for any single individual to process quickly enough. ‘[O]ur discontents’, writes Huyssen, ‘flow from informational and perceptual overload combined with a cultural acceleration neither our psyche nor our senses are that well equipped to handle’ (‘Present’ 35). In this way, time-space compression simultaneously ‘exacts its toll on our capacity to grapple with the realities unfolding around us’ and makes it ‘harder and harder to react accurately to events’ (Harvey, *Condition* 306). That we struggle to know the world is probably not so particular to postmodernity in comparison to any other historical moment; the difference perhaps lies in that now we struggle to

process the world quickly enough to believe that we know it. Ursula K. Heise argues that postmodern culture is focused on ‘the present understood as a narrowly defined time period unhinged from past causes and future extensions or effects’ (26). This narrow presentism is the product of ‘a continuing replay and spread of already familiar modernization processes’ which project an idea of the future that is not ‘cataclysmic or apocalyptic’ but, instead, ‘a process of petrification or crystallization which turns society into a machine-like aggregate that stubbornly reproduces its own structures without allowing any meaningful human intervention’ (18). On the one hand, economic rationalization reduces human experience to machine life, while on the other, industrial and technological advancement produces ‘the enormous speed-up in the existential rhythm of individuals as well as societies’ (Heise 21). For Andreas Huyssen, contemporary culture’s obsessions with memory is a direct response to the increasing speed of a technologically driven world, expressing a ‘desire to anchor ourselves in a world characterized by an increasing instability of time and the fracturing of lived space’ (‘Present’ 28). ‘The faster we are pushed into a global future that does not inspire confidence’, writes Huyssen, ‘the stronger we feel the desire to slow down, the more we turn to memory for comfort’ (Huyssen, ‘Present’ 35).

Anthony Giddens introduced the notion of the ‘sequestration of experience’ to describe the ways in which the ‘abstract systems’ of late modernity removed the ‘basic aspects of life experience, including especially moral crises, from the regularity of day-to-day life’. Giddens describes these developments in terms of ‘connected processes of concealment which set apart the routines of ordinary life from the following phenomena: madness; criminality; sickness and death; sexuality; and nature’ (156). The regulation and routinization of everyday experience forms, what Giddens calls, a ‘protective cocoon’ which ““filters out” . . . many of the dangers which in principle threaten the integrity of the self’ (54). In the context of Jameson’s paradox about the incompatibility of ‘authentic’ and ‘true’ experience, we might extend Giddens’ concept to mean that our advanced, techno-culturo-economic infrastructures conceal not only the radical contingency of our individual lives, but also the structural violence at the foundation of our very sense of security. Thus, today, we perpetually fail to see that we live simultaneously in two worlds; the first,

a wireless, virtual, cloud-world whose bywords are ‘creativity’, ‘freedom’ and ‘choice’; the other, that of sweatshops, hazardous waste dumps and drone warfare. As Ernst Bloch wrote, ‘Not all people exist in the same Now’ (22).

Mark Currie situates the effects of time-space compression in relation to the phenomena of ‘accelerated recontextualisation’ and, after Derrida, ‘archive fever’. The former describes a transformation whereby the recontextualization of cultural signifiers from the past which once necessitated a certain ironic distance has undergone an ‘acceleration of the cycle’ meaning that ‘the repetition of past aesthetic styles becomes value-free’ (Currie 11):

The style of the present, according to the logic of accelerated recontextualisation, is more obviously constituted by traces of the past, which are no longer held at a distance by the temporal gap between the present and the past. This is perhaps most apparent in technological areas of commerce such as music, television or computing, in which the speed of recycling is unrestrained, so that, for example, the television advertisement can produce parodic representations of films which are on current release, or popular music can refer to current events. (Currie 11-12)

This acceleration of the cultural dialectic has, Currie argues, a strange effect on memory.

As an aesthetic commodity, the present anticipates its own pastness in its very form, and is experienced, like everything else in the contemporary world as the object of a future memory. In the mode of accelerated recontextualisation, the process which consigns the present to memory is conducted at infinite speed, since the present commodity is always already in the past. (Currie 12)

Thus, Currie suggests that one effect of the extreme reduction of temporality to the here and now is that the present itself is no longer conceived of as present, but as a future past.¹⁰

Paradoxically then, one of the effects of living at a time when the contradictions and conflicts of History have been reduced to manageable and controllable economic and sociological data, is a certain consciousness of being in history, or to be more accurate, being *of* history. The counter-effect of this historical

¹⁰ This recalls Vincent Crapanzano’s argument that ‘the ruin has been replaced by the quotation, a trace, really a pseudo-trace, a detritus, a re-ferent, a carrying back to/from a past, which is so completely decontextualized, so open to recontextualization, that it, the quotation, the trace, becomes at once an emblem of a past evacuated from history (history understood as a somehow meaningful account of the past) and a signal of the artifice of any such account, any history’ (431).

consciousness, if that is the correct term, is a contemporaneous archive fever. ‘The archive’, Currie explains, ‘is not a passive record, but an active producer of the present: an “archiving archive” which structures the present in anticipation of its recollection’ (13). This logic of the archive is embedded in the very circulation of culture, as embodied, for example, in ‘our experience of the so-called news media because the cause-and-effect sequence of an event and its recording as news is reversed in a highly developed media capitalist society: an event is recorded not because it happens, but it happens because it is recorded’ (Currie 12). In this context, the time-speed compression at the end of history, the speed of technological advance, and the parallel turn towards a notion of memory expressed in the archives, museums and ruins by which we preserve all traces of the past, inaugurates a new logic of historical consciousness, one in which we already conceive of ourselves as being of the past. Thus, much as the notion of the ‘end of history’ might be the convenient fiction of a dominant ideology, it is nevertheless one that captures a sense of the lived experience of real material conditions.¹¹ If, as Marshall Berman argues, ‘the visions and revisions of modernity were active orientations toward history, attempts to connect the turbulent present with a past and a future, to help men and women . . . to make themselves at home in this world’ (33), then postmodernity may be defined as a period in which the quest for home has been all but abandoned and the ‘turbulent present’ has become radically disjoined from past and future.¹² We might understand Giddens’s notion of the ‘sequestration of experience’ to be implicated in an obfuscation of historical processes; to be protected from nature, sickness and death is to be protected from History itself, and is, for the individual subject, to be protected from one’s own implication in that History.

¹¹ Gilles Lipovetsky proposes the term hypermodernity to describe a time of global market domination, technocratic efficiency and individualism. Unlike postmodernity which revelled in the demise of a past that was ‘assumed to be dead’ (Lipovetsky 30), hypermodernity is a condition riddled with insecurity and anxiety. Lipovetsky describes hypermodernity as a ‘paradoxical combination of frivolity and anxiety, euphoria and vulnerability, playfulness and dread’ (40). In response to postmodernism’s ludic appropriation of the images and remnants of the past, hypermodernity is haunted by a ‘crisis of the future’ and, having replaced the idea of a collective utopia with a pragmatic ‘culture of prevention’, looks nostalgically towards the past as a space of security and stability.

¹² As Joy Division’s Ian Curtis once phrased it on ‘Heart and Soul’, a song that mourns ‘foundations . . . ripped apart at their roots’, ‘The past is now part of my future/The present is well out of hand’.

III: History and memory

Dominick LaCapra identifies two tendencies of discussion on the question of memory. On the one side, historians have ‘anxiously opposed history to memory’ so that memory becomes ‘crucial because it is what history must define itself against’; memory becomes ‘the antithesis or “other” of history’ (*History and Memory* 16). On the other, history has been ‘avidly approximated’ to, if not ‘confounded’, with memory so that ‘memory’s importance stems from its putative position as the ground or essence of history’ (LaCapra, *History and Memory* 16). The first tendency, LaCapra argues, reflects a ‘neopositivistic understanding of history as a dry and sober matter of fact analysis’ suspicious of memory, seen to be ‘inherently uncritical and close to myth’; the second adopts ‘a fictionalizing if not mythologizing idea of history that is insensitive to the tricks memory plays and to the reasons for those tricks’ (*History and Memory* 16-17). What these two tendencies fail to appreciate is that memory is able to tell us something that history sometimes cannot.

As Michael Rothberg has it, ‘the truths of memory are often in tension with the truths of history’ (*Multidirectional* 14). LaCapra explains,

Even in its falsifications, repressions, displacements, and denials, memory may nonetheless be informative – not in terms of an accurate empirical representation of its object but in terms of that object’s often anxiety-ridden reception and assimilation by both participants in events and those born later. (*History and Memory* 19)

LaCapra gives the example of the ‘prevalent idea’ that the Nazis made soap from Jews; while the claim is ‘empirically false’, it nevertheless possesses ‘a figurative value both in terms of the very real Nazi tendency to reduce Jews to objects and in terms of its inversion of Nazi ritual and hygienic anxiety over contamination by Jews’ (*History and Memory* 19). With this example, LaCapra wants to show that while the story of the soap is not a historical fact, it still expresses a certain truth about Nazi ideology, a truth rooted in the unconscious rather than empiricism. This realization is at the heart of the pervasive ambiguity around memory. It means that a history that attempts to iron out the vicissitudes of memory, the voices of the witnesses, in the pursuit of narrative closure is necessarily lacking in the richness gained through being attentive to a knowledge filtered through subjective experience.

Yet at the same time it points us to the fact that history is always rooted in these myths or fictions produced in individual memory and the unconscious.

This is why LaCapra's promotion of a historical narrative aimed at 'empathic unsettlement' is, though noble of intent, ultimately flawed. LaCapra proposes a historical narrative that 'resists closure' (*Writing* 35). Such a narrative should involve 'both an objective (not objectivist) reconstruction of the past and a dialogic exchange with it and other inquirers into it, wherein knowledge involves not only the processing of information but also affect, empathy, and questions of value' (*Writing* 35). It would be 'as attentive as possible to the voices of others whose alterity is recognized' (*Writing* 40). As far as the writing of history is concerned, I am sympathetic to LaCapra's desire for a history that resists erasing the voices that disturb its illusions of narrative mastery. Yet the impact of any historical narrative in any form is always without exception conditional. The historical text is always merely a text; and the historical text is always, no matter how accurately and comprehensively it represents historical reality, just one text amongst many.

Marianne Hirsch initially uses the concept of *postmemory* to describe the experience of children of Holocaust survivors 'who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by the traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated' (*Family* 22). Postmemory then points to a peculiar double negation in the experience of the second generation. Their own stories are 'evacuated' by their parents' stories, denoting a fundamental absence at the core of their identity, yet their parents' stories, the very stories that have displaced their own, can be 'neither understood nor recreated'. A void is displaced by an absence. Hirsch's concept can thus be seen to draw on a certain model of traumatic memory that dominates contemporary trauma theory, one in which the traumatic memory resists narrativization, a subject that I will return to further on. What is particular about the experience of survivors' children is that, as Ellen Fine writes, they are 'obliged to fill in the blank spaces with their own words and imagination, to find their own way back to the past that has been denied them – to remember what they did not know' (44). Thus, for Hirsch, postmemory is a way of understanding this imaginative aspect of memory by which 'its connection to its object or source is

mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation' (*Family 22*). For this reason, she hesitates about the use of the prefix 'post' in that it could imply that 'we are beyond memory and therefore perhaps . . . purely in history' (*Family 22*).

Yet despite this hesitation, as Hirsch develops the concept, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish postmemory from a notion of history. She writes, for instance, that the dying out of the survivor generation means that 'the memory of the Holocaust has become a postmemory' (*Family 50*). And the transformation of the particularity of the experience of postmemory to the universal becomes clear in her response to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

The museum was created not primarily for survivors and deeply engaged children of survivors like me, but for an American public with little knowledge of the event. At its best, the museum needs to elicit in its visitors an imaginary identification—the desire to know and to feel, the curiosity and passion that shape the postmemory of survivor children. At its best, it would include all of its visitors in the generation of postmemory. The museum's architecture and exhibits aim at just that effect: to get us close to the affect of the event, to convey knowledge and information, without, however, attempting any facile sense of recreation or reenactment. (*Family 249*)

Postmemory here seeps out into the minds of visitors to the museum, and it is impossible to distinguish postmemory as an 'imaginary identification' with the past, from the imaginative engagement that is necessary for any understanding of history, which is always absent, and therefore always mediated through the imagination.

The reason for this seepage of the term is because postmemory is not so much a theory of memory as a theory of transmission and identification, as is evident in Hirsch's more recent writing where she describes postmemory as 'an intersubjective transgenerational space of remembrance, linked specifically to cultural or collective trauma' ('Surviving' 10). This evolution emphasises notions of transmissibility and affect, as shown when she borrows from Geoffrey Hartman to redefine postmemory as '*retrospective witnessing by adoption*. . . . a question of adopting the traumatic experiences—and thus also the memories—of others as experiences one might oneself have had, and of inscribing them into one's own life story' (Hirsch 'Surviving' 10). Richard Crownshaw highlights the risk of 'the potential for adoption to turn into appropriation, for "seeing through another's eyes, of remembering

through another's memories” to collapse into seeing through one's own eyes and remembering one's own memories instead’ (‘Reconsidering’). Yet while, this risk is something that Hirsch claims to be aware of, it seems that this collapsing the boundaries of witnessing is precisely what is desired, as opposed to, say, defining the boundaries between witness and nonwitness.

Gary Weissman proposes the term *nonwitness* to disambiguate the chasm of experience between those who lived through and survived the Holocaust, and those whose experience is limited to ‘representations of the Holocaust, all of them created or preserved in its aftermath’ (20).¹³ It is this memory of ‘representations’ as opposed to ‘experience’, which postmemory points us to, even as it problematically blurs them. Rothberg picks up on this aspect of postmemory to include not only those ‘haunted . . . by the memories they have inherited from their families’ but also from ‘the culture at large’ (*Traumatic* 186). Similarly Robert Eaglestone uses the term to describe a form of ‘representation mediated by and created in texts: family stories, books, tapes, and so on. These texts are, then, texts on texts, and texts about the effects of texts’ (*Holocaust* 97). In extending postmemory in this way, Rothberg and Eaglestone both point not so much to a distinction between witness and nonwitness memory, but to a similarity, namely that, whatever our experiences, individual memory is never isolated from the cultural context in which it is produced. Hirsch wishes to introduce the role of the imaginary into the discourse of memory, but without allowing for the possibility that the imagination has always already displaced memory.

What Hirsch’s concept of postmemory shares with wider memorial practices and, as I will argue, contemporary theories of trauma is an attempt to respond to a perceived crisis of historical representation. Walter Benn Michaels critiques the myth of ‘history as memory’ that pervades contemporary American culture, a myth he identifies across a wide cultural field from Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicism to the haunted aesthetics of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) (135). This notion of

¹³ While Weissman's term reasserts a useful distinction between these two forms of experience, it nevertheless negatively attributes value to the subject position of the witness. The nonwitness may not have *been there*, but her position as nonwitness is still configured in relation to an event that was not witnessed.

‘remembered history’, Michaels argues, reflects a shift towards the politics of identity and group belonging:

Without the idea of a history that is remembered or forgotten (not merely learned or unlearned), the events of the past can have only a limited relevance to the present, providing us at best with causal accounts of how things have come to be the way they are, at worst with objects of antiquarian interest. It is only when it’s reimagined as the fabric of our own experience that the past can be deployed in the constitution of identity and that any history can properly become ours. A history that is *learned* can be learned by anyone (and can belong to anyone who learns it); a history that is *remembered* can be remembered only by those who first experienced it, and it must belong to them. So if history were learned, not remembered, then no history could be more truly ours than any other. Indeed, no history, except the things that had actually happened to us, would be truly ours at all. (138-9)

Michaels diffracts the opposition of memory to history into an opposition between *learned* history and *remembered* history, and in doing so flips a debate that often circles around questions of representation into a debate about the construction of national and ethnic identity. If we remember history, Michaels shows us, we do not remember it in the way that we might remember something we experienced individually; instead, to remember a history is to believe ourselves to have a personal relationship to a narrative that, in fact, we have only learned. To remember history might then perhaps be best described, to use Raymond Williams’s term, as a ‘structure of feeling’. Kerwin Lee Klein characterizes the history/memory opposition as one between history as ‘objective in the coldest, hardest sense of the word’ and memory that is ‘subjective in the warmest, most inviting sense of that word’ (116-7). These cold/warm, hard/inviting binaries are visible in Nora’s image of the tree and the bark, the living organism of memory that harden into the dead husk of history.

Nora, writing in the context of French national history, sees a threat to the ‘tradition of memory’ posed by what he calls ‘the historiographical movement, the reflexive turning of history upon itself’ (11). Historiography, by which he means the postmodern variety,

operates primarily by introducing doubt, by running a knife between the tree of memory and the bark of history. That we study the historiography of the French Revolution, that we constitute its myths and interpretations, implies that we no longer unquestioningly identify

with its heritage. To interrogate a tradition, venerable though it may be, is no longer to pass it on intact. (10)

The image suggests that memory, ‘the tree’, and history, ‘the bark’, are, for Nora, parts of the same organism. In the natural order of things, the living organism of memory is transformed over time into the hardened dead husk of history.

Historiography’s questioning of the process has, for Nora, fundamentally damaged this natural order; the foundation of identity built upon the continuity between past and present has been severed. Nora’s *lieux de mémoire* have been said to express a ‘nostalgia for a *certain kind of memory*, one which would enable an unmediated access to the past and the restoration of lost continuities’ (King 29, original emphasis). This is a good example of Michaels’s point that to think of our relationship to the narratives of the past through the filter of memory makes us feel differently about those narratives, giving a sense of proximity and possession; it also, surely, changes the kinds of narratives that we tell about the past. Indeed, this is precisely the purpose of a concept such as postmemory, which implies relationship and responsibility to an event even as it inscribes distance.

Much as Michaels’s argument should be borne in mind whenever we cross paths with that vague word ‘memory’, it is precisely the opposition between *learned* and *remembered* history that needs to be broken down. The relationship of an individual to the past is always both learned *and* remembered—indeed, learning *is* remembering. That is, the problem with the ambiguous language of memory is not that it competes with the cold, analytical gaze of the historian who is able to distinguish fact from fantasy; it is that even the most analytical narrative is ultimately subsumed in the mire of memory, imbricated with fantasy, emotion and the unconscious. As Huyssen writes,

[A]ll representation—whether in language, narrative, image, or recorded sound—is based on memory. *Re*-presentation always comes after, even though some media will try to provide us with the delusion of pure presence. But rather than leading us to some authentic origin or giving us verifiable access to the real, memory, even and especially in its belatedness, is itself based on representation. The past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory. The fissure that opens up between experiencing an event and remembering it in representation is unavoidable.

(*Twilight 3*, original emphasis)

Thus, representation and memory can be seen to have a dialectic relationship. An individual's memory is a representation of the past, just as representation is never a pure, unmediated record of the past. To make a representation of the past is in some part to draw upon memory, just as to remember is in some part to draw upon representation. Yet, to acknowledge this relationship will not take us very far, as Richard Terdiman observes '[m]aybe just as *everything* is representation; *everything* is memory' (*Present* 8). To stop there, however, would be to miss the crucial third term in the discussion, *the real*.

IV: The remembered past

Keith Jenkins writes, '[t]he past and history are not stitched into each other such that only one historical reading of the past is absolutely necessary. The past and history float free of each other, they are ages and miles apart' (7). History, then, is categorically different from the past. It is the name of the discourse whose object is the past. Thus, Jenkins proposes a more precise terminology, utilizing 'the past' to denote 'all that has gone on before everywhere' and 'historiography' for 'the writings of historians', while reserving the capitalized 'History' to refer to the 'whole ensemble of relations' (7-8). Indeed, History has, historically, been afflicted by the ambiguity of a name which denotes and conflates the *res gestae*, what happened, and the *historia rerum gestarum*, the narration of what happened, as Hegel shows in his *Philosophy of History*. For Roland Barthes, the conflation of meanings is the result of a 'twofold operation' inherent in the production of 'historical discourse':

At the first stage (speaking of course metaphorically) the referent is detached from the discourse and becomes primordial to it; this is the period of the *res gestae*, where the discourse appears as no more than *historia rerum gestarum*; but then the very idea that history can have a meaning (*signifié*) other than referential is rejected. The referent and its expression (*signifiant*) are seen as directly related; the function of discourse is confined to the mere expression of reality; and meaning, the fundamental term of imaginary structures, becomes superfluous.

('Historical' 154)

It is interesting to note how the duality inherent to the notion of History is mirrored in the notion of 'the past' itself. For Geoffrey Cubitt, the notion of 'the past' encompasses two distinct, though interdependent, concepts. It can mean something

similar to Jenkins's definition, the 'inexorably advancing stream of historical happenings and interactions' (Cubitt 27). But, Cubitt argues, it can also mean 'the past that we have a "sense" of, the past as it exists in current awareness, a past constructed through the complex mixture of reflection and recollection, research and imaginative representation, that allows us the feeling of conscious retrospection' (Cubitt 27). Thus it is that for Robert Holton, adopting a Gramscian perspective, 'all people are historians to the degree that each person carries a sense of the past in his or her mind, and there is a strong narrative element in the discourse that we all conduct about the past' (7). Memory is 'entangled with history, scripted through the layered meanings in mass culture, and itself highly contested and conflictual' (Sturken 7). The distinction between the 'sense of the past' as opposed to 'the past' as a totality of everything that has ever happened allows a more precise articulation of Huyssen's observation about the 'desire for narratives of the past' that arise from the ashes of 'delegitimized' history.

If there is, then, a 'sense of the past', this sense is, in Terdiman's understanding, always in necessary dialect with memory:

What precedes us seems to constitute the frame of our existence, the basis for our self-understanding. Yet however necessary its lineaments may seem to our comprehension of the world, this conception of the "past" is no less contingent than any cultural fact. We say, in a now-familiar formation, that we *construct* the past. The agent of that construction is what I term "memory". Memory is the modality of our relation to the past. (*Present 7*, original emphasis)

The past is something that cannot be said to exist separately from the presence of the individual consciousness that has a sense of it. Memory is, Terdiman says, 'the present past' (*Present 8*). Already, we can begin to see how the notion of a 'sense of the past', figured in this way, is fundamentally opposed to the idea of 'the past' as the totality of everything that ever happened. 'The past' implies a singularity, an absence, an objectivity; the 'sense of the past' implies a multiplicity of 'pasts' as given in the present moment to the subjectivity of each individual.¹⁴

¹⁴ As Huyssen points out, '[t]he temporal status of any act of memory is always the present and not, as some naive epistemology might have it, the past itself, even though all memory in some ineradicable sense is dependent on some past event or experience' (*Twilight 3*).

In *The Political Unconscious* (1981), Jameson's rebuts the 'fashionable conclusion' of 'post-structuralisms and post-Marxisms' that because history is a text, the "referent" does not exist'. History, Jameson states, 'is *not* a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, but that, as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, and that our approach to it and to the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious' (*Political* 35, original emphasis). We should note how Jameson is careful to avoid equating History with the Real; the two are not synonymous even if there is a certain amount of overlap in what each term presumes to give name to. Jameson's hesitation to entirely conflate the two concepts in this text can be compared with an earlier essay on Lacan where he writes that the Real 'is simply History itself' in order to pursue a 'confrontation' between the materialism of psychoanalysis and Marxist historical materialism ('Imaginary' 384).¹⁵

As Wulf Kansteiner notes, there is 'no natural, direct connection between the real and the remembered' ('Finding' 190). This separation is, for Terdiman, absolute: 'The representations of memory . . . cannot be conceived (or depreciated) as the real in some derivative or residue form. *They are the form that the real transformed by our work upon it takes in consciousness*' (*Present* 59-60, original emphasis). In his earlier work, Lacan defines the real as that which 'resists symbolization absolutely' (*Seminar I* 66).¹⁶ This notion comes from the early Lacan in which the Real is conceived of as the absolute other to the symbolic network of signifiers. There is, of course, something contradictory in the attempt to attribute a specific symbolic meaning to something that is said to resist the very process of symbolization. As Tom Eyers writes, in any attempt to define the Real, it is necessary to hold 'singular or stable definitions . . . in suspicion' (2). It is this radical separation of the Real from the Symbolic which Lacan conveys in his 'Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"':

what is hidden is never but what is *not in its place* [manque à sa place], as a call slip says of a volume mislaid in a library. And even if the book were on an adjacent shelf or in the next slot, it would be hidden there, however visible it may seem there. For it can *literally* [à

¹⁵ I have chosen not to use the capitalized form of 'the Real' except when it is used as part of Lacan's Real, Symbolic, Imaginary triad.

¹⁶ Jameson quotes this definition of the Real in *The Political Unconscious*.

la lettre] be said that something is not in its place only of what can change places—that is, of the symbolic. For the real, whatever upheaval we subject it to, is always and in every case in its place; it carries its place stuck to the sole of its shoe, there being nothing that can exile it from it. (*Écrits* 17 (25), original emphasis)¹⁷

A volume in a library can only be understood as missing in the realm of a symbolic network in which it was attributed its place. Just because there is a gap on the shelf where we expect the volume to be does not mean that it has ceased to exist. It still exists, in the real, in the sense of that specific configuration of matter that is the object. The signifier (its unique shelfmark, let's say), continues to refer to the gap, but it cannot help us to locate the book which, now out of place, could, in theory, be anywhere. This radical dislocation between the real and the signifier is evoked in Lacan's description of the 'incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier' (*Écrits* 419 (503)). Thus it can be said that the real is 'always . . . in its place' in the sense that it has no designated space; it is that thing, *Das Ding*, that exists whatever we can say or know or believe we know about it. It is in this sense that Catherine Belsey can propose that we understand the real as shorthand for the 'immensity of the cosmos' (*Culture* xii). The gap on the shelf is the product of the signifying network; it does not exist in the real itself; it is only, as Yanni Stavrakakis observes, through the symbolisation of the real that lack can be said to 'emerge' (44).

We might say that it is precisely because of this dislocation of the Symbolic and the Real that Lacan's conceptual framework for their relationship evolves between his early and late period.¹⁸ As Slavoj Žižek argues, if in the 1950s Lacan understood the Real as 'the brute, pre-symbolic reality which always returns to its place', by the 1970s it increasingly took the form of what he previously called the Imaginary. Žižek gives the example of the place of trauma in Lacan's theory. As Žižek explains, in the 1950s trauma had for Lacan the status of an 'imaginary entity which had not yet been fully symbolized'; by the 1970s,

trauma is *real*—it is a hard core resisting symbolization, but the point is that it does not matter if it has had a place, if it has "really

¹⁷ The page number in parenthesis corresponds to the French Edition of *Écrits*, as provided in Bruce Fink's translation of the complete text used here.

¹⁸ For my purposes here, I follow the work of Slavoj Žižek and Jacques-Alain Miller who highlight the transformations of the relationship of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real in Lacan's theory between the 1950s and the 1970s. Evers argues against this reading, seeing a clear development rather than a break.

occurred” in so-called reality, the point is simply that it produces a series of structural effects (displacements, repetitions, and so on). The Real is an entity which must be constructed afterwards so that we can account for the distortions of the symbolic structure.

(*Sublime* 182, original emphasis)

This, Žižek claims, is the paradox of the Real for Lacan, that it is ‘an entity which although it does not exist (in the sense of “really existing”, taking place in reality), has a series of properties—it exercises a certain structural causality, it can produce a series of effects in the structural reality of subjects’ (*Sublime* 183). The Real must therefore be understood as both ‘the hard, impenetrable kernel resisting symbolization *and* a pure chimerical entity which has in itself no ontological consistency’ (Žižek, *Sublime* 190, original emphasis). The Real is thus to be understood as both prior to and product of any symbolization process.

When we remember an experience, we remember *because* something happened in the world and we registered its happening. Our senses were stimulated by the happening; and whatever traces were registered in the synapses of the brain. This is all real, in the sense that all of this happened, as such, in reality, materially, atomically, biologically. Later, if we remember this happening, our memory is a construction that logically accounts for those real traces of though does not necessarily correspond to that ‘really existing’ event. (In any case, the complexity of what ‘really’ happened was already beyond our sensory capacities.)

The symbolic order is, Žižek argues, characterized by a ‘specific mode of causality, namely *retroactive* causality’ (*For* 201, original emphasis). Whereas, what Žižek calls, ‘positive, “substantial” causality runs in a linear-progressive way, the cause precedes the effect’; in the symbolic order this linear form of causality is reversed (*For* 201). Žižek borrows the term ‘symbolic efficiency’ from Lévi-Strauss to describe the symbolic network’s ‘continuous “rewriting of its own past”, in including past signifying traces in new contexts which retroactively change their meaning’ (*For* 202). This is the basis of Freudian *Nachträglichkeit*, translated variably as ‘deferred action’, ‘belatedness’ and ‘afterwardsness’, and, indeed, for

Lacan it is the origin of Psychoanalysis, as we can see in this passage also quoted by Žižek:¹⁹

[I]n psychoanalytic anamnesis, what is at stake is not reality, but truth, because the effect of full speech is to reorder past contingencies by conferring on them the sense of necessities to come, such as they are constituted by the scant freedom through which the subject makes them present. (Lacan, *Écrits* 213 (256))

As Žižek explains,

the true, the past (long-forgotten traumatic encounters) does determine the present, but the very mode of this determining is *overdetermined* by the present synchronous symbolic network. If the trace of an old encounter all of a sudden begins to exert impact, it is because the *present* symbolic universe of the subject is structured in a way that is susceptible to it. (*For* 202, original emphasis)²⁰

There are two conclusions that we can draw which have implications for my argument. In the first place, there is the insistence on the radical separation between the real and the symbolic, that is, between the real and language. In the second place, is the fact that once we have entered into the symbolic, the real—it must be emphasised—continues to exist. That is, once we have entered into the realm of language, memory, representation, the Real must be understood as simultaneously both a product of the symbolic network *and* the very condition of that network's existence, 'not so much the invisible Beyond, eluding our gazes which can perceive only delusive appearances, but, rather, the very stain or spot which disturbs and blurs our "direct" perception of reality—which "bends" the direct straight line from our eyes to the perceived object' (Žižek, *Plague* 214). It is precisely through this overwrought concept of the Real that we can begin to unpick the tight ideological knot that twists together contemporary theories of trauma and the practices of memorial culture, and to examine literature's place in this context.

¹⁹ Jean Laplanche proposes 'afterwardsness' as a translation of *Nachträglichkeit* in opposition to either a hermeneutic or determinist reading. For Laplanche, the richness of the term is in its seeming ambiguity which 'combines a retrogressive and a progressive direction' ('Notes' 269). Laplanche argues that 'right at the start, there is something that goes in the direction of the past to the future, from the other to the individual in question . . . which I call the implantation of the enigmatic message. This message is then retranslated, following a temporal direction which is, in an alternating fashion, by turns retrogressive and progressive (according to my general model of translation—detranslation—retranslation)' ('Notes' 269).

²⁰ Hence Laplanche's formulation that 'it takes two traumas to make a trauma' (*New Foundations* 88).

2: Witnessing the Past

The postmodern obsession with memory and the traumatic events of the twentieth century might be read as a symptom of contemporary culture rather than a traumatic response in itself. Kirby Farrell argues that the attraction to catastrophe and trauma is 'a strategic fiction' used by 'a complex, stressful society . . . to account for a world that seems threateningly out of control' (2). Farrell describes the mood of these post-traumatic times as 'belated, epiphenomenal, the outcome of cumulative stresses. It reflects a disturbance in the ground of collective experience: a shock to people's values, trust, and sense of purpose; an obsessive awareness that nations, leaders, even we ourselves can die' (3). This is something he explicitly associates with our place at the 'end of history': 'The cold war has shrivelled up like a vampire in the sunlight, and so have the stories that gave it purpose' (3). Much as our lives are increasingly controlled, managed and economized, supposedly cushioned from all perceived threats, , our sequestration, Roger Luckhurst notes, 'can never be total; insecurity and doubt flower at key junctures of lived experience' ('Traumaculture' 38).²¹ It is in this sense that, Mark Seltzer argues, trauma has come to function 'not merely as a switch point between bodily and psychic orders . . . [but] as a switch point between individual and collective, private and public order of things' ('Wound' 5). It is as if the narratives and images of trauma have come to replace the public sphere of politics which has been repressed by the post-ideological, end of history, neoliberal mindset. Luckhurst highlights as an example of this depoliticization of the public sphere in the British Press's interest in 'confessional narratives of illness and trauma' during the late 1990s, which he sees as providing 'scripts for reactions to traumatic life-events for a somehow peculiarly "cocooned" class' ('Traumaculture' 38). Anne Rothe sees trauma as the 'dominant mode of emplotment' of our time; trauma provides 'the basic narrative structure and core set of characters—for representing such diverse experiences as child abuse, Holocaust survival, war combat, terminal illness, and addiction in Western culture' (4). It is thus important to emphasise the distinction between trauma as a real psychological response to a real event or social

²¹ Luckhurst points to Anthony Giddens's observation that the 'frontiers of sequestered experience . . . are fault-lines, full of tensions and poorly mastered forces' (168).

structure and trauma as an aesthetic logic to the way we understand and represent the world.

Jacques Rancière writes,

Politics and art, like forms of knowledge, construct “fictions”, that is to say *material* rearrangements of signs and images, relationships between what is seen and what is said, between what is done and what can be done. (*Politics of Aesthetics* 39, original emphasis)

This relationship between politics and aesthetics is founded on their separate, though not entirely disconnected, roles in what he calls the partition (or distribution) of the sensible (*partage du sensible*):²² ‘the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it’ (12). This partition is constantly in flux and cannot be generalized to common experience. To speak of the partition of the sensible is to speak of the means by which the very definition of what can and cannot be perceived is already present in any given moment of perception; that is, as Žižek explains, in Rancière’s work ‘poetic displacements and condensations are not just secondary illustrations of an underlying ideological struggle, but the very terrain of this struggle’ (‘Lesson’ 77). For Mark Robson, ‘[t]his is not just a matter of recognition, but of what it is possible to recognize’ (82). The partition must then be understood in the double sense, both ‘as that which separates and excludes’ and ‘as that which allows participation’ (Rancière, *Dissensus* 36). To think of trauma and memory from this perspective is to think of the way certain ways of making art and ways of imagining the reality of how our minds function are called traumatic. These ways of making and understanding are implicitly involved in defining what we understand by the word trauma, just as they distort and rearrange what we see and do not see when we use such language.

Lyotard’s call for ‘witnesses to the unrepresentable’ echoes through the work of contemporary trauma theory, which in many ways can be read as an adaptive

²² In English translations, the original French term *partage du sensible* is usually given as either ‘distribution’ or ‘partition’ of the sensible. I use ‘partition’ following Davide Panagia’s observation about the importance of the dual meaning of *partage* as ‘at once a sharing and a division’ (96), better reflected in the English as ‘partition’ than ‘distribution’, which puts undue emphasis on the sharing aspect. See Panagia for further discussion on this point (95-7).

response to postmodern notions such as incredulity towards the grand narratives and the decentring of the subject. Hayden White writes,

The breakdown of narrative in a culture, group, or social class is a symptom of its having entered into a crisis. For with any weakening of narrativizing capacity, the group loses its power to locate itself in history, to come to grips with the Necessity that its past represents for it, and to imagine a creative, if only provisional, transcendence of its “fate.” (*Content* 149)

This can be understood in the context of trauma as it is used both in the academy and in culture more generally, with its suspicion towards all forms of ‘narrative fetishism’, defined by Eric Santner as ‘the construction and deployment of a narrative consciously or unconsciously designed to expunge the traces of the trauma or loss that called that narrative into being in the first place’. For Santner, narrative fetishism is to be understood in opposition to the work of mourning as a process of ‘elaborating and integrating the reality of loss or traumatic shock by remembering and repeating it in symbolically and dialogically mediated doses’. Narrative fetishism evades mourning work by simulating ‘a condition of intactness’ and thus releasing one from the ‘burden’ of reconstituting one’s identity in the aftermath of a trauma (Santner 144).²³ Given White’s views on the cultural and social necessity of narrative, we should perhaps question whether this pervasion of traumatic discourse in contemporary culture is not, in fact, a symptom of some deeper crisis.

Lyotard’s notion of the unrepresentable is founded on his interpretation of the Kantian sublime:

We can conceive the infinitely great, the infinitely powerful, but every presentation of an object destined to ‘make visible’ this absolute greatness or power appears to us painfully inadequate. Those are ideas of which no presentation is possible. Therefore, they impart no knowledge about reality (experience); they also prevent the free union of the faculties which gives rise to the sentiment of the beautiful; and they prevent the formation and the stabilization of taste. They can be said to be unrepresentable. (*Postmodern Condition* 78)

In Lyotard’s conflation of the sublime with the unrepresentable, then, he perceives a difference between modern and postmodern aesthetics. The modern ‘allows the

²³ We should acknowledge that Santner’s comments are made in the context of the question of Holocaust representation raised by the Historikerstreit, but it is productive to consider how pervasive this way of thinking has become in the last two decades in all areas of culture.

unpresentable to be put forward only as the missing contents; but the form, because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer to the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure'. The postmodern, on the other hand,

would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable. (*Postmodern Condition* 81)

Thus, Lyotard champions the work of Kazimir Malevich whose *White on White* (1918) 'enables us to see only by making it impossible to see' and which 'devote themselves to making an allusion to the unpresentable by means of visible presentations' (*Postmodern Condition* 78). Rancière observes in Lyotard's work an 'ethical turn' in postmodern theory.

For Rancière, what is unrepresentable is defined by 'norms of representation', which in the aesthetic regime of art no longer apply. The unrepresentable does not stand 'in contrast to the old logic of representation', but instead is a response to the 'elimination of a boundary that restricts the available choice of representable subjects and ways of representing them':

An anti-representative art is not an art that no longer represents. It is an art whose choice of representable subjects and means of representation is no longer limited. This is the reason why [in *Shoah*] the extermination of the Jews can be represented without having to deduce it from the motivation attributable to a character or the logic of a situation, without having to show gas chambers, scenes of extermination, henchmen, or victims. And this is also the reason why an art representing the exceptional character of the genocide without any scenes of extermination is contemporary with a type of painting made purely of lines and squares of colour as well as with a type of installation art that simply re-exhibits objects or images borrowed from the world of the commodity and ordinary everyday life.

(*Dissensus* 196-7)

I will develop my reading of Rancière's critique of the unrepresentable in relation to Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock* in chapter 3 of this thesis. For now, I simply want to draw attention to the way Rancière situates the question of unrepresentable of art in relation to the discourse of the unrepresentability of the Holocaust. This is part of Rancière's critique of the 'postmodern carnival' which, he argues, was a mere 'smokescreen' for a 'second modernism', one which converted an 'aesthetic promise

of emancipation' into an ethics that 'no longer links art's specificity to a future emancipation, but instead to an immemorial and neverending catastrophe'. This ethical turn sees art transformed into an 'endless work of mourning' (*Dissensus* 200). Amy J. Elias makes a similar point when she writes that in postmodernism history 'becomes more about testifying to the unrepresentable than about re-presenting the past' (Elias, *Sublime* 29). It is against this background that we can turn to the question of trauma theory's relationship to postmodernism and the unrepresentable through its focus on the idea of the witness.

I: Traumatic memory

In an era where each person has 'an absolute right to her memory, which is nothing other than her very being' (Wieviorka 132),²⁴ memory, invested with the aura of witness, comes into conflict with history; it tests the very notion of what history is. Archives such as Yad Vashem, the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education,²⁵ or the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies aim to accumulation masses of testimonial material rather than assimilate it into a single narrative. As Wieviorka explains,

[the] juxtaposition of stories is not a historical narrative, and . . . in some sense, it annuls historical narrative. For how can a coherent historical discourse be constructed if it is constantly counteracted by another truth, the truth of individual memory? How can the historian incite reflection, thought, and rigor when feelings and emotions invade the public sphere? (144)

The act of memory and the discipline of history are figured as two fundamentally opposed ways of relating to and narrating the past; the former is founded in individual experience and expressed through emotion, while the latter aspires to 'reflection, thought, and rigor'. The collection of testimonial accounts of the Holocaust, ongoing since the early 1980s, can be read as a direct response to the sheer volume of historical documentation that already exists. Dominick LaCapra has

²⁴ Memory, writes Marita Sturken, 'forms the fabric of human life, affecting everything from the ability to form simple, everyday tasks to the recognition of the self. Memory establishes life's continuity; it gives meaning to the present, as each moment is constituted by the past. As the means by which we remember, memory provides the very core of identity' (1).

²⁵ The USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education was formerly Steven Spielberg's Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation.

observed how in contemporary memorial culture, testimony has ‘almost displaced or been equated with history itself’ (11). We might think of Lawrence Langer’s argument, for example, that ‘a complete narrative of the Holocaust experience’ cannot be written without the consultation of audio-visual testimonies (‘Hearing’ 299). This focus on testimony can be seen in the aesthetics of Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah* (1985) and Saul Friedländer’s two volume history *Nazi Germany and the Jews* (1997/2007).²⁶

Shoshana Felman writes that ‘our era [is] an *age of testimony*, an age in which witnessing itself has undergone a major trauma’ (‘Return’ 206, original emphasis). This claim is, to some extent, made with reference to the historical particularity of the Holocaust figured as an event that ‘*produced no witnesses*’ which refers both to Nazism’s attempt to ‘exterminate the physical witnesses of their crime’ and the ‘inherently incomprehensible *and* deceptive psychological structure of the event’ by which it ‘precluded its own witnessing, even by its very victims’ (Laub, ‘Event’ 80, original emphasis). It goes without saying that the experience of living through and surviving genocide will have a complex psychological impact on its survivors; however, when trauma theory is extended to the general condition of contemporary existence, things become problematic, not least because of the way trauma theory pushes a very particular and monolithic idea of what trauma is.

Most accounts of contemporary trauma theory trace its origins back to the introduction of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the third edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III)* in 1980. This moment marked a change, write Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman, ‘from a realm in which trauma was regarded with suspicion to a realm in which it carries the stamp of authenticity’ (23). For Luckhurst this event inaugurated the ‘trauma paradigm’ that pervades the ‘understanding of subjectivity and experience in the advanced industrial world’ (*Trauma* 1). Fassin and Rechtman argue that the ‘discovery of the painful memory’ is a ‘major anthropological phenomenon of contemporary societies’ (15). Allan Young argues this is part of an

²⁶ Amos Funkenstein’s argument that ‘[t]he systematic destruction of self-identity of inmates in concentration camps was also the attempt to destroy their narrative of themselves’ provides some explanation for status of testimony in post-Holocaust culture (77). The survivor’s testimony is seen as a voice from beyond the archive, and therefore seemingly untainted by its duplicity.

ongoing history which saw a progression, since the birth of psychoanalysis in the nineteenth century, from the notion of trauma as physical wound (from the Greek root) to that of the ‘traumatic memory’, the wound in the mind. Young attributes the emergence of traumatic memory to two parallel developments: the ‘*medicalization of the past*’ whereby traumatic neuroses come to be seen as being ‘produced by memories of events rather than by the events themselves’ seen to be ‘pathogenic secrets, merging concealed ideas with concealed urges’ that only medical men are able to decipher; and, secondly, the ‘*normalization of pathology*’ where pathology was no longer seen to be unique, but was instead seen to be either a ‘*loss or displacement of normal functions*’ or an ‘*exaggeration or overextension of normal functions*’. In the first place, traumatic memory becomes translated into the image, first of, a ‘*parasite*’ and then as ‘*mimesis*’: ‘a memory that is inscribed simultaneously *in the mind*, as interior images and words, and *on the body*, where it is disguised in perverse postures, sensations, and absences (catalepsies, anaesthesias, etc.)’. In the latter, the normalization process leads to the establishment of the Freudian unconscious as a ‘universal (normal) part of the mind’, while the traumatic symptom comes to be seen as the mind’s way of coping with trauma (A Young 39-40, original emphasis). For Young, as ethnographer, PTSD is

not timeless, nor does it possess an intrinsic unity. Rather, it is glued together by the practices, technologies, and narratives with which it is diagnosed, studied, treated, and presented by the various interest, institutions, and moral agents that mobilized these efforts and resources. (A Young 5)

This is not to suggest that PTSD does not have real effects, but to point to the way that social discourses are always involved in interpreting and making meaning out of illness and pain.²⁷ For Fassin and Rechtman, the evolution from trauma neurosis to PTSD over the course of the twentieth century is the result not of ‘more refined diagnostic tools’ but of ‘a narrowing of the gap between the climate of public opinion and the preoccupations of mental health professionals, between the moral economy and medical theory’ (22).

²⁷ The ‘suffering is real; PTSD is real’ (A Young 10).

It is no surprise that Cathy Caruth's work is closely engaged with the contested definitions of PTSD. Caruth identifies a core similarity between PTSD's various definitions:

[M]ost descriptions generally agree that there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts, or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event. ('Trauma' 4)

The central premise of Caruth's concept of trauma as 'unclaimed experience' can be traced back to Freud's notion of 'fright' with its focus on the element of surprise and the absence of physical wounding.²⁸ The fright, for Caruth, is

not simply . . . the literal threatening of bodily life, but the fact that the threat is recognised as such by the mind *one moment too late*. The shock of the mind's relation to the threat of death is thus not the direct experience of the threat, but precisely the *missing* of this experience, the fact that not being experienced *in time*, it has not yet been fully known. (*Unclaimed* 62, original emphasis)

At the foundation of Caruth's theory, we thus find the paradoxical image of the witness who cannot witness.²⁹

Trauma, for Caruth, is construed around a double absence, or, to be more exact, a twice-missed experience. The experience is missed first because it is unexpected; the mind is unprepared to recognize the event as it happens. And the experience is missed because, having failed to recognize the threat, it can only be

²⁸ Caruth's work, along with that of Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, are important reference points for what has come to be known as trauma theory. All three share a focus on the central problem of historical witnessing, adapted from Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). In this text, Freud revises his notion of the pleasure principle to incorporate the idea of the psyche as a 'protective shield against stimuli' through his investigation of similarities between 'traumatic neurosis', usually observed to occur 'after severe mechanical concussions, railway disasters and other accidents involving a risk to life', and the 'war neurosis' suffered by soldiers in the aftermath of the First World War (27, 12). Freud observes two primary characteristics which determine whether or not a survivor of an accident would display symptoms of traumatic neurosis: 'first, that the chief weight in their causation seems to rest upon the factor of surprise, of fright; and secondly, that a wound or injury inflicted simultaneously works as a rule *against* the development of a neurosis' (*Beyond* 12, original emphasis). This leads Freud to speculate that '[p]rotection *against* stimuli is an almost more important function for the living organism than *reception of stimuli*' (*Beyond* 27, original emphasis). The protective shield is said to limit the potential excitations that can penetrate through to the deeper layers of the organism. Trauma occurs when these barriers are overwhelmed and can thus be understood as 'a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli' (*Beyond* 29).

²⁹ Trauma is neither 'defined by' nor a 'distortion' of the event but exists 'solely in the *structure of its experience* or its reception' (Caruth 'Trauma' 4, original emphasis). It is 'suffered in the psyche' precisely because it is '*not* directly available to experience' (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 61, original emphasis).

recognized as a threat after it has passed, ‘*one moment too late*’. Caruth translates these factors into, what she calls, ‘traumatic belatedness’. As the event is ‘not experienced or assimilated fully at the time’, it can only be experienced ‘belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event’ (Caruth, ‘Trauma’ 4-5, original emphasis). The forms of this possession are the traumatic nightmares and flashbacks in which the survivor ‘is forced, continually, to confront [the event] over and over again’ (*Unclaimed* 62). In Caruth’s understanding, these flashbacks are to be understood as a ‘literal return of the past’, the product of ‘the absolute inability of the mind to avoid an unpleasurable event that has not been given psychic meaning in any way. In trauma, that is, the outside has gone inside without any mediation’ (*Unclaimed* 59).³⁰ As the survivor does not possess the capacity to make sense of the event in the moment it was experienced, the event is internalized ‘without mediation’ and is thus resistant to linguistic expression, resurfacing only in the form of flashbacks. In Caruthian trauma theory, then, trauma is understood in terms of ‘a literal, nonsymbolic and nonrepresentational *memory* of the traumatic event’ (Leys 272, original emphasis).³¹ To this extent, contemporary trauma theory can be understood as a theory of historicity, an attempt to articulate the complex position of individual subjectivity in history. That is, trauma theory is, in the first place, an attempt to account for the mechanisms of historical witnessing, or, what it means for the subject to be *in history*. The model of witnessing found in the work of Caruth, Laub and Felman is built upon a number of assumptions about the nature of memory and language, the implications of which resonate more widely in contemporary memorial culture.

In order to understand the audacity of Caruth’s claims, it is important to take her notion of ‘literality’ literally:

³⁰ Langer captures this notion of the unmediated registration of the traumatic event when he describes the way trauma ‘stops the chronological clock and fixes the moment permanently in memory and imagination, immune to the vicissitudes of time’ (*Holocaust Testimonies* 175).

³¹ Caruth takes this notion of the literality of the traumatic memory from the work of neurologists Bessel A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, whose work focuses on the relationship between narrative memory and traumatic memory in PTSD. For a deeper exploration of the circular relationship of the work of Caruth and van der Kolk and van der Hart, see the last two chapters of Ruth Leys’s *Trauma: A Genealogy*. It is in this sense that trauma has the ‘paradoxical position of being at once *absent* from memory (amnesia) and *too much present* in memory (hypermnnesia)’ (Codde 53, original emphasis).

It is the literality and its insistent return which thus constitutes trauma and points toward its enigmatic core: the delay or completion in knowing, or even in seeing, an overwhelming occurrence that then remains, in its insistent return, absolutely *true* to the event. It is indeed this truth of traumatic experience that forms the center of its pathology or symptoms; it is not a pathology, that is, of falsehood or displacement of meaning, but of history itself. If PTSD must be understood as a pathological symptom, then it is not so much a symptom of the unconscious, as it is a symptom of history.

(‘Trauma’ 5, original emphasis)

It is here that we can say what is so seductive about Caruth’s theory; the traumatic memory is nothing less than a pure, unmediated trace of history. In the age of postmodern doubt, trauma theory offers ‘not so much a theory of recovered memory as . . . one of recovered referentiality’ (Elsaesser 201). Caruth, indeed, proposes that through her reading of trauma we can ‘begin to recognize the possibility of a history that is no longer straightforwardly referential (that is, no longer based on simple models of experience and reference)’ (*Unclaimed* 11).³²

For Susannah Radstone, the focus on the literality of the traumatic memory misses Freud’s ‘emphasis on the mediating role of *unconscious processes*’ (‘Trauma’ 16).³³ For Leys, the notion of a ‘pristine and timeless historical truth undistorted or uncontaminated by subjective meaning, personal cognitive schemes, psychosocial factors, or unconscious symbolic elaboration’ has no basis in the theory or science of trauma (Leys 7). Nevertheless, Caruth’s theory of the trauma as ‘a speechless void, unrepresentable, inherently pathological, timeless, and repetitious’ is now seen as a ‘traditional model’ for trauma in the humanities (Balaev 3). This logic of the literality of the traumatic memory is writ large in the practices of contemporary memorial culture.

³² Ruth Leys thus places Caruth’s work amongst the ‘mimetic’ tendency of theories of trauma in which the trauma is understood to ‘shatter the victim’s cognitive-perceptual capacities’ making the traumatic scene ‘unavailable for a certain kind of recollection’ (Leys 9). Leys traces this tendency back to the earliest work of Freud, Ferenczi and Kerdener. According to Leys, theories of trauma have oscillated between the mimetic tendency and the antimimetic tendency—in which trauma is regarded as ‘a purely external event coming to a sovereign if passive victim’ (10). Indeed, both tendencies can exist at the same time, such as when Felman writes, ‘Trauma is, one might say, the event par excellence, the event as unintelligible, as the pure impact of sheer happening’ (*Juridical* 179).

³³ ‘An event may prove traumatic, indeed, not because of its inherently shocking nature but due to the unbearable or forbidden fantasies that it prompts. Or, conversely, an event’s traumatic impact may be linked to its puncturing of a fantasy that has previously sustained a sense of identity—national, as well as individual’ (Radstone, ‘War’ 458).

II: Witnessing history

In the language of contemporary theory, Susannah Radstone observes, witnessing is an ethical imperative, an ‘injunction to bear witness . . . to the sufferings of others’ (‘Social’ 60). The witness and survivor, James Berger argues, possess ‘a sacred status’ in contemporary culture (‘Falling’ 346). This status arises out of a convergence of two distinct characteristics as ascribed to the witness subjectivity. In the first place, the witness’s position is given value by the importance that is placed on proximity to and direct experience of an event. The witness’s body is seen, Ana Douglass and Thomas A. Vogler note, as ‘an indexical sign or symptom of the reality of the event’ (36). The witness *was there*. The witness *saw it with their own eyes*. In this sense, the survivor-witness is seen to possess the aura of ‘having returned from beyond the boundary of all previous moral imaginings’ (James Berger, ‘Falling’ 346). And it is this notion of proximity, filtered through certain ideas about the traumatizing impact of events that comes to validate the witness’s testimony. As James Berger explains, ‘their language can be seen as an awful, almost nonlinguistic mix of metaphor, literal repetition, and indexical pointing that in some sense conveys the traumatic event without being able to represent it’ (‘Falling’ 346).

A myth of remembered history pervades contemporary memorial culture beyond Michaels’s American context, and it is one of the central points at which trauma theory aligns with wider memorial practices. In that remarkable passage from Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, Sethe educates her daughter Denver on the workings of what she calls ‘rememory’:

Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it’s not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it’s gone, but the place – the picture of it — stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don’t think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened. . . . Where I was before I came here, that place is real. It’s never going away. Even if the whole farm – every tree and grass blade of it dies. The picture is still there and what’s more, if you go there – you who never was there – if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. (36)

Sethe has the notion of a memory of an event that exists outside her head, ‘out there, in the world’; the memory seems to belong to a place rather than to a brain, and, more strangely, this place appears to exist somewhat askew to material reality (the picture will be there even after the farm and the tree and the grass is no longer there). *Beloved* is a work of fiction, not a theory of memory, and it would be incorrect to read it as such, but it nevertheless evokes an idea of traumatic *acting out* where, LaCapra explains, ‘tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene’ (*Writing* 21). Yet, if Morrison’s text is engaged with the imploded tenses of acting out, in this case it is reality itself that appears to be acting out. The traumatic memory has been displaced onto the landscape.

The idea that the memory of the traumatic event is ‘remembered’ by a place recalls the scenes in *Shoah* (1985) where Claude Lanzmann takes survivors back to the settings of the historical crime in order to recount their memories of the events to which they bear witness. *Shoah* opens with the story of Simon Srebnik, who is said to be one of only two survivors from the 400,000 men, women and children sent to the camp in Chelmno between 1941 and 1945. Lanzmann convinces Srebnik to return to Poland from Israel for the first time since the end of the war, and films him returning to the site where the bodies were burned; nothing now remains but a clearing in the forest. Lanzmann’s camera follows Srebnik along a deserted forest road until he stops and looks out beyond the frame. ‘It’s hard to recognize’, he says, ‘but it was here. They burned people here. A lot of people were burned here.’ The camera lingers on Srebnik’s face as he remembers what he had once seen—we can only imagine what he might feel—before the film cuts to show us what he has seen: an empty clearing, with all but the brief shape of some former structure visible, which we might presume to be the ruins of the camp. Given the context, it is not easy to separate the image from what we as viewers project onto the image. Srebnik remembers the gas vans and the ovens and the flames ‘reaching into the sky’. As he walks out onto the site, he says, ‘No one can describe it. No one can recreate what happened here. Impossible! And no one can understand it. Even I, here, now. I can’t believe I’m here.’

Much as Lanzmann intends his film to be in the voice of the witnesses, in this opening sequence Srebnik acts as a mouthpiece for Lanzmann, who roots his film’s

aesthetics in relation to his philosophical pronouncements on Holocaust representation:

The Holocaust is first of all unique in that it constructs a circle of flames around itself, the limit not to be broken because a certain absolute horror is not transmittable: to pretend to do so, on the other hand, is to become guilty of the most serious transgression. One must speak and be silent at the same time, to know that here silence is the most authentic mode of speech, to maintain, as in the eye of the cyclone, a protected, preserved region in which nothing must enter.

(Lanzmann qtd. in M Roth, *Ironist's Cage* 219)

For Lanzmann, the Holocaust is thus positioned at the cross section of two continuums: in the first place, it is to be understood as 'unique'; in the second, its uniqueness precludes its transmissibility and therefore, its representability.

Lanzmann's emphasis on 'silence as the most authentic mode of speech' situates him in a long tradition of philosophical discourse about the crises of language, art and representation after the Holocaust. This is often figured through the idea of silence, such as when George Steiner writes that 'The world of Auschwitz lies outside speech as it lies outside reason' (123).³⁴

Lanzmann similarly criticises *Schindler's List* (1993) for the way it embraces the supposed inadequacies of fiction:

Here you have the whole problem of the image, the problem of representation. Nothing that actually happened was anything like that, even if it all seems authentic. The Germans were not like that. And anyway I fail to see how deportees, sick with fear after months and years of misfortune, humiliation and misery, can be played by actors. I can't really justify my argument. Either one understands it or one does not. (qtd. in Weissman 149)

The 'problem of representation', Lanzmann suggests, is that whatever ends up on the screen in the reconstruction can never get close to the authenticity of what it was really like. In order to avoid promulgating such 'fictions', *Shoah* practices a negative

³⁴ Another variation of this position relates specifically to the role of art and literature in response to the Holocaust, often part of a widespread tradition that misappropriates Adorno's often quoted maxim—'[t]o write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric' ('Cultural' 34)— as a prescriptive rather than descriptive statement. This statement, lifted out of context from an essay on cultural criticism, has been transformed to such an extent that is sometimes reduced to the phrase 'No poetry after Auschwitz', as, indeed, when Leslie Epstein misquotes, what he calls, Adorno's 'slogan' (263). Adorno's position on the role of art as a response to the horrors of fascism is developed elsewhere, when he writes that 'literature must resist this verdict [of silence]. . . . [I]t is now virtually in art alone that suffering can still find its own voice, consolation, without immediately being betrayed by it' ('Commitment' 188). For a critique of the notion of 'Holocaust sublime', see Braiterman.

aesthetics, choosing neither to reconstruct the past, nor to use documentary images. Instead Lanzmann films only the material absence of the Holocaust (images of ruins and empty landscapes abound), and he fills this absence with the witnesses' voices. The testimony he records is particularly interesting in that it places emphasis on capturing a moment in which a particular witness returns to a particular scene; the testimony is not only a testimony made of words, but one that involves the expressions on the witnesses' faces and the tones of their voices as they confront the memories and emotions produced by the experience of return. In comparison with Lanzmann's emphasis on absences and silences, *Schindler's List's* 'serious transgression' is, for Lanzmann, precisely that it presumes to create the illusion of presence through its use of elaborate set pieces and its hand-held pseudo-documentary style to suggest unmediated access to the events depicted, a camera turned on History.³⁵

There are three aspects of Lanzmann's discourse around the appropriateness of Holocaust representation that are of particular relevance to understanding the place of trauma and memory in contemporary theory and in wider culture. It is first, an emphasis on the unimaginable and the unrepresentable; that the horrors of Auschwitz stand, first, outside of reason, and, thus, it goes, beyond speech. Secondly, it puts forward an argument about the appropriateness of a certain kind of language, namely the language of memory and trauma: testimony, over and above the language of the imagination. Thirdly, as both fictional and historical forms of representation are seen to contaminate the past through the act of imagination involved, the witness becomes a central figure of authenticity, precisely due to fraught relationship between the past and the channels of (traumatic) memory; as LaCapra notes, 'witnessing—typically witnessing based on memory—has emerged as a privileged mode of access to the past' (LaCapra, *History and Memory* 11).

³⁵ James Young criticises the position that the Holocaust should not be represented; to exclude the Holocaust from the imagination, he writes, is 'to sanctify and place it off-limits, is to risk excluding it altogether from public consciousness. . . . Better abused memory in this case, which might then be critically qualified, than no memory at all' (*Writing* 133). Miriam Bratu Hansen similarly notes how the question of opposing the two extremities of aesthetic response to the Holocaust, as represented by Shoah and *Schindler's List*, is beside the point, for 'whether we like it or not, the predominant vehicles of public memory are the media of technical re/production and mass consumption' (310).

III: Remembering realism

A number of contemporary trauma fictions draw on the dynamic between witnessing and absence that we see in *Shoah*. In *Everything is Illuminated* (2002), for example, Sasha, the young Ukrainian who exchanges letters with the (fictional) author Jonathan Safran Foer, and who narrates the story of Jonathan's search for Trachimbrod, the village where Jonathan's grandfather originated, describes what they find in his meticulously flawed English when they get there:

I implore myself to paint Trachimbrod, so you will know why we were so overawed. There was nothing. When I utter "nothing" I do not mean there was nothing except for two houses, and some wood on the ground, and pieces of glass, and children's toys, and photographs. When I utter that there was nothing, what I intend is that there was not any of these things, or any other things. (184)

Unlike Lanzmann, who disdains the vagaries of the imagination, Safran Foer offers an elaborate magical-realist historical metafiction to fill the void of history. Yet, despite the apparent divergence, Safran Foer's fictional devices are designed to present fiction as a melancholic consolation in the face of the unrepresentable rather than to celebrate the capacity of fiction to communicate ideas and images of the past.

Everything is Illuminated is an example of what Michael Rothberg has called *traumatic realism*. To understand traumatic realism, it is worth considering Linda Hutcheon's notion of *historiographic metafiction* to describe the 'intense self-consciousness' about the 'act of narrating in the present the events of the past' visible in much postmodern fiction (*Politics* 68). For Hutcheon, responding to Fredric Jameson's critique of postmodern pastiche, in such fictions,

The narrativization of past events is not hidden; the events no longer seem to speak for themselves, but are shown to be consciously composed into a narrative, whose constructed—not found—order is imposed upon them, often overtly by the narrating figure. The process of making stories out of chronicles, of constructing plots out of sequences, is what postmodern fiction underlines. This does not in any way deny the existence of the past real, but it focuses attention on the act of imposing order on that past, of encoding strategies of meaning-making through representation. (*Politics* 63)

Thus, for Hutcheon, the emphasis in historiographic metafiction is to draw attention to the constructed nature of all historical narrative and to emphasise the ideological complicity of any historical narrative that does not didactically draw attention to its

interests and bias. When John Berger writes, in *G.* (1972), '[n]ever again will a single story be told as though it were the only one' (133), he evokes a Benjaminian view of History that acknowledges that History can always and must always be rewritten.

It is interesting in this respect to compare Rothberg's proposition of traumatic realism as an alternative model for understanding the particular aesthetic strategies of texts explicitly concerned with the representation of traumatic histories.³⁶ Rothberg rearranges the triad of realism, modernism and postmodernism to describe not an aesthetico-historical progression—modernism as a rejection of 'naive realism'/ postmodern doubt as a response to modernist confidence in its own autonomy—but instead three 'persistent responses to the demands of history' which 'provide frameworks for the representation and interpretation of history' (*Traumatic* 9). Traumatic realism, then, does not replace the concepts of realism, modernism and postmodernism, but rather offers an alternative way of understanding how they work in relation to one another and in a single text.

In the representation of a historical event . . . a text's "realist" component seeks strategies for referring to and documenting the world; its "modernist" side questions its ability to document history transparently; and its "postmodern" moment responds to the economic and political conditions of its emergence and public circulation.

(*Traumatic* 9)

Rothberg modifies the understanding of realism, modernism and postmodernism from labels which describe specific aesthetic strategies, with implicit associations to political and philosophical worldviews, into a series of components found in any text in response to the demands of historical representation.

Realism, argues Rothberg, is troubled by the Lacanian 'missed encounter with the real'. 'Something always slips away', he writes, 'leaving a gap that undermines the movement from the microcosm of the text to the macrocosm of the social world. . . . [S]omething always persists as a remainder/reminder . . . that links surface to depth without allowing for passage of one to the other' (*Traumatic* 139).

³⁶ Rothberg develops his theory after Hal Foster's coinage of the term. In *The Return of the Real* (1996), Foster proposes the term to describe the way Warhol's screen prints mediate the referential and the simulacral, adapting Barthes's concept of the *studium* and the *punctum* in relation to Lacan's concepts of *automaton* (the symptom) and *tuché* (the traumatic return of the real) (138).

Traumatic realism responds to this relation between ‘reference and narrative’ for those who ‘seek to understand’ an ‘extreme historical event’:

On the one hand, the demand for documentation calls for an archive of facts or details referring to the event. On the other hand the active sense of documentation indicates the need for the construction of a realistic narrative that would shape those details into a coherent story.

(*Traumatic* 100)

In this sense, the traumatic realist text, as Rothberg describes it, closely resembles LaCapra’s call for a history ‘tensely involving both an objective (not objectivist) reconstruction of the past and a dialogic exchange with it and other inquirers into it, wherein knowledge involves not only the processing of information but also affect, empathy, and questions of value’ (*Writing* 35). Like LaCapra’s middle voiced history, traumatic realism is ‘counterideological’, in the sense that it ‘does not produce an imaginary resolution, but rather programs readers to recognise the absence of the real’ (Rothberg, *Traumatic* 104).³⁷ Traumatic realism thus acknowledges the ideological construction of narrative, but seeks a form of narrative that does not ‘reflect the traumatic event in an act of passive mimesis’, as *Schindler’s List* does, for example, but instead constructs a narrative that attempts to ‘evoke [the real] as a felt lack’ (*Traumatic* 103, 104).

There are a number of assumptions underlying Rothberg’s work which are worth exploring, visible in his use of terms such as realism and ideology. Like Lanzmann and Wiesel, whom he would most likely position himself against, Rothberg engages with a discourse of appropriateness. The underlying principle of his theory is that a ‘realist’ narrative through its production of an ‘imaginary resolution’ is not appropriate for representing the rupture of the traumatic event. In this sense, Rothberg draws on the theory of classic realism, as put forward by critics such as Colin MacCabe and Catherine Belsey. Belsey defines the classic realist text as one ‘characterized by *illusionism*, narrative which leads to *closure*, and a *hierarchy of discourses* which establishes the ‘truth’ of the story’ (Belsey, *Critical* 70, original emphasis). The purpose of realism is, for Belsey, always ideological. Its

³⁷ Rothberg’s notion of traumatic realism shares something in common with Hutcheon’s notion of historiographic metafiction, when she writes of the ‘philosophically realist view of the past and then proceeds to confront it with an anti-realist one that suggests that . . . the past exists *for us – now* – only as traces on and in the present’ (*Politics* 69, original emphasis).

purpose is to reinforce conventions and norms. What is made intelligible in realism is, finally, the ‘conventional and therefore familiar, “recognizable” articulation and distribution of concepts. It is intelligible as “realistic” precisely because it reproduces what we already know’ (Belsey, *Critical* 47). Just as Hutcheon and Rothberg, in their categories of historical metafiction and traumatic realism, privilege strategies which disrupt the closed texts of realism, or draw attention to their representational or ideological complicity, Belsey prefers the *interrogative text* which rejects closure, if illusionist, and employs devices that ‘undermine the illusion’ and ‘draw attention to its own textuality’, in order to resist the idea of ‘a single privileged discourse which contains and places all the others’ (*Critical* 92). While such theories are useful in that they provide us with a language to describe some of the features of ‘postmodern’ fiction, in their desire to liberate the reader from her ideological chains, they too quickly evade the problematic relationship between ideology and the text.

Alison Lee calls realism the ‘straw man’ of postmodern theory (28), while Peter Brooks writes that the ‘Balzacian novel’ was the ‘whipping boy’ of the novelists of the 1960s and post-structural criticism (6). The critique of naïve realism is founded upon a notion of a naïve reader. Bruno Latour attacks the conflation of criticism with antifetishism in contemporary theory. The role of the critic in this climate, Latour argues, has become

to show that what the naïve believers are doing with the objects is simply a projection of their wishes onto a material entity that does nothing at all by itself. Here they have diverted to their petty use the prophetic fulmination against idols “they have mouths and speak not, they have ears and hear not”, but they use this prophecy to decry the very objects of belief—gods, fashion, poetry, sport, desire, you name it—to which naïve believers cling with so much intensity. (237-8)

The critique of realism that unites Hutcheon’s, Rothberg’s, and Belsey’s theories is one which does not focus on any particular realist text, but is instead founded on a projection of a naïve, and ideologically susceptible, reader who cannot see what the critic can see. Belsey, we must assume, does not read a work of realism in the fashion that her ideologically conditioned reader presumably does. This is not to reject the notion of ideology, as shall become apparent, but it is to reject a particular understanding of the relationship between ideology and literary text.

‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)’ is Louis Althusser’s proposal for a theory of ideology constructed from his reading of Marx, in particular *The German Ideology* and the *1844 Manuscripts*. In the essay Althusser proposes two theses for a theory of ideology; first, that ideology is the representation of the ‘imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence’ (*Essays* 36); and, second, that ideology has ‘a material existence’ (*Essays* 39). So, on the one hand, ideology is seen as a mediator between reality and what reality is imagined to be, while on the other, it is externalized in the very material practices of that reality. The two theses combined suggest to Althusser that the ‘imaginary relation is itself endowed with a material existence’ (*Essays* 39). Reading Althusser from a Lacanian perspective, Slavoj Žižek explains:

Ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality; in its basic dimension it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our “reality” itself: an “illusion” which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel. . . . The function of ideology is not to offer us a point of escape from our reality but to offer the social reality itself as an escape from some traumatic, real kernel. (Žižek, *Sublime* 45)

In Žižek’s interpretation, ideology is not mere ‘illusion’, it is the very fantasy which sustains any sense of social cohesion in the first place, and thus it performs a necessary social function. ‘[I]deology is always with us’, Jameson writes, ‘it will be present and necessary in all forms of society, including future and more perfect ones, since it designates that necessary function whereby the biological individual and subject situates himself/herself in relationship to the social totality’ (*Signatures* 165).³⁸

One of the central tenets of Žižek’s theory of ideology and the foundation of his critique of the idea that we live today in a post-ideological society is its emphasis on the opposition between knowing and doing, following Althusser’s insistence on the materiality of ideology. Žižek begins with Marx’s formula ‘they do not know it, but they are doing it’, a formula which he illustrates using the example of commodity

³⁸ In *For Marx*, Althusser writes that ‘Human societies secrete ideology as the very element and atmosphere indispensable to their historical respiration and life’ (232).

fetishism: on the one hand, money, as we know, ‘is just an embodiment, a condensation, a materialization of a network of social relations—the fact that it functions as a universal equivalent of all commodities is conditioned by its position in the texture of social relations’ (Sublime 27); yet to the individual, this quality of money as the symbolic ‘embodiment of wealth’ appears as a ‘natural property of a thing called “money”’ (*Sublime Object* 28). The individual, from Marx’s perspective, is thus blind to the true function of money as a reification of social relations which structures the material limits of the individual’s reality. From this perspective, the ideological veil need only be torn away—for Althusser, with the science of Marxism—for the individual to perceive reality *as it really is*.

For Žižek, the Marxian formula ignores ‘an illusion, an error, a distortion which is already at work in the social reality itself, at the level of what individuals are *doing*, and not only what they *think* or *know* they are doing’ (Sublime 28, original emphasis). When an individual uses money, Žižek argues, they are perfectly aware that there is ‘nothing magical about it’, that it is simply a ‘sign giving the individual possessing it a right to a certain part of the social product’:

[O]n an everyday level, the individuals know very well that there are relations between people behind the relations between things. The problem is that in their social activity itself, in what they are *doing*, they are *acting* as if money, in its material reality, is the immediate embodiment of wealth as such. They are fetishists in practice, not in theory. What they “do not know”, what they misrecognize, is the fact that in their social reality itself, in their social activity—in the act of commodity exchange—they are guided by the fetishistic illusion.

(Sublime 28, original emphasis)

Žižek’s point is that a society’s beliefs are embodied not in the collective minds of the individuals but in the practices by which the society is organized, which is entirely external to the knowledge or belief of the particular individual involved. When they exchange money for goods, Capitalists and Marxists both act, in that moment of exchange, *as if* they believe in the magic of money, even if they are certain that they do not. It is precisely at this level of the *as if* that the cogs of society turn round, entirely separate from the discourses that interpret them.

In the Althusserian approach to Marxist criticism, the literary text exists askew to historical reality. A text is not a mirror of reality, but, Terry Eagleton explains,

the production of certain produced representations of the real into an imaginary object. If it distantiates history, it is not because it transmutes it to fantasy, shifting from one ontological gear to another, but because the significations it works into fiction are already representations of reality rather than reality itself. The text is a tissue of meaning, perceptions and responses which inhere in the first place in that imaginary production of the real which is ideology.

(*Criticism* 75)

As Eagleton explains,

The imaginary London of *Bleak House* exists as the product of a representational process which signifies, not “Victorian England” as such, but certain of Victorian England’s ways of signifying itself. Fiction does not trade in imaginary history as a way of presenting real history; its “history” is imaginary because it negotiates a particular ideological *experience* of real history.

(*Criticism* 77, original emphasis)

This is to say that the literary text exists at a place twice removed from reality; it is a representation weaved from other representations.

In ‘Realism in the Balance’, Georg Lukács argues for a realism that ‘penetrates the laws governing objective reality’ to expose the ‘deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society’ (38), which he sees as being in opposition to naturalism, modernist expressionism and surrealism. There are two stages to the construction of a work of realism, according to Lukács. The first stage involves discovering and giving ‘artistic shape’ to the hidden ‘network of relationships’ (39). The second is the ‘process of abstraction’ by which this artistic discovery is concealed:

This twofold labour creates a new immediacy, one that is artistically mediated; in it, even though the surface of life is sufficiently transparent to allow the underlying essence to shine through (something which is not true of immediate experience in real life), it nevertheless manifests itself as immediacy, as life as it actually appears. . . . [I]n the works of such writers we observe the whole surface of reality in all its essential determinants, and not just a subjectively perceived moment isolated from the totality in an abstract and over-intense manner. This, then, is the artistic dialectic of appearance and essence. (‘Realism’ 39)

Thus, where naturalism merely reflects the appearance of reality, and expressionism presents the essence of reality as fragmentary and impenetrable, only realism, for Lukács, is able to represent reality in its true dialectical complexity.

Lukács's model proves to be unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, not least of which is the formalist approach of his inquiry, with which Bertolt Brecht takes issue. Although Brecht shares Lukács's emphasis on art's capacity to shatter the illusions of reality and to make conscious the hidden processes underlying what is perceived, he is antagonistic to Lukács's prescriptive approach. Brecht doesn't so much rebut Lukács as radicalise his definition of realism. For Brecht, realism is not so much a way of making literature as a quality that any politically engaged art must aspire to. Realism, he writes, 'is not a question of form. . . . Reality changes; in order to represent it, modes of representation must also change' (82). Thus, for Brecht, in his focus on realism as the representation of the relationship between appearance and essence *in reality*, Lukács fails to acknowledge that art is not a mere reflection of reality, nor does he consider that the aesthetic experience is itself complicit in the way reality is perceived and experienced.

IV: Testimony

Jane Kilby argues that trauma theory's 'synthesis of psychoanalysis and deconstruction' 'demands a new form of reading' (218). This can be found in the work of Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. The traumatic memory, seen as literal registration of history, has a problematic relationship with language and narrative. As Anne Whitehead argues, the traumatic memory having bypassed the normal functions of memory renders it 'resistant to narrative structures and linear temporalities' (Whitehead 5). The traumatic memory is 'wordless and static' (Herman 175). It is this resistance to language which necessitates that it be formulated in narrative, as Jenny Edkins explains when she describes the 'disruptions of . . . linearity' associated with 'trauma time':

Something happens that doesn't fit, that is unexpected - or that happens in an unexpected way. It doesn't fit the story we already have, but demands that we invent a new account, one that will produce a place for what has happened and make it meaningful. Until this new story is produced we quite literally do not know what has

happened: we cannot say what it was, it doesn't fit the script - we only know that "something happened". (xiv)³⁹

For Michael Roth, the anxiety about the relationship between trauma and narrative is a double bind: 'trauma appears to demand inclusion in any narrative of the development of the present yet makes any narrative seem painfully inadequate' (*Memory* 82). In an important contribution to the discussion of the theoretical application of trauma in the humanities, Radstone asks whether 'theories of trauma are taken to illuminate the relation between actuality and representation in general, or is it that actuality is beginning to be taken as traumatic in and of itself?' ('Trauma' 13).

Dori Laub formulates his theory of testimony on the basis that when 'the observing and recording mechanisms of the human mind are temporarily knocked out, malfunction', then the victim's testimony must 'begin with someone who testifies to an absence, to an event that has not yet come into existence, in spite of the overwhelming and compelling nature of the reality of its occurrence' (Laub, 'Bearing' 57).⁴⁰ For Felman, testimony is a 'performative *engagement* between consciousness and history, a struggling act of readjustment between the integrative scope of words and the unintegrated impact of events' ('Camus' *The Plague*' 114, original emphasis). Yet this quality is not limited to the act of testimony. Even a fictional work, such as Albert Camus's *The Fall* can be read as a work of testimony:

In bearing witness to the witness's inability to witness – to the narrating subject's inability to cross the bridge towards the Other's death or life – *The Fall* inscribes the Holocaust as the impossible historical narrative of an event without a witness, an event eliminating its own witness. Narrative has thus become the very writing of the impossibility of writing history. (Felman, 'Camus' *The Fall*' 200-1)

At the heart of Felman's understanding of the work of testimony lies a complex tension between history, memory and fiction; while it is not possible to write history, it is possible to write narratives that account for that very impossibility; it is possible

³⁹ This logic of the narrative production of meaning can be seen in Laub's argument that the 'testimony to the trauma . . . includes its hearer, who is, so to speak, the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time' ('Bearing' 57).

⁴⁰ Laub's description of the effect of trauma on the 'mechanisms of the human mind' and the act of bearing witness in testimony follows Janet's distinction between traumatic and narrative memory; it is only through the act of testifying that the event comes into being, as the traumatic memory is inaccessible in its pre-narrativized form.

to testify to the experience of an event that one was not a witness to. In the work of Felman and Laub, we see the move from an understanding of trauma as a private, psychological phenomenon to the indexical inscription of history, the transition from the idea of history as text towards a concept of the pure unmediated historicity of the trace.

The act of testimony is thus conceived as a transference of knowledge of the event in the form of a trauma passed from witness to listener. As Laub explains,

The emergence of the narrative which is being listened to—and heard—is, therefore, the process and the place wherein the cognizance, the “knowing” of the event is given birth to. The listener, therefore, is a party to the creation of knowledge *de novo*. The testimony to the trauma thus includes its hearer, who is, so to speak, the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time. . . . [T]he listener to trauma comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself. The relation of the victim to the event of the trauma, therefore, impacts on the relation of the listener to it, and the latter comes to feel the bewilderment, injury, confusion, dread and conflicts that the trauma victim feels. . . . The listener . . . by definition partakes of the struggle of the victim with the memories and residues of his or her traumatic past. The listener has to feel the victim’s victories, defeats, silences, know them from within, so that they can assume the form of testimony.

(‘Bearing’ 57-58)

In Laub’s account, the listener is not a passive audience to the act of testimony, but through listening becomes a ‘co-owner’ of trauma, to the extent that she comes to feel the same ‘bewilderment, injury, confusion, [and] dread’ that the victim feels.

At the heart of contemporary trauma and memory studies we thus find a complex notion of witnessing and its embodiment in the figure of the witness. On the one hand, it implies a certain proximity to an event. The witness is the *one who was there*, and *who saw it with their own eyes*. It is not the witness’s words that carry meaning but the symptoms of their trauma:

Having been in the center of the action, the Holocaust witnesses have not come away unscathed, which is the reason why they testify not only verbally with their words, but also bodily with the symptoms of their trauma. Here, therefore, experiential and indexical (or “symptomatic”) truth is more important than representational truth.’

(A Assmann, ‘History’ 269-70)

Douglass and Vogler write that the witness ‘is an indexical sign or symptom of the reality of the event, the experience of which prevents the witness from communicating in normal modes’;

In extreme cases the whole life of a victim can become living testimony to the traumatic experience, both physical and mental, the traumatized body and mind of the victim serving as evidence for the reality of a history that hurts, as the charred remains of a building witness its conflagration. (Douglass and Vogler 36)

To bear witness implies more than just a knowledge of the past. It implies a relationship, a transmission. In the work of Felman and Laub, this relationship is expressed through the transmission of trauma from the survivor to the listener, the ‘witness to the trauma witness’, through the act of testimony (Laub, ‘Bearing’ 58).

LaCapra argues that one of the flaws in the Caruthian model of trauma is in its failure to make a distinction between ‘structural trauma’ and ‘historical trauma’. Structural trauma is ‘related to absence or a gap in existence—with the anxiety, ambivalence, and elation it evokes—may not be cured but only lived with in various ways. Nor may it be reduced to a dated historical event or derived from one; its status is more like that of a condition of possibility of historicity. . . .’ (*Writing* 84). Trauma theory conflates this notion of structural absence, necessary to the experience of subjectivity, with the particular experience of historical loss. For LaCapra, the difference between absence and loss is that absence exists at a ‘transhistorical’ and loss at a ‘historical’ level:

In this transhistorical sense absence is not an event and does not imply tenses (past, present, or future). By contrast, the historical past is the scene of losses that may be narrated as well as of specific possibilities that may conceivably be reactivated, reconfigured, and transformed in the present or future. The past is misperceived in terms of sheer absence or utter annihilation. Something of the past always remains, if only as a haunting presence or symptomatic revenant. (*Writing* 48-9)

Where loss is felt as the result of a specific experience in the past, absence can be understood in a more metaphysical sense. LaCapra insists that a difference must be made when thinking about trauma between the categories of absence and loss. ‘Absence is the absence of an absolute that should not itself be absolutized and fetishized such that it becomes an object of fixation and absorbs, mystifies, or downgrades the significance of particular historical losses’ (LaCapra, *Writing* 50-1).

The particular trauma is historical in the sense that it was caused at a certain time, at a certain place, and involved certain individuals. While historical trauma is also termed social, empirical, and factual, 'abstract' trauma has an ahistorical or transhistorical status, and could just as well be called existential, transcendental, or textual.

(Ramadanovic 111)

It is not possible to lose something that was never possessed. In these terms, LaCapra is able to distinguish structural from historical trauma; whereas '[e]veryone is subject to structural trauma' in that it relates to the subject's very experience of subjectivity, historical trauma is 'specific, and not everyone is subject to it or entitled to the subject position associated with it' (*Writing* 78). Thus, for LaCapra, historical trauma refers to a specific experience of loss, even as he retains the notion of structural trauma to describe the constitution of subjectivity around an originary absence. LaCapra's distinction between historical and structural trauma proves a useful place to begin in relation to how memory becomes transformed into history. 'One may well argue', writes LaCapra,

that it is ethically and politically dubious to believe that one can overcome or transcend structural trauma or constitutive absence to achieve full intactness, wholeness, or communal identity and that attempts at transcendence or salvation may lead to the demonization and scapegoating of those on whom unavoidable anxiety is projected. But historical traumas and losses may conceivably be avoided and their legacies to some viable extent worked through both in order to allow a less self-deceptive confrontation with transhistorical, structural trauma and in order to further historical, social, and political specificity, including the elaboration of more desirable social and political institutions and practices. (*Writing* 84-5)

While LaCapra's concern that the specific experience of the individual may be obscured in a universalist notion of trauma is important, a problem remains concerning how, in real terms, it is possible to distinguish between the two; for if structural trauma is constitutive of the very experience of subjectivity, then it must follow that it remains constitutive of the subject even at the moment of historical loss; and, conversely, if that is the case, then what aspect of an experience would allow us to differentiate between its historical as opposed to its structural quality? If, as LaCapra acknowledges, it is possible to think of structural trauma as 'a condition of possibility of historicity' (*Writing* 84), then it must surely, therefore, be a condition for the experience of a particular historical loss. LaCapra's insistence on

the distinction of these terms is one that can only exist at the level of language and ideology and not at the level of the real.

II: Texts

1: 'But what *really* happened?': History, Realism and the Aesthetics of Trauma in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*

Novels, then, have beginnings, ends, and potentiality, even if the world has not.

Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending* (138)

Contemporary trauma culture is, for Hal Foster, an expression of 'dissatisfaction with the textual model of reality—as if the real, repressed in poststructural postmodernism, had returned as traumatic' ('Obscene' 122). Mark Seltzer gives the name 'wound culture' to the fascination with 'torn and opened bodies and torn and opened persons, a collective gathering around shock, trauma, and the wound' that pervades the contemporary (3).¹ As Foster argues, a 'special truth' is seen to 'reside in traumatic or abject states, in diseased or damaged bodies'. The image of the 'violated' body is seen as 'the evidentiary basis of important witnessings to truth, of necessary testimonials against power' ('Obscene' 123). In Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001), we find such images of 'torn and opened' bodies in the descriptions of injured soldiers brought from the evacuation of Dunkirk to the hospital where Briony Tallis works. As a nurse, Briony treats body after broken, shrapnel-ridden body, each described in the unflinching detail characteristic of McEwan's writing. One soldier has lost part of his nose which allows Briony to 'see through the bloody cartilage into his mouth, and onto the back of his lacerated tongue' (297-8). As she changes the bandage on Private Latimer's facial injury, she is able to see inside:

This was all ruin, crimson and raw. She could see through his missing cheek to his upper and lower molars, and the tongue glistening, and hideously long. Further up, where she hardly dared look, were the exposed muscles around his eye socket. So intimate, and never intended to be seen. (301-2)

Later, she sees into the head of a young French soldier, the 'spongy crimson mess of brain' making her nauseous (308). These moments reveal to Briony 'a simple and obvious thing she had always known, and everyone knew: that a person is, among all else, a material thing, easily torn, not easily mended' (304). For Žižek, the images of

¹ That is, for Seltzer, the fascination with the wound, takes into account the full evolution of trauma's definitions, from its original meaning as a physical wound (*trauma* as the original Greek for wound) to its later transformation in psychoanalytic theory as a psychic wound, as it is more commonly used now.

the ‘flayed body, the palpitations of the raw, skinless red flesh’ is one way of defining the Lacanian Real (*Metastases* 116). The horror we feel towards the idea of the human body as a biological thing is enveloped in a greater horror at the meaningless mechanism of that which exists beyond the symbolic structures by which we make meaning of the world. To relate to the body, we must suspend ‘what goes on beneath the surface’, a suspension which is performed by the symbolic order (Žižek, *Metastases* 116). Our very subjectivity is founded on this suspension. As Žižek puts it, “‘subject’ is nothing but the name for this inner distance of ‘substance’ towards itself, the name for this empty place from which the substance can perceive itself as something ‘alien’” (*Sublime* 257). In a novel obsessed with the relationship between minds, language and witnessing, these images of exposed eyes, tongues and brains point to a parallel anxiety about the horror of the real.

The images of flayed and opened bodies as much as they are presented in language point to the real that is beyond language, and to the very materiality of language itself, in the sense that ephemeral language is the product of a brain or a tongue. This problem of the relationship between language and the real is related to *Atonement*’s status as a historical novel. Briony’s proximity to the soldiers’ wounds are ‘the closest she would ever be to the battlefield’; it is through contact with the soldiers that she gets closest to the ‘essential elements’ of the battlefield, the ‘blood, oil, sand, mud, sea water, bullets, shrapnel, engine grease, or the smell of cordite, or damp sweaty battledress whose pockets contained rancid food along with the sodden crumbs of Amo bars’ (304). This stream of detail evokes the complexity of the war experience even as it fails to represent it. Yet the comment takes on further significance in the light of the revelation towards the end of the novel that Briony is the author of the first three parts of the novel; in particular, when we consider the second part which tells the story of Robbie Turner and his two fellow soldiers travelling along the French coast towards the beach of Dunkirk for the evacuation.

Atonement is split into three parts and a coda. ‘Part One’ narrates a momentous summer day in the life of the Tallis family in which the young Briony misunderstands a series of moments in the developing relationship between Cecilia, her sister, and Robbie, the son of the family’s charwoman, leading to Robbie’s arrest when Briony accuses him of raping her cousin, Lola. ‘Part Two’ focuses on Robbie’s

military experience as he and two fellow soldiers head to Dunkirk for the evacuation. ‘Part Three’, as mentioned before, turns its attention to Briony’s experience as a nurse during the war, and overlaps with the timeline of ‘Part Two’ when Briony nurses the Dunkirk evacuees. The tension between witnessing, with its basis in perception and experience, and fiction, with its origins in the imagination, echoes throughout *Atonement*, not least in the central episode of Briony’s misapprehension of Robbie and Cecilia’s encounter at the fountain, the moment that will haunt Briony for the rest of her life and one that is intricately connected to her development as a writer. The dual significance of the moment is emphasised by the fact of the novel she has written, which seemingly both fictionalizes and testifies to her experience.

Geoff Dyer notes a quality of *Atonement* which makes it ‘difficult to give an adequate sense of what is going on in the novel without preempting—and thereby diminishing—the reader’s experience of it’ (‘Who’s Afraid’). This points to two aspects of *Atonement* that are worth further exploration; the first being the fallacy of ‘reading experience’ that pervades critical responses to the novel; the second being the illusion of unrepresentability that is a product, as I shall argue, of the novel’s opposition of ‘trauma’ and narrative. This has wider implications on what we might want to call the politics of a traumatic aesthetics of history.

Georges Letissier writes that ‘in a post-traumatic age, the literary experience is endowed with a testimonial function’ (212).² In this sense, for Letissier, *Atonement* is a ‘testimonial novel’ rather than a historical novel; it does not aim to represent history but instead adopts a ‘responsible stance towards the past’ by occupying a space between ‘fictionalization’ and ‘testifying’ (213, 223). Counter to Letissier’s approach, my reading of *Atonement* will resist the temptation to collapse its thematic and aesthetic concerns into symptoms of transmittable trauma; instead, I will

² Letissier quotes Wiesel’s comment that ‘[i]f the Greeks invented tragedy, the Romans the epistle, and the Renaissance the sonnet, our generation invented a new literature, that of testimony’ (9). Yet, in doing so, he fails to note that in this context Wiesel is speaking specifically on behalf of Holocaust survivors, and does not mean to imply that ‘our generation’ should be taken to mean everyone living after the Holocaust. Indeed, elsewhere Wiesel has specified the impossibility of representing the Holocaust in fictional form, which would raise doubts about the usefulness of the term ‘testimonial novel’. However, as Antony Rowland has pointed out following Sue Vice and James E. Young, while the notion of testimony predates the Holocaust and can be traced back through the First World War to biblical scripture – not to mention slave testimony – the assertion of testimony’s importance to the contemporary moment still holds some accuracy when considering ‘the critical attention that has accrued to the genre since the end of the Second World War, and, more recently, outside the remit of historians’ (113).

approach *Atonement* as a historical novel, one that represents history through the lens of trauma, and to explore what seeing history through such a lens does to our understanding of history.

I: Separate minds: on seeing and knowing

Tim S. Gauthier observes that McEwan's fiction is often focused on 'a particular moment, often one of horror in which the individual's life is irrevocably transformed' which serve as an 'impetus for characters to reassess the narratives they tell about the world and themselves' (Gauthier 107).³ McEwan's narratives thus replicate one of the central orthodoxies of contemporary trauma culture, namely what Luckhurst identifies as the seemingly self-contradictory relationship between trauma and narrative.⁴ 'In its shock impact trauma is anti-narrative, but it also generates the manic production of retrospective narratives that seek to explicate the trauma' (Luckhurst, *Trauma* 79). The logic of Freudian *Nachträglichkeit* is certainly evident in Briony's attempt to narrate the sequence of events that she failed to comprehend in the moment of their occurrence, and her attempt to come to terms with the consequences of her misunderstanding.

The key moment in *Atonement*, to return to Gauthier's point, is when 13-year-old Briony, escaping the frustrations of play rehearsal with her cousins, witnesses, from her bedroom window, an odd exchange between Cecilia and Robbie in the gardens of her family's country home. This moment is presented twice in the novel. The first time it is focalized through Cecilia, the second time through Briony, so that when we read it from Briony's perspective we already know what she does not. The traumatic nature of this moment is made explicit by the narrator's explanation that Briony 'must have seen what lay before her some seconds before she registered it' (38). Briony's first impression of the scene is informed by her passion for orderly narratives, judging the formality of Robbie's stance to be a

³ This focus is visible in the sequence of novels published in the nineties—*Black Dogs* (1992), *Enduring Love* (1997) and *Amsterdam* (1998)—leading up to *Atonement*, perhaps McEwan's most popular novel.

⁴ Hal Foster places McEwan among the speakers of a '*lingua trauma* . . . spoken in popular culture, academic discourse, and art and literary worlds', part of a general tendency to 'redefine experience, individual and historical, in terms of trauma' ('Obscene' 123'). Writing in the nineties, Foster groups McEwan as a speaker of this language alongside the novelists Paul Auster, Dennis Cooper, Steve Erikson, Denis Johnson, and Tim O'Brien, and the filmmakers Atom Egoyan and Terry Gilliam.

proposal of marriage (38). A proposal is sympathetic to her affection for plot: ‘She herself had written a tale in which a humble woodcutter saved a princess from drowning and ended by marrying her. What was presented here fitted well. . . . It all made perfect sense’ (38). Briony’s desire to see the world as a literary text means, as Martin Jacobi argues, that she ‘expect[s] to see certain conventions of plot and character development and *do[es]* see these conventions’ (66, original emphasis). For Dominic Head, this is a sign of Briony’s ‘inadequate respect for the contingent’ (159). Yet the world is not in harmony with Briony’s expectations; Cecilia takes off her dress, to Briony’s eyes, as if in obeisance to Robbie’s ‘imperiously’ raised hand by which he appears to be ‘issuing a command’ that Cecilia ‘dared not disobey’ (38). Stripped to her underwear, Cecilia enters the pond and submerges herself. For Briony, watching from the window, the ‘sequence was illogical—the drowning scene, followed by a rescue, should have preceded the marriage proposal’ (39). When she re-emerges, Cecilia picks up a vase of flowers which Briony ‘had not noticed before’ and sets off back to the house (39). Having already seen these events from Cecilia’s perspective, we know that Briony has missed Cecilia and Robbie’s initial tussle over the vase, when Robbie wants to help collect water from the pond, ending in a piece of the vase (a family heirloom) snapping off and falling into the pond. Cecilia goes into the water to retrieve this piece.

For Briony, this irruption of disorder and incomprehensibility is revelatory, a window onto an unknown world of experience: ‘Unseen, from two storeys up, with the benefit of unambiguous sunlight, she had privileged access across the years to adult behaviour, to rites and conventions she knew nothing about, as yet’ (39). The arrival of the unpredictable into her worldview influences her ambitions as a young writer; this, we are told, ‘was not a fairy tale, this was the real’ (41). Considering the later revelation that Briony is the author of this text—a subject I will return to further on—and the way it is often cast as a surprise, it is interesting to note how this initial moment of witnessing is so ingrained with Briony’s reflections on her writing. Her initial response is of a ‘faint thrill of possibility’ and an ‘elusive excitement at a prospect she was coming close to defining’ (40):

The definition would refine itself over the years. She was to concede that she may have attributed more deliberation than was feasible to her thirteen-year-old self. At the time there may have been no precise

form of words; in fact, she may have experienced nothing more than impatience to begin writing again. (40)

This passage uses prolepsis to project a sense of the older (author) Briony's feelings about the young Briony's reaction. That there was 'no precise form of words' to what she felt at the moment is immediately brought into contradiction with a description of what kind of narrative innovation would be necessary to capture the complexity of the event she witnessed, a description that suggests a modernist aesthetic, and bears resemblance to the multi-focalized narrative of 'Part One' of *Atonement*:

She could write the scene three times over, from three points of view; her excitement was in the prospect of freedom, of being delivered from the cumbrous struggle between good and bad, heroes and villains. None of these three was bad, nor were they particularly good. She need not judge. There did not have to be a moral. She need only show separate minds, as alive as her own, struggling with the idea that other minds were equally alive. (40)

This in turn is followed by a further extended use of prolepsis, where 'six decades later', a professional author, Briony has developed a stock answer to questions about her origins as a writer, a myth about 'one special morning during the heat wave in 1935' when she had 'written her way through a whole history of literature, beginning with stories derived from the European tradition of folk tales, through drama with simple moral intent, to arrive at an impartial psychological realism which she had discovered herself' (41). The scene of Briony watching Robbie and Cecilia by the fountain appears to be part of this 'self-mythologizing' of Briony's birth as a writer. We have a glimpse of the later revelation about Briony's authorship when the narrator points out that it was not the 'long-ago morning she was recalling but her subsequent accounts of it'; the thoughts she had may have been 'thoughts she had on other days'; whatever 'actually happened drew its significance from her published work and would not have been remembered without it' (41). Briony's chance witnessing can thus be seen to instigate a dual impetus for narrative; it is simultaneously both a moment that necessitates a narrative reconstruction in order to be understood and a narrative reconstruction that serves as the origin myth of Briony's writerly consciousness. At the same time, it points to an ambiguity about Briony's status as witness and Briony as author, and thus an indeterminacy about the

text as work of fiction and as product of memory (either as testimony, confession, or memoir).

These various threads converge around the idea of the mind. As we have already seen, the modernist turn in Briony's writing is presented as an attempt to acquire a neutral, amoral narrative perspective that reconstructs the subjectivity of each person in the triangle. This problem of the minds of others is one that Briony ponders moments before she witnesses the scene from her window (at least in this version of her origin myth). Flexing her fingers, Briony wonders how she comes to command the 'fleshy spider', the 'machine', at the end of her arm. Bending and straightening her finger, she becomes aware of the 'mystery . . . in the instant before it moved, the dividing moment between not moving and moving, when . . . intention took effect' (35). Perceiving in this 'dividing moment' the 'secret of herself, that part of her that was really in charge', she conducts an experiment of will, drawing her forefinger to her face and 'urging' it to move:

It remained still because she was pretending, she was not entirely serious, and because willing it to move, or being about to move it, was not the same as actually moving it. And when she did crook it finally, the action seemed to start in the finger itself, not in some part of her mind. When did it know to move, when did she know to move it? There was no catching herself out. It was either-or. There was no stitching, no seam, and yet she knew that behind the smooth continuous fabric was the real self – was it her soul? – which took the decision to cease pretending, and gave the final command. (35-6)

Briony becomes momentarily aware of that gap between subject and substance at the origin of subjectivity, and this moment of self-awareness leads her to reflect upon whether others possess the same level of self-awareness; was Cecilia 'as valuable to herself' as was Briony? Does Cecilia similarly pass time contemplating the paradoxes of the self (36)? This line of reasoning only leads to further turmoil. On the one hand, if everyone is as self-aware as Briony, then 'the world, the social world, was unbearably complicated, with two billion voices, and everyone's thoughts striving in equal importance and everyone's claim on life intense. . . . One could drown in irrelevance' (36); alternatively, if Briony is one of the few who possess self-awareness, then she is 'surrounded by machines, intelligent and pleasant enough on the outside, but lacking the bright and private *inside* feeling she had' (36, original

emphasis).⁵ Later when she gazes into the French soldier's brain, this opposition between inside and outside is radically undermined.

The young Briony is, in a sense, correct to surmise that she is surrounded by machines, fictional automatons, although this intuitive understanding is only granted to her by the fact that she herself is inhabited by the authorial consciousness of her older self. Žižek terms this the 'zombie problem', that there are 'no "objective" criteria that enable us to differentiate a zombie from a "real" human' (*Parallax* 178). In the 'standard philosophical observation', Žižek argues, we should make a distinction between 'knowing' a phenomenon and 'acknowledging it, accepting it, treating it as existing' (*Parallax* 178). From this perspective, we cannot really know the answer to Briony's query; it is not possible to know whether other people have minds or are simply programmed robots or instinctive zombies. However, this is to miss the crucial aspect of intersubjectivity that comes into being with this very question, as Žižek explains:

[I]f I were to "really know" the mind of my interlocutor, intersubjectivity proper would disappear; he would lose his subjective status and turn—for me—into a transparent machine. In other words, not-being-knowable to others is a crucial feature of subjectivity, of what we mean when we impute to our interlocutors a "mind": you "truly have a mind" only insofar as this is opaque to me. . . . What makes the zombie hypothesis wrong is that, if all other people are zombies (more precisely: if I perceive them as zombies), I cannot perceive *myself* as having full phenomenal consciousness either.

(*Parallax* 178, original emphasis)

Briony's misreading of what she sees from her window is directly related to this very question. If she had the capacity to see into the 'transparent machines' of Robbie and Cecilia's minds then she would not have misunderstood what was happening (itself a mutual misunderstanding of intention). From this perspective, Briony's fictional reconstruction of the event can be read as an attempt to retroactively grant Robbie and Cecilia their minds through an act of imagination.

The problem of the unbearable multiplicity of human consciousnesses is echoed in the historical narrative of 'Part Two', and it provides a useful crossing point between the two parts. Remembering his last letter from Cecilia informing him

⁵ This, Briony reasons, would be 'unlikely' though it 'offend[s] her sense of order' to do so (*Atonement* 36).

of Briony's intentions to clear his name, Robbie reflects on the chaos he has witnessed on the road to Dunkirk. His war experience highlights the futility of Briony's attempt to 'rewrite the past so that the guilty become the innocent' (261).⁶ What worth, he wonders, can it be to him in these times when '[e]veryone was guilty, and no one was':

No one would be redeemed by a change of evidence, for there weren't enough people, enough paper and pens, enough patience and peace, to take down the statements of all the witnesses and gather in the facts. The witnesses were guilty too. All day we've witnessed each other's crimes. (261)

The sheer mass of wartime experience is too much to make sense of; the 'crimes' witnessed by too many; everyone is implicated. Passing the corpses of soldiers and civilians in the rubble of a bombed village, Robbie's questions turn to the problem of historical representation:

Who could ever describe this confusion, and come up with the village names and the dates for the history books? And take the reasonable view and begin to assign blame? No one would ever know what it was like to be here. Without the details there could be no larger picture. (227)⁷

In the context of such pondering, Briony's musings on subjectivity take on the weight of historical significance. If the gap between thought and action means it is impossible to be certain of the deep motives of one's own actions—even to locate the origins of the decision to move a single (trigger) finger—then how to make sense of the mass of experience, the conscious and unconscious choices, of 338,000 evacuees, never mind the dead, never mind the other two billion co-members of the species?⁸ It might be possible to reconstruct a scene from three different perspectives, but it is impossible to magnify this strategy to the scale of history. As David Lodge writes,

⁶ Robbie's reflection on Briony's attempt to 'rewrite the past' provides yet another clue to the later revelations of the coda.

⁷ In the context of *Atonement*, the answers to Robbie's questions are twofold. Who? Briony Tallis and Ian McEwan, or more specifically the very people who have posed the question. But it is precisely in their shared concern for 'the details' that we can begin to piece together the ideological perspective that allows them to take the 'reasonable view' in their representation.

⁸ The figure of 338,000 is taken from the Encyclopaedia Britannica as a total of the estimated 198,000 British and 140,000 French and Belgian troops that were evacuated between 26 May and 4 June 1940. The two billion refers to the 'two billion voices' referenced in relation to Briony's reflections on consciousness quoted above, presumably accounting for the estimated population of the period.

History conceived as the sum total of individual human lives is of course unknowable: there is simply too much data. Historiography can give us selective accounts of events in selected human lives, but the more scientific its method—the more scrupulous it is in basing all its assertions on evidence—the less able it is to represent the density of those events as consciously experienced. (13-4)

Just as there are too many witnesses, there are too many traumas. There is an echo of Caruth's traumatic view of history in Robbie's musing, when she writes that 'history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas' (*Unclaimed* 24). Yet the terms of Caruth's theory of trauma produce a potent and insidious co-alignment of the unrepresentable traumatic memory with the notion of history as totality, as described by Lodge.

'For history to be a history of trauma', writes Caruth, 'means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs; or to put it somewhat differently, that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence' ('Trauma' 8). To collapse history in such a way to the moment of witnessing, while insisting on a particular form of traumatic witnessing which means that the witness is not consciously able to experience what they have seen, produces an essential paradox in the dominant form of trauma theory, and reveals its ideological basis. As Jane Kilby explains,

Trauma insists on a past that has never been present. Trauma is impossible to experience at the time and difficult to grasp in the here and now. At its simplest, then, the central insight of trauma theory is best captured by the notion that there is no experience, memory or history of trauma as such. (217)

Trauma, it seems, is precisely that moment in which everything is registered but nothing is experienced. The witness's traumatic memory is like an old camera, before digital memory and LCD screens, but in a world that cannot process film.⁹ On the one hand, the 'literal' inscription of the event in the mind of the witness 'without mediation' suggests that it is history in its totality, history as real that is registered there. However, at the same time this traumatic memory resists narrativization. It is in this sense that Caruth can write of PTSD as 'not so much a symptom of the

⁹ We find such an analogy in Ulrich Baer of trauma that 'blocks routine mental processes from converting an experience into memory or forgetting, it parallels the defining structure of photography, which also traps an event during its occurrence while blocking its transformations into memory' (9).

unconscious as a symptom of history' ('Trauma' 5). The traumatized witness must thus 'carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history they cannot entirely possess' ('Trauma' 5). This is to say that history understood as a literal registration of the real in the mind of the witness marks the symptoms of trauma as symptoms of history precisely in so far as they resist representation. The result is a theoretical sophistry that sometimes appears so far from any real experience of the world that it might be a work of science fantasy: the logic goes that if trauma is inherently resistant to narrativization, then trauma resides wherever language struggles for coherence;¹⁰ as the traumatic memory is both a literal and unmediated registration of real history, these linguistic symptoms are seen as indexical marks of history itself; (in a third step, the contagion theory of trauma means that the history of trauma is communicated not through the narratives of the witnesses, but through the transmission of traumatic symptoms).

This turn can be understood in relation to Kansteiner's observation that

Just because trauma is inevitably a problem of representation in memory and communication does not imply the reverse, i.e. that problems of representation are always partaking in the traumatic. Even if certain analogies exist, we have to acknowledge that the dilemmas of representation and the distress of trauma never carry the same effects, intensities and risks. ('Genealogy' 205)

The counterimpact of this 'moth-to-flame movement' towards the aporia of trauma is a suspicion towards narrative as fetishistic and ideological (LaCapra, *Representing* 192). On the one hand, as Michael Roth explains, 'to narrate the past, whether personal or historical, is to bring it into confrontation with the forces of forgetting. If a trauma is unforgettable, this is, paradoxically, because it cannot be remembered, cannot be recounted' (*Memory* 83). Yet '[t]elling the story of the traumatic past makes it part of ordinary life: the trauma is robbed of its uniqueness, its aura destroyed' (M Roth, *Memory* 82). What's more narrative itself is one of the 'most powerful and subtle forms of forgetting' in that it '*transforms* the past as a condition of retaining it' (M Roth, *Memory* 85, original emphasis). Within the context of a culture which sees victimhood as a positive marker of identity, to work through the trauma can thus be seen as a threat to a person's selfhood. A privileged place is given

¹⁰ 'It is in gap, inconsistency, and hesitation that the possibility of fleetingly accessing the original trauma resides' (Bernard-Donals and Glejzer 126).

to forms of narrative that resist closure and display the gaps of trauma; thus, we find in the work of Dori Laub and Lawrence Langer an emphasis on oral testimony, seen as a form of narrative production that does not allow for the temptation to revise and perfect the forms of written language.

We can see the influence of this anxiety towards language in the tendency of literary critics to read complex narratological structures as inherently traumatic or to prescribe a certain aesthetics for the representation of trauma. Alan Gibbs has described a ‘mutually reinforcing circuit’ that sustains the relationship between contemporary literature and trauma theory. Writers ‘borrow from existing criticism in order to lend their works verisimilitude’, while critics find ‘their positions validated by this theoretically orthodox literary practice’ (“Problem” 149). Luckhurst similarly worries that trauma has become a ‘dominant aesthetic, backed by an ethical imperative’ in contemporary theory, one drawn from the ‘aporetic injunctions’ of Holocaust representation and ‘marked by disruption, non-linearity, refusal of identification, and resistance to closure’ (‘Beyond’ 12). We can find this in Anne Whitehead’s comment that ‘if trauma is at all susceptible to narrative formulation, then it requires a literary form which departs from conventional linear sequence’ (6). Trauma fiction attempts to ‘mirror at a formal level the effects of trauma’ (Whitehead 84). Indeed, Pieter Vermeulen notes, citing Whitehead and Vickroy as examples, how critical studies of trauma fiction

for all their emphasis on fragmentation, repetition, and temporal dislocation, often continue to rely on the psychological realism of the traditional and (especially) the modernist novel; indeed the formal features of such fictions are routinely understood as the reflection of a traumatized psyche. (553)

Vermeulen’s argument points to a crucial failure of the application of trauma theory to literary texts, with its tendencies towards prescription rather than analysis, namely involving a certain collapsing of the gap between mind and text. Trauma’s resistance to language is seen to produce the dislocations and disruptions in its narration; the ideal text from such a perspective is the testimony, seen as a linguistic record of the verbalization of the trauma.

The observation point from her bedroom window, looking down on the scene by the fountain, hints at a subtle relationship between Briony as witness and Briony

as author, one that can be drawn by returning to her collection of miniatures. Peter Brooks situates the pleasure taken in ‘scale models of the real—dollhouses, ships in bottles, lead soldiers, model railroads’ in relation to the way they allow a sense ‘of being able to play with and therefore . . . master the real world’. Models provide ‘a way to bind and organize the complex and at times overwhelming energies of the world outside us’ (Brooks 1). For Brooks, this desire for mastery through play is also expressed in realist fiction which ‘claims to offer us a kind of reduction—*modèle réduit*—of the world, compacted into a volume that we know can provide, for the duration of our reading, the sense of a parallel reality that can almost supplant our own’ (2). Briony appears to subscribe to such an understanding when she makes a direct comparison between storytelling and the world of the miniature:

[W]riting stories not only involved secrecy, it also gave her all the pleasures of miniaturisation. A world could be made in five pages, and one that was more pleasing than a model farm. . . . The pages of a recently finished story seemed to vibrate in her hand with all the life they contained. Her passion for tidiness was also satisfied, for an unruly world could be made just so. (*Atonement* 7)

Briony sees her fictions as miniatures of a living world which subscribes absolutely to the particular logics and laws of her worldview. Fiction is, for Briony, the way by which she masters the world. Here we should recall the way her model animals are lined up as if on military parade, in salute to the gaze of the general.

Brooks draws attention to a scene in Alain-René Le Sage’s *Le Diable Boiteux* (1707) where the devil Asmodée takes Don Cléofas to the top of the highest tower in Madrid, lifting the roof of the buildings to reveal the city’s inhabitants in their private spaces. The image evokes the perspective of looking down on a dollhouse or toy city, and this is, Brooks proposes, a viewpoint that will later become inscribed in the novels of Balzac or Dickens ‘seeing through the roofs and facades of the real to the private lives behind and beneath’ (3). Barthes makes a similar claim about the innate connection between the development of realism and the notion of the panorama, the view from above which unites an entire city in a single gaze. For Barthes, the Eiffel Tower was anticipated in novels such as Victor Hugo’s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* whose perspective permitted its readers ‘to transcend sensation and to see things *in their structure*’ (‘Eiffel’ 242, original emphasis). Briony’s initial impetus to write her story about the figures by the fountain is to explain the confusion she feels

by the sudden imposition of subjectivity. She desires a perspective that allows her to account for the complexity of the scene that she has not understood, imagining that '[t]here must be some lofty, god-like place from which all people could be judged alike, not pitted against each other, as in some lifelong hockey match, but seen noisily jostling together in all their glorious imperfection' (*Atonement* 115). Briony's position at the window looking down at the figures by the fountain suggests such a 'god-like' perspective, one that is aligned with the position from which she looks upon her model farm; this image of Briony at the window conflates her position as the unreliable witness of the unfolding moment with her position as author of a text that aspires to a realist examination of the complexity of that initial misprision and its consequences.¹¹

This moment can be understood in terms of the Lacan's *tuché*, the missed encounter with the real, and the dialectical nature of the relationship between the Real and the Symbolic. From an anthropocentric perspective, language precedes the real. '[T]he world of words . . . creates the world of things—things which at first run together in the *hic et nunc* of the all in the process of becoming—by giving its concrete being to their essence, and its ubiquity to what has always been' (Lacan, *Écrits* 229 (277)). Words define the boundaries by which the thing comes to be known as a thing separate from other things. However, the structure of language is not built of the relationship between word and thing, but between each signifier in the chain of the symbolic network. Thus, as Ursula K. Le Guin writes in *The Dispossessed* (1974), 'Things in words [get] twisted and [run] together, instead of staying straight and fitting together' (31). Words, as Benjamin put it, 'overname' things. Things, writes Benjamin, 'have no proper name except in God. For in his creative word, God called them into being, calling them by their proper names. In the language of men, however, they are overnamed' (*Selected* 73). We might understand 'God' in Benjamin's text in relation to Lacan's comment that '*The gods belong to the field of the real*' (*Four* 45, original emphasis). 'God', in the quotation from Benjamin, can be approximated to the real, the universe, nature, cosmos, totality as it

¹¹ Mathews suggests a correlation between Briony's 'fascistic obsession with order' her storytelling instincts which might suggest a deeper relationship between fascism and realism which I won't have space to explore here (154).

exists outside of its symbolism in language. (Lacan's gods are 'real' also in the sense that the notion of the gods are a form of that linguistic symbolism.) Briony's initial understanding that the scene at the fountain is a proposal is a product of her seeing the world through her particular (childish) symbolic understanding of the world. This is the 'retroactive causality' of the symbolic order (Žižek, *For* 201, original emphasis). When the scene fails to match the logic of what she projects onto it, her language is thrown into crisis, and she must find another way to make sense of what happened. Briony's text, compulsively redrafted over the course of her life, is the result of her 'manic production' to work through this initial missed encounter with the real.¹²

II: Trauma and postmodernism

Georges Letissier observes that it is an ongoing concern with the 'persistence of trauma' that links together the four sections of *Atonement* (214). However, there is a thread of contemporary criticism which sees any representation of trauma conflated with an attempt to read the text *as* traumatic. J. Hillis Miller's reading of *Atonement* is representative of the potential absurdities trauma theory's application to literary criticism, a meticulous reconstruction of the reading experience which aims to capture the various twists and shocks of McEwan's text. The reason for this reconstructive criticism turns out to be in aid of an audacious claim about the novel's capacity to provoke 'reader's trauma', and his essay ends with an expression of trauma envy, claiming he 'shall go on being haunted by *Atonement*, re-enacting it in my mind, whenever I encounter something that recalls it, as traumatised soldiers remember obsessively their war experiences' (Hillis Miller 104). Paul Crosthwaite puts forward a more cautious hypothesis about the potential transmission of trauma through the reading of *Atonement* in his consideration of the context of 'embedded traumas' of the Second World War, passed down from parents to their children, suggesting that:

while McEwan's novel itself is necessarily incapable of producing a *tuché* through which the reader would be pierced by the real's

¹² LaCapra defines *working through* as an 'articulatory practice' whereby 'one is able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory that something happened to one (or one's people) back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future' (*Writing* 22).

precipitous irruption, the historical conditions that help to shape its field of reception (and inform its production) are such that the text may trigger the reopening of psychic fissures engraved on the reading subject by the real's intergenerationally channelled force. ('Speed' 66)

It is not my interest here to refute Crosthwaite's hypothesis about the textual transmission of trauma, nor to deny Hillis Miller his own trauma, yet it is important to note that these readings both buy into a trauma culture which measures the success of a text in terms of its perceived traumatic impact. The transmission of trauma is seen as a desirable outcome of reading a text.

Atonement offers both a thematic and formal engagement with the notion of traumatic experience. Thematically, it is drawn to the traumatizing effects of the Second World War on both the soldiers, as told through its Dunkirk sections, and on English culture more generally, with its focus on the idyllic pre-war country house setting;¹³ 'Part One', in its focus on Briony's misreading of the events which leads to her false accusation of Robbie similarly offers a sustained exploration of the problem of witnessing. Formally, the metafictional twist ending evokes, as Crosthwaite suggests, the 'temporal structure' of a 'traumatic episode' that 'instils a compulsion to repeat, to reread, until the full enormity of the information imparted becomes apparent' ('Speed' 63).¹⁴ This 'compulsion to repeat' is also evident in critical responses which obsessively return to *Atonement*'s twist ending, all but impossible to avoid so much does it impact any reading of the text. The traumatic lexicon even filters through to the responses of critics who pay no heed to the issue of trauma; the ending has been described as a 'postmodern shock' that 'shatters the fictional world of the main narrative' (Albers and Caeners 707, 711), a 'jolt to the reader's trust' (Hidalgo 85), a moment when the reader's 'investment in the codes of realism is betrayed' (Head 174). However, rather than concern myself with the idea of the text as a carrier of trauma, I intend here to ask what the aesthetic form by which the text

¹³ Pilar Hidalgo discusses the country house motif as an ironic allusion to the Austenian country house. The irony lies in the fact that the country house in *Atonement* is 'not only ugly but something of a fake' (Hidalgo 84).

¹⁴ Letissier similarly points to the way *Atonement* 'largely consists of slices of time, or frozen moments that challenge the notion of time as uninterrupted flux or unstoppable stream, to allow the past to spill over into the present, instead of setting the present as an organizing position from which retrospectively some kind of chronological ordering could be imposed' (223). This argument demonstrates that to insist on the traumatic aspects of the novel requires a disavowal of certain significant aspects of the book itself, such as Briony's authorship and complicity.

attempts to capture the experience of the traumatic moment and the trauma of perception does to *Atonement* as a historical novel, or, in other words, what is the politics of a 'traumatic history'.

While Crosthwaite and Hillis-Miller read *Atonement*'s twist ending in terms of its traumatic impact, a consistent feature of critical responses stemming back to its earliest reviews is the question of its relationship with postmodernism. James Wood criticized the twist as 'unnecessary', its sole purpose, as far as he was concerned, to give the novel the identifying stamp of 'a proper postmodern artefact, wearing its doubts on its sleeve, on the outside, as the Pompidou does its escalators' ('Twist' 34).¹⁵ Lynne Sharon Schwartz similarly saw *Atonement*'s 'one flaw' to be an 'unwarranted excursion into postmodernism' (24). Brian Finney argues that such responses to the novel which read the parts before the coda as realist and then 'fault McEwan for failing to live up to the realist expectations . . . aroused during the first half of the book' amounts to a 'radical misreading of the novel' (70).¹⁶ These early reviews are blind to the textual complexity of McEwan's novel, not merely in terms of its metafictional coda and the way its ending is, on a second reading, pre-empted throughout by the use of variable internal focalization and temporal prolepsis, which suggests a more restricted narrative perspective than that of the omniscient classic realist narrator (Finney 74-6), and this can also be seen in its intertextual dialogue with the history of English literature.¹⁷ As Richard Pedot points out, *Atonement*'s parts are 'more densely intertwined than assumed at first reading' (150). Indeed, for some, such as Alistair Cormack, the first three parts are neither realist nor postmodernist, but rather constitute an 'exemplary modernist text' due to the 'absence of omniscience' and its use of 'a variety of fragmentary subjective

¹⁵ Wood's more recent essay on McEwan, published in the *London Review of Books* in 2009 suggests that he has changed his perspective on *Atonement*.

¹⁶ I have adopted the term 'coda' to describe *Atonement*'s final section, although I would draw attention to Armelle Parey's observation that the nature of the paratext ultimately remains indeterminate (98-99). Parey notes how reviewers and critics of the novel have referred to this final section in numerous ways, including 'the ending', 'coda' and 'epilogue'. James Phelan interprets it to be 'Briony's diary entry' (322), though there is no evidence to support such a reading. James Harold's view is that 'we are not to suppose that Briony has written the fourth part down' (137), although this, in turn, fails to account for Briony's comment that 'Now it is five in the morning and I am still at the writing desk, thinking over my two strange days' (*Atonement* 369).

¹⁷ Another prominent strand of *Atonement* criticism has explored intertextuality in the novel; in particular, see Heta Pyrhönen's essay on *Atonement*'s relationship to Lacan and 'The Purloined Letter' and Earl Ingersoll's exploration of the intertextual relationship between *Atonement* and L. P. Hartley's *The Go-Between*.

perspectives'. This modernist text is then 'subtly subverted' by the coda (Cormack 73).¹⁸ For Laura Marcus, the novel 'confound[s] absolute distinctions between "realist", "modernist", and "postmodernist" writings' (98). Nevertheless, *Atonement* continues to be read according to this false dichotomy of realism and postmodernism.

The curious thing about this opposition is its suggestion that 'postmodernism' is something supplementary rather than implicit to the text. Stefanie Albers and Torsten Caeners, for example, describe the 'tension between realist and postmodern narrative', a tension that is resolved by their suggestion that the text 'holds an indeterminate position between the classic, closed narrative and the open and experimental narratives of (post)modernism', a 'hybrid narrative that contains both realist and postmodern elements' (707-8). The weakness of this approach is that it presupposes the 'realism' of the first three parts of the novel and then fails to register that the 'postmodern' ending precludes that very reading. Albers and Caeners' emphasis on the text's hybridity assumes the priority of the reading experience; the first three parts are perceived to be 'classic realism' only because they might appear that way the first time through. David K. O'Hara unpicks the logic of such readings:

[T]hey have all presupposed the actuality of a certain conflict (entirely external to the novel): that between the apparently 'postmodernist' and the apparently 'classic realist' modes. No matter how they choose to value this conflict . . . metafiction is seen as its *modus operandi*. . . . The issue therefore becomes the artistic integrity of such tactics, rather than any objective sense of what the novel itself might be saying about the making of narrative. (85-6)

In the context of O'Hara's critique, Wood's analogy of *Atonement*'s coda with the exteriority of the Pompidou's escalators is revealing, predicated as it is, firstly, on the assumption that the use of a metafictional device is 'definitively, or by definition, a *postmodernist* one' (O'Hara 87, original emphasis), and, secondly, that any such 'postmodern gimmickry' (Finney 70)—whether it be a metafictional device in a novel or an externally exposed escalator on a building—only ever serves to self-identify the work as a *postmodernist* work, thus ignoring any particularity about how the device has been used in any given instance. Once the escalators have been set on the outside of the building, they are no longer merely aesthetic but have become functional; people actually use them to enter the building. Similarly, once we have

¹⁸ For a further exploration of *Atonement*'s modernist credentials, see Richard Robinson's essay.

finished reading *Atonement*, those first sections have changed for good; any sense that those first pages were realist, which is already to ignore the complexity of those initial parts, is exposed in the coda as an illusion. It is useful then to resist these larger labels of ‘realism’ and ‘postmodernism’, and, bearing O’Hara’s advice in mind, to pay closer attention to the particular workings of the metafictional device in *Atonement*, rather than to ascribe it a general meaning.¹⁹ To trace the full impact of the coda, then, we must try to define more precisely how it relates to and alters the perception of the first three parts.

It is common to find the metafictional ending of *Atonement* described as a singular revelatory moment when, in fact, the end involves a series of twists, each with their own implications for interpretation. The first of these is the appearance of Briony Tallis’s initials (‘BT’) dated ‘London 1999’ (349), at the end of ‘Part Three’, which confirms her authorship of the first three parts, a novel-within-a-novel.²⁰ The coda, titled ‘London 1999’, instigates a shift from third-person to first-person narration, and there is little doubt that Briony is the narrator of this final part. This first twist is important as it points to the relative stability of the text in that, despite the reversals of its final pages, what ultimately holds it together as a whole is the figure of Briony as the author of everything we have read. This means that it is no longer possible to see the character of Briony in the first three parts as just one of many characters; a further depth can now be read into the representation of her actions and thoughts throughout these sections. Nicola King highlights the paradox of the autobiographical narrator who always writes from a place between knowing and not-knowing, using the Freudian notion of *Nachträglichkeit*. What we remember, King argues, ‘are events which took place in a kind of innocence’. The autobiographical narrator ‘in the present moment of the narration, possesses the knowledge that she did not have “then”, in the moment of the experience’ (2). If in the opening parts, we had read Briony’s actions as ‘innocent’, the coda alerts us to

¹⁹ Finney argues that the use of metafiction is not a mere ‘self-indulgence’ on McEwan’s part, but is ‘central to the book’s concerns’ (76). The metafictional ending, Finney argues, serves two didactic purposes: it invites the reader to reflect on the inherently constructed nature of subjectivity ‘in the non-fictional world’, and it undermines the naturalized inequalities of 1930s British society (Finney 76).

²⁰ Though it is only at the end of ‘Part Three’ that the reader can be certain of Briony’s authorship, there are some suggestions that this might be a possibility scattered throughout the first three parts, not least of which is the fact that from the very first pages of the novel we know of the young Briony’s aspiration to become a writer.

the fact that her innocence was already coloured by her later knowledge. What originally appeared to be a work of historical fiction thus becomes stained with an authorial consciousness, tainted with autobiography.

Drawing attention to Briony as author further affects how we view the first three parts in terms of our relationship to the very language of the text. For this purpose, it is useful to draw on Albers and Caeners' false dichotomy of 'classic realism' and 'postmodernism', despite the problems I've already identified with this reading. If we proceed *as if* the novel-within-a-novel were a 'classic realist' text, as others have read it to be, this flawed reading highlights an important linguistic effect that the coda has on the text that precedes it. Albers and Caeners quote a review by David Sexton in the *Evening Standard* which, they argue, 'nicely captures the experience of reading the novel's main storyline': '[McEwan] wields a prose so clear and straightforward it seems almost *invisible*, but it's always alive with the thoughts of the characters, as if it were a *transparent* medium into other minds' (Sexton qtd. in Albers and Caeners 707, my emphasis). The description of McEwan's prose as 'invisible' and 'transparent' neatly directs us to the critique of the classic realist text found in the work of Catherine Belsey and Colin MacCabe. Realism, according to Belsey, is a discourse which 'offers itself as transparent', but it is a transparency that is an illusion (*Critical* 51). The illusion is produced by the text's projection of a metalanguage, that is a language which can 'state all the truths in the object language—those words held in inverted commas—and can also explain the relation of this object language to the real' (MacCabe 35). The metalanguage aspires to the paradoxical place of an 'unwritten' or 'transparent' prose in that it

is not regarded as material; it is dematerialised to achieve perfect representation—to let the identity of things shine through the window of words. For in so far as the metalanguage is treated itself as material—it, too, can be reinterpreted; new meanings can be found for it in a further metalanguage. (MacCabe 35)

The effect is to reassure the reader that 'the world evoked in the fiction, its patterns of cause and effect, of social relationships and moral values, largely confirm the patterns of the world we seem to know' (Belsey, *Critical* 51). This argument is based on the sound theoretical principle that literary discourse as a 'signifying practice' rooted in language can only 'reflect . . . the order inscribed in particular discourses,

not the nature of the world' (Belsey, *Critical* 46). The problem with MacCabe's and Belsey's particular application of this principle to the theory of realism is that it defines not so much the quality of the realist text in practice, but the naïvety of its imagined reader. That is to say, MacCabe and Belsey would not read a classic realist text as if it were a transparent 'window of words' the way their duped reader would.²¹ Putting aside this criticism, the idea of transparency nevertheless proves to be useful in describing the linguistic effect of the coda, if we allow a certain elasticity into the notion of 'transparency' to describe the mimetic quality of a text that aspires to Jameson's more flexible concept of realism as a discourse that constructs rather than merely reflects reality.²² When Briony is unmasked as the author, she not only exposes the potential fictionality of the preceding three parts, but the very fact of its materiality as text, the fact of its writtenness. If we read these parts *as if* the language were a transparent film onto raw, unmediated reality, the coda performs a feat of alchemy which restores it to its opacity; the window of words is ground to grains of sand. It is as if we are forced to see what we always already saw but refused to believe.²³

Taken in isolation from the coda, the fact of Briony's authorship tells us little about the status of the text of the first three parts. In the final pages of 'Part Three', Robbie asks Briony to do three things: she must go tell her parents 'everything they need to know to be convinced that [her] evidence was false; she must go to a solicitor to make a statement that she will retract the evidence that was used to convict Robbie; and, finally, she must write a letter to Robbie. This should be a 'long letter', Robbie explains, going into 'greater detail' about 'everything that you think is relevant' (*Atonement* 345). In the final lines of 'Part Three' after she has left Robbie and Cecilia at Balham tube station, Briony reflects on Robbie's instructions:

²¹ We might recall Bruno Latour's critique of the rhetorical use of the 'naïve believer' that the critic must first invent in order to liberate him from his fetishistic illusions.

²² '[R]ealism and its specific narrative forms construct their new world by *programming* their readers; by training them in new habits and practices, which amounts to whole new subject-positions in a new kind of space; producing new kinds of action, but by the way of the production of new categories of the event and of experience, of temporality and of causality, which also preside over what will now come to be thought of as reality' (Jameson, *Signatures* 166).

²³ As Spiridon writes, 'the Coda brings forth the tortuous road to turning a fabula into a narrative discourse: the story of a storytelling' (61).

Together, the note to her parents and the formal statement would take no time at all. Then she would be free for the rest of the day. She knew what was required of her. Not simply a letter, but a new draft, an atonement, and she was ready to begin. (*Atonement* 349)

These final lines would suggest that the text of the first three parts is the ‘draft’ for Robbie by which Briony has atoned for her crime, albeit a somewhat strange atonement given its third-person narrative perspective. That is to say, just as we learn that the text *is* a text, we are coaxed into believing that this text is an attempt to reconstruct a series of events that really happened, at least from Briony’s perspective, a confession or testimony of sorts.²⁴

These subtle misdirections about the textuality and veracity of the first three parts, sets up *Atonement*’s final twists, contained within the coda, which are so closely entwined that they might appear to be one. These final twists are revealed in quick succession, when what appeared to be a happy ending of sorts—the lovers reunited, Briony agreeing to make amends for the lie that tore them apart—turns out to have been an illusion. At the end of ‘Part Three’, Briony parts from Robbie and Cecilia at Balham Underground Station having agreed to Robbie’s conditions to clear his name and make her atonement. In the coda, Briony admits that the text of the first three parts is just the latest of ‘half a dozen different drafts’ written between January 1940 and March 1999 (369):

It is only in this last version that my lovers end well, standing side by side on a South London pavement as I walk away. All the preceding drafts were pitiless. But now I can no longer think what purpose would be served if, say, I tried to persuade my reader, by direct or indirect means, that Robbie Turner died of septicaemia at Bray Dunes on 1 June 1940, or that Cecilia was killed in September of the same year by the bomb that destroyed Balham Underground station. (370)

Thus, the lovers did not survive. Briony’s meeting with them did not take place and, indeed, could not have taken place; Robbie was already dead when it was said to happen. Cecilia was to die soon after. In this moment, we find two inextricable revelations; in fact, the two revelations are so interdependent that neither one really takes priority over the other, though it is inevitably the fact that Robbie and Cecilia

²⁴ Hillis Miller sees the implication of the idea that the text is a draft of Briony’s version of events as an ‘extreme example of mimetic realism’, which would validate the novel as a ‘one-to-one correspondence to historical events that really happened’ (100).

are dead that is seen as the most dramatic. However, underpinning the news of the lovers' deaths is the knowledge that what might have been a confession or testimony is a work of fiction.

With the revelation that the first three parts of *Atonement* are only the 'latest' of many drafts (369), any reading must therefore take into account the question of the novel as 'palimpsest' (Jacobi 57). Jacobi uses this concept to draw attention to the complex way the coda instigates a series of rereadings: the first reading of the novel as 'straightforward narrative', must be reconstructed to take into account 'Briony's perspective as the narrative's center of consciousness', and, this in turn leads to a reflection on the nature of reading and misreading (Jacobi 57-8). Jacobi uses the word 'palimpsest', then, to describe not the text as such, but the way the reader is forced in each reading to see the text afresh. The idea of the text as 'draft' much more accurately describes the sense of the text as something in progress, that has been altered and modified, whose current arrangement of signifiers is only one version of the many variations that Briony might have experimented with, or the others that may have been possible.

The latest draft contains the traces of Briony's misperception, but also all the different ways that the original misperception has been retraced and reorganized in her memory in the intervening years; this draft is also, at the very same time, the product of Briony's development as a writer, reflecting her aesthetic sensibility about what a work of fiction is and can be. Though we might attempt to identify how these traces have been registered in the text, the fact of the text as text means that the convergences between memory, imagination, fiction, and experience remain finally imperceptible. It is for this reason that *Atonement* might fit into a certain strand of recent English fiction that Amy J. Elias calls *postmodern realism*, in which she includes Graham Swift's *Waterland* (1983), Martin Amis's *Money* (1984) and Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984). What unites these novels, Elias argues, is the way each 'blurs the borders between experimental and realistic fiction by questioning the premises of Realistic fiction while painstakingly recreating the past' ('Meta-mimesis?' 27). These novels attempt to 'record the real', but a real that 'has become a strange new world: mediated reality' (Elias, 'Meta-mimesis?' 26). 'Painstaking' is a good way of describing Briony's approach to writing, which she herself calls a

‘pointillist approach to verisimilitude’ attained through the cumulative ‘correction of detail’ (*Atonement* 359).

Given that *Atonement* is as much a *künstlerroman* as it is the story of a crime and a historical novel, it is interesting to explore the way it shows how Briony’s understanding of the art of writing evolves, and how this intersects with the larger story of Briony’s crime.²⁵ At the beginning of the novel, Briony prepares a performance of her play *The Trials of Arabella*, in honour of her brother Leon’s homecoming. The central organizing principle of young Briony’s literary sensibility is order, an idea that is tied to the notion of justice; her stories always end either with death, a punishment ‘set aside for the morally dubious’, or marriage, ‘a reward withheld until the final page’ (*Atonement* 7). This passion for an orderly plot reflects Briony’s more general ‘love of order’ (7). Briony is ‘one of those children possessed by a desire to have the world just so’, a desire which extends into all reaches of her life (*Atonement* 4). She is obsessed with tidiness; in comparison with Cecilia’s room, said to be ‘a stew of unclosed books, unfolded clothes, unmade bed, unemptied ashtrays’, Briony’s is the ‘only tidy upstairs room in the house’ (4-5). Orderliness is so deeply ingrained that it is even expressed in her play, as seen in her model farm which ‘consisted of the usual animals, but all facing one way—towards their owner—as if about to break into song’, her ‘straight-backed dolls’ which ‘appeared under strict instructions not to touch the walls’ of the dollhouse, and ‘the various thumb-sized figures to be found standing about her dressing table—cowboys, deep-sea divers, humanoid mice—suggested by their even ranks and spacing a citizen’s army awaiting orders’ (*Atonement* 5). The militaristic arrangement of her models imbues Briony’s play with a sense of seriousness and even suggests a fascistic impulse.²⁶

²⁵ The first hint that Briony is the author appears on the second page of the novel where Emily, Briony’s mother, is at her dressing table reading Briony’s play ‘with the author’s arm around her shoulder the whole while’ (4).

²⁶ For Peter Mathews, *Atonement* can be read specifically as ‘an account of Briony’s lifelong struggle with her attraction to fascism . . . with its external patterns of order and symmetry’ (154). Mathews highlights the representation of militarized nursing practices as reflective of a ‘proto-fascist mindset’ (154), and relates this question to Briony’s unconscious elimination of Robbie in her ‘search for purity’ (155). Thus while the novel is not explicitly concerned, despite its Second World War setting, with the question of Nazism and its ideals of racial and cultural purity, it nevertheless, according to Mathews, presents an indirect engagement with these questions through its exploration of Briony’s obsessions.

Briony becomes disillusioned with theatre over the course of rehearsals with her cousins whose freckled complexion does not match the image she has of her characters. Arabella, the main character in her play, who happens to have hair ‘as dark as Briony’s’ is ‘unlikely to be descended from freckled parents . . . [or] lose her heart to a freckled prince and be married by a freckled vicar before a freckled congregation’ (10). The final straw comes when the older (freckled) Lola decides that she should play (dark) Arabella. The whole experience makes Briony understand the ‘chasm that lay between and idea and its execution’ (17). Through this trial, Briony realises she prefers to write stories more than plays. In a story ‘you only had to wish, you only had to write it down and you could have the world; in a play you had to make do with what was available: no horses, no village streets, no seaside’ (37). A story bypasses the problem of your idea being compromised by reality.

The story’s freedom from the bondage of reality is a product of the freedom of language itself. Briony understands storytelling as a kind of ‘telepathy’, a ‘magical process’ by which she can ‘send thoughts and feelings from her mind to her reader’s’ (37).²⁷ This notion of telepathy is founded upon a pre-Saussurean understanding of the relationship between signifier and sign. The possibility of directly transmitting an image is tied to the overdetermined processes involved in the act of reading:

Reading a sentence and understanding it were the same thing; as with the crooking of a finger, nothing lay between them. There was no gap during which the symbols were unravelled. You saw the word *castle*, and it was there, seen from some distance, with woods in high summer spread before it . . . (37, original emphasis)

Briony’s understanding of language approximates that quality of transparency that MacCabe and Belsey highlight as a feature of the classic realist text. You write *castle*, and a castle is conjured in your reader’s mind. You write, “Robbie and Cecilia live happily ever after” and a happy couple appears. Yet when Briony reads the word *cunt* in the letter Robbie asks her to pass to Cecilia, it is this faith in the transparency of telepathic language which leads to one of the misunderstandings that contribute to her accusation against Robbie. This is a word which, although she ‘had never heard [it] spoken, or seen it in print, or come across it in asterisks’, she understands from its

²⁷ There is a parallel to be made between Briony’s telepathic notion of language and Emily’s omniscient reading of the house from her bedroom in chapters six and twelve of ‘Part One’. For a discussion of Emily as a parody of the omniscient narrator, see Laura Marcus’s article.

‘context’ and ‘because the word was at one with its meaning, and was almost onomatopoeic’ (114). The irony is that while Briony may well understand the word in its most literal sense, she entirely miscomprehends its meaning in the context of Robbie and Cecilia’s blossoming desire for one another. She understands what the word refers to but not understand that a word has different meanings to different people in different contexts.

Despite this crucial lesson about the radical contingency of language—that words don’t always mean what they appear to—the adult Briony never loses faith in her telepathic theory of language, and, in fact, in a sense, it is this very faith that explains her approach to the writing of the first three parts. Her ‘pointillist approach’ is a more sophisticated form of her unwavering faith in the power of language. This approach is most visible in Briony’s description of the composition of ‘Part Two’, which narrates Robbie’s experience of the evacuation of Dunkirk. Briony explains that this episode was composed out of research undertaken in the archives of the Imperial War Museum and through written correspondence on the subject of Dunkirk with a Mr Nettles, whose name appears in the narrative as one of Robbie’s co-combatants.²⁸ Briony’s draft was also read for inconsistencies by ‘an obliging old Colonel of the Buffs, something of an amateur historian himself’ who ‘faxed through his suggestions’. Some examples of the Colonel’s suggestions include corrections to military terminology and slang, anachronistic details (‘I think you’d better give the man a forge cap’ (359)) not to mention basic proofreading for typos (‘a Stuka does not carry “a single thousand-ton bomb”’ (360)). A rereading of ‘Part Two’ confirms that the Colonel’s suggestions have been ‘silently incorporated’ into the text (Hidalgo 87). The effect of drawing attention to these corrections is twofold. In the first place, it exposes the construction of the text as fiction, and, in this sense, it performs a characteristic function of historiographic metafiction to draw attention to way events are ‘consciously composed into a narrative’ (Hutcheon, *Politics* 63). This seems to place *Atonement* in what Steven Connor identifies as a shift in postwar British fiction from fiction ‘about history’ to one ‘about its own historically relative construction of history’ (143). Yet Briony’s corrections, while drawing attention to

²⁸ Briony’s research in this way parallels McEwan’s, who mentions in the acknowledgements to *Atonement* that he consulted unpublished letters and journals at the Imperial War Museum in the course of writing the novel.

her (and McEwan's) meticulous method of composition, at the same time emphasise the origin of the fiction in the historical archive (Imperial War Museum), in memory (the letters of Mr Nettles), and in experience (the Colonel). Just at the very moment Briony's historical tapestry is exposed to be "mere fiction", it is doing all it can to emphasise an authentic relationship to the real. It simultaneously forefronts Briony's authority as a writer of fiction *and* her thoroughness as a researcher. This emphasis on the archival authenticity of the historical fiction of 'Part Two' has a further and more subtle impact on how it relates to the other two parts of the novel-within-a-novel for it reveals an unsettling discontinuity in the incongruous origins of the various parts of the novel. 'Part Two' may be a fiction based on historical research, but the others are fictions based on Briony's first-hand experience.

III: What *really* happened?: two absences, two deaths

In the coda, Briony acknowledges that there is always a 'certain kind of reader' who will ask, 'But what *really* happened?' (371, original emphasis). This condenses a number of intersecting questions: What *really* happened that night all those years ago when Briony accused Robbie of rape (a question about Briony's intentions and memory)? What *really* happened to Robbie and Cecilia in the aftermath of Briony's accusation (a question about Briony's imagination and history)? And, considering that Briony also incorporates the story of Dunkirk into her fiction of Robbie's experience, lurking somewhere behind these questions is another pressing question about the relationship between history and historical fiction.

In *On the Historical Novel* (1850), Alessandro Manzoni confronts two critiques of the historical novel. On the one hand, the historical novel fails to distinguish between 'fact' and 'invention' which prevents the work from presenting 'a faithful representation of history' (Manzoni 63); on the other, when the author does highlight this distinction, it turns out to be detrimental to the necessary 'unity that is the vital condition of this or any other art' (Manzoni 65); as Manzoni puts it, 'once you ask the historical novel to identify reality here or there, you are really asking it to identify reality throughout: an impossibility' (69). Ultimately, this paradox leads him to conclude that the historical novel is but a 'species of a false genre which includes all compositions that try to mix history and invention, whatever

their form' (Manzoni 81). This 'false genre' sounds very much like that of historiographic metafiction. Jerome de Groot has noted how the 'techniques of postmodernism . . . have become the techniques of the modern historical novel' (108). For Lukács, the revolution in the historical novel, which he attributes to the work of Walter Scott, is in the transition away from history 'treated as mere costumery' where 'it is only the curiosities and oddities of the *milieu* that matter, not an artistically faithful image of a concrete historical epoch' (*Historical* 19). Lukács argues that the 'strong temptation to try and produce an extensively complete totality' is propelled by the 'delusion' that 'such completeness can guarantee historical fidelity' (*Historical* 42). However, for Lukács, what matters most in historical fiction is not the accuracy and accretion of descriptive detail,

not the re-telling of historical events but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. What matters is that we should re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality. (*Historical* 42)

That is to say, what matters to Lukács is that historical fiction produces a sense of historicity, of history as the product of the will and action of the people. It is in this sense that Jameson defines historicity as 'a perception of the present as history', an effect not limited to historical fiction (*Postmodernism* 284, original emphasis). Briony's question nods to this subtle difference between historical detail and the sense of history evoked by the text. Briony's 'pointillist' approach, indeed, suggests that her emphasis is on the former. Belsey's definition of classic realism proves to be of further use to our reading. Belsey defines the classic realist text as one that is 'characterized by *illusionism*, narrative which leads to *closure*, and a *hierarchy of discourses* which establishes the 'truth' of the story' (Belsey 70, original emphasis). Confined to a reading of the novel-within-a-novel, it is certainly possible to argue that *Atonement* has tendencies towards illusionism and closure, with its minute attention to historical detail and the return to order at its conclusion. *Atonement's* position is more complex, however, for just as Briony's, and McEwan's, prose in the first three parts demonstrates her/his mastery of the detail, the fact of Briony's stepping out from behind the curtain disrupts the illusion of history's restaging.

Jacques Rancière writes of the duality of history,

There is history because there is a past and a specific passion for the past. And there is history because there is an absence of things in words, of the denominated in names. The status of history depends on the treatment of this twofold absence of the “thing itself” that is no longer there – that is in the past; and that never was – because it never was such as it was told. (Rancière, *Names* 63)

The historical narrative is twice removed from historical reality, in the first place, because the object of the discourse no longer exists; in the second, because the narrative itself is, in any case, not able to simply reflect the object, ‘it never was such as it was told’. It is in this sense that Rancière sees the aesthetic regime of art as one in which ‘[w]riting history and writing stories come under the same regime of truth’ (*Politics of Aesthetics* 38). His point is not to question the ‘reality or unreality of things’,

On the contrary, it is clear that a model for the fabrication of stories is linked to a certain idea of history as common destiny, with an idea of those who “make history”, and that this interpenetration of the logic of facts and the logic of stories is specific to an age when anyone and everyone is considered to be participating in the task of “making” history. Thus it is not a matter of claiming that “History” is only made up of stories that we tell ourselves, but simply that the “logic of stories” and the ability to act as historical agents go together.

(*Politics of Aesthetics* 38-9)

History’s ‘twofold absence’ is the necessary result of any attempt to reconstruct the past through language.

One example of what Rancière means can be found in *The Names of History*, where he highlights the necessity that the historian speaks in the place of the historical subject, which he demonstrates using an episode where Tacitus appropriates the voice of Percennius, a lowly soldier of the Roman army said to have spoken out against his superiors. Percennius’s statement, Rancière writes, is ‘too perfect in its argumentation’ to have been spoken by the soldier. In the passage ‘Percennius doesn’t speak; rather, Tacitus lends him his tongue’ (*Names* 27), but this act of appropriation has revolutionary potential:

By invalidating the voice of Percennius, substituting his own speech for the soldier’s, Tacitus does more than give him a historical identity. He also creates a model of subversive eloquence for the orators and simple soldiers of the future. . . . And when the language of Tacitus has, as a dead language, taken on a new life, when it has become the language of the other . . . the overly talented students in the schools

and seminaries will fashion, in their own language and in the direct style, new harangues. . . . All who have no place to speak will take hold of those words and phrases, those argumentations and maxims, subversively constituting a new body of writing. (*Names* 29-30)

Tacitus in this moment does not represent history; he provides a template for future historical agency. In another example, taken from the reverse side of history, Rancière reflects on the character of General Kutuzov in *War and Peace*. One of the lessons of Tolstoy's book is, for Rancière, that

Great men don't make history. . . . In every one of the battles, forecasts and plans reveal themselves to be obsolete and are defeated by the infinite interweaving of small actions and reactions. In every one of them, it is revealed that those who forecast and command do nothing but forecast and plan—actions that are ends in themselves and that only produce effects on the ground in tangential ways. It is the masses who actually act, and they do so precisely because they don't let themselves be distracted by the illusory determination of ends and strategies. What are known as the laws of history result from the relationship between these series of interwoven and heterogeneous acts—and that is something no human reckoning can control.

(*Politics of Literature* 73-4)

In this example, Rancière's point is not merely to suggest the vulnerability of strategy to misinterpretation, but to emphasise that there is an intrinsic and insurmountable disjuncture that separates the act of strategic planning and the real actions of the battlefield. Kutuzov's strategy is essentially a fiction that expresses his desire for a victorious outcome. The example of Percennius demonstrates the gap between the real and the fiction constructed to make order of it; the example of Kutuzov shows the way that the strategy of the General on the battlefield is itself a fiction that precedes the real of battle. Should his side be victorious, he will be celebrated for his foresight.

It is this gap between language and the real that is opened up by Briony's revelation in the coda, in the way it draws into focus the materiality of the signifier. Whereas before, the proper names 'Robbie' and 'Cecilia' could be understood to signify the real bodies of Robbie and Cecilia within the fictional space of the novel, with the transformation in the materiality of the text effected by the revelation of the coda, 'Robbie' and 'Cecilia' are not so much reduced to 'mere' signifiers as revealed to have been nothing but signifiers all along. This, we should emphasise, is not so much to claim that Robbie and Cecilia are only figures of Briony's authorial

imagination as to say that any reading of *Atonement* must take into account the fact that our only idea of Robbie and Cecilia is one already stained by Briony's consciousness. Although we could not know it, the lovers were already dead at the very beginning of their story, even as they fell in love, even as they were torn apart. When Briony reveals this at the end, she is only making explicit something that was already known from the beginning by the author of the text we have read (Briony).

Roland Barthes once wrote of his aversion to the word 'he', which he saw as 'a kind of murder in language' which 'annuls and mortifies its referent' (*Roland* 169). Much as the revelation of their deaths creates a shock in those who have identified closely with the lovers, we should resist the temptation to see Briony's revelation as murder of the two previously-understood-to-be living characters, when what it actually reveals is that Robbie and Cecilia have been revived inside Briony's novel, that Robbie and Cecilia live on in Briony's fiction even as they are truly, biologically dead.²⁹ Robbie and Cecilia are the living dead. This is to say that Robbie and Cecilia inhabit the space of the death drive, what for Lacan, is the space between two deaths, the real and the symbolic. The relationship between the two deaths is one that is deeply connected to the work of mourning. To experience the death of another is to experience a 'hole in the real' (Lacan, 'Desire' 37). This hole, according to Lacan, 'sets the signifier in motion' by providing a place for the 'missing signifier' ('Desire' 38). The function of mourning is thus

to satisfy the disorder that is produced by the inadequacy of signifying elements to cope with the hole that has been created in existence, for it is the system of signifiers in their totality which is impeached by the least instance of mourning. (Lacan, 'Desire' 38)

As Žižek explains, the function of the funereal rite is that the dead are 'inscribed in the text of symbolic tradition' and 'are assured that, in spite of their death, they will "continue to live" in the memory of the community' (*Looking* 23). The hole in the real opened up by the biological death of the individual, is closed by ascribing the name of the dead a place in the symbolic order. When we exchange stories about

²⁹ Earl Ingersoll writes of the temptation to speak of Robbie and Cecilia as if they were real: 'However much readers have been cautioned by contemporary theorists against conceiving of fictional characters as historical personages, the impulse to credit characters with a "reality" continues to be irresistible' (Ingersoll 255). Hillis Miller embraces this impulse when he writes, 'I must speak of the characters as if they were real people, and I must recapitulate crucial events as succinctly and accurately as I can. I *know* the characters are fictive, but they seem like real people to me' (92, original emphasis).

those who have passed, we repeat that first real death in the form of a second symbolic death, one in which the name, in the repetition of the narratives and fictions that encompass it, comes to be seen to possess a simple and fixed meaning.³⁰ It is in this sense that the work of mourning can be understood as a kind of symbolic ‘murder’. When we speak about a thing, Žižek explains, ‘we suspend, place in parenthesis, its reality’ (*Looking* 23). In this sense, Briony’s fiction might be understood as an attempt to lay Robbie and Cecilia to symbolic rest.

However, when the dead do not find their proper resting place in the text of tradition, they return as ‘living dead’. This return ‘is a sign of a disturbance in the symbolic rite, in the process of symbolization; the dead return as collectors of some unpaid symbolic debt’ (Žižek, *Looking* 23). We can understand Robbie’s request for Briony’s letter of atonement in this sense. Yet the failure in the symbolic rite also has historical significance:

The two great traumatic events of the holocaust and the gulag are . . . exemplary cases of the return of the dead in the twentieth century. The shadows of their victims will continue to chase us as “living dead” until we give them a decent burial, until we integrate the trauma of their death into our historical memory. (*Looking* 23)

Those ‘traumas’ of history can thus be understood in terms of an incomplete mourning process in which the events have not yet been made to signify, not yet been ascribed a significance on which all can agree. Thus while the ‘truth’ of history has been lost to the contingencies of the real, the event lives on in the repeated efforts to articulate its place in the symbolic order.³¹

O’Hara argues that Briony’s fiction represents her attempt to ‘alter and recreate the past in order to reconfer empathetic value on those victims of history, the forgotten and the dead’ in the way that she ‘failed to do so as a child’. She ‘lends them her imagination at the expense of her ego. She resurrects, through narrative, the possible life that they were never allowed, fictionally paying it testimony. Thinking of these others, she pays her respect to the hindered, unrealized possibilities of

³⁰ Yet, as Žižek explains, ‘For a human being to be “dead while alive” is to be colonized by the “dead” symbolic order; to be “alive while dead” is to give body to the remainder of Life-Substance which has escaped the symbolic colonization’ (*Plague* 89).

³¹ The real is an ‘act which never took place in reality but which must nevertheless be presupposed, “constructed”, afterwards to account for the present state of things’ (Žižek, *Sublime* 190).

history' (O'Hara 95). For O'Hara, Briony's fiction rights her wrong through a kind of wish-fulfilment or fantasy of an alternative ending to their lives which reincarnates and reunites the dead lovers. When Briony asks what purpose would be served to have left her story in the form of one of her more 'pitiless' drafts, it is unclear whether the drafts' pitilessness is a result of Briony's commitment to mimetic or aesthetic principles; that is, does it refer to her treatment of the characters or to her attitude towards her readers' expectations?

Martin Jacobi argues that it is a 'misreading' to presume that the lovers die. For Jacobi, the narrative 'encourages' readers to expect the lovers' deaths as the deaths themselves are not explicitly represented in the text (Jacobi 56). As Jacobi observes, Briony does answer her question about what *really* happened: 'The answer is simple: the lovers survive and flourish' (371). Jacobi's interpretation is that it is ultimately the reader, in light of the text's ambiguities, who sends the lovers to their deaths or grants them their reprieve (Jacobi 56). However, if we read Briony's answer in context, it is difficult to confirm Jacobi's reading. In the sentence which immediately follows Briony claims that ultimately the truth coincides with the version of events given in her final draft: 'As long as there is a single copy, a solitary typescript of my final draft, then my spontaneous, fortuitous sister and her medical prince survive to love' (371). The implication is that the final authority lies with the final draft. As Spiridon argues, the 'fictional closure wins a long and tormenting battle not only with the real world but also with the glorious pillars of the reputedly realistic truth: history, individual destiny, psychological truth, moral law and the unavoidable atonement and punishment for whoever challenges it' (60). Jacobi's counter-reading raises a question as to what extent any interpretation of Robbie and Cecilia's fate can be construed as a misreading, given the text's deliberate attempt to create ambiguity and to emphasize the gap between language and its referent, signifier and signified, at the foundation of historical representation.³²

The coda's exposure of the text as fictional construction is paralleled in an earlier sequence in 'Part Three' where Briony receives a rejection letter from 'CC'

³² Joe Wright's film adaptation (2007) leaves no ambiguity as to the fact of Robbie and Cecilia's deaths.

(Cyril Connolly) at the *Horizon* literary journal.³³ This a response to her submission of what we understand to be a novella that turns out to be the first draft of 'Part One', *Two Figures by a Fountain*. Connolly offers Briony encouragement, but is critical of her pursuit of the 'crystalline moment' which, he suggests, owes 'a little too much to the techniques of Mrs Woolf', preferring instead a bit more narrative 'pull' to give a sense of 'forward movement' (312). He also makes some suggestions for the novella that have arisen out of discussions in the *Horizon* office:

A young man and woman by a fountain, who clearly have a great deal of unresolved feeling between them, tussle over a Ming vase and break it. (More than one of us here thought Ming rather too priceless to take outdoors? Wouldn't Sèvres or Nymphenburg suit your purpose?) The woman goes fully dressed into the fountain to retrieve the pieces. Wouldn't it help you if the watching girl did not actually realise that the vase had broken? It would be all the more of a mystery to her that the woman submerges herself. (313)

Just as the old Colonel's corrections are included in 'Part Two', CC's suggestions are incorporated into the text of 'Part One', so, for example, in this sequence from the early part of the text the vase is said to be Meissen rather than Ming (24); similarly, the 'watching girl' (Briony) does not realize that the vase is broken. This last detail is significant in that it shows a chink in Briony's fiction. Connolly's comments make it clear that in the original draft of her story, Briony did realize that the vase had been broken. This means that Briony's misunderstanding of what passes between Robbie and Cecilia at the fountain, as we are told it in 'Part One', is an act of misdirection. Briony, in fact, understood. Her misunderstanding is a part of her fiction. If she understood all along, it begs the question to what extent her story is an attempt to conceal rather than atone for her guilt.

The vase is first described in the section which deals with the episode from Cecilia's perspective. Cecilia is preparing flowers for the guest bedroom, and carries them out to the fountain in the vase to fill it with water. At this point, we are given a detailed history of the vase, including the tale of how Uncle Clem, Briony and Cecilia's uncle, had taken the vase from a 'shattered glass case' in the 'half-

³³ The identity of CC is made clear in Cecilia's letter to Robbie in 'Part Two' where she mentions that Briony has had a piece of writing 'turned down by Cyril Connolly at *Horizon*' (212). This is an example of non-synchronicity between 'Part Two' and 'Part Three' in which Briony is said to have written to Cecilia *before* she receives her response from *Horizon* and who decides to visit Cecilia in her flat, rather than write again, because she received no reply to her initial letter.

destroyed museum' of a small French town, while involved in the evacuation of its civilians during World War I (23). After Clem's death, the vase found its way to Tallis home. The vase, according to this history, was 'a genuine Meissen porcelain, the work of the great artist Höroldt, who painted it in 1726' (24). However, in the Tallis home, the vase is respected not for its artistic or monetary value but because it serves as a souvenir for 'Uncle Clem, and the lives he had saved, the river he had crossed at midnight, and his death just a week before the Armistice' (24). The vase is at the centre of Robbie and Cecilia's tussle at the fountain which sees a section of its lip 'split into two triangular pieces' that fall into the water, prompting Cecilia's immersion in the water to retrieve them (29). Later, Cecilia is able to repair the vase. 'No one', we are told, 'would ever know' (43). This question of who knows is important as it introduces a problem with the chronology of Briony's story. In 'Part Three', while undergoing nurse training in London, Briony learns in a letter from her mother that the priceless vase has been broken by Betty, the family's maid, while moving the family's 'fragile pieces' to the cellar to avoid any damage from potential air raids. Betty supposedly dropped the vase on the stairs; according to Briony's mother, 'She said the pieces had simply come away in her hand, but that was hardly to be believed' (279). The cracked vase is in this way a crack in Briony's narrative, an opening of the gap between the real and the symbolic. Is the *real* vase Meissen or Ming, for example? This gap is prised open again and again in *Atonement*, not to emphasise the ideological formations of language and representation, but to insist upon the historical truth of the real, even as it is unknown.

2: Doubled Reality: Traces of Ideology in Robert Harris's *Fatherland*

Most of you know what it means when 100 corpses lie together, when 500 lie there or 1000 lie there. To have stuck this out and—with the exception of human weaknesses—still remained decent, that has made us hard. This is a never written and never to be written page of glory in our history.

‘Speech by Himmler to SS-Gruppenführer in Posen, 4 October 1943’ (164)

At the ‘end of history’, with capitalism’s triumph over its ideological enemies, and thus also at the ‘end of ideology’, we find a contemporaneous anxiety about the relationship of the present to the past transposed into a discourse about memory. Robert Harris’s *Fatherland* (1992) indirectly confronts this wider anxiety about memory and history, remembering and forgetting, through its story of the recovered memory of the Holocaust. The novel is set in Berlin 1964 on an alternative historical timeline, one in which Germany emerged victorious from World War II, and in which the Final Solution was carried through to full completion. The NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei), still fronted by Adolf Hitler, reigns over a Jew-free proto-European Union.³⁴ The Wannsee Conference of 1942 is the point where *Fatherland*’s version of history spins off at a tangent to our own; Wannsee was the setting for the gathering of senior Nazis, under Reinhard Heydrich’s direction, that put together the original plans for the Final Solution. As Harris explains in the ‘Author’s Note’, ‘[m]any of the characters whose names are used in this novel actually existed. Their biographical details are correct up to 1942. Their subsequent fates, of course, were different’ (503). Most of these altered fates relate to those senior Nazis at Wannsee who, according to Harris’s note, all live much longer lives in the novel than they did in reality.³⁵ *Fatherland*’s plot hinges on a series of murders of those present at Wannsee, an action that turns out to be that of

³⁴ Parallels between the Greater German Reich as the most powerful member of the European Community in *Fatherland* and a German-dominated EU did not go unnoticed by critics in the novel’s early reception. In the introduction to the 20th Anniversary Edition of the novel, Harris explains that, although work on the novel began years earlier, it deals with a ‘140-year old “German question” which, he suggests, is still relevant to ‘the current problems in the Eurozone’ (xv-xvi). Winthrop-Young observes that the Europe of the novel ‘bears more than a superficial resemblance’ to the Europe of the early-nineties (884). The Maastricht Treaty, which formalized the European Union and the single European currency, was signed on 7 February 1992.

³⁵ In *Fatherland*’s world, for example, Heydrich survives the attempt on his life by resistance fighters in Prague on 27 May 1942 which in reality killed him.

a Nazi hierarchy intent on disappearing all evidence of its crimes before an official state visit from American President Joseph Kennedy.

Fatherland is a detective thriller where the crime being investigated was committed in the process of covering up a greater historical crime. The novel begins when a dead body surfaces on the banks of Lake Havel. Xavier March, ‘homicide investigator with the Berlin Kriminalpolizei—the Kripo’ (3), is the man tasked with the investigation of the body, which turns out to be that of Josef Buhler, a high ranking member of the Nazi party. In the course of his investigation, March stumbles onto the fact of the Final Solution and the conspiracy of the Nazi state to erase its traces. As Petra Rau puts it, ‘one brutalised Nazi corpse will lead to eleven million murdered European Jews who have vanished without a trace’ (*Our* 73).³⁶ That his case will lead to the revelation of the crimes of the Holocaust is suggested by the ‘plumes of rain . . . like smoke’ that drift across the surface of the lake in the opening passage (3). *Fatherland*, then, exists as a peculiar hybrid of the allohistory and the ‘Nazi detective’ narrative, working simultaneously on two levels: in the first place, it is actively engaged in a fictional rewriting of the historical record in its creation of an alternative history; at the same time, as a detective narrative, it is constructed so as to bring to light the “real history” of the Holocaust.³⁷ Its plot thus revolves around the recovery of historical memory, and in this way it dramatizes the imbrications and

³⁶ In this sense, *Fatherland* might be seen as a peculiar example of the ‘Historian-as-Detective’ trope found in contemporary Holocaust fiction, as identified by Anna Richardson, in which a character embarks on an ‘overarching quest for knowledge; to uncover that which had previously been hidden’ (161). Richardson offers examples of texts as diverse as Anne Michaels’s *Fugitive Pieces* (1999), Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Everything is Illuminated* (2002), and Nicole Krauss’s *The History of Love* (2005), to which we can add Rachel Swiffer’s *The Dark Room* (2001), Tatiana de Rosnay’s *Sarah’s Key* (2007), and Laurent Binet’s *HHhH* (2009). The trope is, however, not restricted to fictional representations of the Holocaust. Some examples of texts that might be seen in terms of the Historian-as-Detective trope not related to the Holocaust are Aleksandar Hemon’s *The Lazarus Project* (2008), Junot Diaz’s *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2008), and Atom Egoyan film *Ararat* (2002), not to mention Foer’s *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005).

³⁷ Katharina Hall notes the minority of post-1990 Nazi-themed texts that feature a ‘Nazi detective’ as protagonist, which she defines as ‘an investigative figure who works in an official capacity within the structures of the Nazi regime, as part of its police force, army, or paramilitary operations’ (288).

tensions of history, memory and fiction present in contemporary memorial culture, and the particular place that it ascribes to the Holocaust.³⁸

Carl Tighe questions whether it is plausible that the facts of the Holocaust would ever come to light in the world of *Fatherland*:

If the total destruction of the Jews had become an accomplished fact in a Nazified and German-dominated Europe, a never publicly discussed or acknowledged fact, all evidence destroyed, all witnesses vanished, what would it be possible to discover about the event? And if anything ever were uncovered by a German, would they be scandalized, thankful or indifferent? And if the information were made public, would the world believe such a thing possible? What would we understand or feel about such an event? What would Germans make of such a discovery? Would it be possible, seen from within a long-established Nazism, to even view the death of the Jews as a crime? (307)

In a world that has suppressed knowledge of its violent origins, a world in which the Jews have been wiped out and knowledge of their extermination erased from, or repressed by, popular memory, then why is March immune to such forgetting? To begin to answer such questions, we need to examine what is so peculiar about Xavier March that it grants him a capacity to see what to all around him is invisible.

I: Holocaust memory and the archive

Pierre Nora once said, ‘whoever says memory, says Shoah’ (qtd. in Winter 363). Nora’s statement resonates in a multitude of ways. The Holocaust is arguably the primary object of contemporary Western memorial practice; at the same time, the discourse on Holocaust remembrance has influenced the way that memory and trauma is discussed more generally. Huyssen sees the Holocaust as the ‘ubiquitous cipher for our memories of the twentieth century’ (*Present* 18). For Jeffrey Alexander, the last fifty years has seen a ‘cultural transformation’ of the Holocaust as a ‘specific and situated historical event’ into a ‘generalized symbol of human suffering and moral evil’; the originating event has come to be redefined as a

³⁸ Memorial culture, of course, extends to events beyond the Holocaust, such as the First World War or the Cold War, for example. However, the Holocaust can be understood to be unique in that it has become a globalized form of memory, almost synonymous with memorial culture itself. Tim Cole notes this when he writes, ‘Each year tourists flock Auschwitz, Anne Frank House, Yad Vashem, the museums in Washington, DC, Dallas, Houston, and buy postcards (to send to friends at home with the message “Wish you were here”). At the end of the twentieth century the “Holocaust” is being consumed’ (17).

‘traumatic event for all of humankind’ (‘Social’ 197). The idea of the memory of the Holocaust encompasses both the ethical injunction that those born after should ‘never forget’ Auschwitz and the tension between individual memory borne of experience and ideological pressures on the images of history. Pierre Vidal-Naquet’s reflections on the problem of Holocaust denial point to the understandable anxieties about the relationship between memory and history from the perspective of surviving witnesses:

[W]e are observing a transformation of memory into history. . . . My generation, now fifty years old, is more or less the last for whom Hitler’s crime still remains a memory. That one must fight against the disappearance—or, worse yet, the debasement—of memory seems to me obvious. Neither a statute of limitations nor a pardon seems conceivable to me. (Vidal-Naquet 57)

Vidal-Naquet’s ‘fight against the disappearance of memory’ is a fight against mortality itself; memory in this context denotes the living memory of a vanishing generation. Yet to call for a ‘fight against the disappearance’ implies that the word has a more material significance, existing beyond the individual consciousness; a memory that is something other than history. At first the ‘transformation of memory into history’ appears to be the natural order of passing time, but it becomes clear that, for Vidal-Naquet, the transformation is not desirable; something is lost with the survivor generation, a material connection with the event. In the context of the Holocaust, the loss of experiential memory is of particular concern due, first, to the self-consciously historiographic form of Nazi genocide, and, second, to the ongoing assault by deniers and revisionists on the facts of the genocide.

Jacques Rancière writes that the Nazi genocide aimed at ‘a double elimination: the elimination of the Jews and the elimination of the traces of their elimination’ (Rancière, *Future* 127). It is primarily in this second form of elimination that we see the historiographic aspect of genocide, what Marc Nichanian has called, in the context of the Armenian genocide between 1909 and 1918 (the traces of which have been far more successfully erased), the ‘historiographic perversion’, that self-consciously archival drive of genocidal logic to ‘annul itself as fact’ by erasing its traces in the archive (30). Primo Levi ironically exposed this logic of genocide in the preface to *The Drowned and the Saved* in the words of an SS Militiaman:

However this war may end, we have won the war against you; none of you will be left to bear witness, but even if someone were to survive, the world would not believe him. There will perhaps be suspicions, discussions, research by historians, but there will be no certainties, because we will destroy the evidence together with you. . . . We will be the ones to dictate the history of the Lagers. (1)

Nichanian locates this logic precisely in the realm of the archive. The ‘historiographic perversion’ is the perversion of the knowledge that, as Derrida says, the archive is ‘not a question of the past. . . . [but] a question of the future’ (36). The archive looks forward to a moment when the present will be past; it does not preserve the traces of history, it preserves the traces that whoever controls the archive wishes to preserve. As Foucault writes, the archive is ‘the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events’ (*Archaeology* 129). The ‘genocidal machine’, Nichanian argues, already knows this law,

[it is] in its essence, a denegating and negationist machine; because those who invented it had already perfectly understood everything about the coming reign of the archive, consequently its operations can never become a *fact*. For a fact is that in the face of which no “different opinion” can ever occur. (27, original emphasis)

The existence of a fact is contingent on the existence of an archive. The genocidal machine, designed to eliminate its victims and erase the archival traces of the crime, seeks to foreclose this possibility of its ever becoming fact. We might recall Himmler’s speech to SS-Gruppenführer in Posen which talks of the genocide as a ‘never written and never to be written page’ of European history (164).³⁹ Yet, to read Himmler’s words is also to be confronted with the irony that this ‘never to be written’ history has generated, and continues to generate, pages and pages of historical documentation and enquiry.⁴⁰ Donald Bloxham considers the Holocaust to be the ‘best-documented genocide in history’ (*Final* 25). Today, when we read the

³⁹ The historical self-consciousness of Nazism is reflected in a passage from *Hitler's Table Talk*: ‘We, too, shall re-write history, from the racial point of view. Starting with isolated examples, we shall proceed to a complete revision. It will be a question, not only of studying sources, but of giving facts a logical link’ (88). Harris uses both Himmler’s speech in Posen (Poznan today) and Levi’s transcription of the words of the SS soldier as epigraphs to sections of *Fatherland*.

⁴⁰ Lucy Dawidowicz wrote in 1976 that the ‘documentary sources’ of the Holocaust ‘surpass in quantity and comprehensiveness the records of any other historical era’ (1). Bloxham writes, ‘The sheer scale of the evidence means that whatever we do not know, we can be certain that organizing and implementing genocide was highly complex and involved a huge number of disparate people and agencies’ (*Final* 25).

words of the SS-Militiaman in Levi's testimony, it only serves to underline the Nazis' ultimate failure to 'dictate the history of the Lagers'.

Fatherland presents us with an image of a world in which the 'double elimination' has been all but carried through to completion; the mass murder has been committed and forgotten; the genocide has been erased as fact, to the extent that there is the widely held belief that the Jews have been 'resettled' in the East.⁴¹ As Charlie Maguire, the American reporter who conspires with March in the attempt to reveal the Nazi crimes to the world, explains:

When I first came to Berlin, and my parents gave me that list of people they knew in the old days, there were lots of theatre people on it, artists—friends of my mother. I suppose quite a few of them, in the way of things, must have been Jews, or homosexuals. And I went looking for them. All of them had gone, of course. That didn't surprise me. But they hadn't just vanished. *It was as if they'd never existed.* (279-80, original emphasis)

The rewriting of history in *Fatherland* can thus be seen to serve as a device to explore the contours of a world without the memory of its genocidal origins. Yet, much as the citizens of the Greater German Reich might believe that the past is the past, the relationship between past and present in *Fatherland* turns out to be slightly more complex. Using Rancière's notion of the 'double elimination' inherent to genocidal logic, we might say that the Final Solution in the novel is in its late stages of completion, in that it has reached its own logical end point, the elimination of the very last witnesses, namely, those very men present at its inception at Wannsee (according to the novel's reading of history). In this sense, it is not an arbitrary outcome that March's investigation into the murders of Josef Buhler, Wilhelm Stuckhart and Martin Luther leads him to uncover the Nazi state's repressed history; his investigation into these Party members' deaths, in a neat dovetailing of a seemingly incongruous plot, is precisely an investigation into the ultimate victims of the Final Solution, namely its last surviving originators. These men have fallen foul

⁴¹ On the history of the idea of 'resettlement' in Nazi policy, see the first essay in Christopher Browning's *The Path to Genocide*. Browning uses the fact of the Nazi's initial plans 'to solve the Jewish question by expulsion into the wastelands of conquered Russia [after the presumed success of Operation Barbarossa]' to complicate the polarization of historians' interpretations of the Holocaust between the 'functionalist' and 'intentionalist' explanations (5). In *Fatherland*, the term has become a euphemism for Jewish extermination. Donald Bloxham has described how the idea of a Jewish 'reservation' in the East 'only slowly metamorphosed from a real intention to a euphemism for more-or-less immediate murder' ('Europe' 326).

of the very genocidal logic they themselves instigated by which no witnesses should remain. In the week leading up to Hitler's 75th birthday (the Führertag), and with a potential détente with the United States in the balance, the Nazis have initiated the final stages of genocide, to eliminate the last remaining witnesses and to vanish incriminating documents from the archive.

It is in the archive—the Reichsarchiv, more specifically—that March begins to piece together the clues of his investigation. Above the Reichsarchiv's entrance, a quotation from the Führer exemplifies the historical self-consciousness of the regime: 'FOR ANY NATION, THE RIGHT HISTORY IS WORTH 100 DIVISIONS' (319). The sentiment is a perversion of Benjaminian historical materialism; where, for Benjamin, the historical materialist should read history against the grain to expose its barbarity and to find openings for alternative potentialities, the Nazi archive cynically asserts its place on the side of history's victors. The Nazi state's penchant for sloganeering also hints at the Orwellian influence on *Fatherland*.⁴² The building is evidence of the importance the Reich places on the control of historical consciousness. Rudolf Halder, an officially employed historian and March's insider in the archive, explains that it is 'the largest archive building in the world' with six floors of documents, one floor for research and two for 'administration' (319). This last reference to the two top floors of the archive explains its later description as 'a monument to German bureaucracy' (329). Sixty metres beneath the ground, March sees a secure doorway to what Halder tells him is the 'place where the wrong history goes'. We learn what this means when March glimpses 'a furnace, a roar of a flame' as a security guard exits (324), an image which foreshadows March's discovery of what exactly the 'wrong history' is, the genocidal logic economically represented in this equation between burned documents and burned bodies.⁴³ Yet, it is precisely because this is a fantasy of what a 'Reichsarchiv' might look like that it reveals something about how history works in

⁴² 'The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became truth' (Orwell 78).

⁴³ Rau notes two oppositions relating to the body in Harris's novel, 'the readable, ubiquitous Nazi bodies that populate the plot against an invisible, undetectable mountain of genocidal victims; and a material body of evidence in the form of documents about the Shoah to which the detective's vulnerable body gives access' (*Our* 74).

Fatherland, that is to say, how the text constructs an idea of History as opposed to how it represents Nazism and the Holocaust.

The centrality of the Reichsarchiv's officially-sanctioned historical revisionism to *Fatherland*'s plot, and, indeed, its pride of place in the culture of the Greater German Reich, hints at an interesting parallel between the world of *Fatherland* and our own world at the 'end of history'. As much as Fukuyama's vision is represented as one of triumph and celebration, there is a somewhat melancholic ambivalence to his description of the 'post-historical period' in which 'there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history' and in his admission that 'I can feel in myself, and see in others around me, a powerful nostalgia for the time when history existed' (Fukuyama, 'End' 18). Fukuyama's demotion of the human as historical actor to mere caretaker of history chimes with Nora's description of the contemporary culture of memory that is 'not memory but already history'. There are hints of Fukuyama's 'museum of human history' in Nora's description of the perpetual archival drive that produces

the gigantic and breathtaking storehouse of a material stock of what it would be impossible for us to remember, an unlimited repertoire of what might need to be recalled. . . . No society has ever produced archives as deliberately as our own, not only by volume, not only by new technical means of reproduction and preservation, but also by its superstitious esteem, by its veneration of the trace. Even as traditional memory disappears, we feel obliged assiduously to collect remains, testimonies, documents, images, speeches, any visible signs of what has been, as if this burgeoning dossier were to be called upon to furnish some proof to who knows what tribunal of history. (13-14)

In the age of the Facebook, there is a quaintness to Nora's already-nostalgic reflections on the postmodern 'veneration of the trace', yet, if anything, the advent of the perpetual self-archiving of social media, only makes his critique appear more prescient. This is Nora's version of what Jacques Derrida calls 'archive fever' and what Jean Baudrillard terms postmodern culture's 'archaeological fetishism' (74): '[n]othing disappears, nothing must disappear' (Baudrillard 72). For Baudrillard, the compulsion to exhume buried traces of the past is symptomatic of a world anxious of its own historicity, which digs up the remnants of previous epochs in order to feel connected to its past, and in doing so is condemned to live both 'without memory

and without forgetting' (73).⁴⁴ This is the paradox of a contemporary culture that, as Huyssen argues, is 'obsessed with memory' yet 'also somehow in the grips of a fear, even a terror, of forgetting' (Huyssen, *Present* 18). The rise of the archive and the museum, Huyssen argues, is an expression of a desire to slow down, to hang on to a sense of the past as the quickening pace of technologically advanced capitalist society reduces life to the measure of the instant. Yet, writes Huyssen, this very solution only aggravates the problem:

The more memory we store, the more the past is sucked into the orbit of the present, ready to be called up on the screen in the library, the archive, the museum. A sense of historical continuity or, for that matter, discontinuity, both of which depend on a before and an after, gives way to the simultaneity of all times and spaces readily accessible in the present. ('Monument' 253)

The very desire to preserve the traces of the past to maintain some notion of continuity, some root in history, in 'the library, the archive, the museum', ultimately contributes to the very presentism that produces the desire in the first place.

Cubitt, in noting the difference between the past and the sense of the past, points out that the sensed past is itself 'historically conditioned – shaped . . . by the very flow of past events and experiences at which their selective and creative backward gaze is directed' (Cubitt 28). In *Hope and Memory*, Tzvetan Todorov examines the conditions of this 'backward gaze' in relation to the problems of witness and memory. There are two kinds of traces of the past, Todorov argues, 'mnesic' traces in the mind of those who were there and 'material ones in the outside world' (119);

Only a few mental and material traces of what was are available to us; a process of selection, over which we have no control, has already occurred between the facts of the past and the traces they have left. But now there has to be a second selection procedure, which is conscious and voluntary: we have to choose which of the surviving

⁴⁴ In Baudrillard and Nora's view, what we mean when we talk about memory is the perpetual archival drive of postmodern culture. In his introduction to *The Past is a Foreign Country*, David Lowenthal writes of the increasing interest in the past in 1980s America: 'Once confined to a handful of museums and antique shops, the trappings of history now festoon the whole country. All memorabilia are cherished, from relics of the Revolution to artifacts from Auschwitz; antiques now embrace yesterday's ephemera; the zeal for genealogy ranges from Haley's Roots to the retrospective conversion of Mormon ancestors' (xv). The mention of Auschwitz highlights the centrality of the Holocaust to contemporary memorial culture's obsessive preservation of the remnants and sites of history.

traces of the past to use, which of them we judge, for one reason or another, to be worthy of perpetuation. (Todorov 121)

To some extent, Todorov's description betrays a specific concern with histories that exist within living memory. The 'mental' or 'mnesic' traces of an event only exist as part of a human organism destined for obsolescence, thus for such traces to be said to be 'available to us' is to suggest that we are speaking about bodies that exist within such a time frame. Todorov also simplifies the means by which we access these psychic traces; it is self-evident that a historian cannot approach a survivor's memory of an event in the same way that she would approach a 'material' document. Indeed, we might go as far as to suggest that these mnesic traces are part of the inexorable stream of happenings that is the past as real. This short-circuiting of the dialectical relationship of "the past" and "history", of a history that attempts to construct a coherent narrative of an event, while remaining faithful to the vicissitudes of the psychic traces of that event in the mind of its survivors and witnesses, is a paradox at the crux of the memory crisis and debates about the relationship of memory, trauma and history.

However, Todorov's attention to the subtleties of the double selection involved in the construction of any historical narrative in relation to the traces of the past is useful. This process is first arbitrary and random, a mere accident of the passing of time, of things being lost; but later it becomes the 'conscious and voluntary' historiographic work on those traces that still remain. This second process of selection raises its own problems. In a general sense, it presents the historian's work as a neutral endeavour, impervious to the ideological moment in which he is writing history. At the same time, the idea of 'conscious' selection becomes problematized when we consider the example of the Nazi genocide, where the initial 'process of selection' was a self-consciously orchestrated aspect of the event itself.

There is also an unconscious aspect to this work. Raphael Samuel notes that '[i]f history was thought of as an activity rather than a profession, then the number of practitioners would be legion' (17). He names these anonymous practitioners of history 'Clio's invisible hands' (19):

Even as a form of literary production, history is the work of a thousand different hands. The books, monographs and articles in the learned journals draw on a whole army of ghost-writers. Quite apart

from the indexers, the copy-editors, and the proof-readers—and in the old days the typist—without whom a book could hardly exist, one might refer to scholars' wives who, even if they have been through every line of the text, are likely to be recognized by no more than a single acknowledgement. (18)⁴⁵

The relationship between history and memory, or, at least, the insistence on their differences as two distinct discourses that have the same object becomes problematized when we consider how we might understand 'history' in its most pragmatic sense as a means of describing the totality of relationships between objects, minds and language, and the huge complexity that each of these notions introduces; which is to ask, what is the relationship between the event, as witnessed by however many eyes, and the way(s) the representation of the event lives on in its future?

This unconscious aspect of the selection processes of history can be understood in relation to Slavoj Žižek's notion of 'historical memory' which works through the retroactive appropriation of the 'meaningless trace' by the ideological narrative of the 'master-signifier', based on the Lacanian analysis of the symptom. The perpetual process of reconstructing the images and ideas of what happened underlies a culture's coherent sense of identity and continuity with the past:

Symptoms are meaningless traces, their meaning is not discovered, excavated from the hidden depth of the past, but constructed retroactively—the analysis produces the truth; that is, the signifying frame which gives the symptoms their symbolic place and meaning. As soon as we enter the symbolic order, the past is always present in the form of historical tradition and the meaning of these traces is not given; it changes continually with the transformations of the signifier's network. Every historical rapture, every advent of a new master-signifier, changes retroactively the meaning of all tradition, restructures the narration of the past, makes it readable in another, new way. . . . The past exists as it is included, as it enters (into) the synchronous net of the signifier—that is, as it is symbolized in the texture of the historical memory—and that is why we are all the time "rewriting history"; retroactively giving the elements their symbolic

⁴⁵ Samuel's roll call of contributors to the historical record recalls a footnote to Alasdair Gray's *Lanark: A Life in Four Books*, which acknowledges by name the contributions of those who were involved in the production of the work, including those employed to 'typeset this bloody book'. 'Yet these', the footnote concludes, 'are only a few out of thousands whose help has not been acknowledged and whose names have not been mentioned' (499, note 13).

weight by including them in new textures—it is this elaboration which decides retroactively what they “will have been”.⁴⁶ (*Sublime* 55-6)

For Žižek, then, what Todorov describes as the ‘conscious and voluntary’ selection process of the historian is synchronously undergoing an unconscious and ideological process of selection based on the attribution of meaning inherent to the very act of selection. At the same time, Žižek’s reference to the ‘texture of the historical memory’ reintroduces the problem of delineating history and memory. In a sense, the ‘historical memory’ itself is, like Maurice Halbwachs’s concept of the ‘collective memory’, always in dialect with individual memory.

We can understand this idea of historical memory in relation to what Tim Cole calls the ‘myth of the “Holocaust”’. Cole’s use of the word ‘myth’ is not to question the reality of the historical event, but to acknowledge that a certain notion of the Holocaust exists which ‘may have drawn on the historical Holocaust, but . . . now exists apart from that historical event’ (4). Primo Levi notes the propensity towards, and, indeed, necessity to simplify the world in language as a product of a very human desire to comprehend:

[W]ithout a profound simplification the world around us would be an infinite, undefined tangle that would defy our ability to orient ourselves and decide upon our actions. In short, we are compelled to reduce the knowable to a schema: with this purpose in view we have built for ourselves admirable tools in the course of evolution, tools which are the specific property of the human species—language and conceptual thought. (*Drowned* 36)

Cole’s notion of ‘myth’ describes this (necessary) simplification of history. This can be seen in Raphael Samuel’s conception of the relationship between memory and history when he writes that ‘history is not the prerogative of the historian, nor even as postmodernism contends, a historian’s “invention”. It is, rather, a social form of knowledge; the work, in any given instance, of a thousand different hands’ (8). Or, as Ernst van Alphen put it, ‘[c]ollective memory . . . is not in the service of objective historiography; rather, historiography is in the service of collective memory’ (*Caught* 62). That is, whether we call it ‘myth’, ‘historical memory’ or ‘collective memory’, it

⁴⁶ Žižek here comes close to Hayden White’s theorisation of historical narrative. White writes that the historical narrative ‘does not . . . dispel false beliefs about the past, human life, the nature of the community, and so on; what it does is test the capacity of a culture’s fictions to endow real events with the kinds of meaning that literature displays to consciousness through its fashioning of patterns of “imaginary” events’ (*Content* 45).

is important to acknowledge that certain images and ideas circulate at a tangent to evidence-based historical research, and might, as van Alphen suggests, even have an impact in guiding the focus of such research.

This chimes with Young's comment that '[w]hat is remembered of the Holocaust depends on how it is remembered, and how events are remembered depends in turn on the texts now giving them form' (*Writing* 1). Both Samuel and Young insist on the distance, and difference, between the idea of history as an academic discipline, with all the theoretical baggage included in that description, and the idea of history as an image of the past that is forged in the realm of popular culture and in dialectic with individual memory (what we might want to call 'ideology'). Postwar generations, Young points out, remember 'not actual events but rather the countless histories, novels, and poems of the Holocaust they have read, the photographs, movies, and video testimonies they have seen over the years' as well as the 'long days and nights in the company of survivors, listening to their harrowing tales' ('Holocaust' 26).⁴⁷ As soon as we accept that the 'memory' of the Holocaust is as much a product of culture as it is actual testimonial experience, we must accept Huysen's observation that it is no longer possible 'to think of the Holocaust or of any other historical trauma as a serious ethical and political issue apart from the multiple ways it is now linked to commodification and spectacularization' (*Present* 18).

A common trope of popular representations of Nazism and the Holocaust in popular culture is a fascination with the idea of the "good" Nazi, and the discomfiting dialectic of barbarity and 'normality'. Gavriel D. Rosenfeld sees the continued prominence of alternative histories related to Nazism as the result of a process of 'normalization' as the period recedes further into the past, that is as it increasingly becomes a matter of remembered history as opposed to lived memory (20). Sara Buttsworth and Maartje Abbenhuis note the 'universally understood and

⁴⁷ This is not to say that a child or grandchild of a survivor does not have a very particular kind of relationship to the Holocaust, as has been expressed in concepts such as Marianne Hirsch's 'postmemory' or Ellen S. Fine's 'absent memory', merely to highlight the role culture plays in any act of remembering, no matter what the background of the one who remembers.

(almost completely) uncritically accepted' equation of Nazism with evil (xx).⁴⁸ It is due to such simplifications in the historical memory that the Nazis have become the go-to bad guys of popular culture; Nazis, as Winthrop-Young observes, 'provide a reliable repository of villains that can be vilified and dispensed with without fear of offense' (881). Such simplified constructions of Nazism are a distance from the moral complexity of the 'grey zone' which held the categories of perpetrator, bystander and victim in perpetual suspense. In the character of Xavier March, *Fatherland* engages directly with this notion in the historical memory, yet it offers us a way of understanding the complex relationship between the idea of memory and the image of the Nazi in the ideology of post-history.

II: Man and uniform: the distorted mirror of ideology

Katharina Hall argues that the idea of a Nazi detective poses a problem for the writer of detective fiction in its attempt to reconcile 'the genre's dominant depiction of the detective as a representative of truth, morality, and justice with that of a detective working for a corrupt, fascist regime' (290). In *Fatherland*, Harris goes to some length to avoid this conflict. Xavier March is not a typical Nazi ideologue, a point that is reinforced throughout. He does not respond to a colleague's salute (4); he prefers 'not to wear uniform when he could avoid it' (17); his colleagues call him 'the fox' because he 'did not run with the pack, was more reliant on brain than muscle' (7). Midway through his investigation, having begun to make powerful enemies, Artur Nebe, the head of the Kripo, confronts March with his official file: 'A glittering career', says Nebe, '[a]nd then it all starts going wrong' (197). A 'centimetres thick' file documents his unorthodox behaviour (196). Nebe summarizes what he has found on March:

Blockwart: persistent refusal to contribute to Winter-Relief. Party officials at Werderscher Markt: persistent refusal to join the NSDAP. Overheard in the canteen making disparaging comments about Himmler. Overheard in bars, overheard in restaurants, overheard in corridors "Shown insufficient enthusiasm for his Party activities". (197-8)

⁴⁸ Raul Hilberg has written that the Holocaust 'is the benchmark, the defining moment in the drama of good and evil' (qtd. in Cole 13).

In this way March is shown to be actively resistant to the regime's expectations. To sympathize with March, the novel wants to reassure us, is not to sympathize with his colleagues and countrymen, those real Nazis who salute and who wear their uniforms with pride, those who *really* believe.

March's distance from the regime is further emphasized by his military experience. Throughout the novel he suffers from flashbacks to his time on the U-boats. At the crime scene of the novel's opening, the Baltic rain, 'sea-scented, tangy with salt', takes him 'back twenty years' to 'the conning tower of a U-boat' (3). The explanation for this flashback is given further on:

March pinched the bridge of his nose between thumb and forefinger, a nervous habit he had picked up—when?—in the U-boat service, he supposed, when the screws of the British warships sounded so close the hull shook and you never knew if their next depth charge would be your last. (33)

There's sufficient detail in the novel to piece together that March joined the Navy in 1939 and was discharged with tuberculosis in 1948 (197, 33). When he returned '[a]fter ten years in the navy and twelve months in virtual isolation, he . . . stepped ashore into a world he barely recognised' (34). His post in Berlin with the SS came about 'for want of anything better to do' after a year 'convalescing' before working with the Marine-Küstenpolizei (the coast guard) (33). Charlie Maguire spells out the narrative significance of these years, just in case: 'But what happened—the worst of what happened—was during the war, and you weren't around. You told me: you were at sea' (278). March's being 'at sea' has a dual purpose, both exonerating him of responsibility for the crimes of the regime and protecting him from any knowledge of those crimes, even as he continues to represent the state that committed them. He is established as only-coincidentally-a-Nazi, a free thinker who is "just doing his job". Sturmbannführer Xavier March, 'homicide investigator with the Berlin Kriminalpolizei', is thus doubly exculpated, and ignorant, of his complicity with the structures of Nazi state power.

March's distance from the crimes of the regime makes him an example of the 'good Nazi', as many critics have observed,⁴⁹ and while it is possible to read March

⁴⁹ Gavriel D. Rosenfeld argues that Harris 'crossed an important line by positing the existence of a "good" Nazi. In doing so, [he] by no means aimed to rehabilitate Nazism. . . . [B]y presenting March as a tragic character, caught between his inclinations towards good and his career service of evil, Harris moved well beyond wartime

as a subversion of the stereotypically sadistic figure found in novels such as William Styron's *Sophie's Choice* (1979), or films such as John Schlesinger's *Marathon Man* (1976) and Liliana Cavalli's *Il Portiere di Notte* (1974), it is interesting to note that his ignorance is also essential to the plot which sees him uncover the Final Solution. Had he known already, there would have been no truth to uncover. Nevertheless, as Hall argues, the post-1990s attraction to morally ambivalent as opposed to Manichean representations of the Nazi may be explained with reference to the spate of 'ordinary man' theories put forward around that time by historians such as Christopher Browning and Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, which is not to suggest that these two share an explanation for the genocide, but merely to point out that both are concerned with the role of the ordinary German in carrying it out the genocide rather than that of the Nazi hierarchy.⁵⁰ This interest might be explained by Zygmunt Bauman's observation that the Holocaust 'inverted all established explanations of evil deeds' (151). For Bauman, the Final Solution

was not the work of an obstreperous and uncontrollable mob, but of men in uniforms, obedient and disciplined, following the rules and meticulous about the spirit and the letter of their briefing. It became known very soon that these men, whenever they took their uniforms off, were in no way evil. They behaved much like all of us. They had wives they loved, children they cosseted, friends they helped and comforted in case of distress. It seemed unbelievable that once in uniform the same people shot, gassed, or presided over the shooting and gassing of thousands of other people, including women who were someone's beloved wives and babies who were someone's cosseted children. (Bauman 151)

Bauman's analysis, inspired by the work of Stanley Milgram, focuses on the means by which the modern state bureaucracy had the potentiality to facilitate the genocidal drive of Nazism. The propensity to carry out such a task thus lay beyond the actions or choices of any one individual within the system. Bureaucracy, with its emphasis on the division of labour and its technical efficiency, distances the functionary from the system's actions. This produces a form of 'technical responsibility' which is

and postwar stereotyping' (80). Hall, on the other hand, sees March as an 'overridealized portrayal' of the 'Good German' (309). See also Rau (*Our* 74).

⁵⁰ For an excellent discussion focusing on the opposition between Browning and Goldhagen through the question of metahistory, see Eaglestone (*Postmodernism* 195-223). The interest in the 'ordinary man' can also be traced back to Primo Levi's notion of the 'grey zone' and Hannah Arendt's thesis on the 'banality of evil'.

different from moral responsibility in that ‘it forgets that the action is a means to something other than itself. As outer connections of action are effectively removed from the field of vision, the bureaucrat’s own act becomes an end in itself’ (Bauman 101). The reduction of action to technical proficiency means human beings are seen as ‘pure, quality-free measurements’, are ‘dehumanized’ (Bauman 103). It is in the nature of bureaucracy, Bauman argues, to ‘lose sight of the original goal and to concentrate on the means instead’, and in this sense the Nazi bureaucracy was no different; ‘[o]nce set in motion, the machinery of murder developed its own impetus’ (106). That is, bureaucracy ‘did not hatch the fear of racial contamination and the obsession with racial hygiene. For that it needed visionaries, as bureaucracy picks up where visionaries stop. But bureaucracy made the Holocaust. And it made it in its own image’ (Bauman 105). For Bauman, then, like Browning, the genocide was the outcome of the structure of the modern bureaucratic state; the ‘ordinary man’ in this theory is just doing his job as best he can.

Goldhagen, while similarly insisting on the role played by ordinary Germans in the genocide, attributes their willingness to take part to ‘the long-incubating, pervasive, virulent, racist, eliminationist antisemitism of German culture’, a deeper moral perversity suddenly permitted violent expression by the rise of National Socialism (419), an argument for which he has been criticized. Such criticism has tended, as LaCapra observes, to fall into two camps, arguing that Goldhagen either underplays the role of bureaucratized murder, as put forward by Bauman and Raul Hilberg, or that he overemphasises the notion of moral perversity. As Norman G. Finkelstein argues, Goldhagen’s argument is effectively that ‘only deranged perverts could perpetrate a crime so heinous’; its lesson is the ‘complacent’ one that ‘normal people—and most people, after all, *are* normal—wouldn’t do such things’ (86, original emphasis).⁵¹ For LaCapra, both arguments—attributing the cause to the bureaucratic or the morally perverse—are inadequate in their oversimplification of the Holocaust to a single explanation. Both, according to LaCapra, downplay the question of victimization, violence and the ‘role of Nazi ideology as both a cause and

⁵¹ See chapter 4 of LaCapra’s *Writing History, Writing Trauma* for a detailed overview of historians’ responses to Goldhagen’s work.

enabler of these tendencies' (*Writing* 127). Furthermore, the appeal to notions of normality and the ordinary

prejudge what normal or ordinary people—"we"—are capable of doing and hence to stereotype and demonize so-called perversity. In other words, they assume too complacently that "we" know who "we" are and what "we" are capable of doing. They also engender a false sense of surprise about certain forms of belief, feeling or behavior. Even more basically, they deflect attention from the need for more cogent categories of understanding and explanation—including self-understanding. (*Writing* 127)⁵²

This is not the place to discuss the origins of the genocide, rather what I want to focus on is the way that such historical debates are absorbed into what Tim Cole calls the 'myth of the "Holocaust"'.

LaCapra's and Finkelstein's criticism of the logic of arguments that asserts the perversity of the perpetrator in the past in order to normalize a "we" who act in the present is useful in this context. In popular culture, the "normality" of the Nazi fascinates and disgusts in equal measure, as can be seen in notes to the exhibition *Auschwitz through the Lens of the SS: Photos of Nazi Leadership at the Camp* at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The exhibition focused on an album of photographs taken by Karl Höcker, an SS-Obersturmführer stationed at Auschwitz between May 1944 and its evacuation, discovered in 2007. Most of the photographs are rather innocuous in their subject matter, but it is precisely their innocuousness that is seen to be a sign of their horror. This can be seen in the exhibition notes that accompany an image of male camp commanders enjoying some leisure time with their female auxiliaries:

A full-page spread of six photographs entitled "Hier gibt es Blaubeeren" (Here there are blueberries) shows Höcker passing out bowls of fresh blueberries to the young women sitting on a fence. When the girls finish theatrically eating their blueberries for the camera, one girl poses with fake tears and an inverted bowl. Only miles away on the very same day, 150 prisoners (Jews and non-Jews) arrived on a transport to Auschwitz. The SS selected 21 men and 12

⁵² This may be related to the 'Manichean tendency' to 'simplify history' into a 'they' and a 'we' discussed by Primo Levi in his essay on the 'grey zone' (*Drowned* 36). The idea of normality also underpins the notion of punctual trauma: 'The traumatic event, although real, took place outside the parameters of "normal" reality, such as causality, sequence, place and time. The trauma is thus an event that has no beginning, no ending, no before, no during and no after' (Laub, 'Bearing' 69).

women for work, and killed the remaining members of the transport in the gas chambers. (*Auschwitz through the Lens of the SS*)

These images coax us with the words of Max Aue, the narrator of Jonathan Littell's *The Kindly Ones*: 'Oh my human brothers . . .' (3). It is precisely their being 'so familiar' that explains our fascination (Buttsworth and Abbenhuis xix). This juxtaposition of the historical record with the frivolity depicted in the photograph typifies a particularity of responses to Nazism; the horror is contained not merely in its implementation of mass industrialized killing, but that such violence could be reconciled with the everyday innocence of a summer holiday.

This duality can be seen in *Fatherland*'s fascination with March's SS uniform, as can be seen in the description of his morning ritual:

His uniform was laid out in the bedroom: the body-armour of authority.

Brown shirt, with black leather buttons. Black tie. Black breeches. Black jackboots (the rich smell of polished leather).

Black tunic: four silver buttons; three parallel silver threads on the shoulder tabs; on the left sleeve, a red-white-and-black swastika armband; on the right, a diamond enclosing the gothic letter "K", for Kriminalpolizei.

Black Sam Browne belt. Black cap with silver death's head and Party eagle. Black leather gloves.

March stared at himself in the mirror, and a Sturmbannführer of the Waffen-SS stared back. (57-8)

The grammatical structure of this last sentence performs the self-distancing that March experiences when he looks into the mirror.⁵³ The conjunction between the two clauses draws together the signifiers of March, the man, and his Sturmbannführer reflection in a mutual stare just as it splits them apart. Rau reads the detailed description of March's uniform (the 'rich smell of polished leather' stands out here) as an expression of a fetishistic attraction to fascist paraphernalia, 'fascinating Fascism' as Susan Sontag has it (*Our* 75). Geoffrey Winthrop-Young suggests this fascination might equally be understood to be a 'continuation of fascism's fascination with itself' in its obsessively self-conscious staged images and propaganda (879). This emphasis on the separation of man and uniform is repeated

⁵³ This image of the Nazi looking at his reflection in the mirror appears in *Schindler's List* (1993) and *Good* (2008).

throughout the novel. At the Gestapo headquarters, Sturmbannführer Krebs is described as ‘about thirty years old with an angular, intelligent face, and without the uniform he could have been anything—a lawyer, a banker, a eugenicist, an executioner’ (170). Likewise, an Obersturmführer is described as ‘[a] fat man in the uniform of an Obersturmführer’ (171). March, as has already been mentioned, has a predilection for not wearing uniform, yet he is said to feel ‘naked’ without it (390).⁵⁴

We might see the influence of Robert Jay Lifton’s concept of ‘doubling’ in this repeated splitting of the Nazi self. Lifton introduced the concept in his study of Nazi doctors, first published in 1986: ‘Doubling is an active psychological process, a means of adapting to extremity. . . . The adaptation requires a dissolving of “psychic glue” as an alternative to a radical breakdown of the self’ (422). Lifton emphasises the difference between doubling and dual personality disorder where ‘the two selves are more profoundly distinct and autonomous’ (422). Doubling instead is to be seen as a self-distancing that enables the subject to be *both* a medical professional and a functionary of genocide, an ‘important psychological mechanism for individuals living within any criminal subculture’ (Lifton 423). Lifton gives the example of a ‘Mafia or “death squad” chief who coldly orders (or himself carries out) the murder of a rival while remaining a loving husband, father, and churchgoer’ (Lifton 423).⁵⁵ In *Time’s Arrow, or the Nature of the Offence* (1991), for instance, Martin Amis translates Lifton’s theory into the novel’s structure, both in the chronological reversal of the narrative, mimicking Lifton’s concept of the moral reversal of the ‘*healing-killing paradox*’ (Lifton 150, original emphasis), and in the disembodied non-place of the narrative voice, the ‘co-consciousness’ or ‘*ghost conscience*’ (G Harris 489, original emphasis), or ‘soul’ of the central protagonist Tod Friendly/John Young/Hamilton De Souza/Odilo Unverdorben (Anelli 424).⁵⁶ The reversal of time

⁵⁴ ‘A uniform makes salient the role-related aspects of a performance; it serves as a signal to both parties that the uniformed individual is not acting within a personal context, but in an organizational one. An individual’s behavior is a function of the constraints of the role he or she is temporarily occupying’ (Silver and Geller 132).

⁵⁵ Lifton’s example foreshadows the appearance of the popular Tony Soprano in *The Sopranos* (1999-2007), except the comparison points to a crucial difference. In *The Sopranos* the two domains of the domestic and Mafia family were not mutually exclusive, instead one was the support of the other; Tony’s criminality underpins the stable nuclear family model, while the stability is what motivates his criminality.

⁵⁶ Amis acknowledges the influence of Lifton’s work in the afterword to *Time’s Arrow*, which he says ‘would not and could not have been written without it’ (175).

parodies the perversion of the Nazi universe in relation to the supposedly upright moral worlds that preceded and succeeded it.⁵⁷ Giorgio Agamben locates the ‘true horror’ of the camps precisely in this idea of the normal, pointing to Primo Levi’s account of a football match played between Sonderkommando (the work units of Jewish prisoners who operated the gas chambers) and SS soldiers, a moment of seeming ‘normality’ which transcended the brutal daily conditions of Auschwitz. For Agamben, this match ‘is never over; it continues uninterrupted’:

[H]ence our shame, the shame of those who did not know the camps and yet, without knowing how, as spectators of that match, which repeats itself in every match in our stadiums, in every television broadcast, in the normalcy of everyday life. If we do not succeed in understanding that match, in stopping it, there will never be hope. (26)

It is not merely the Nazi doctor that was doubled: reality itself is doubled for Agamben, the ‘normalcy of everyday life’ a mask obscuring the ‘true horror’ embodied in the camps.

To return to March’s confrontation in the mirror with his Sturmbannführer reflection, in relation to the discourse of extremity and normality, we can read this moment as a staging of Fatherland’s representation of ideology. A clue to the fascination with the deeper, hidden evils of the ‘ordinary’ and the ‘normal’ can be found in a passage from Goldhagen’s book which reconstructs the situation of a German soldier taking a young Jewish girl into the woods to kill her. LaCapra uses the passage to critique Goldhagen’s ambiguous free-indirect narrative style, which involves ‘an imputation from some other perspective of what perpetrators must have felt or at times should have felt but did not feel’ (*Writing* 119). Goldhagen writes,

Walking side by side with his victim, he was able to imbue the human form beside him with the projections of his mind. . . . It is highly likely that, back in Germany, these men had previously walked through woods with their own children by their sides, marching gaily and inquisitively along. With what thoughts and emotions did each of these men march, gazing sidelong at the form of, say, an eight- or twelve-year-old girl, who to the *unideologized* mind would have looked like any other girl? . . . Did he see a little girl and ask himself why he was about to kill this little, delicate human being who, if seen as a little girl by him, would *normally* have received his compassion,

⁵⁷ In *Time’s Arrow*, when Dr Odilo Unverdorben arrives at Auschwitz, we are reassured that ‘THE WORLD is going to start making sense’ (Amis 124).

protection, and nurturance? Or did he see a Jew, a young one, but a Jew nonetheless? (218, my emphases)

Goldhagen's reference to the 'unideologized mind' is suggestive; it makes clear an opposition within his text between 'ideology' and 'normality'. That is, what is classed as normal is, from such a perspective, by definition non-ideological. Goldhagen's theory thus posits a (psychological) space that remains somehow beyond the reach of ideology. We should be immediately suspicious of such statements. For Žižek, it is precisely in assertive declarations about what is and is not 'ideological' that ideology is working most effectively. To name an idea or a practice as 'ideological' is to imply that one's own perspective has transcended that very ideology. '[T]here is no ideology', Žižek argues, 'that does not assert itself by means of delimiting itself from another "mere ideology"' ('Spectre' 19). For Žižek, 'ideology is always self-referential, that is, it always defines itself through a distance towards an Other dismissed and denounced as "ideological"' ('Multiculturalism' 37). We can see this logic at work in *Fatherland*.

In this context, we can read March's relationship to his Sturmbannführer reflection as a way into the complex representation of ideology, and the non-ideological (or post-ideological), at work in Harris's novel. Thus while I agree with Rau that the text's obsession with the paraphernalia of Nazism 'betrays a deep uncertainty about the boundaries between liberal democracy and fascist otherness' in its problematic offering of a 'safe and exciting fascist fantasy' (*Our* 85-6), it is equally worth asking to what extent this is specifically about the ideologies of Nazism and fascism, rather than ideology itself in the context of 'end of history' discourse. Which is to say that the fetishistic description of the gloves and the leather and the boots, etc., might be read not only as signifiers of Nazism itself, but as signifiers of 'mere ideology'. That is, we can read the specificity of the identifiers of Nazi ideology as synecdoches of ideology itself. This is, of course, to use the term 'ideology' in Alvin Gouldner's sense of 'the mind-enflaming realm of the doctrinaire, the dogmatic, the impassioned, the dehumanising, the false, the irrational, and, of course, the "extremist" consciousness' (qtd. in Eagleton, *Ideology* 4). March's mirror reflection is an image of ideological misrecognition. Žižek uses Lacan's theory of the mirror stage to describe the ideological process of 'imaginary

identification' by which 'to achieve self-identity, the subject must identify himself with the imaginary other, he must alienate himself—put his identity outside himself, so to speak, into the image of his double' (*Sublime* 116). The product of this is an 'effect of retroversion' which produces an illusion of a self as the 'autonomous agent which is present from the very beginning as the origin of its acts' and thus a way for the subject 'to misrecognize his radical dependence on the big Other, on the symbolic order as his decentred cause' (Žižek, *Sublime* 116).

Despite March's uneasiness about his position in Nazi society and his refusal to take part, it is precisely in his Nazi reflection, an image which presents March as something *essentially* other to the Sturmbannführer that he sees, that we can witness March's total ideological immersion. March's implication in the ideological structures of the Nazi state is at the level of action and not at the level of belief. It is precisely because every day he dresses in Nazi uniform and acts like a Nazi detective, no matter how uncomfortable it makes him feel, that ideology is at work. For Žižek, arguing through a Lacanian perspective, belief is 'radically exterior, embodied in the practical, effective procedure of people' (*Sublime* 29). In this sense, March's relationship to ideology can be identified as an example of the cynicism that, Žižek argues, is the predominant ideological mode of late capitalism, following Peter Sloterdijk's thesis that we live in the age of cynical reason, in which the 'cynical subject is quite aware of the distance between the ideological mask and the social reality, but nonetheless insists upon the mask' (Žižek, *Sublime* 25). Žižek makes the distinction between 'cynical reason' and what Sloterdijk calls 'kynicism', the 'popular, plebeian rejection of the official culture by means of irony and sarcasm' (*Sublime* 26). For Žižek, cynicism rather than ridiculing the official culture, is precisely 'the answer of the ruling culture to this kynical subversion' (*Sublime* 26). Cynicism 'recognizes, it takes into account, the particular interest behind the ideological universality, the distance between the ideological mask and the reality, but it still finds reasons to retain the mask' (*Sublime* 26).⁵⁸ Indeed, in *Fatherland*, March uses precisely this logic to justify to Charlie why he continues to wear his

⁵⁸ Žižek gives the example of the cynical reaction to being 'confronted with illegal enrichment, with robbery . . . that legal enrichment is a lot more effective and, moreover, protected by law' (*Sublime* 26). Such a response acknowledges the structural politico-economic injustices of the present system, but only to insist on its acceptance as the only possible alternative.

Nazi uniform: ‘either I am an investigator in that uniform, and try to do a little good; or I am something else without that uniform, and do no good at all’ (278).

One of Laurent Binet’s many critical interventions in *HHhH* (2013; original French 2009), his hyper-realist meta-novelization of the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, is targeted at Jonathan Littell’s portrait of a Nazi in *The Kindly Ones* (2009). Stumbling across a comment posted on an online forum describing Max Aue, *The Kindly Ones*’s narrator and central protagonist as ‘the mirror of his age’, Binet unleashes a tirade that might equally be applied to Xavier March:

What? No! He rings true (for certain, easily duped readers) because he is the mirror of *our* age: a postmodern nihilist essentially. At no moment in the novel is it suggested that this character believes in Nazism. On the contrary, he displays an often critical detachment towards National Socialist doctrine—and in that sense, he can hardly be said to reflect the delirious fanaticism prevalent in *his* time. (204)

March, like Max Aue, is of ‘our age’; a cynical subject projected back into an alternative history to re-enact the recovery of the memory of an event, which in our own time is far from being forgotten. Saul Friedländer suggests that the contemporary fascination with the image of evil embodied in Nazism and its crimes has a certain purpose to reaffirm the values of liberal society:

Nowadays liberal society is not faced with any concrete enemy; its existence was not threatened, even before the complete demise of Communism. But, to identify its ideals and the natures of its institutions, a society needs to define the quintessential opposite of its own self-image. Due to its unquestionable horror, to its immense number of victims, to the heroic sacrifices demanded to achieve victory over it, Nazism has fulfilled and continues to fulfill the function of the enemy *per se*. (‘History’ 277)

The moment when March looks into the eyes of his Sturmbannführer reflection is one of ideological misrecognition, the illusion that the “good” March is somehow separate from his actions as a Nazi, when in fact it is his role in the ideological structure of Nazism that materializes his world. That we are able to recognize and identify with the “good” March is the product of contemporary ideology.

Agata Pyzik, writing on the trends towards memorialization of the Nazi and communist past in the ex-communist countries that have joined the European Union in the last decades, notes a tendency to conflate the crimes of the past under the general rubric of remembrance, as encouraged by EU initiatives such as the

European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism (also known as Black Ribbon Day) on 23 August, which first took place in 2009. In the rampant neoliberalism of the former-Eastern Bloc countries, Pyzik argues, the purpose of keeping the ‘monster’ of the past alive, is to emphasize that it is ‘crucial for us not to change anything about the present and to exist in this morbid clutching onto the past. The past is used to scare, so that anything we do now cannot be put into question’ (33). It is no surprise then that in *Fatherland*, one of the continuities between the past and the present, and between our historical timeline and the novel’s, is the Swiss banking system.

March and Charlie travel to Zürich to find a safe deposit box locked in the family-run Zaugg & Cie bank. Unlike the ‘[h]igher, longer, bigger, wider, more expensive’ buildings of the victorious Reich (32), the banks of Zürich’s financial district hide in plain sight. The building of Zaugg & Cie is an ‘optical illusion’. It is ‘[s]mall and nondescript from the outside’ while inside ‘a staircase of glass and tubular chrome led to a wide reception area, decorated with modern art’ (289). Zaugg’s description of the bank’s history displays a confidence about capital’s resistance to historical disturbance; ‘Sometimes’, he says, ‘it seems to me that the whole history of twentieth-century Europe has flowed through this office’ (291). When March warns him that most of the people associated with the deposit box have been murdered, Zaugg shows no signs of concern:

Dear me, dear me. Old clients pass away and new ones . . . take their place. And so the world turns. The only thing you can be sure of, Herr March, is that—whoever wins—still standing when the smoke of the battle clears will be the banks of the cantons of Switzerland. (298)

III: The red brick: memory and recognition

One of the final images in *Fatherland* is of March walking through a ‘wasteland’ with his ‘eyes on the ground’ (499-500). He is searching for a piece of evidence, something that would confirm the existence of the camp he has inferred from documents he uncovered in the course of his investigation.

And then he saw it. Almost buried at the base of a sapling: a streak of red. He bent and picked it up, turned it over in his hand. The brick was pitted with yellow lichen, scorched by explosive, crumbling at the corners. But it was solid enough. It existed. He scraped at the lichen

with his thumb and the carmine dust crusted beneath his fingernail like dried blood. As he stooped to replace it, he saw others, half-hidden in the pale grass—ten, twenty, a hundred . . .

(501, original ellipsis)

The image resonates with the opening scenes of *Shoah* in which Lanzmann takes Simon Srebnik back to the empty field that once was Chelmno, the only remains being the deformed ground where the walls had once been. The ‘scorched’ bricks suggest the effort made to erase all traces of the Holocaust. Of course, there is a difference between Srebnik’s recognition of place through his memory of its experience, and March’s recognition through investigative research and empathy. Yet this resonance with Lanzmann’s masterpiece of negative aesthetics highlights a crucial fact, namely that much of the real Auschwitz has been carefully preserved. Its gas chambers and barracks are still standing. According to the website of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, 1.33 million people visited the museum in 2013, slightly down on the previous year.⁵⁹ This stark opposition between March in the world of *Fatherland* and the many visitors of Holocaust-related museums and memorials that exist today across the globe is curious, considering Sara Anelli’s reading of the novel as having the ‘chief goal’ of ‘[e]xposing knowledge about the Holocaust to the world’ (416). This is certainly March’s aim by the end of the novel, but to think of it as the ‘goal’ of the novel itself is problematic; in what sense does knowledge of the Holocaust need to be ‘exposed’? Is Anelli really suggesting that the Holocaust is as hidden to us as it is to Xavier March?; and, if so, how might we then account for the choice to expose such ‘knowledge’ in the form of an allohistorical novel? To pursue an answer to this question, we need to understand what it means when something is recognized to be a trace of history; in this we might note an affinity between March’s desire to seek out the red bricks of Auschwitz and today’s visitors to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum.

When we see an object on display in a museum, we rely on an imaginative investment; the object may have no immediately observable marker of its relationship to the past. As David Lowenthal writes, ‘[m]emory and history pin-point only certain things as relics; the rest of what lies around us seems simply present,

⁵⁹ The memorial was founded in 1946, and has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979.

suggesting nothing past. And daily familiarity divests of their pastness many artifacts formerly identified as relics' (238). Lowenthal acknowledges an inherent disconnectedness from the past—even with those objects that appear most intensely invested with “pastness”—and in doing so echoes Paul Ricoeur’s observation that a trace exists ‘only for one who can deal with the mark as a present sign of an absent thing, or better as the present vestige of a passage that exists no longer’ (345). Such an understanding of the object as relic emphasises the unsettling and almost platitudinous awareness that every object is the ‘vestige of a passage that exists no longer’ whether one is or is not able to perceive it as such, that everything that exists, exists in any given moment in a state of infinite contingency at every scale. In the contemporary museum, writes Young, the relics and remains on display come to be

mistaken for the events from which they have been torn: in coming to stand for the whole, a fragment is confused for it. . . . At such moments, we are invited to forget that memory itself is, after all, only a figurative reconstruction of the past, not its literal replication. . . . [W]e risk mistaking the piece for the whole, the implied whole for unmediated history. (*Texture* 127)⁶⁰

The museum object is an object that has been rescued from the surrounding detritus, an object that is not only a fetishization of history, in that it is seen to be evidence for whatever fiction explains it, but also the reification of history in the object—that is, the object comes, almost paradoxically to be invested with a sense of the particular past while embodying the very notion of “the past in general” by its very materiality. The remnant in the museum with its prestige as something “that was really there”, while still remaining only a fragment, comes to stand for the whole, the real of ‘unmediated history’. The object can be understood as a catalyst which transforms our imaginary relationship with the past, into an image of the past that we might confuse as real. That is, when we recognize an object as being of a particular history, we are projecting meaning onto that object, derived from that bank of imaginary images of historical memory that we carry around in our heads.

⁶⁰ Young explains this effect further in *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*: ‘Nothing but airy time seems to mediate between visitor and past realities, which are not merely *re*-presented by these artifacts but present in them. As literal fragments and remnants of events, these artifacts of catastrophe collapse the distinction between themselves and what they evoke. Claiming the authority of *unreconstructed* realities, the memorial camps invite us not only to mistake their reality for the actual death-camps’ reality but also to confuse an implicit, monumentalized vision for unmediated history’ (*Writing* 174-5).

When March discovers a photograph tucked behind the ‘mildewed wallpaper’ of his bedroom while he is redecorating, he does not possess the necessary knowledge to recognize what he has found (48):

A sepia portrait, all misty browns and creams, dated 1929, taken by a Berlin studio. A family stood before a painted backdrop of trees and fields. A dark-haired woman gazed at a baby in her arms. Her husband stood proud behind her, his hand resting on her shoulder. Next to him, a little boy. He had kept it on the mantelpiece ever since.

(48-9)

Given his lack of motivation for work, what drives March is a ‘duty to the dead’ and a ‘compulsion to *know*’ (23, 125, original emphasis). This is seen in his treatment of the unidentified body found in the lake: ‘He was always respectful of the dead. No society doctor on the Kurfürstendamm was more tender with his clients than Xavier March’ (45). March’s compassion extends into his private life. For years, he wonders who the family were, and eventually he decides to pursue an answer. The landlord’s records show that the apartment was rented to a Jakob Weiss between 1928 and 1942:

But there was no police file on any Jakob Weiss. He was not registered as having moved or fallen sick, or died. Calls to the records bureaux of the Army, Navy and Luftwaffe confirmed he had not been conscripted to fight. . . . They had vanished. (49)

Eventually, ‘like a policeman, seeking witnesses’, March shows the photograph around to the other tenants of his building (49). Only the ‘crone in the attic’ has something to say, something that the reader has presumably understood well in advance, given the context of the novel: ‘They were Jews’ (50). The significance of this information is not as overtly obvious to March as it should be for a reader. As far as March, who passed the war in the depths of the oceans, is aware, it is common knowledge that the Jews ‘had all been evacuated to the east during the war. Everyone knew that. What had happened to them since was not a question anyone asked in public—or in private either, if they had any sense, not even an SS-Sturmbannführer’ (50). Yet something compels March to keep the photograph on his mantelpiece; later he will carry it with him in his wallet reasoning that if he is ‘stopped and searched, he would say they were his family’ (237).

Photographs appear throughout *Fatherland*, as criminal evidence, archival evidence, aide-mémoire. They provide a useful device for connecting the present to

the past. March's investigation of the body in the lake, for example, which reads as a short history of the Nazi party, is told primarily through the description of photographs. He identifies the body of Josef Buhler from a photo in the Party directory:

The body in the Havel was Buhler's, no question of it. He stared up at March through his rimless spectacles, prim and humourless, his lips pursed. It was a bureaucrat's face, a lawyer's face; a face you might see a thousand times and never be able to describe; sharp in the flesh, fudged in memory; the face of a machine-man. (61-2)

Buhler's position in the higher echelons of the party is explained through a series of discovered photographs, finally made explicit when March discovers a picture of Buhler with Hitler in the dead man's apartment, signed by the Führer himself (89). Yet, when March comes into possession of the original minutes of the Wannsee Conference, and the evidence of the final solution, the photographs in the file are described multiple times simply as 'the photographs':

He piled the contents of the case on the dressing table—the map, the various envelopes, the minutes and memoranda, the reports, including the one with the rows of statistics, typed on the machine with the extra large-letters. Some of the paper crackled with age. He remembered how he and Charlie had sat during the sunlit afternoon, with the rumble of traffic outside; how they had passed the evidence backwards and forwards to one another—at first with excitement, then stunned, disbelieving, silent, until at last they came to the pouch with the photographs. (416)

We learn nothing more about the photographs; they are enveloped in a pervasive narrative silence. And yet, it is not difficult to conjure up the kinds of images that might be found in these photographs. To some extent the novel depends on the reader's ability to conjure such images. *Fatherland's* refusal to describe 'the photographs' relies entirely on the reader's capacity to imagine what those photographs must show. The signifier of the 'photographs', in a sense, acts as a trace which stimulates the memory of photographs of the camps that we might have seen in museums, books and documentaries. The photographs are an absent space in which the reader must draw on his or her own knowledge of Holocaust imagery.⁶¹ At

⁶¹ In contrast, the novel provides almost thirty pages (405-432) of transcribed documents relating to the Wannsee Conference including railway timetables, camp plans and orders for the collection of human hair from the prisoners.

the same time, by choosing not to describe the images, Harris appears to subscribe to a certain prohibition of representation, the way Spielberg's camera turns away from the door of the gas chamber in *Schindler's List*.

Berel Lang has written that all Holocaust writing 'aspires to the condition of history' (19). He identifies three generic divisions in Holocaust writing in their relation to history: the first group includes memoirs, diaries, oral histories and 'non-fictional fiction' which 'claim historical veracity and assert or indicate their differences from historical writing as such'; the second group includes texts such as Aharon Appelfeld's *Badenheim, 1939* which appear 'with only a sub- or con-text of historical reference'; while the third group is 'historical writing itself' (Lang 19-22). While Lang does not resist the inevitable epistemological questions raised by including history writing as a genre of Holocaust writing, it is worth looking more closely at the distinctions he makes between the three categories' relations to 'history'. The first group is that of the primary source; these are the texts of witness, words engendered in direct response to real experience. The second group has a more complex relationship with the real; the texts themselves might not refer directly to the historical event, but 'the unconscious of the texts—their repressed past—must be retrieved and articulated by the reader, with these acts themselves then integral to shaping the reader's response' (Lang 22). Finally, the third group, that of historiography itself

aspires to the actuality of history—since in its formulations not only is there no guarantee of success (and often evidence of failure), but the possibility both of alternate emplotments or causal chains and of different *kinds* of these constructs. (Lang 25)

While a text from the first group is clearly identifiable as a historical source, there is an interesting conflict between the other two groups. On the one hand, history is concealed in the 'unconscious of the texts', a history that is immutable, persistent, must be 'retrieved' by the reader. On the other hand, history is the textual construct that, however limited, must necessarily aspire to reproduce an 'actuality'.

The problem with Lang's categorization can be illustrated with an example from Alvin H. Rosenfeld's *A Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature*. Rosenfeld presents his reader with a 'simple test' which highlights the intertextual complexity of reading an historical text and demonstrates how Lang's genre

distinctions are less clear than they may first appear. In Rosenfeld's example, we are presented with two texts: a diary and a historical account of the life of the author of the diary. At first glance, it might seem that the two texts are representative of two of Lang's categorizations, namely, the diary is a historical document with all its implied claims to 'historical veracity', while the account is a work of historiography; that is, these texts are representative of the first and third categories of Holocaust writing according to Lang's schema. Yet, according to Rosenfeld's description, the full impact of the diary is only 'completed' in the context of the secondary historical text:

[R]ead Anne Frank's diary—one of the best known but, as such things go, one of the "easiest" and most antiseptic works of Holocaust literature—and then read Ernst Schnabel's *Anne Frank: A Profile in Courage*, which "completes" the work by supplying the details of the young girl's ending in Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. You will never again be able to rid your understanding of the original text of dimensions of terror, degradation, and despair that it itself does not contain. (*Double* 17)

In this sense, Lang's second categorization can be seen to be present precisely in the intertextual relationship of the two texts. That is, the historical importance of Anne Frank's diary is partly contingent on the extra-textual knowledge of its reader. Schnabel's history, in turn, must therefore itself be contingent on other texts in order to be recognised as 'history'.

Susan Sontag gives the example of an exhibition of photographs held in New York after 9/11. The photographs had no captions as, she notes, there was 'no need'; the New York audience had 'a surfeit of understanding' of what they saw (*Regarding* 26). The photographs on display were being read in the context of the real events of 9/11 mediated through the memories of the audience. John Berger observes how a photograph with the title 'Nazis Burning Books' requires 'a caption for us to understand the significance of the event. . . . And the significance of the caption again depends upon a sense of history that we cannot necessarily take for granted' ('Appearances' 90). Sontag makes a similar point about the photographs in the exhibition, noting that one day the images will need captions because 'if there is any distance from a subject, what a photograph "says" can be read in several ways. Eventually, one reads into the photograph what it *should* be saying' (*Regarding* 26, original emphasis). In other words, the photograph is not capable of transcending the

ideological gaze; eventually, it will merely justify whatever the gaze expects to find there. Even carefully labelled, a photograph will merely come to justify whatever its captions says. Not only are photographs susceptible to the whims of interpretation but ‘as soon as photographs are used with words, they produce together an effect of certainty, even of dogmatic assertion’ (John Berger, ‘Appearances’ 91). The photograph as a (meaningless) trace simultaneously confirms the existence of the real in its unique relationship with the past, and is open to the whims of ideological fantasy: whatever ideology seeks in the photograph, it will not only find, but will find confirmed. To recall Žižek’s notion of history in this context, what we remember, what we recognise as a trace, is dependent on the master-signifier of the historical period and culture we live in, and the dominant narratives of the past it engenders. The photograph, despite its seeming closeness to the real, does not exist beyond the reach of this master-signifier. In order to understand the significance of a photograph, it is necessary to possess sufficient knowledge to recognize what it shows; another person without knowledge of the Holocaust might have passed over such a photograph innocently. The ability to identify the photograph as a trace of the past is wholly dependent on the viewer’s cultural knowledge or position within ideology.

Noting the sense of presence evoked by the ruin, Huyssen writes that ‘what is allegedly present and transparent whenever authenticity is claimed is present only as an absence. It is the imagined present of a past that can now be grasped only in its decay’ (‘Authentic’ 20). ‘In the ruin’, he continues, ‘history appears spatialized, and built space temporalized’ (Huyssen, ‘Authentic’ 21). The ruin itself is present, its past absent. Yet the absent past is evoked by the presence of the ruin. The ruin is the indexical mark of a history (*something was here, something happened here*), even if that particular history is not fully known. When the visitor intuits the aura of history, the intuition relates to an absence invoked by the ruin’s presence. We can see this relationship between presence and absence, witnessing and the intuition of history traced further afield in the aesthetics of memorial culture.

Alison Landsberg describes a moment in the museum narrative of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum where the visitor is invited to enter a boxcar once used to transport Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to Treblinka, noting that,

Its emptiness produces a kind of cognitive dissonance—you attempt to reconcile its present emptiness with the fact that people were at one time crammed into its interior. The effect . . . is an odd sense of spatial intimacy with those people who are at an unbridgeable distance—with people who are profoundly absent. (79)

Landsberg's description is striking in the way it collapses presence and absence, present and past into a single moment. When she writes that the 'present emptiness' of the boxcar creates a sense of 'spatial intimacy' with those who once occupied it, the sense of absence in the present is compounded with the historical absence of the victims of the genocide. This effect is further developed by what is presented to the visitor on exiting the car. Landsberg continues:

When you emerge from the freight car you enter the world of the death camps: piles of personal belongings confiscated at the camps like scissors, razors, hairbrushes, kitchen utensils, bunks from Auschwitz. The piles, it seems, have a semiotic of their own. The pile has become the "aesthetic" of the Holocaust, precisely because it now evokes a deathworld. It is through this semiotic, or iconography, of the pile, that the mute surviving objects speak. (79)

The boxcar acts, for Landsberg, as a portal from which she 'emerges' into 'the world of the death camps', as if temporal and geographical distances between post-Cold war Washington and Nazi-occupied Poland of 1943 had collapsed into one another. In this respect, Landsberg's description recalls LaCapra's definition of traumatic 'acting out' where 'tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene' (*Writing* 21).⁶² The movement from the emptiness of the boxcar to the piles of personal objects shines light on the dialectic of presence and absence at work in memorial aesthetics, a word which Landsberg revealingly puts in quotation marks in order to signal a discomfort about its use in the context of the Holocaust. The movement is one from an absence—of the past, of the victims—, albeit one that is contained within the remnant of the boxcar, to an overwhelming presence, the mountains of personal possessions that once belonged to those victims.

We can observe this dialectic in remnants and remains, the tangible traces of history on display in our museums, in the preservation of historical sites, as well as in the architectural fascination with evocative absences, such as the underground

⁶² Landsberg describes the moment as a 'radical eradication of the dichotomy between our space and museum or object space' (78).

passages in Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, or Peter Eisenman and Buro Happold's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. In each case, we find a curious simultaneity between historical specificity and a general evocation of history as absent presence, which conspire to evoke a sense of the past that is intricately related to the tangibility and presence of the trace. At the other end of the scale, we find a sense of the past conjured as a general sense of space disassociated from any specific object. A good example of this can be found in Daniel Libeskind's design of the Jewish Museum in Berlin (JMB), a central feature of which is what he calls the 'Holocaust Void', which he describes thus:

the building measures more than 15,000 square meters. The entrance is through the Baroque Kollegienhaus and then into a dramatic entry Void by a stair, which descends under the existing building foundations, crisscrosses underground, and materializes itself as an independent building on the outside. The existing building is tied to the extension underground, preserving the contradictory autonomy of both the old building and the new building on the surface, while binding the two together in the depth of time and space. ('Between')

For Libeskind, this void is the living presence of history reified in the very structure of the museum space: 'The history of the Jews is living, even in its absence, in its permanent potential, and it lives in its absent presence in the structure, in the collections of the city of Berlin, and in the space of the museum' ('Trauma' 54). Yet, to visit Libeskind's building, the passageway leading up towards the empty concrete room that is no longer officially called the Void, you will notice that the passageway contains a number of displays, each containing an object and a written explanation of what happened to the once-owner of that object. This is to suggest that an absent space can only evoke the Holocaust when it is contained within a building ostensibly devoted to the event, and in relation to the presence of the myriad objects and texts which contribute to that imaginary experience. When March finds the red brick, he is able to project onto the brick a certain image of history, the history of the Holocaust, but he is only able to do this because he sees the brick not through the eyes of a Nazi SS, but through the eyes of the cynical subject of postmodernity.

3: 'How could I be both that and this?': Doubles and Documents in Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock: A Confession*

Now this story is not invented, and reality is always more complex than invention: less kempt, cruder, less rounded out. It rarely lies on one level.

Primo Levi, *The Periodic Table* (226)

David Brauner writes of the importance of the idea of paradox to Philip Roth's work, 'both as a rhetorical device of which [he] is particularly fond, and also as an organising intellectual and ideological principle that inflects all his work' (8).

Operation Shylock: A Confession (1993), in which 'pure invention and biographic historic fact mingle like brush strokes of a single painting' (Cooper 3), is a good example of this tendency in Roth's work. In the publicity which accompanied its publication, Roth insisted that *Operation Shylock* was a work of autobiography, a confession of true events. Many of the events, in fact, are verifiable. The novel is set for the most part in Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories against the backdrop of the trial of John Demjanjuk in 1988, an American auto-repair worker suspected of being the Treblinka camp guard known as 'Ivan the Terrible'.¹ Extensive sections of the novel are effectively transcripts of actual interviews with the writer Aharon Appelfeld that Roth published in *The New York Times Book Review*. Roth did visit Israel during that time, and he did attend Demjanjuk's trial, though when he is spotted on television by his cousin Apter in the novel, it is not Roth himself but an interloper Philip Roth, who Roth names Pipik, making use of Roth's celebrity to promote his philosophy of 'Diasporism', the return of the Jews of Israel to Europe.² The novel is a carnivalesque performance which eventually leads to Roth's agreeing to carry out a secret mission for the Mossad.

The key moment in the trial, as far as Roth's account in *Operation Shylock* goes, is in the cross-examination of Eliahu Rosenberg whose pivotal testimony

¹ Demjanjuk was sentenced to death in April 1988, but his sentence was overturned on appeal in 1993. He was later found guilty of being a guard at Sobibor camp and sentenced in Germany.

² I will not follow the practice of other critics who make the distinction between Roth (the author) and Philip (the narrator), as the inability to speak of the one without invoking the shadow of the other is essential to the novel's aesthetic construction. As Derek Parker Royal has argued, the novel is constructed precisely 'so that author and subject become indistinguishable' (55).

identifying Demjanjuk as ‘Ivan the Terrible’ is discovered to contradict a previous claim in a document from 1945 in which Rosenberg stated that he had witnessed the murder of ‘Ivan’.

I: That and this: testimony and realism

To think of History as a ‘history of trauma’, Caruth writes, ‘means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs; or to put it somewhat differently, that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence’ (*Unclaimed* 18). Caruth here conflates the very particular experience of the traumatized subject, the fright-damaged consciousness of the Freudian model, with the wider concept of History.³ Sigrid Weigel is critical of Caruth’s reading of Freud which ‘makes every experience and any history traumatic by definition’ (87).⁴ More precisely, the problem with Caruth’s understanding is that it posits her very particular notion of trauma as a universal condition of history. For Greg Forster, trauma theory

[has] helped us to see how a historical moment might be experienced less as an ongoing set of processes that shape and are shaped by those living through them than as a punctual blow to the psyche that overwhelms its functioning, disables its defenses, and absents it from direct contact with the brutalizing event itself. (259)

In the dominant trauma theory, this emphasis on the historical moment as ‘punctual blow’ is married, in the first place, to a notion of the unmediated registration of the moment in the mind of the survivor-victim, and, secondly, to the idea that the trauma is transmitted symptomatically through testimony, and through art which is always seen to be testifying.

³ To this extent, Caruth posits a useful understanding of the subject’s experience of History, of the limits of seeing and knowing, an understanding that might be compared with Benjamin’s distinction between experience or ‘aura’ (*Erfahrung*) and lived experience or ‘shock’ (*Erlebnis*), to use Terry Eagleton’s translations, which is itself drawn from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin* 35). Benjamin explains his understanding of experience with echoes of Freud’s model of consciousness: ‘The greater the share of the shock factor in particular impressions, the more constantly consciousness has to be alert as a screen against stimuli; the more efficiently it does so, the less do these impressions enter experience (*Erfahrung*), tending to remain in the sphere of a certain hour in one’s life (*Erlebnis*)’ (*Illuminations* 159). The difference, however, is that while Caruth acknowledges the difference between shock and fright in her initial reading of Freud, as she moves to emphasize the place of trauma in her theory of history, the distinction becomes erased.

⁴ As Alexander Dunst puts it, Caruth’s theory ‘absolutize[s] history as the history of trauma’ (58).

In his essay 'The Modernist Event', Hayden White defines the Holocaust as an event 'that not only could not possibly have occurred before the twentieth century but whose nature, scope, and implications no prior age could even have imagined'.⁵ Such events, he argues, 'function in the consciousness of certain social groups exactly as infantile traumas are conceived to function in the psyche of neurotic individuals' ('Modernist' 69). In this sense, White relies on a certain notion of a group 'consciousness', the parameters of which remain unspecified, whose relationship to history is understood to work in 'exactly' the same way as an individual's relationship to their traumatic past. White goes on to explain the significance of this comparison:

This means that [the events] cannot be simply forgotten and put out of mind or, conversely, adequately remembered, which is to say, clearly and unambiguously identified as to their meaning and contextualized in the group memory in such a way as to reduce the shadow they cast over the group's capacities to go into its present and envision a future free of debilitating effects. ('Modernist' 69)

That White's argument is a defence of his earlier work against accusations of historical relativism becomes clear when he emphasizes that '[t]he suggestion that, for the groups most immediately affected by or fixated upon these events, their meanings remain ambiguous and their consignment to the past difficult to effectuate should not be taken to imply in any way that such events never happened' ('Modernist' 69). Rather, the effects of these events on contemporary society and 'generations that had no direct experience of them' are 'readily documentable'. What is at stake, White argues, 'is not the facts of the matter regarding such events but the different possible meanings that such facts can be construed as bearing' ('Modernist' 70). The magnitude of such events is so great that 'not only are their occurrences amply attested, but also, their continuing effects on current societies and generations that had no direct experience of them are readily documentable' ('Modernist' 69-70). White's attention to the continuing effects on later generations suggests an affinity with Caruth's notion of a traumatic history that is 'not only the passing on of a crisis

⁵ White lists events such as 'the two world wars, a growth in world population hitherto unimaginable, poverty and hunger on a scale never before experienced, pollution of the ecosphere by nuclear explosions and the indiscriminate disposal of contaminants, programs of genocide undertaken by societies utilizing scientific technology and rationalized procedures of governance and warfare (of which the German genocide of six million European Jews is paradigmatic)' ('Modernist' 69).

but also the passing on of a survival that can only be possessed within a history larger than any single individual or any single generation' (*Unclaimed* 71). His emphasis on the singularity of the Holocaust, similarly, evokes Felman and Laub's notion of the 'historical processes of the Holocaust . . . as a radical historical *crisis of witnessing*, and as the unprecedented, inconceivable, historical occurrence of "an event without a witness"—an event eliminating its own witness' (xvii).

The idea of history as trauma derives from a conflation of the experience of the survivor/witness with the difficulties of historiographical representation, as can be seen, for example, when Ernst van Alphen argues that

the problem of the unrepresentability of the Holocaust has already arisen *during* the Holocaust itself and not afterward when survivors tried to provide testimonies of it, literary, artistic, or other. To put it differently, the later representational problems are a continuation of the impossibility during the event itself of experiencing the Holocaust in the terms of the symbolic order then available.

(27, original emphasis)

In effect, van Alphen conflates a failure of memory, of the ability of the individual consciousness to process experience, with the inherent difficulties of historiographical interpretation, and in this way his approach embodies the kind which Kansteiner singles out for criticism where

The very specific and unusual experiences and memory challenges of survivors—who find that their memories of the 'Final Solution' form a volatile, independent realm of memory that remains painfully irreconcilable with subsequent experiences—are offered as proof of the general traumatic characteristics of the postmodern condition.

('Finding' 187)

Elie Wiesel's statements on the Holocaust, perhaps understandably given his experiences, often comes across as hyperbolic, even territorial. In his critique of what he sees to be the trivialization of history in the television series *Holocaust* (1978), he writes,

You may think you know how the victims lived and died, but you do not. Auschwitz cannot be explained nor can it be visualized. Whether culmination or aberration of history, the Holocaust transcends history. Everything about it inspires fear and leads to despair. The dead are in possession of a secret that we, the living, are neither worthy of nor capable of recovering. ('Trivializing')

Here, Wiesel appears to take the paradoxical position that not only does the Holocaust resist its representation in art and culture, it ‘transcends’ history. This transcendence is figured, tellingly, through the figures of the ‘dead’ who withhold a ‘secret’ from ‘we, the living’, an image that suggests an affinity with Giorgio Agamben’s idea of the *muselmann* as the ‘complete witness’ (*Remnants* 39). Wiesel further complicates his position when he writes that ‘Auschwitz defies imagination and perception; it submits only to memory. It can be communicated by testimony, not by fiction. A novel on Majdanek is either not a novel or not about Majdanek’ (‘Beyond’). In this case, while the Holocaust remains incomprehensible and inarticulable, here Wiesel offers a single exception. It is now said to ‘submit’ to memory and can be ‘communicated’ by testimony.⁶ The logic of the argument is built upon a pair of oppositions: ‘memory’ as opposed to ‘imagination’, ‘testimony’ as opposed to ‘fiction’. For Wiesel, testimony as the product of memory has an authentic relationship to truth; fiction, on the other hand, debases and deforms.

This opposition between fiction and testimony in their respective capacity to communicate the truth of historical atrocity is echoed throughout debates about the representation of the Holocaust, and they overlap with trauma discourse. Lawrence Langer makes a similar distinction between testimony and fiction, and one that illuminates the ideas that underlie the opposition. In the first place, Langer identifies the difference in terms of the text’s origins in its author’s experience, so where oral testimony arises out of the direct memory of experience, the historian, critic, poet or novelist are merely ‘witnesses to memory rather than rememberers themselves’ (*Holocaust* 39). Langer’s choice of words here demonstrates a paradoxical insistence on the language of memory and witness to describe the relationship of the nonsurvivor to the Holocaust, precisely at the moment when he wishes to delineate the difference between the two. Having distinguished the category of witness testimony from the discourse of ‘witnesses to memory’, Langer develops the distinction with reference to the literary qualities of the respective texts; the oral testimony of the survivor is privileged by an ‘absence of literary mediation’ as opposed to the highly mediated language of a literary text (*Holocaust* 57). Langer’s

⁶ In this respect, Wiesel’s notion of testimony differs from Agamben’s, for whom testimony can only ever bear witness to ‘the impossibility of bearing witness’ (39).

argument can be seen in terms of two parallel continuums, the first related to proximity to an event, ranging from the witness to the nonwitness; the second pertaining to linguistic mediation, ranging from oral testimony, through written testimony, to the highly mediated forms of, say, the novel.

The logic goes, if language is, by nature, an orderer and a mediator, then it is only in the initial act of the oral testimony, the zero point of narrative formulation, that the struggle to verbalize the traumatic memory is registered symptomatically. Langer describes this struggle in terms a tension between ‘deep memory’ and ‘common memory’:⁷

Deep memory tries to recall the Auschwitz self as it was then; common memory has a dual function: it restores the self to its normal pre- and postcamp routines but also offers detached portraits, from the vantage point of today, of what it must have been like then. Deep memory thus suspects *and* depends on common memory, knowing what common memory cannot know but tries nonetheless to express.

(Langer, *Holocaust* 6)

The distinction between the two forms of memory rests on the ability to authentically communicate the reality of experience; while deep memory engages the suppressed ‘Auschwitz self’, common memory attempts to ‘mediate atrocity’, to represent and repackage the extremity of experience in a narrative form which reassures that ‘in spite of the ordeal some human bonds were inviolable’ (*Holocaust* 9). Deep memory, for Langer, persists in the words of the witness. The listener to the testimony, therefore, must seek out the sites of deep memory. It is primarily in the oral testimony, where narrative production is at its most spontaneous, that its effects are most evident:

When the witness in an oral testimony leans forward to the camera . . . apparently addressing the interviewer(s) but also speaking to the potential audience of the future—asking: “Do you understand what I’m trying to tell you?”—that witness confirms the vast imaginative space separating what he or she has endured from our capacity to absorb it. Written memoirs, by the very strategies available to their authors—style, chronology, analogy, imagery, dialogue, a sense of character, a coherent moral vision—strive to narrow this space, easing us into their unfamiliar world through familiar (and hence comforting?) literary devices. The impulse to *portray* (and thus refine) reality when we write about it seems irresistible. (*Holocaust* 19)

⁷ Langer borrows these terms from Charlotte Delbo.

In other words, while common memory seeks to integrate the traumatic event in language, the listener must remain attentive to the deep memory of the testimony recognised not through its presence but through its effects on language and narrative structure.

Dori Laub similarly privileges the primal event of oral testimony and places emphasis on the presence and necessity of the listener, who is, for Laub, considered as a 'blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time' ('Bearing' 57). Laub's understanding of the workings of testimony also relies on a certain extension of the notion of witnessing to include the listener who is 'a witness to the trauma witness' (Laub, 'Bearing' 58). This emphasis on the function of the listener is founded on two key characteristics of trauma, according to Laub's understanding, which predominate more generally in trauma theory discourse. Firstly, that trauma arises as a result of the survivor's lack of preparation for the event at the moment of its occurrence, and, secondly, that trauma is transmittable from one person to another, from, for example, the witness to the listener. This is to be understood in a very literal sense:

the listener to trauma comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself. The relation of the victim to the event of the trauma, therefore, impacts on the relation of the listener to it, and the latter comes to feel the bewilderment, injury, confusion, dread and conflicts that the trauma victim feels. (Laub, 'Bearing' 57-8)

For Felman, this notion of transmissible trauma is extended to the idea that trauma is registered and transmitted through literature and film. The witness's trauma, evoked by the difficulty to put the memory into words, becomes a marker of the reality of the past event.

This privileging of the symptoms of language above meaning leads to a revealing paradox in trauma theory. Laub tells the story of an Auschwitz survivor whose testimony is questioned at a historian's conference, a story which dramatizes a passage from Lyotard:

You are informed that human beings endowed with language were placed in a situation such that none of them is now able to tell about it. Most of them disappeared then, and the survivors rarely speak about it. When they do speak about it, their testimony bears only upon

a minute part of this situation. How can you know that the situation itself existed? (*Differend* 3)

Laub's answer to this question is based on certain notions of trauma, memory and witnessing. The episode begins with Laub's description of the original interview with the woman that he conducted for the Fortunoff Video Archive:

She was relating her memories as an eyewitness of the Auschwitz uprising; a sudden intensity, passion and color were infused into the narrative. She was fully there. "All of a sudden", she said, "we saw four chimneys going up in flames, exploding. The flames shot into the sky, people were running. It was unbelievable". There was a silence in the room, a fixed silence against which the woman's words reverberated loudly, as though carrying along an echo of the jubilant sounds exploding from behind barbed wires, a stampede of people breaking loose, screams, shots, battle cries, explosions. ('Bearing' 59)

Laub's choice of phrasing when he writes that the woman was 'fully there' in the moment of her narration has a double meaning. It suggests that she is caught up in the emotional intensity of the telling, but it also suggest the idea of being caught up in an experience, to live "in (or for) the moment". In the context, the 'there' of Laub's narration does not signify the deictic moment of the story's telling. Instead, it needs to be understood within the framework of Laub and Felman's project, the 'there' of Auschwitz, the literal return of or to the past, through the reliving of the traumatic experience, literally registered, outside of time, in the survivor's mind. This recalls LaCapra's definition of traumatic acting out: 'tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene' (*Writing* 21). Laub's survivor is 'back there in the past'. Indeed, the intensity of the woman's narrative is such that when it is finished the silence of the room reverberates with the 'echo' of 'screams, shots, battle cries, explosions'. It is as if the silence is pregnant with the presence of the past; as if the silence evoked by the spoken words calls up the past in all its spectacular detail; as if the events could be heard in the emptiness surrounding her words.

This conflict between the woman's testimony and the meaning of its silence is further accentuated when the video is shown at a conference of 'historians, psychoanalysts, and artists' where a 'lively debate ensued':

The testimony was not accurate, historians claimed. The number of chimneys was misrepresented. Historically, only one chimney was blown up, not all four. Since the memory of the testifying woman

turned out to be, in this way, fallible, one could not accept—nor give credence to—her whole account of the events. It was utterly important to remain accurate, lest the revisionists in history discredit everything.

(Laub, 'Bearing' 59-60)

The historians take issue with the facts of the story. The details have been 'misrepresented'. In contrast to the 'fixed silence' of the room in reverent response to the original testimony, here the historians challenge the veracity of the survivor's words. The facts were incorrect. For Laub, the historians' mistake was not listening to what the testimony did not say. The woman testified 'not simply to empirical historical facts, but to the very act of survival and of resistance to extermination' ('Bearing' 62).⁸ By the very act of testifying, she was 'bursting open . . . the very frame of Auschwitz':

The historians could not hear . . . the way in which her silence was itself part of her testimony, an essential part of the historical truth she was precisely bearing witness to. She saw four chimneys blowing up in Auschwitz: she saw, in other words, the unimaginable taking place in front of her own eyes. And she came to testify to the unbelievability, precisely, of what she had eyewitnessed. . . . This was her way of being, of surviving, of resisting. It is not merely her speech, but the very boundaries of silence which surround it, which attest, today as well as in the past, to this assertion of resistance.

(Laub, 'Bearing' 62)

While deep memory shows itself only in the ways it distorts the testimony, Laub's interpretation of the 'four chimneys blowing up' demonstrates his peculiar understanding of the testimonial experience. The enveloping silence is 'itself part of her testimony', understood as 'not merely her speech, but the very boundaries of silence which surround it', a physical manifestation of the truth of the experience. The details, which cannot otherwise be corroborated by historical knowledge and, indeed, contradict the accepted historical narrative, are, for Laub, secondary effects to the fact that her testimony brings the listeners into contact with the real silence of 'historical truth'.⁹ There is a conflict between the silence—what the testimony does

⁸ Kalí Tal asks of the theory of trauma as presented in Laub and Felman's work: "If speaking is speaking, and silence is speaking, then what possible way is there not to testify?" (59).

⁹ See Thomas Tresize's article for an interesting study of how the 'witness's silence . . . [is] superseded by Laub's own highly imaginative and appropriative response to her testimony' (10-11).

not say—which testifies to ‘historical truth’ and the actual details of the narrative which constructs its own version of that truth.

At the heart of this understanding of the work of testimony lies a complex tension between history, memory and fiction. Here, we see a transformation from trauma as a private, psychological phenomenon into an indexical inscription of history. We see a transition from the idea of history as text into a concept of the pure unmediated historicity of the traumatic symptom. There are two points which are significant here. The first is the insistence that the mistake of the historians is to hear only the words and details of the survivor’s testimony, when, in fact, there is also meaning in the survivor’s silences. This is, more precisely, a question about the relationship between language and silence. Following from this, the second point is that Laub understands this silence to be symptomatic of an ‘historical truth’. The witness’s trauma becomes a symptom of the reality of the past experience, even if she struggles to put the experience into words. In such statements, we find an anxiety about historical representation; if language is, by its very nature, an orderer and a mediator, then it is only in the traumatic symptoms which resist and deform its smooth efficiency that we can know that we are close to ‘historical truth’. In this sense, we can read the turn to trauma, testimony and the witness as a response to the perceived artificiality of postmodernism.

The centrepiece of this novel obsessed with ‘fakery, forgery, lies, deceit, mistrust, manipulation’ is the trial of John Demjanjuk (Rubin-Dorsky 93). Having established the novel’s ‘verisimilitude’ and asserted that any straying from the factual record is due to ‘legal reasons’, Roth goes on to provide background to the Demjanjuk case which, at the time of writing—the preface is dated 1 December 1992—was as yet unresolved. In this way, the Demjanjuk trial, as a historically verifiable event is used as part of an aesthetic strategy to endow the novel, from the beginning, with the aura of authenticity. It is here that questions about the meeting point between survivor testimony and ‘empirical fact’ are dramatized, the relationship between fiction and fact takes on significance, and where the ‘problem of the determinacy of identity takes on dire historical consequence’ (Shostak 142). Philip encounters Demjanjuk for the first time by accident when he is on his way to the trial to ‘face down’ Pipik (58). Yet when he recognizes Demjanjuk amongst a

group of figures at the front of the courtroom, he is stunned by his proximity to this living remnant of Nazism, of History. In the context, his Pipik problem pales into insignificance: ‘not only did my double cease to exist, but, for the time being, so did I’ (60). This moment, Milowitz argues, finds Roth’s imagination ‘gaping at the audaciousness, at the perverse genius of the real’ (186). Roth’s incredulity is expressed in a sequence of paragraphs wrestling with questions about how to make sense of the man in front of him (60-8). Yet, far from simply ‘gaping’, these paragraphs present an imaginative desire to see Demjanjuk from the inside, one which employs all of the tools of freedom that fiction has to offer. The effect is neatly captured by Elaine B. Safer’s description of the sequence as ‘a series of colored balloons, multiple views of reality are presented to the reader, only to be deflated, one by one with a pinprick’ (48). Yet the point is not mere play, but it takes us right to the heart of the novel’s engagement with the problem of realism, historical representation, and the Real.

The crux of the trial rests on establishing whether John Demjanjuk is or is not ‘Ivan the Terrible’, one of the guards of the Treblinka extermination camp. The verdict ultimately rests on the testimony of survivors who had identified Demjanjuk from photographs. The trial can thus be seen as a dramatic example of the problematic relationship between language and the Real, where ‘interwoven questions of personal identity and the truth status of speech are ethically but fundamentally contested’ (Basu 181). Fiction provides Roth with a useful way of exploring the problem of Demjanjuk’s radical duality. The sequence is held together by the repetition of the phrase ‘There he was’. The first time it is used is to paint a portrait of Demjanjuk, the camp guard:

There he was. *There he was*. Once upon a time, drove two, three hundred of them into a room barely big enough for fifty, wedged them in every which way, bolted the doors shut, and started up the engine. Pumped out carbon monoxide for half an hour, waited to hear the screams die down, then sent in the live ones to pry out the dead ones and clean up the place for the next big load. . . . Back when the transports were really rolling, did this ten, fifteen times a day, sometimes sober, sometimes not, but always with plenty of gusto. Vigorous, healthy boy. Good worker. Never sick.

(60, original emphasis)

This initial paragraph projects in great detail the violence and sadism associated with Nazi crimes onto Demjanjuk, but as these paragraphs develop, the legendary ‘Ivan the Terrible’ is slowly transformed into the figure of the elderly man sitting in the dock. A second paragraph is focused on the life of the other American Demjanjuk: ‘*There he was*. There *it* was, bald now and grown stocky, a big cheerful palooka of sixty-eight, a good father, a good neighbour, loved by his family and all his friends’ (61, original emphasis). The modification of the pronoun from ‘*he*’ into ‘*it*’ is telling. The ‘*it*’ can be understood in a number of ways. In the first place, it can be understood as a reflection on the inhumanity of the perpetrators of Nazism, expressing a discomfort about including the Nazi in the family of humanity, one which chimes awkwardly with the image of the ‘big cheerful palooka’ to which it refers. Similarly, the ‘*it*’ suggests a close proximity to History, or more specifically to the Holocaust, in a much more direct way than the torn piece of paper that Nathan Zuckerman keeps in his wallet throughout *The Anatomy Lesson* (1983).

Yet this ‘*it*’ also draws attention to the idea of Demjanjuk’s body as an object or thing. It is not simply that we can interpret the ‘*it*’ in multiple ways, but that the multiple ways ‘*it*’ can be interpreted are ultimately projected onto this thing, this ‘*it*’—Demjanjuk’s body, the real—which, through its potential for having-been-there in History, provides support for the symbolic fictions projected onto it, first in the form of the survivors’ testimonies, then as the hook for Roth’s fictions. These fictions lead Roth to appropriate Demjanjuk’s voice in a parody of his claim to innocence:

I was staring at John Demjanjuk, who claimed to be no less run-of-the-mill than he looked—my face he argued, my neighbours, my job, my ignorance, my church affiliation, my long unblemished record as an ordinary family man in Ohio, all this innocuousness disproves a thousand times over these crazy accusations. How could I be both that and this? (63)¹⁰

If Hannah Arendt’s notion of the ‘banality of evil’ is supposed to unsettle simplistic categories of good and evil, to relativize preconceptions about the “normal” and the

¹⁰ Demjanjuk’s question resonates with an earlier sequence in the novel when Roth describes a period of mental disintegration provoked by the drug Halcion, which he had been prescribed for the pain he suffered in ‘the aftermath of minor knee surgery’ (20). Roth writes that the medication had turned him into a ‘corpse but for a violently thumping heart’ (21).

“moral”, these passages in *Operation Shylock* show that in reality, forty years down the line, after the evil, all that is left is the banality. As Rothberg asks:

If Demjanjuk is Ivan the Terrible, then how to explain his overwhelmingly normal Americanness? . . . If he is not Ivan the Terrible then how to account for the series of eye-witness identifications by Treblinka survivors? In either case, everyday assumptions about the continuity and coherence of identity, memory, and testimony break down. (*Traumatic* 198)

With only the survivors’ fallible memories for evidence, how certain can we be that this ‘it’ was the same ‘it’ that murdered so many people in Treblinka so many years before.

Roth’s answer is that he can be both, simply because his ‘appearance proves only that to be both a loving grandfather and a mass murderer is not all that difficult’ (63):

that you’ve been so wonderful in Ohio at living your little, dull life is precisely what makes you so loathsome here. You’ve really only lived sequentially the two seemingly antipodal, mutually excluding lives that the Nazis, with no strain to speak of, managed to enjoy simultaneously—so what, in the end, is the big deal? (63)

Milowitz interprets the novel’s depiction of Demjanjuk along the lines of Robert Jay Lifton’s notion of doubling. Demjanjuk, for Milowitz, is ‘the demon side of deconstruction, his past metamorphosed into an emptiness, a nothing’ (186). With the Nazi, according to Milowitz, ‘[o]ne self existed at a time, sheltering the other in forgetfulness, turning the truths of one moment into a mass of forgettable fictions’ with the ultimate goal of erasing ‘the stain of the Holocaust, the guilt, the very facts of atrocity’ (186). Milowitz sets this sequentiality in opposition to the idea of the ‘integrated man’:

The well integrates the subselves, the sick divides them absolutely. The Nazi lives two contrary lives, each exclusive of the other, as if acted by another man, while the integrated man must accept his contradictions, his niceness and his not-so-niceness, his conscience and his desires, and live with the consequences of each. (186)

However, Milowitz’s reading presumes that Demjanjuk is who he is accused of being, and in this sense it simplifies the novel’s central concern with the ambiguities of fact and fiction.

II: Documents of the real: the fiction of fact

‘For the history of the Holocaust, the documentary sources’, writes Lucy Dawidowicz, ‘surpass in quantity and comprehensiveness the records of any other historical era’ (1). Indeed, as Alvin Rosenfeld notes, ‘in its most comprehensive definition’ the literature of testimony would include not only the published works but also ‘individual letters, handbills, proclamations, account books, government decrees, diplomatic and business reports, corporate files, memoranda, etc.’. This expansive list goes on to include the minutes of the Wannsee Conference, the ‘papers of the *Sonderkommando* at Auschwitz’, but also the suicide note of Samuel Zygelbojm ‘the Polish Jewish leader who took his life in London in a vain attempt to jolt the indifference of the Western powers and stir them into action in behalf of the Jews’ (*Double* 60). Finally, Rosenfeld writes,

One should not neglect the jottings and pictures of children and the medical records compiled by doctors in the ghettos who studied the wasting effect of typhus and starvation. As part of the literature of fraud and deception, or self-defeating artifacts, baptismal certificates and the omnipresent, always changing German *Schein* have to be considered. And we must not ignore that most minimal but most telling of confessional forms—the fragment—such as the one marked on the walls of a cellar in Cologne where Jews were hiding.

(*Double* 60-1)

Rosenfeld’s expansion of the category of the document to include almost any trace of human consciousness betrays a deep anxiety about historical accuracy in the light of the Holocaust.

Sue Vice observes that novelists writing about the Holocaust face a ‘double bind’ in relation to problems of ‘authenticity and accuracy’. Taking the examples of the controversies surrounding D. M. Thomas’s *The White Hotel* (1981) and Thomas Keneally’s *Schindler’s Ark* (1982), both of which were accused of plagiarism, Vice describes the novelist’s dilemma in that he or she is ‘expected to keep to the facts’ while ‘doing so too slavishly can be viewed as plagiarism; as novelists they are expected to invent material, yet doing so amounts to inaccuracy’ (162). One of the ways that writers have tried to assuage such criticisms is to include a note or acknowledgement to confirm that their historical novel is indeed a work of fiction. A brief note at the beginning of Tatiana de Rosnay’s *Sarah’s Key* (2007), for example,

reassures any suspicious readers that '[t]he characters in the novel are entirely fictitious' even if 'several of the events described are not'. Thomas's *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1993) has a page of acknowledgements to secondary sources, perhaps a direct response to accusations that passages of *The White Hotel* had been plagiarised from Anatoli Kuznetsov's *Baba Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel* (1970; original 1966). Keneally prefaces *Schindler's Ark* with a lengthy author's note that insists upon the text's origins in 'interviews with fifty Schindler survivors from seven nations' alongside documentary evidence from Oskar Schindler's 'postwar friends' and 'wartime associates', and testimonies archived in Yad Vashem, playing down the fictional processes at work:

To use the texture and devices of the novel to tell a true story is a course which has frequently been followed in modern writing. It is the one I have chosen to follow here; both because the craft of the novelist is the only craft to which I can lay claim, and because the novel's techniques seem suited for a character of such ambiguity and magnitude as Oskar. I have attempted to avoid all fiction, though, since fiction would debase the record, and to distinguish between reality and the myths which are likely to attach themselves to a man of Oskar's stature. (13-4)

This insistence on the documentary origins of the text and anxieties about the potential of fiction to 'debase the record' place the novel firmly within the context of contemporary memorial culture, with its emphasis on witness, testimony and archive. It is also symptomatic of a response to questions of the ethics of representation and imagination in the context of the Holocaust.

To further complicate matters in *Operation Shylock*, the main body of Roth's text is sandwiched between two paratexts that only serve to perpetuate these ambiguities. In the 'Preface', Roth asserts the text's basis in fact:

For legal reasons, I have had to alter a number of facts in this book. These are minor changes that mainly involve details of identification and locale and are of little significance to the overall story and its verisimilitude. Any name that has been changed is marked with a small circle the first time it appears.

I've drawn *Operation Shylock* from notebook journals. The book is as accurate an account as I am able to give of actual occurrences that I lived through during my middle fifties and that culminated, early in 1988, in my agreeing to undertake an intelligence-gathering operation for Israel's foreign intelligence service, the Mossad. (13)

Yet these very claims to ‘verisimilitude’ are subverted in the ‘Note to the Reader’ at the end of the novel, which begins with the claim, ‘This book is a work of fiction’. The brief sense of clarity quickly vanishes, however, when, having acknowledged certain documentary sources used in the novel, the ‘Note’ closes with what appears at first to be a standard legal disclaimer: ‘Otherwise the names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. This confession is false’ (399). That final line—‘This confession is false’—can be interpreted as referring both to the text as a whole (the novel as ‘confession’), thereby reemphasising the status of the text as fiction, or in reference to the (confessional) text of the disclaimer itself, thereby reinforcing its basis in fact. The ambiguity is perpetuated even further in that, in the novel, Roth toys with the possibility of inserting such a disclaimer as a way of ‘sidestepping a confrontation with the Mossad’. A disclaimer, he reflects, would allow him to perform a ‘sacrosanct prank of artistic transubstantiation, the changed elements retaining the appearance of autobiography while acquiring the potentialities of the novel’ (361). It is in this sense that we can understand Josh Cohen’s description of *Operation Shylock* as ‘a kind of self-canceling act of inconsequentialization, with its Zeno-like bracketing by mutually canceling declarations of its truth and falsehood’ (92). The main body of the novel finds itself caught neatly between two contradictory and incompatible claims to its status as both fact and fiction (Brauner 95). What appears at first to be an attempt to influence the reception of the text in the ‘Preface’, i.e. that it be read as an ‘accurate’ account of ‘actual occurrences’, by the end is itself drawn into the novel’s own parallaxic shifting between fact and fiction.

To return to those anxieties about the potential of fiction to contaminate the authenticity of history, as expressed by Keneally and Ezrahi, *Operation Shylock* can thus be read in relation to how it positions itself in relation to the ‘floundering’ discourse of realism. Keneally’s and Ezrahi’s conceptions about realism and fiction can be understood in terms of the way they conflate two interrelated oppositions; the first being that of an opposition between ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’; and the second, that of ‘factuality’ and, as Ezrahi phrases it, ‘what actually happened’, what I have earlier discussed in relation to the Real. James Young writes of the ‘impulse in Holocaust

writers to insist on a documentary link between their texts and the events inspiring them' which he sees as a response to the 'fear that the rhetoricity of their literary medium inadvertently confers a fictiveness onto events themselves' (*Writing* 51). Yet, Young notes, the problem with such attempts at asserting the 'documentary' origins of the fiction in the authentic reality of the events is that

by mixing actual events with completely fictional characters, a writer simultaneously relieves himself of an obligation to historical accuracy (invoking poetic license), even as he imbues his fiction with the historical authority of real events. By inviting this ambiguity, the author of documentary fiction would thus move the reader with the pathos created in the rhetoric of historically authentic characters, even as he suggests the possibility that both his events and those in the world are fictional. (*Writing* 52)

Young is drawing attention here precisely to this imaginary blurring of the line between fact and fiction; the problem, he suggests, is that once you have entered into the realm of the 'fictional', there can no longer be such a line, or, if there is a line, we might say that it only exists outside of the fiction, that is between the fictional text and the perceived version of the facts on which the fiction is said to feed. Yet, it is curious to note, as Young does, how this anxiety about historical representation, if not confined to the specific context of the Holocaust, is at least accentuated there.

With *Operation Shylock*'s publication, Roth's gleeful ambiguity seemed to overflow into reality itself. Aptly for a novel concerned with doubles, the *New York Times* greeted its publication with two companion pieces; the first, a review by D.M. Thomas, the second, a short essay by the author himself titled 'A Bit of Jewish Mischief', in which Roth reiterates the claims of his preface that *Operation Shylock* is an autobiographical account of 'a Middle East crisis all my own' based on true events. Coaxed on by Roth's insistence on the text's authenticity, the media seized on what it perceived to be a potential controversy; Roth was surely pleased with this seepage of his fiction into the texture of reality.¹¹ The media's fascination with the text's indeterminate status as fiction or nonfiction has become a recurring focus of critical work done on *Operation Shylock*, often described as a 'blurring of the line'

¹¹ *Newsweek* ran an article entitled 'Was He a Spy or Wasn't He?' (Jones Jr. 71), meanwhile one reviewer stated 'on reliable authority . . . that no such events as described in the book occurred' (Louvish 57). For Cooper, Roth was 'skating on very thin ice': 'the blurring of fiction and fact, not merely personal but historical, was dangerous as a literary enterprise: fantasizing history could seem like trivializing history' (253). The novel's commercial failure, Cooper argues, was a result of Roth's 'silly pretense' about it having been based on a 'real event' (278).

between fact and fiction (de la Durantaye 303). Richard Tuerk sees this in relation to the postmodernism of Roth's later works which 'blur the distinction between fact and fiction' while 'explicitly remind[ing] their readers of the blurring' and simultaneously 'point[ing] out to the readers the impossibility of arriving at complete certainty' (136-7).¹² Yet, what this notion of blurring does not acknowledge is the novel's problematization of the very notion of 'fact', which undermines in advance any attempt to isolate it from 'fiction'. What these readings share is the presumption that there exists a clearly discernible boundary between fact and fiction in the first place, that it is possible to conceive of an event that is not already tainted by the workings of the imagination.

Indeed, what becomes clear is that to attempt to untangle fact from fiction is to misrecognize an aesthetic effect for a puzzle. The categorical instability of this novel cannot be dismissed as an example of what Ben Siegel calls Roth's 'postmodernist habit of writing about writing' (22). For James Young, any attempt to delineate a boundary between fact and fiction in such novels is ultimately misguided:

as long as facts are presented to us in fictionalizing media and fiction is presented as fact, the categories themselves remain all too fuzzily defined. If there is a line between fact and fiction, it may by necessity be a winding border that tends to bind these two categories as much as it separates them, allowing each side to dissolve occasionally into the other. (*Writing* 52)

Operation Shylock embraces this winding border as it draws questions about the very categories of fact and fiction into focus, forcing us to ask what it means for a text to be considered factual or fictional, a subject of real import asked in the shadow of the Holocaust. If *Operation Shylock* ultimately leaves its readers 'stranded' between fiction and nonfiction (Rothberg, *Traumatic* 201), rather than try to settle the argument, we should ask how the effect is achieved, and for what purpose. That is, all the while it asserts its claim to truth, the novel never permits for that a final determination be arrived at as to what is fiction and what is fact. Much as we might be tempted to position ourselves in the role of judge, *Operation Shylock* wants our final judgement to be held in suspension.

¹² Leland de la Durantaye pinpoints 'sex, Judaism, and the relation of fact to fiction' as the three major themes of Roth's work (304).

If *Operation Shylock*'s preface derives its authority as an 'accurate account' of 'actual occurrences' from its origins in the journals that Roth kept during the events recounted, emphasising the text's status as eyewitness account, the importance of the notion of the document is reinforced by the plethora of documents used in support of Roth's story. In the first place, these take the form of the novel's intertextual relationship with other really existing documents; in the second, it is expressed in the novel's frequent use of a documentary aesthetic in references to and reproductions of numerous 'false documents' throughout the text, to borrow E. L. Doctorow's phrase, which all serve as supporting evidence of Roth's 'confession'. In the first sense, the novel reproduces the text of historically verifiable 'documentary sources' in its use of transcriptions from the trial of John Demjanjuk and the text of interviews with Aharon Appelfeld, previously published in *The New York Times*.¹³ On a similar note, a more subtle form of intertextuality appears in relation to the novel's relationship to its status as 'confession'. Philippe Lejeune highlights the importance of the 'autobiographical pact' based on the reader's assumption about the shared identity of the author, narrator, and protagonist. One of the key factors in making this assumption is the proper name of the author which appears on the cover of the book. The presence of this name is the 'only mark in the text of an unquestionable world-beyond-the-text' (Lejeune 11). It is 'social convention, Lejeune argues, which links the proper name to a *'real person'* (11, original emphasis). By 'real', Lejeune means, 'a person whose existence is certified by vital statistics and is verifiable' (11). The reader is unlikely to verify such information, but nevertheless will assume that such information is verifiable in the reading of the autobiographical text. A further form by which the author 'draws his reality' is through the publication of other texts that bear 'his' name (12). Turning back to *Operation Shylock*, Roth draws on the resources of his previous autobiographical work to establish continuity between the author-narrator-protagonist of those texts and *Operation Shylock*.¹⁴ Alongside the use of incorporated and verifiable

¹³ Roth's interviews with Appelfeld were published by *The New York Times* in 1988. The use of both the transcripts of the Demjanjuk trial and the interviews are acknowledged in the 'Note to the Reader' at the end of the book.

¹⁴ *Operation Shylock* recounts episodes already narrated in Roth's previous autobiographical works, *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* (1988) and *Patrimony: A True Story* (1991); in particular, the period of mental

documentation and implicit reference to biographical information already in the public domain, a number of further ‘documents’ are provided throughout the text, including the ‘TEN TENETS OF ANTI-SEMITES ANONYMOUS’; a transcription of the ‘A.S.A. Workout Tape #2. “Did the Six Million Really Die?”’; extracts from the ‘Klinghoffer Diaries’; and pamphlets on historical anti-Semitism.

One explanation for this might be the particularity of the ‘historiographic perversion’ of the Nazi genocide, discussed in the previous chapter (Nichanian 30). If, as Linda Hutcheon argues in *The Politics of Postmodernism*, in an era when historiography is ‘no longer considered the objective and disinterested recording of the past’ (61), postmodern fiction displays an ‘intense self-consciousness’ about narrative representations of the past. Postmodern writers are, for Hutcheon, distinguished by their willingness to avoid ‘reducing the strange past to verisimilar present’ (*Politics* 68). For Hutcheon the development of ‘historiographic metafiction’ demonstrates the way that postmodern fictions have evolved so that historical representation is ‘more an attempt to comprehend and master it by means of some working (narrative/explanatory) model that, in fact, is precisely what grants a particular meaning to the past’ (Hutcheon, *Politics* 61). Such novels, Hutcheon argues, assert that ‘[t]he past did exist—independently of our capacity to know it’ (*Politics* 69):

Historiographic metafiction accepts this philosophically realist view of the past and thus proceeds to confront it with an anti-realist one that suggests that, however true that independence may be, nevertheless the past exists *for us—now*—only as traces on and in the present. The absent past can only be inferred from circumstantial evidence.

(Hutcheon, *Politics* 69, original emphasis)

It is important to avoid simplifications that would seek to explain or conflate the historical self-consciousness of postmodern fiction with the historical self-consciousness of the Nazi genocide. To acknowledge that history is always written after the fact and that it is, therefore, necessarily subject to the same ideological pressures as any discourse is categorically not the same as utilising this knowledge in the active erasure of history; if anything, it is borne of the very opposite desire, as

breakdown induced by his use of the controversial Halcion painkiller following a routine knee operation (*Operation* 25).

articulated by Walter Benjamin, to read history ‘against the grain’, to recover the voices that have been erased in the ongoing palimpsest of History. Yet, this similarity does nevertheless suggest an explanation for the particular anxieties around documentation in Holocaust fiction, however much they might be based on a misconception. It is in this context that we can understand the frustration perceptible when Efraim Sicher writes of ‘a postmodern free-for-all’ that came after the Holocaust which ‘makes nonsense of any moral or spiritual redemption and presents the post-Holocaust world as a chaos devoid of Law in which all moral and personal identity is lost’ (58-9). Though I find this to be a problematic simplification of the complexity of what Sicher calls ‘postmodern’, such sentiment nevertheless raises a question about how to insist on an ethical responsibility to acknowledge the fact of the Holocaust precisely when the very notion of ‘fact’ has become problematized.

In *Operation Shylock*, the ‘historiographic perversion’ is itself perverted through the philosophy of ‘Diasporism’ advocated by Roth’s double, whom he names Pipik. At the beginning of the novel, Roth, living at the time in a Manhattan hotel, learns about the existence of ‘the other Philip Roth’ from his cousin Apter in Jerusalem who thinks he has been attending the Demjanjuk trial, or so it has been reported on Israeli radio (17). Roth doubts the truthfulness of Apter’s story at first—his cousin’s experience as a child survivor has left him with a ‘hunger’ that ‘is unappeasable for those who are not here’ (18)—yet later his friend Aharon Appelfeld, the writer, calls to tell him about an advert for a talk in the previous week’s edition of *The Jerusalem Post*, supposedly to be given by Philip Roth, titled ‘Diasporism: The Only Solution to the Jewish Problem’ (18). This echo of Nazi euphemism is accentuated during an early exchange between the two Philips. Pretending to be a journalist, Roth calls Pipik at his hotel room to investigate the situation, and it is here that Pipik first propounds the logic of his proposed ‘solution’. The problem, he argues, is that Israel ‘has become the gravest threat to Jewish survival since the end of World War Two’ (41); ‘The destruction of Israel in a nuclear exchange is a possibility much less farfetched today than was the Holocaust itself fifty years ago’ (43). In response to this threat, Pipik proposes a theory of ‘Diasporism’ which promotes ‘the dispersion of the Jews in the West, particularly the resettlement of Israeli Jews of European background in the European countries where

there were sizable Jewish populations before World War II' along with a reduction of Israel to its 1948 borders (42-4):

And what a historic day for Europe, for Jewry, for all mankind when the cattle cars that transported Jews to death camps are transformed by the Diasporist movement into decent, comfortable railway carriages carrying Jews by the tens of thousands back to their native cities and towns. A historic day for human memory, for human justice, and for atonement too. (45)

Pipik's argument rests on his belief that 'virtually everything we identify culturally as Jewish has as its origins in the life we led for centuries among European Christians':

Do not confuse our long European history with the twelve years of Hitler's reign. If Hitler had not existed, if his twelve years of terror were erased from our past, then it would seem to you no more unthinkable that Jews should also be Europeans than that they should also be Americans. (43)

'But,' Roth breaks character to insist,

Hitler *did* exist. . . . Those twelve years *cannot* be expunged from history any more than they can be obliterated from memory, however mercifully forgetful one might prefer to be. The meaning of the destruction of European Jewry cannot be measured or interpreted by the brevity with which it was attained. (43)

Faced with Pipik's radical relativism, Philip finds himself attesting to the reality of the event, the simple, undeniable reality that 'Hitler *did* exist'. This particular history, the history of the Holocaust, cannot be 'obliterated from memory'. Yet, while he is able to say what cannot be used to define the 'meaning' of the Holocaust, we might say that *Operation Shylock's* aim is to explore the contours of what it can mean.

Pipik's Diasporism, according to Steven Milowitz, is a form of 'deconstruction by another name'. It is

escape, surrender, a means of excising a burdened psyche, just as deconstruction is an escape into charade, amnesia, and non-referentiality. Both are used to remove the second skin of the Holocaust from the victims and the victimizers alike, to deny the murderer his murderous past and the victim his nightmares. What gets lost then, is the simple facts, the millions dead, the bones, the ash, the hair, and, finally even, the memory. (187)

Milowitz's antagonism towards 'deconstruction' and his appeal to the 'simple facts' echoes Deborah Lipstadt's rally against the relativism of the postmodern age for

whom it is specifically ‘deconstructionism’ (though one might read ‘poststructuralism’ or ‘postmodernism’) that is to blame for having created the ‘atmosphere of permissiveness toward questioning the meaning of historical events’ that has led, in her view, to the increased acceptance of Holocaust denial in popular culture (18). Lipstadt writes of deconstructionist ‘attacks on history and knowledge’ which have altered ‘the way established truth is transmitted from generation to generation’, and create a climate where ‘[n]o fact, no event, and no aspect of history has any fixed meaning or content. Any truth can be retold. Any fact can be recast. There is no ultimate historical reality’ (19). Yet, it is precisely these sorts of appeals to ‘fact’ that are at the heart of *Operation Shylock*, and, indeed, the earlier ‘autobiographical’ works which precede it, *The Facts: A Novelist’s Autobiography* (1988) and *Patrimony: A True Story* (1991). In, the letter to Nathan Zuckerman that introduces *The Facts*, Roth explains that

Obviously the facts are never just coming at you but are incorporated by an imagination that is formed by your previous experience. Memories of the past are not memories of facts but memories of your imaginings of the facts. (8)

In this way, Roth would support Nicola King’s observation about the ‘paradoxical’ position of the autobiographical narrator who ‘in the present moment of the narration, possesses the knowledge that she did not have “then”, in the moment of the experience’ (2). Indeed, this presentism is reflected in historical discourse; the failing of nineteenth-century historians were, for Hayden White, that they did not realize that ‘the facts do not speak for themselves, but that the historian speaks for them, speaks on their behalf, and fashions the fragments of the past into a whole whose integrity is – in its representation – a purely discursive one’ (125). This is exactly the kind of ‘relativism’ that Lipstadt would see discredited, yet the issue of what is fact, as Slavoj Žižek asserts, is precisely what is at stake in this discourse:

“Let the facts speak for themselves” is perhaps the arch-statement of ideology—the point being precisely that facts *never* “speak for themselves” but are always *made to speak* by a network of discourse devices. (‘Spectre’ 11, original emphasis)

How then to assert the authority of fact, to assert that ‘Hitler *did* exist’ while admitting the ideological vulnerability of fact is precisely the question *Operation Shylock* attempts to answer.

In 'False Documents', an essay published in the final issue of *American Review* (1977), E. L. Doctorow uttered what must be seen to be one of the fundamental tenets of postmodern culture: 'There is no fiction or nonfiction as we commonly understand the distinction: there is only narrative' ('False' 231). His point was a polemical one. Language, he argued, could be split into two kinds: 'There is a regime language that derives its strength from what we are supposed to be and a language of freedom whose power consists in what we threaten to become' ('False' 217). The power of the 'regime language'

is first of all the modern consensus of sensibility that could be called *realism*. . . . What we proclaim as the discovered factual world can be challenged as the questionable world we ourselves have painted—the cultural museum of our values, dogmas, assumptions, that prescribes for us not only what we may like and dislike, believe and disbelieve, but what we may be permitted to see and not to see. ('False' 217)

'Regime language' describes the world as it is supposed to be, while the 'language of freedom'—fiction, a language that strives to redefine the boundaries of the real—derives its power 'from what we threaten to become' ('False' 217). This is ultimately, for Doctorow, about the conflict between the language of 'politicians, historians, journalists and social scientists' who '[presume] a world of fact discovered, and like a religious tenet the presumption is held more fiercely the more it is seen to be illusory' and that of writers who are 'by definition *engagé*' ('False' 223, 224).

'What is an historical fact?' asks Doctorow,

A spent shell? A bombed-out building? A pile of shoes? A victory parade? A long march? Once it has been suffered it maintains itself in the mind of the witness or victim, and if it is to reach anyone else it is transmitted in words or on film and it becomes an image, which, with other images, constitutes a judgment. I am well aware that some facts, for instance the Nazi extermination of the Jews, are so indisputably monstrous as to seem to stand alone. But history shares with fiction a mode of mediating the world for the purpose of introducing meaning, and it is the cultural authority from which they both derive that illuminates those facts so that they can be perceived. ('False' 228-9)

It is inevitable that Doctorow seizes on the Holocaust as the limit point of his argument, pre-empting a predictable onslaught that would reduce the questioning of fact to a meaningless relativism which would equalate all possible worlds, right and wrong, fact and fiction. Doctorow's point is, however, that the opposition

between fact and fiction is not clear in the first place, for what is considered to be ‘fact’ is dependent not on its relationship to ‘truth’, but on its placement within the ideological discourse which ascribes meaning to the fact, the context of other ‘facts’, themselves contingent on that very process.

There are numerous examples in the novel of the kind of physical remnant of the real that Doctorow uses to question the empiricism of ‘fact’. At one point, Pipik tries to ingratiate himself with Roth by having an original yellow star pushed under Roth’s hotel room door, which Roth describes as a ‘jagged piece of fabric about the size of my hand and as weightless as a swatch of gauze—a cloth Star of David, something I’d only seen before in those photographs of pedestrians on the streets of occupied Europe, Jews tagged as Jews with a bit of yellow material’ (217). The star is significant in that, in a book that concerns itself with questions of authenticity and truth, it is the physical trace of a history of persecution, but it is also significant that Roth refers to ‘those photographs of pedestrians’ demonstrating the simultaneity of distance and proximity to the past. Later in the book, as Philip attempts to make sense of the events that have unfolded, we find that he has kept the star beside him as he writes, along with a tape of the ‘Ten Tenets of A-S.A [Anti-Semites Anonymous]’ and envelopes containing, what he suspects to be, Pipik’s pubic hair and shavings ‘to attest to the tangibility of a visitation’, to remind him that ‘when life looks least like what it’s supposed to look like, it may then be most like whatever it is’ (252-3). Philip uses the star, evidence of the persecution of the Jews in Europe, as evidence for the truth of his autobiography.

Another such ‘fact’ which appears is the figure of Aharon Appelfeld himself. In the novel, Roth describes his friendship with Appelfeld as one of ‘radical *twoness*’, the product of their ‘*antithetical* twentieth-century Jewish biographies’ (200-1, original emphasis). As Shostak explains:

A survivor of the Holocaust, Appelfeld is the living proof of a Jewish historical reality, a history that, for Jews, is an indelible *fact* and not a construction. As such, his identity is historically contingent, neither open absolutely to self-fashioning nor able to be *other* in the way that the American Philip might construe himself. (149, original emphasis)

In contrast to Roth, whose postmodern American background permits him to see identity as performance and impersonation,¹⁵ Appelfeld, according to Shostak's reading, represents a Jewish identity that is inextricably tied to the historical experience of Holocaust survival. Shostak argues that Appelfeld's appearance in the novel 'provides an irruption of the real into the novel. Things are as they are, his presence seems to say, and not as we might invent them' (149). In this sense, Appelfeld might be seen to have the purpose, like Demjanjuk, of a reality effect, pointing to the complexity of the real as totality that is beyond his text. Yet, at the same time, Roth might be understood to have appropriated Appelfeld's reality as part of his game to convince the reader of the verisimilitude of his story. Roth pins his fiction to Appelfeld, in the way that the lawyers attempt to pin testimony to the reality of John Demjanjuk.

III: An appropriate language: on the unrepresentable

Roth's work has always been fascinated with the relationship between imagination and reality, with life as performance, and fiction confused for fact. In *The Counterlife* (1985), Nathan Zuckerman, Roth's long time alter-ego, thinks about '*the kind of stories that people turn life into, the kind of lives that people turn stories into*' (115, original emphasis). It is this capacity for people to invent and re-invent themselves in reality that so often charges Roth's work. In 'Writing American Fiction', published in *Commentary* in 1960, Roth bemoans the problem of the American writer in the face of 'American reality': 'It stupefies, it sickens, it infuriates, and finally it is even a kind of embarrassment to one's own meager imagination. The actuality is constantly outdoing our talents, and the culture tosses up figures almost daily that are the envy of any novelist' (224). It is this constant interrogation of the role of the imagination in the construction of reality that links Roth's early fictions of the self with his later focus on the relationship between the individual and history. It is in this sense that Roth can be seen, as John Updike wrote, a 'working theorist of fictional

¹⁵ In an interview in the *Paris Review*, Roth compares his notion of writing as impersonation to the everyday performance of identity: 'Millions of people do this all the time, of course, and not with the justification of making literature. They mean it. It's amazing what lies people can sustain behind the mask of their real faces' ('Art').

reality' who has 'tested the limits of realism . . . feverishly paced its boundaries and played games with its presumptions' (293).

A certain strand of post-Holocaust thought says that when reality transcends in its grotesque brutality our most feverish imagination, realism becomes loose at its seams. Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi writes

. . . whereas factual reportage can add to our knowledge of what actually happened, in fiction the realist's or the naturalist's respect for details which comprise the fabric of historical processes is defeated by facts which can hardly be integrated into any preexistent system of ethics or aesthetics. . . . The imagination loses credibility and resources where reality exceeds even the darkest fantasies of the human mind; even realism flounders before such reality. (3)

The Holocaust, Alvin H. Rosenfeld argues, was a turning point in history inaugurating a massive transformation in human consciousness and the imagination. Just as the Renaissance, or Romanticism, or the Victorian period inaugurated 'shifts in awareness and expression', Holocaust literature, writes Rosenfeld, strives to 'express a new order of consciousness, a recognizable shift in being' ('Problematics' 21-2).

The human imagination after Auschwitz is simply not the same as it was before. Put another way, the addition to our vocabulary of the very word Auschwitz means that today we *know* things that before could not even be imagined. . . . [W]e have been compelled to occupy a realm of experience—acknowledge a realism—that previously was understood as that of private invention alone, a realm conceived of as being entirely separate from and of another kind than that which might ever cross with historical event. With the advent of Auschwitz, the necessary distance that once prevailed between even the most extreme imaginings and human occurrence closes. . . . [T]he eye opens to gaze unbelievably on scenes of life-and-death, death-and-life, which the mind cannot rationally accept or the imagination take in and adequately record. Stunned by the awesomeness and pressure of the event, the imagination comes to one of its periodic endings; undoubtedly, it also stands at the threshold of new and more difficult beginnings. ('Problematics' 22, original emphasis)

Ezrahi and Rosenfeld here sits alongside Wiesel, Lanzmann and Langer in their pronouncements of the Holocaust as an event beyond the powers of imagination.¹⁶

¹⁶ Gary Weissman convincingly argues that this position collapses the distinction between two 'objects of knowledge', the 'Holocaust' and the 'Holocaust experience', the Holocaust as an object of historiography and the Holocaust as the object of survivor memory and experience (92).

What these arguments seem to ignore is that the events of the Holocaust are as much a product of the human imagination as any work of documentary fiction is. The genocide was perpetrated by human beings who imagined and devised strategies for it to be carried out.

We can get a sense of what realism means to Roth's writing, and in *Operation Shylock* in particular, through his interview with Aharon Appelfeld early in the novel. Appelfeld situates the problem of realism explicitly within the context of Holocaust representation, and presents a useful alternative to the fiction versus testimony dichotomy. Roth is particularly interested in Appelfeld's decision to fictionalize his experience in his novel *Tzili* rather than to 'present your experiences as you remember them, to write a survivor's tale as direct . . . as Primo Levi's' (85). Appelfeld explains that though he had attempted several times to write the 'story of my life', these efforts were 'in vain'. 'I wanted', Appelfeld tells Roth, 'to be faithful to reality and to what really happened. But the chronicle that emerged proved to be a weak scaffolding. The result was rather meager, an unconvincing imaginary tale. The things that are most true are easily falsified'. For Appelfeld, there is a certain paradox in the power of reality over the imagination. Where reality 'can permit itself to be unbelievable, inexplicable, out of all proportion. The created work, to my regret, cannot permit itself all that. . . . If I remained true to the facts, no one would believe me' (86). This paradox of credibility, of no concern to reality itself yet of some importance to the fiction writer, lies at the heart of Roth's experiment with the boundaries of fiction in *Operation Shylock*. Roth's gambit is to take Appelfeld's understanding of this paradox by which reality in its very implausibility can only be represented adequately in the form of fiction and stretch it inside out.¹⁷ If the perils of writing a true story are due to the potential that truth might be called a lie, it is only in fiction, by its very nature an elaborate lie, that we can approximate any notion of truth. In *Operation Shylock*, Roth testifies to the absolute truth of a story that is precisely 'unbelievable, inexplicable, out of all proportion', to use Appelfeld's words; his game is precisely to insist on the reality of a story that has all the

¹⁷ In 'Reading Myself', Roth describes his fascination with the 'passageway from the imaginary that comes to seem real to the real that comes to seem imaginary, a continuum between the credible incredible and the incredible credible' (75-6).

hallmarks of a fiction. In doing so, the story's very implausibility, that its plot is 'so wild, so ridiculous, so contrived, as to defy belief in its basis as fact' (Gooblar 45), becomes the very guarantee of its truthfulness.

A number of critics have interpreted *Operation Shylock*'s aesthetic in terms of an ethical engagement with the problem of Holocaust representation. Tamas Dobozy, for example, describes it as 'a fiction that continually charges itself with the crime of perpetrating a nonfiction, and vice versa, in an aesthetic of extreme wariness that Roth suggests should inform all attempts at rendering the Holocaust, either as testimony, juridical fact, self-evident history, or art' (40). Its goal, Dobozy continues, is to represent 'the inexpressible by expressing it *in its inexpressibility*, by expressing it as a nonfiction that is continually haunted by its fictionality' (46, original emphasis). In a similar vein, Kate McLoughlin focuses the problem through the problem of Demjanjuk/Ivan who, according to Rosenberg's testimony is both alive and dead. For McLoughlin, 'to escape the logical predicament of Ivan as both alive and dead requires a new kind of logic, or even a suspension of logic' (123). She locates this new logic in *Operation Shylock*'s aesthetic of 'mutual incompatibility' in its 'irreconcilable claims to fact and fiction' which amounts to a way of representing the Holocaust 'without reducing it to either fiction . . . or to silence' (McLoughlin 127). The opposition between fiction and silence that underpins such readings is that shared by contemporary trauma theory, and one which shows its origins in certain strands of Holocaust discourse.

However, the question of the representation of the unrepresentable and the ethics of the imagination is more complex in *Operation Shylock* than such readings would make it appear. The opposition in the novel is one between presence and absence, figured through the relationship of language to the real. At the one extreme, we find Demjanjuk's real body and the difficulty of fixing it in the past to the signifier of 'Ivan the Terrible'; at the other is the problem of the novel's missing chapter 11. This problem dominates the final pages of the novel. Smilesburger, the (alleged) Mossad agent who in some sense might be seen to be the ultimate author of the events in the novel, meets Roth to provide feedback on the final manuscript of his

book.¹⁸ A disagreement arises between them over Roth's decision to publish as the book's final chapter a 12,000 word account of a secret mission that he carried out for the Mossad to expose Jewish supporters of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization), codename 'Operation Shylock'. Smilesburger is concerned about Roth's choice to publish the book as a 'confession' and claims to be acting in his best interest when he suggests that he might want to 'fictionalize a little' (382). Yet Roth is belligerent in the defence of his work: '[I]t's not a book of fiction', he argues, '[and] "a little" fictionalization isn't what you're talking about. You want me to invent another operation entirely' (382). He insists on his autonomy as the author of the work and his right to write about his own experience: 'I went where I went, did what I did, met whom I met, saw what I saw, learned what I learned—and nothing that occurred in Athens, absolutely nothing, is interchangeable with something else' (383).¹⁹ Smilesburger is evasive when Roth asks him if the Mossad 'will put a contract out . . . the way the Ayatollah did with Rushdie' (383). As the confrontation develops, it becomes clear that Smilesburger's scepticism is not founded on a simple concern about a revelation which he and/or the Mossad would prefer was concealed. Despite showing an initial interest as a general reader of his work, Smilesburger's concern becomes worn down in the face of Roth's resistance, and he reveals some residual contempt:

This is not a report of what happened, because, very simply, you haven't got the slightest idea of what happened. You grasp almost nothing of the objective reality. Its meaning evades you completely. I cannot imagine a more innocent version of what was going on and what it signified. I won't go so far as to say that this is the reality as a ten-year-old might understand it. I prefer to think of it as subjectivism at it most extreme, a vision of things so specific to the mind of the observer that to publish as anything *other* than fiction would be the biggest lie of all. Call it an artistic creation and you will only be calling it what it more or less is anyway. (390-1, original emphasis)

¹⁸ The meeting place between Roth and Smilesburger is given as a 'Jewish food store on Amsterdam Avenue', and it is mentioned that Roth sees his friend Ted Solotaroff with his son Ivan (378; 391). In the media intrigue surrounding the novel's publication, Malcolm Jones Jr., in a *Newsweek* article seeking to shed light on the veracity of Roth's account, thought it necessary to confirm that, in fact, Roth was dining with the biographer Judith Thurman and not a Mossad agent.

¹⁹ Roth's assertion here has echoes with the novel's theme of testimony and truth.

In the first place, Smilesburger wants the chapter excised on the basis that it is not fictional enough; on the other hand, it turns out that it is too fictional—it fails to capture the true complexity of reality. This dispute about the text’s facticity is further complicated by its context in the hall of mirrors by which we gain access to the exchange; the text of their conversation, we must remember, has been published in a book of which Roth is the author, with these very contradictions left unresolved. The subtitle ‘*A Confession*’ remains, yet the chapter on ‘Operation Shylock’ has been redacted.

Operation Shylock is thus, as Basu argues, a title that ‘names an invisible object in the text, something that is never present and we cannot be sure ever existed’, which ‘generates gaps in the text’ (184-5). Roth’s strategy, Shostak suggests, seduces ‘the reader with an absence, an unspoken “reality” the suppression of whose narrative seems to increase its facticity’ (145). For Shostak, this is another example of Roth’s problematization of representation in the novel. ‘He tries to have it both ways, at once representing and claiming the impossibility of representation’ (Shostak 146). Such readings expose a curious overlap between ideas about trauma and the conventions of certain strands of postmodern thought. Amy J. Elias points to this overlap when she characterizes postmodern historical fiction as a form in which

[t]he act of historical telling becomes refocused on the event that is unrepresentable rather than on the minute study and empirical reconstruction of past actions; history becomes more about testifying to the unrepresentable than about re-presenting the past. . . .
Representation itself is what deforms history.

(*Sublime* 29, original emphasis).

Yet it is precisely at this point that we can see that *Operation Shylock* is doing something different. First, this is not a novel about the impossibility of representation, it is one about a choice not to represent; Roth does not include chapter 11 because he has been bribed/threatened. Secondly, the thing that he does not represent is not the Holocaust, but a mission for the Mossad, and one that suggests his complicity with rather distasteful politics.

Rancière argues that the discourse of the ‘unrepresentable’, the ‘unthinkable’, the ‘incomprehensible’, etc., is the product of a slippage between two different discourses about the representation. In the first place, it encompasses an argument

about the ‘internal impossibility of representation’, a version of the sublime which suggests that ‘a certain type of object leaves representation in ruins by shattering any harmonious relationship between presence and absence, between the material and the intelligible’ (*Future* 111). Folded into this discourse about the internal limitations of art is one that argues against the ‘indignity’ of representation, one that evolves out of an ethical framework which judges the relationship of images to their origin and their destination, asking whether they are adequate to the object that they purport to represent, and what effect they have (*Future* 111). Together, these intertwined logics transform ‘problems of the adjustment of representative distance into problems of the impossibility of representation’, the result being that ‘[p]roscription is . . . slipped into this impossibility, while being disclaimed, presented as a simple consequence of the properties of the object’ (112). That is, the question is not so much that something is impossible to represent but that it is undesirable that it be represented. This logic is visible when Saul Friedländer writes that there are ‘limits to representation *which should not but can easily be transgressed*’ (*Probing* 3, original emphasis). Friedländer’s statement is paradoxical; the Holocaust is said to be an ‘event at the limits’ of representation, implying that the very processes of representation are incapable of meeting the demands of such a task. Yet, in the same breath, we find that these limits can be ‘transgressed’; that is to say, the limits are finally not inherent to the logic of representation itself but are the product of a choice not to transgress a certain preconceived limit to representation, outside of representation itself. This in turn suggests that, in fact, representation has *no limits*.

For Rancière, *Shoah* does not demonstrate the impossibility of representing the Holocaust but a choice of what can and cannot be represented:

For what is to be represented is not executioners and victims, but the process of a double elimination: the elimination of the Jews and the elimination of the traces of their elimination. This is perfectly representable. Only it is not representable in the form of fiction or testimony which, by bringing the past “back to life”, renounces representing the second elimination. . . . If what has occurred, and of which nothing remains, can be represented, it is through an action, a newly created fiction which begins in the here and now. It is through a confrontation between the words uttered here and now about what was and the reality that is materially present and absent in this place.

(*Future* 127)

The point, Rancière argues, is that there is no such thing as a language specialized for the purpose of communicating atrocity and trauma; however much we might desire one, we are always stuck with an inappropriate language; this is the very nature of language. In his analysis of Robert Antelme's *The Human Race*, Rancière thus opens up a central problem in the emphasis on testimony as a vehicle for the all-elusive figure of memory that can be found in Wiesel, Laub and Langer. Responding to the opening passage of Antelme's text, Rancière writes,

This is commonly regarded as a form of writing that corresponds to a specific experience—the experience of a life reduced to its most basic aspects, stripped of any horizon of expectations, and merely connecting simple actions and perceptions one after the other. Corresponding to this experience is the paratactic linking of simple perceptions. (*Future* 124)²⁰

Antelme's simple style, Rancière argues, 'transforms the concentration camp's reduction of life to naked existence into the affirmation of fundamental membership of the human race, even in its most basic gestures' (*Future* 124). Yet, the style of Antelme's prose is not born out of any specific experience of life in the concentration camp, but, Rancière notes, in the slow, paratactic accretion of perception that is also the style of Camus's *L'Étranger* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. What each of these three texts share, Rancière suggests, is the 'same relationship between exhibition and signification' (*Future* 125). They each share the same logic of 'minor perceptions added to one another, which make sense in the same way, through their silence, through their appeal to a minimal auditory and visual experience' (*Future* 125). Rancière's observation is central to his critique of the discourse of the 'unrepresentable':

'[I]t is because everything is representable, and that nothing separates fictional representation from the presentation of reality, that the problem of representing the genocide arises. This problem is not to know whether or not one can or must represent, but to know what one wants to represent and what mode of representation is appropriate to this end' (*Dissensus* 196)

²⁰ Rancière quotes the following lines of Antelme's text: 'I went outside to take a piss. It wasn't yet daylight. Beside me others were pissing too; nobody spoke. Behind the place where we pissed was the trench to shit in; other guys were sitting on the little wall above it, their pants down. The trench was covered by a small roof, but not the urinal. Behind us were the sounds of galoshes, of coughing; that came from the others who were arriving' (qtd. in Rancière, *Future* 124).

Contrary to the notion that there exists no language adequate for the representation of concentration camp life,

The language exists and the syntax exists. Not as an exceptional language and syntax, but, on the contrary, as a mode of expression peculiar to the aesthetic regime in the arts in general. The problem is in fact rather the reverse. The language that conveys this experience is in no way specific to it. The experience of a programmed de-humanization quite naturally finds itself expressed in the same way as the Flaubertian identity between the human and the inhuman, between the emergence of an emotion uniting two beings and a little dust stirred up by a draught in a farm kitchen. Antelme wants to convey a lived, incomparable experience of the parcelling out of experience. Yet the language he selects for its appropriateness to this experience is the common language of literature in which the absolute freedom of art has, for a century, been identified with the absolute passivity of physical matter. This extreme experience of the inhuman confronts no impossibility of representation; nor is there a language peculiar to it. There is no appropriate language for witnessing. (*Future* 126)

It is from this perspective that *Operation Shylock* can be read not only as ‘a parody of both realism and postmodernism’ but of Holocaust sublime and the aesthetics of trauma culture (Brauner 101).

Timothy Parrish writes that the fact of the shared title of the novel with its missing chapter points to the fact that *Operation Shylock* ‘is not so much about the stories that Roth has told, as critics have always complained, but the story he has not told. The silence that surrounds the Holocaust becomes here a source of Jewish storytelling power’ (592). To a certain extent, this makes sense; the complex intertextual, metafictional games of this novel are directed towards asserting this illusion of the “true story” that exists outside of the text; this “true story” we are led to believe, is the story that has not been told. In a certain sense, this notion of truth shares something with the presence of Demjanjuk, whose body represents the truth of a life, even as the lawyers struggle to pin the language of testimony to it to make it signify. However, what Parrish overlooks is the fact that Roth provides sufficient information for us to imagine a possible chapter 11; we know who he works for, where he travelled, who he was spying on. In doing so, Roth affirms Rancière’s argument. What is supposedly outside representation, is in fact a product of representation; it is a choice to define the limits of representation. Roth shows us that

we must acknowledge the necessary role of fiction—that, is the imaginary arrangement of signs into narrative—in any understanding of the world.

4: 'Something is always true': Photography, Space, Memory and the Fictions of History in Aleksandar Hemon's *The Lazarus Project*

[H]istory operates more efficiently when its agents are dead.

Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories* (5)

The dual narratives of Aleksandar Hemon's *The Lazarus Project* (2008) parallel the telling of a historical story with the story of its research; its use of photography, and focus on reconstructing the story of a moment lost to the past, shows its immersion in the language and themes of memorial culture. In his review of the novel, James Wood notes the way Hemon's writing is both 'grounded in pungent realities and drawn toward playful fictionalizing', a quality which, Wood suggests, makes him a 'postmodernist who has been mugged by history' ('Unforgotten'). In light of Andreas Huyssen's observation that the 1990s saw a transformation from a postmodern culture 'once celebrated as a new departure beyond the modern and toward the future' into a 'culture of memory haunted by the past' ('Trauma' 18), it might then be tempting to see Hemon's mugging as just one example of a sustained assault by history on postmodernism. In a recent overview of trends in contemporary fiction, Robert Eaglestone picks *The Lazarus Project* as an example of the way the contemporary novel rejects a traditional model of the historical novel 'by exploring memory, trauma, and the way the past haunts and possesses the present' (*Contemporary* 37). Eaglestone positions this trend in relation to what he sees as a 'retreat from the extreme playfulness of postmodernism and the emphasis on textuality and on difficulty' towards an 'integrated' and 'domesticated' postmodernism with an interest in 'telling a story' (*Contemporary* 14-5). We can observe such domestication in Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* which adopts the strategies of historiographical metafiction, but in order to produce a piece of consolatory sentimentality. If Jameson saw a crisis in the flattening of history into pastiche, Foer's novel further reduces historicity to a work of vague,

apolitical mourning.²¹ Elaine Blair groups *The Lazarus Project* with Anita Desai's *The Zig Zag Way* (2004), Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2008) and *Everything is Illuminated* as representatives of a trend in contemporary fiction to 'combine contemporary narratives with those set during violent historical episodes . . . in order to show the continuing influence of the past—especially the political past—on characters who live in the present' (58). On the surface *The Lazarus Project* appears to share some thematic concerns and narrative features with these other works; the dual narrative structure that splits the happenings of the present from the past; the use of postmodern techniques; the focus on textuality, language and the problems of representation. Problems of historical representation are seen through the filter of memory and trauma, issues of truth and authenticity are seen at a personal level. It matters that these novels take as their subject historical events that exist within the realm of living memory; in doing so, the problem of constructing historical narrative is bound up with questions about documentation, testimony, and archival traces.

The Lazarus Project switches between two narratives, one set in the past, one in the present. The historical narrative is told in the third person, and focuses on the shooting of Lazarus Averbuch, a young Jewish immigrant, at the home of the Chicago Chief of Police in 1908, examining the impact of the death on Chicago's immigrant communities, through the characters of his sister Olga and his friend Isador. This narrative is intersected by the first-person narrative of Vladimir Brik, like Hemon, a Bosnian-American writer who travels with his photographer friend Ahmed Rora between Lviv, Ukraine and Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina for research into his 'Lazarus Project', which gives the novel its title; Brik's 'Lazarus project' is

²¹ Walter Kirn catches the banal, apolitical aesthetic of Foer's work in his review of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), writing about how 'today's neo-experimental novels are not necessarily any better suited to get inside, or around, today's realities than your average Hardy Boys mystery. The avant-garde tool kit, developed way back when to disassemble established attitudes and cut through rusty sentiments, has now become the best means, it seems, for restoring them and propping them up'.

to resurrect Lazarus, like his biblical counterpart, from the abyss of history.²² The novel opens in the historical narrative with the only explicit reference to Brik's presumed authorship: 'The time and place are the only things I am certain of: March 2, 1908. Beyond that is the haze of history and pain, and now I plunge' (*Lazarus* 1). Aside from this passing 'I' in the opening sentences, the relationship between the two strands is never made explicit, though a multitude of correspondences of plot and character names does suggest that the historical narrative is Brik's work. In this way, the novel plays off the contrasting styles of the two intersecting narratives, one confronting the problems of historical representation, the other focused on the vagaries of memory. From the outset the novel confronts us with questions about the relationship between fiction and reality, narrative and truth.

There are two aspects of *The Lazarus Project* of particular interest. The first is its use of photographs alongside the text. Brik and Rora's journey across Europe is in pursuit of the journey taken by Lazarus and Isadora one hundred years earlier, but it also mirrors the trip taken by Hemon with photographer Velibor Božović as part of his own research into *The Lazarus Project*. Some of Božović's photographs from that trip appear in the novel obliquely occupying the place of Rora's photographic documentation of the fictional trip. The second is how this use of photography works in parallel with the novel's exploration of memory and history through the idea of space. The novel stages a relationship between text and image in order to emphasise the radical semantic instability of the photograph, and this textual instability engages in interesting ways with some of the tropes of contemporary memorial culture.

²² The novel's title has obvious biblical connotations, and, indeed, its epigraph is a passage from John 11:44, an account of the biblical Lazarus's resurrection. The novel's 'Lazarus project' is similarly to resurrect the historical Lazarus Averbuch, bringing the past back to life through telling the story of his death. The idea of resurrection resurfaces throughout the book as a metaphor for migration and displacement. Lazarus's and Brik's are stories of forced migration; Lazarus in flight from the pogroms in his home town Czernowitz, Brik from the siege in Bosnia. The relationship between resurrection from death and resurrection through migration is emphasised in Brik's interest in the idea that the biblical Lazarus was said to have travelled to Marseilles with his sisters after he was brought back to life (77). In a series of reflections on how the biblical Lazarus might have felt in his post-resurrected life, Brik asks, 'did he remember being dead, or did he just enter another dream of another life by way of Marseilles? Did he have to disremember his previous life and start from scratch, like an immigrant?' (127). These two forms of resurrection are interconnected in the novel.

I: Imagining history: archive, memory, space

One of the recurring tropes of contemporary fiction's incessant re-staging of historical trauma is the image of a character returning, like Simon Srebnik in Lanzmann's *Shoah*, to the site of some historical atrocity, to bear witness to history's absences and erasures. We can see this in Tatiana de Rosnay's *Sarah's Key* (2007), for example, which purports to trace the traumatic aftereffects of the roundup of Jewish families in the Vélodrome d'Hiver in Paris for deportation to the camps on 16 July 1942. Julia Jarmond, the novel's protagonist, is an American journalist who works for an ex-pat magazine in Paris *Seine Scenes* who investigates the deportation for the sixtieth commemoration of the event. Despite living in Paris for twenty-five years, Julia has never heard of the round-up: 'It was like a secret. Something buried in the past' (28). Nevertheless, despite the secrecy surrounding the event, Julia is able to google '*vélodrome d'hiver vel' d'hiv*' and return 'numerous' and 'very detailed' results. Enough material, in fact, that she can spend an 'entire afternoon' reading (29). And enough for the information to have a profound effect on her:

My recent knowledge about the events of July 1942 had awakened a vulnerability within me, triggered something deep, unspoken that haunted me, that burdened me. I had dragged that burden around with me all week, ever since I'd started to research the Vel' d'Hiv round-up. (37)

The novel plays out Julia's obsession with the story of a young girl, Sarah, who survived the round-up; its false tone is compounded by the way it ends with a burgeoning romance between Julia and Sarah's son, who had never learned of his mother's past. What is odd, but revealing, about *Sarah's Key* is how it exposes the peculiar relationship between absence and presence, memory and forgetting that memorial culture is always restaging. That is every expression of anxiety about forgetting some momentous event from the past has by necessity to be founded upon a certain amount of material which would allow it to be remembered, suggesting that it was never entirely forgotten in the first place.

In *Sarah's Key*, this contradiction is evident in a scene in which Julia and the magazine's photographer Bamber visit the area where the Vélodrome once stood, now replaced by the 'large brownish construction' of the Ministère de l'Intérieur (59). They 'looked for a plaque, for something that mentioned what had happened

here, but could not find it' (60). Of course, the absence of any attempt to confront this shameful chapter of French history would be further evidence of the national conspiracy of silence, except for the fact that, a couple of lines later, they do find the 'smallish' plaque, and Julia wonders if 'anyone ever glanced at it'. It reads:

On 16 and 17 July, 13,152 Jews were arrested in Paris and the suburbs, deported and assassinated at Auschwitz. In the Vélodrome d'Hiver that once stood on this spot, 1,129 men, 2,916 women, and 4,115 children were packed here in inhuman conditions by the government of the Vichy police, by order of the Nazi occupant. May those who tried to save them be thanked. Passerby, never forget! (60)

The novel similarly returns more than once to a speech made by Jacques Chirac in 1995 commemorating the round-up, a speech which Julia's friend tells her 'made headlines' (43). The end of the novel similarly celebrates Chirac's inauguration of a new Holocaust Memorial in the Marais in 2002. This is only to point out that the novel plays on a certain association between atrocity and repression that apparently is not evident in reality; it needs to overplay the absence of the event in order to "recover" it through the work of memory. That the novel is a cynical cash-in on empathy politics is evident in that detail of the Ministère de l'Intérieur building, which hints towards those aspects of French and European history which truly are hidden, such as the colonial history symbolized by the Algerian war and the massacre in Paris in 1961, or the camps and detention centres across Europe that house today's refugees. For Tatiana de Rosnay, the true evil of history is firmly situated in the past. Her novel provides a useful example of the potential uses and abuses of memory in consolidating present ideology.

James E. Young identifies one feature of contemporary memory culture as an obsession with the 'magic of ruins', which he describes as

a near mystical fascination with sites seemingly charged with the aura of events, as if the molecules of the sites still vibrated with the memory of their history. Some people claim to intuit such a charge in places of "history", but usually, this aura is apparent only to those who already know something of the site's past, or who suspect a site is somehow historical. (*Texture* 119)

Young's explanation is self-evident; it is obvious that when visiting a ruin, it is only through our willingness to inscribe it with meaning—a willingness entirely determined by our prior (cultural/historical) experience and knowledge—that we are

able to ‘intuit’ the ‘charge’ or ‘aura’ of the history. It is precisely this ‘will to remember’, to use Nora’s terminology, that endows a site with its apparent significance (19). Such sites are ‘created by a play of memory and history, an interaction of two factors that results in their reciprocal overdetermination’ (Nora 19). Yet, to deconstruct this moment does not account for what actually happens when a person ‘intuits’ the ‘charge’ of history in this way, or even why the ‘charge’ might be interpreted in this way. Writing on the Jewish Museum in Berlin, J. Stephen Murphy argues that contemporary memorial culture posits an idea of history that is not ‘evaluated on how truthfully it assembles the facts, but on how effectively it makes the reader or, more frequently, the audience (since film, video, and museums exploit a wider range of the senses) *feel* history’ (62, original emphasis).²³ This notion of the feeling or ‘aura’ of history conjured by ruins, museums and memorials is tied up with trauma culture’s injunction to bear witness to past atrocities and with a notion of History as sublime.

A central feature of this desire for the past and the privileging of the discourse of witnessing can be seen to converge around the notion of proximity. Gary Weissman observes how today memory ‘connotes both the survivor’s recall of lived experience and the nonwitness’s familiarity with Holocaust narratives’ (92). This collapse of the distinction between memory of the lived experience and remembered history (in Walter Benn Michaels’s sense) is tied into the discourse of witnessing. The desire for the past is a desire to be close to the past, a desire for the real. It is this desire for proximity that establishes a continuity, an ideology, that unites trauma theory with wider memorial culture, and this is fostered through a certain aesthetic which delineates the boundaries of presence and absence, or, to put it in Rancière’s terms, is a specific distribution of the sensible.²⁴ This is demonstrated in Thomas Ligotti’s short story ‘Purity’ when the young narrator becomes aware of a ‘certain haunting presence’ in the attic of his family’s rented home which seems, he

²³ Andrew S. Gross makes a similar point relating this idea of felt history the discourse of incomprehensibility of the Holocaust. On the subject of sites of Holocaust tourism, Gross argues that the practice encourages visitors to take ‘on authority . . . that the Holocaust must be *felt* because it can never be understood’ (81, original emphasis).

²⁴ Rancière defines aesthetics as the ‘delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience’ (*Politics of Aesthetics* 13).

explains, ‘to be concentrated near the wooden beams which crossed the length of the attic and from which, I imagined, some former inhabitant of the house may once have committed suicide by hanging’. His father, a mad scientist obsessed with discovering a ‘pure conception’ of reality, explains his son’s fear away:

“There is nothing in the attic,” he explained to me. “It’s only the way that your head is interacting with the space of that attic. There are certain fields of forces that are everywhere. And these forces, for reasons unknown to me as yet, are potentiated in some places more than others. Do you understand? The attic is not haunting your head—your head is haunting the attic. Some heads are more haunted than others, whether they are haunted by ghosts or by gods or by creatures from outer space.” (13)²⁵

Taking the father’s words into consideration when we think about Young’s example of the visitor to the memorial camp, we must not forget that it is not the camp that is haunted by ghosts, it is the visitor’s head.

In *The Lazarus Project*, Vladimir Brik’s research into Lazarus’s life begins with such a pilgrimage, when he and Rora pay a visit to George Shippy’s residence to witness the scene of Lazarus’s death. The scene is described in the novel’s opening pages; a ‘scrawny young man’ rings the doorbell of the residence of George Shippy, chief of the Chicago Police at 31 Lincoln Place. Theresa, the maid who answers the door, cannot place his accent, but informs him that Shippy does not receive visitors before 9am (1). The first chapter recounts the series of events that eventually lead to the seven bullets that leave the young man’s ‘blood and brains spurting and splattering’ on the walls and floor of Shippy’s living room (9). When Brik and Rora arrive at the street where the house is supposed to be, they discover that the address no longer exists. ‘There was no part of the Lazarus story to be photographed, nothing’, Brik tells us, ‘and Rora took no pictures. So many things had vanished that it was impossible to know what was missing’ (45). The site of Shippy’s former address shows no record of Lazarus’s death; no plaque marks the events of what passed between the two men 100 years before. This moment is central to the novel’s plot; it is Brik’s disappointment at the absolute absence of any traces of Lazarus’s life that spurs him to track Lazarus back to his previous existence in

²⁵ Ligotti’s father’s comments are redolent of the narrator’s comment in Kafka’s ‘Being Unhappy’, that ‘These ghosts seem to be more doubtful about their existence than we are, which is no wonder, given their frailty’ (34).

Europe, ‘to the time before America’ so that he can ‘reimagine what I could not retrieve . . . to see what I could not imagine’ (46). The scene points to an interesting engagement between Hemon’s novel and the orthodoxies of memorial culture. While its structure resembles that of novels such as *Sarah’s Key*, *Everything is Illuminated* or *Fugitive Pieces* in its focus on the relationship between a person in the present researching the life of a person in the past, the difference with *The Lazarus Project* is that it tells a genuinely unknown story about a genuinely unknown young man, who is resolutely not a cypher for a greater historical crime, or, that is, a greater and widely known historical crime.

One way that we can make the distinction between Julia Jarmond’s interest in the Vélodrome d’Hiver round-up and Vladimir Brik’s tracking of the story of Lazarus is through a notion of ‘collective’ or ‘cultural’ memory. To use any notion of memory, we must remain wary of Kerwin Lee Klein’s critique of the tendency in contemporary theory for memory to ‘range back and forth across time’ allowing the critic to ‘move freely from memories as individual psychic events to memories as a shared group consciousness to memories as a collection of material artifacts and employ the same psychoanalytical vocabularies throughout’ (‘Emergence’ 136). To embrace such ambiguity is simply to see the difference between history and memory as tonal; memory is a ‘humanized’ history, one that sounds ‘less distant’ (‘Emergence’ 129). It is ‘no surprise’, writes Klein, ‘that our sudden fascination with memory goes hand in hand with postmodern reckonings of history as the marching black boot and of historical consciousness as an oppressive fiction’; memory offers only a ‘therapeutic alternative’ (‘Emergence’ 145). Despite my sympathies with Klein’s critique, a careful definition of what we mean by memory can nevertheless be useful to describe a certain structural relationship between individual and culture, one that can remain, with Klein, sceptical of Matt Matsuda’s claim that ‘archives remember’ (qtd. in Klein, ‘Emergence’ 132).

In Klein’s critique, Matsuda’s words suggest a notion of memory with agency that exists outside of any individual consciousness. However, it is also possible to read the word ‘remember’ as projecting a metaphorical meaning to describe some other more intangible process at work. A common strand of contemporary notions of cultural memory is an emphasis on materiality, as Nancy Wood writes, memory

‘seems to reside not in perceiving consciousness but *in the material*: in the practices and institutions of social or psychic life, which function within us, but, strangely, do not seem to require our participation or our explicit allegiance’ (2, original emphasis). Similarly, Barbie Zelizer writes that collective memories ‘have texture, existing in the world rather than in a person’s head’ (4). The notion of memory that is materialized, however, only leads to further obfuscation: in what sense does memory ‘reside’ in the material? If there is such a thing as a collective memory that exists outside of a person’s head, how do we gain access to it?

As the quote from Nancy Wood suggests, materiality can mean both the materiality of things and the materiality of the individual’s negotiation of things, of movement through space. The latter might be understood in terms of habitus, as Pierre Bourdieu defines it,

The habitus, as the word implies, is that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated in the body in the form of permanent dispositions. So the term constantly reminds us that it refers to something historical, linked to individual history, and that it belongs to a genetic mode of thought, as opposed to essentialist modes of thought. (86)

To think of memory in terms of habitus is to think of it as the expression of an unconscious relationship between bodies and space. In this sense, the materiality of memory is something that is not inherent to the objects of memory but is the product of the ways social practices perform a relationship with certain objects as if those objects had some innate capacity to store memory.

Another way of understanding the materiality of memory is to think of it as a kind of potentiality; thus, in opposition to Matsuda’s notion of the archive that ‘remembers’, we can read Aleida Assmann’s description of the archive as decisively ‘not a form of presentation but of preservation; it collects and stores information, it does not arrange, exhibit, process, or interpret it’ (‘History’ 270-1). That is the archive can be understood to contain memory only in a symbolic sense; what that memory comes to mean finally depends on how what it contains comes to be arranged, exhibited, processed and interpreted. Collective memory, Kansteiner argues, ‘is not history, though it is sometimes made from similar material’ (‘Finding’ 180). Jan Assmann, for example, proposes a notion of cultural memory, distinguished from an individual’s ‘communicative memory’ and ‘science’ (126).

Though he emphasizes Maurice Halbwachs's notion of individual memory which exists in communication with others, cultural memory is exterior to this process. Cultural memory is 'that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image' (J Assmann 132). It is feasible, then, that the two kinds of memory do not preclude one another. An individual at the centre of an event will inevitably draw on secondary mediated accounts or imaginary representations in the process of constructing their idea of "the bigger picture". Yet what remains at odds in Assmann's account is the notion of the 'reusable'. Where does this 'body' of texts exist? And, if it exists outside of any individual consciousness, how are we to define its limits? Indeed, viewed from such a perspective we find ourselves back in the realm of Nora's notion of the perpetual and incessant archival drive of postmodernity. If cultural memory is merely an unidentifiable constellation of archival traces then, in another sense, it is nothing but the archive itself.

It is interesting, however, to look at the way Hemon develops a notion of the spatial aspects of memory, both in *The Lazarus Project* and in his autobiographical writing. Richard Terdiman writes, 'Memory is so constitutive, so indispensable to our intellectual and practical activity to begin with that every cognitive or discursive act or fact is already tangled up in the mnemonic realm' ('Given' 186). In 'Mapping Home', an autobiographical essay published in the *New Yorker*, Hemon describes his return to Sarajevo in the spring of 1997, the first time since the end of the Bosnian War.²⁶ He had been visiting the US on a cultural exchange program at the outbreak of the war in April 1992, whence he had become an accidental refugee. Five years later, he spends the first few days of his visit trying 'to comprehend how the siege had transformed the city, because the transformation was not as simple as one thing becoming another' ('Mapping' 40). Although the layout of the city was the same as before, everything had changed, 'both familiar to the point of pain and entirely uncanny and distant' ('Mapping' 41). Aimlessly wandering through the streets of his former home, Hemon finds himself on the *Ulica Branilaca Sarajeva* ('the Defenders of Sarajevo Street')—formerly the *Ulica J.N.A.* ('the Yugoslav People's Army Street')—where he has a strange experience:

²⁶ This essay has recently been collected in Hemon's *The Book of My Lives* (2013).

As I passed what had been called, in the times of socialism . . . the Workers University, something made me turn and look over my shoulder into its cavernous entranceway. The turn was not of my own volition: it was my body that turned my head back, while my mind continued forward for a few steps. ('Mapping' 41)

He is puzzled by the seemingly mechanical reaction of his body until he realizes that the Workers University was the former site of a cinema he frequented when living in Sarajevo. The cinema 'had shut down a couple of years before the war' ('Mapping' 41). During those years, his habit was to stop and check the posters and show times in the display cases. Describing this curious muscle response to his surroundings, Hemon writes,

From the lightless shafts of corporal memory, my body had recalled the action of turning to see what was playing. It had been trained to seek out stimulation in the form of a new movie poster, and it still remembered, the fucker, the way it remembered how to swim when thrown into deep water. ('Mapping' 41)

This is an example of what Henri Bergson called 'habit' and what today's neurologists call non-declarative memory (95-6), those unconscious corporeal responses to external stimulus that are fundamental part of learning skills as well as social practices. But what I would like to draw attention to in this particular example is that the automatic response occurs in relationship to a particular space, and more specifically a space that is an imaginary projection of the past onto the material present.

In *The Lazarus Project*, Brik has a similar experience when he arrives in Sarajevo at the end of his journey and it turns out not to resemble the city he remembers. He feels like a 'ghost', invisible to the glances of passers-by. He recalls his 'previous life' when he

had ridden a bike down this very street, and where the kids on their way to school pelted me with rocks; the life in which I had written some politically charged obscenities on the school wall; the life in which I had effortlessly stolen candy from a store minded by a blind old man who had stubbornly denied his blindness to himself and to others. Nobody seemed to remember me. Home is where somebody notices your absence. (*Lazarus* 278)

We can understand Hemon's and Brik's experiences using Michel de Certeau's notion of the relationship between *place* and *space* as a framework for articulating what happens in such moments. 'There is no place', writes Certeau, 'that is not

haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence, spirits one can “invoke” or not. Haunted places are the only ones people can live in’ (*Practice* 108). To make sense of this notion of what Certeau means by ‘haunting’, we need to first clarify his idea of ‘place’. For Certeau, place is associated with the immediate and the instant; it describes the material arrangement of objects in relation to other objects, an ‘instantaneous configuration of positions’ (*Practice* 117). ‘Space’, on the other hand, ‘is a practiced place’ (*Practice* 117, original emphasis).²⁷ That is, space happens through interaction with and use of place. This conceptualization of space and place opens up an interesting paradox. From one perspective, place is instantaneous and singular while space is potentially infinite and multiple. Yet, from another perspective, the opposite is true: if place is singular, it is singular in a global sense, a description of the present state of the world in its totality; in this sense, space can be seen to be entirely localised to the particular momentary practice of a single fragment of that totality.

Certeau’s notion is founded on the idea that the experience of place is spacialized through its mediation in consciousness and memory. He gives the example of demonstrative phrases that might be used when somebody shows a guest round a place they know well, such as ‘Here, there used to be a bakery’ or ‘That’s where old lady Dupuis used to live’ (*Practice* 108, original emphasis). The old bakery may now be the site of an apartment block or a supermarket, and yet, in the mind of the one who remembers it, the site is haunted by the memory of what once was there. (Perhaps we should note that Certeau’s example suggests a nostalgia for a time when there were bakeries and not supermarkets and when you knew where old lady Dupuis lived.) In the spatial practices of everyday life, memory acts as a screen or projection through which the place of the city is transformed into the space of life. Demonstratives such as those that resurrect the bakery in Certeau’s schema ‘indicate the invisible identities of the visible’ (*Practice* 108). If the places people live in are ‘like the presences of diverse absences’, it is only by seeing place as filtered through

²⁷ Certeau writes, ‘in relation to place, space is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization, transformed into a term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformation caused by successive contexts’ (*Practice* 117).

the imaginative practice of memory that such absences take on meaning (*Practice* 108). As Paul Connerton writes,

[T]he absolutely now is inconceivable. . . . [I]n all modes of experience we always base our particular experiences on a prior context in order to ensure that they are intelligible at all; that prior to any single experience, our mind is already predisposed with a framework of outlines, of typical shapes of experienced objects. To perceive an object or act upon it is to locate it within this system of expectations. The world of the percipient, defined in terms of temporal experience, is an organized body of expectations based on recollection. (6)

Our perception of the world is always filtered through memory.

In *The Lazarus Project*, the historical significance of this process comes into view at the beginning of Brik and Rora's journey. If the opening paragraph begins with the void of history, this void is materialized in the visit to the Shippy neighbourhood, the scene of Lazarus's murder, so Rora can take photographs. The suggestion of the impossibility of knowledge hints at the question of what knowledge Brik expected to gain were the house still standing. The absence of material to be photographed is foreshadowed by an archival photograph of Shippy's house taken at the time that appears at the beginning of the novel's first chapter, which recounts the story of Lazarus's death. Brik and Rora's visit to the site of Shippy's former residence points to an intriguing anomaly; they are searching for a place that no longer exists and which they have never seen; that is, the memory that they possess, if we can speak of it in these terms, is not a memory born of experience. In this sense, Rora's hypothetical photograph would be a replication not only of an image, but of an experiential relationship with the space of history. And yet, much in the way that Certeau's hypothetical rememberer conjures the vanished bakery in the mind of her interlocutor, Brik and Rora's visit to the site of Shippy's residence bears witness to its once existence despite the failure of their trip. This moment points to an ambiguity about what we might mean when we talk about memory in such a context. Brik's knowledge that Shippy's residence did exist once is precisely what allows him to identify its non-existence. Shippy's residence, now absent in the real, continues to exist in Brik's head as a mediation in space of its archival traces.

The relationship between memory and space is a recurring trope of Brik's narrative. Early on, Brik recounts a story about the blindness that afflicted his

grandfather in later life. The introjection of the short tale is typical of Hemon's style, which gives the impression of a series of fragments that speak back and forth to one another in their juxtaposition. Brik's grandfather's sight deteriorated in the form of 'chicken blindness' which meant that he 'could see nothing in the twilight' and would often find himself lost in the fields at dusk awaiting a 'crew' of his grandchildren 'dispatched on a search mission' to bring him home (69). Later, his complete loss of sight is accompanied by the deterioration of his memory, which has a profound impact on his relationship to the world around him by making him 'entirely removed from the present'. He no longer remembers the names of his grandchildren, no longer knows his grandchildren 'as his grandchildren'. Memory seeps out into the very fabric of his lived experience. As Brik explains, to his blind, old grandfather, 'We became the Briks he had left behind in Ukraine to come to Bosnia in 1908: Romans and Ivans and Mykolas and Zosyas' (70). Their grandfather's confusion becomes the source of amusement for the grandchildren. Brik describes the ritual of his grandfather's 'kitchen walks'; his grandfather had the habit of waking up in a state of confusion shouting 'Why did you leave me in the woods?' To appease him, it became the habit for one of the grandchildren to lead him by the hand around the kitchen table and back to the comfort of his sofa. 'The circuit around the kitchen', Brik explains, 'was his journey home' (70). On one occasion, one of these kitchen walks has a profound impact on his grandfather:

Once I took him for a kitchen walk, to the cupboard and back, a total of three yards that took us an eternity to cover. And suddenly we were in Lviv, he was nine, I was his father, we had gone to church, and now he wanted after-church rose candy as promised. When I said I couldn't give it to him, my grandfather cried like a child. I returned him to the sofa, he turned toward the wall, prayed, and wept, until he fell asleep. (70)

This short tale seems to extrapolate Richard Terdiman's notion of memory as the past made present. Terdiman presents the following paradigm for the process of memory: '*A content of some sort is registered, with whatever fidelity the registering system can manage. Time passes. A representation appears, responsive to the content previously registered*' (Present 8, original emphasis).

Memory can thus be understood as having two key and interrelated aspects: that it is primarily an act of representation, and that its referent is 'always absent'.

One effect of this is that memory tangles up the ‘then’ and the ‘now’ and folds the time line back upon itself (Terdiman, *Present* 8). Indeed, this is precisely what the tale of Brik’s grandfather shows; isolated by his blindness from the world around him, his mind becomes wholly absorbed in the representations of the past that are now more vivid to his perception. However, this tale similarly stretches this conception of memory through the complicity of the grandchildren. This is not a story about memory as something solitary and interior, but the relationship between the grandfather’s experience of his material environment through the filter of memory. The physical journey around the kitchen table is necessary to quieten his anxieties about being lost in the woods; there is a real exchange with the projection of his father embodied in the physical and vocal presence of his grandson. Memory is seen to act in dialogue with space, and through this dialogue becomes a fictional hybrid between an image of the past and an action in the present.

II: True stories: fictions and memory

James Wood describes *Lazarus*’s two narratives as a ‘travelogue’ and an ‘archival fantasy’ (‘Unforgotten’). The former descriptor is self-evident, given that the narrative ostensibly recounts Brik and Rora’s travels across Eastern Europe, but it is worth exploring to what extent ‘archival fantasy’ might apply to the historically-focused narrative that makes up one of *Lazarus*’s narrative strands. There are two aspects of the novel’s relationship to ‘the archive’ which point to its peculiarity as a text, and suggest that it might be read, to some extent, as a parody of the dual narrative novels with which Blair groups it. Indeed, one of the differences between *The Lazarus Project* and those other novels is the relationship between the protagonist of the present-day narrative and the events of the past. In these other novels, this relationship is familial and/or cultural. Brik has only the most tenuous link to Lazarus and Olga Averbuch, the siblings through which the historical narrative is focused. Rather than a familial or cultural link, what Brik shares with Lazarus is simply the experience of being an immigrant in America. Brik and Lazarus’s shared experience is presented as an impetus in quite another way, in the form of Brik’s insecurities.

Brik is certainly compelled by Lazarus's story, but he is reticent about his motives for telling that story in particular:

I wanted my future book to be about the immigrant who escaped the pogrom in Kishinev and came to Chicago only to be shot by the Chicago chief of police. I wanted to be immersed in the world as it had been in 1908, I wanted to imagine how immigrants lived then. I loved doing research, poring through old newspapers and books and photos, reciting curious facts on a whim. (*Lazarus* 41)

Brik's love of research suggests a historian's detachment from his subject matter, a very different relationship between Brik and Lazarus than, for example, Jonathan Safran Foer's quest for Augustine, the mysterious woman in a photograph with his grandfather. Indeed, there is strong suggestion that Brik's research trip is not so much a compulsive quest for truth—though the narrative is structured as if that were the case—as the outcome of a successful grant application.

We first meet Brik at a celebration of Bosnian Independence Day in support of the Association of Bosnian-Americans, an official exhibition of cultural otherness organized to raise money from American Benefactors more likely to donate if 'convinced that our culture is nothing like theirs so that they can exhibit their tolerance and help our unintelligible customs' (*Lazarus* 13). Brik sees an opportunity to fund his project when he finds himself seated next to Bill Schuettler, a retired banker, and his wife Susie, both 'board members of Glory Foundation' and thereby in control of 'all kinds of glorious funds' (*Lazarus* 14). When he finds out that Susie had read some of the columns he writes for the *Chicago Tribune*, Brik's chance at funding beats in him 'like a brand-new heart' (*Lazarus* 16). His column, we learn later is about the experiences of new immigrants, 'looking for a job, getting the social security number, finding an apartment, becoming a citizen, meeting with Americans, dealing with nostalgia, that sort of thing' (*Lazarus* 31). Alongside the column, Brik was a teacher of English as a second language, although when the novel begins he has recently lost his job, which is part of the reason he is so desperate for funding.

Brik explains how he would often find people 'gushing over the neatness of [his] immigrant story'. In America—the country of immigrants—many recognize in Brik's stories a 'narrative trajectory' shared by one of their own ancestors:

‘displacement, travails, redemption, success’. However, the ‘neatness’ of Brik’s narrative does not reflect the reality of his situation:

I couldn’t bring myself to tell them that I had lost my teaching job and that I was pretty much supported by Mary. She liked the narrative trajectory too, for her people also had a history of displacement and replacement, though I was pretty sure that she was disappointed that my success stage seemed to have been suspended. (*Lazarus* 32)

Mary, Brik’s American wife, is a successful neurosurgeon, and Brik’s dependence on her provokes anxieties that she will leave him for a ‘successful anesthesiologist’ (*Lazarus* 42). He imagines her ‘so sick of my writerly ambition and the accompanying underemployment’ that she would not return home leaving him to recognize that his ‘parasitic existence was no longer acceptable to her’ (*Lazarus* 30). Before he learns that he has been successful with his grant application, he says, ‘I certainly didn’t want to beg her for money, again, and go through the whole debasing process of proving that my plans, hopes, dreams are not overly indulgent’ (*Lazarus* 46-7). The arrival of what he comes to call his ‘Susie grant’ permits him to avoid debasing himself. Yet, it is precisely within the context of his calculated mixture of performed exoticism and flirtatiousness with Susie that we first learn that he is interested in writing about Lazarus, a story he ‘stumbled upon while doing research’ for his column (*Lazarus* 15). This focus on Brik’s domestic and financial anxieties raise a question about Brik’s motives. The success of his grant application is tied as much to Brik’s fear of failure as it is to his interest in Lazarus’s story. And this fear is implicitly tied to his immigrant status.

Despite the numerous parallels between Brik and his author—both arrived in the United States from Sarajevo in 1992, accidental refugees of the war in Yugoslavia; both were English teachers; both write columns about being an immigrant in America; both have distant family origins in Ukraine; both have a ‘Lazarus project’—, Brik does not appear to share his author’s motive to write his story.²⁸ In an interview, Hemon claims that it was when he saw the ‘horrifying and amazing’ photographs of Lazarus Averbuch’s dead body in Joe Kraus and Walter Roth’s book *An Accidental Anarchist* (1998) that he was inspired to write his novel

²⁸ This ghost of autobiography hovers teasingly around the edges of the text and is encouraged by the uncaptioned image which appears alongside the title page of Hemon dressing in a mirror; the shot is taken from over his shoulder as his reflection, obscured by shadow, stares directly into the lens.

(‘Conversation’ 90).²⁹ In particular, it was the uncanny similarity between the images of Lazarus Averbuch’s body and those of American atrocities in Abu Ghraib which resonated with Hemon.³⁰ These images of Lazarus appear in the novel but Brik never refers to them in relation to his own inspiration for pursuing his project. This tiny divergence in motivation is significant in that it opens up the gap between *The Lazarus Project* as a work that is engaged in some way with the climate of paranoia and fear—and the use of fear by power—and Brik’s ‘Lazarus project’ whose motives are banal and, it turns out, obscure even to Brik himself.

Brik is a self-avowed ‘double-citizen’, a ‘reasonably loyal citizen of a couple of countries’, those countries being the United States and Bosnia. Brik exists in an in-between space between his current life in Chicago, where he lives with Mary, his wife, and the Sarajevo of his past, in a no longer existing Yugoslavia. Yet, while this split in his sense of belonging is figured as a divide between past and present, for Brik the loss of Sarajevo is also a loss of a different way of relating to reality, a difference in the way Bosnians and Americans relate to stories. In Sarajevo, we are told,

Disbelief was permanently suspended, for nobody expected truth or information, just the pleasure of being in the story and, maybe, passing it off as their own. It was different in America: the incessant perpetuation of collective fantasies makes people crave the truth and nothing but the truth – reality is the fastest American commodity.

(102-3)

This difference is developed through the opposition between Mary and Rora. Mary is a brain-surgeon, and Brik envies Mary’s certainties about reality, fantasizing that one

²⁹ The full title of Walter Roth and Joe Kraus’s investigation into Lazarus Averbuch’s death, which is credited at the end of *The Lazarus Project*, provides a decent summary of the early parts of the historical narrative in Hemon’s novel: *An Accidental Anarchist: How the Killing of a Humble Jewish Immigrant by Chicago’s Chief of Police Exposed the Conflict Between Law & Order and Civil Rights in Early 20th Century America*. Roth and Kraus describe Lazarus’s death as a ‘murder mystery’ and a story ‘with a hole in its middle’: ‘We know that Averbuch wound up dead and we know that George Shippy admitted firing the fatal bullets, but that is almost all we know about the central moment of the affair. We don’t know what brought Averbuch to a place as far from his own world as Shippy’s home. We don’t know what Shippy thought as he saw a foreign-looking man on his doorstep. And, in the end, we don’t know who Averbuch really was’ (ix).

³⁰ Indeed, for Hemon *The Lazarus Project* is best described as ‘an Abu Ghraib novel because the most painful thing to live through in the last administration was how we became complicit in the crimes the administration committed’ (‘Exile’). If Hemon’s novel can be understood to be a 9/11/Abu Ghraib/War on Terror novel, its approach to these subjects is indirect. For Georgiana Banita, who focuses on the parallels between the racial tension on Chicago after the Lazarus affair and the atmosphere of post-9/11 America it is ‘more of a post-9/11 novel than it cares to acknowledge’ (210).

day he might watch her in the operating theatre ‘her hands up to their wrists in somebody else’s mind, her quiet power exuding through her blood-stained surgical gown’ (278). Rora, on the other hand, is a compulsive fabricator of implausible tales in which he casts himself as the central protagonist. In Sarajevo before the war, Brik writes, there was a ‘kind of unspoken belief that everyone could be whatever they claimed they were. . . . it was easy to choose to believe him; you could choose to trust his stories because they were good’ (20). In Sarajevo before the war, Brik and his friends were beguiled by the stories that Rora told.

Rora’s capacity for storytelling bears some superficial resemblance to *The Lazarus Project* as a whole, and, as we shall see, it is fundamental to the novel’s plot. Brik’s description of the kind of tall tales that Rora would tell as a teenager in Sarajevo might also describe something about the aesthetics of the novel we are reading, and its particular use of photographs alongside the text. One of Rora’s stories as told by Brik:

In Sweden he had had a guaranteed place in bed with an older woman who showered him with gifts—he would pull apart his shirt and offer us a thumb-thick golden necklace for inspection. She let him drive her Porsche, and would have given it to him if he’d wanted it; he showed us a picture of the Porsche. (20)

So, one of Rora’s tricks as a storyteller is to offer an object—a picture, a necklace—as evidence in support of whatever story he is telling. Even if the evidence he puts forward is hardly convincing, it nevertheless highlights the always arbitrary relationship between world and language, a theme which courses through the novel, not least in its use of photography. The photograph possesses two seemingly contradictory qualities: on the one hand, its indexicality; on the other, its vulnerability to interpretation. In this sense, a photograph is the product of a direct encounter with a really existing object. A photograph is not, as John Berger writes, ‘impregnated by experience or consciousness’ (‘Appearances’ 95). And yet, this aura of the photograph as an attestation that ‘*the thing has been there*’ remains in some form in the way photographs are utilized in museum spaces as well as novelistic engagements with memorial culture (Barthes, *Camera* 76, original emphasis). On a certain level, we can understand this to mean that for a photograph to have meaning it must be assigned a place in relationship to a narrative—the abyss must be

reinvested with story. When Rora hands his picture around as he tells his story, he uses this inherent instability of the photograph to his advantage.

Brik describes his memory rituals before he goes to sleep:

Often, before I went to sleep. I remembered – or I should say I tried not to forget. Before I passed out, I recollected particular moments in slumberous tranquillity; I replayed conversations; I reflected upon smells and colors; I remembered myself as I used to be, twenty years before, or earlier that day. The ritual was my nightly prayer, a contemplation of my presence in the world. (126)

This passage expresses Brik's belief in the importance and certainty of memory, expressing a notion of memory as the glue of identity, yet his 'nightly prayer' to the god of memory, he explains, 'often got out of hand: possible stories sprouted from the recalled instants and images' (126). These memories now contaminated with the stains of fiction would turn 'unnoticeably into a dream' lost on waking, but occasionally reemerging 'violently', 'like a corpse released from the bottom of the lake' (127).

Part of the recollection ritual was admitting the defeat, recognizing that I could never remember everything. I had no choice but to remember just miniscule fragments, well aware that in no future would I be able to reconstruct the whole out of them. My dreams were but a means of forgetting, they were the branches tied to the galloping horses of our days, the emptying of the garbage so that tomorrow—assuming there would be a tomorrow—could be filled up with new life. (127)

The logic of this movement from memory through to fiction is repeated in various forms throughout the novel.

One common trope of contemporary American fiction is that of the American in Europe, usually in search of their roots or in self-imposed exile. In *Everything is Illuminated*, Jonathan Safran Foer travels to Ukraine to investigate the history of his grandfather's past. In Ben Lerner's *Leaving the Atocha Station* (2011), Adam Gordon is a young American poet on a fellowship in Madrid. In Greg Baxter's *The Apartment* (2012), the anonymous narrator searches for an apartment in an unnamed European city that evokes Vienna or Budapest. In these novels, Europe is seen as an historical space opposed to the dehistoricized landscapes of postmodern America, although the protagonists in most of these novels usually find History relatively hard to track down. The pull towards Europe is explained at the end of Sam Lipsyte's *The*

Ask (2010), where the narrator, Milo, muses on the eventual whereabouts of Don, an unhinged, emotionally-scarred soldier, who has vanished with a pot of money. Milo imagines Don in Europe:

Maybe Don would finally know that fallen joy, the empty liberation, of drinking an espresso or a crisp white ale and then strolling along some worn battlement where young men once lay in heaps, hacked and gored by halberds and axes and pikes, smashed by siege stones, and the women and children and old men lay nearby in other shit-streaked heaps, raped, dead of fever, all this slaughter just a little historical entertainment between café stops, the horror far in the past, bound up in modes of thought and styles of hosiery humankind would never abide again. (295)

It is not that history is still alive in Europe, Milo suggests, but Europe is the epicentre of ‘historical entertainment’, dark tourism; to mangle Jameson’s words, Europe is where the pastiche of history hurts.

While on the surface, Brik and Rora’s voyage to Eastern Europe appears to serve as a voyage into the past much like the one that Jonathan Safran Foer (the character) makes in *Everything is Illuminated*, European History for Brik and Rora, as refugees of the Bosnian war, is contaminated by their own personal histories and memories. As Elaine Blair observes, Brik ‘is not an ordinary young American on a Jewish heritage tour, but a refugee from another of the twentieth century’s disasters’ (56). Indeed Brik shares with Hemon—as well as Josef Pronek, the focus of Hemon’s first novel *Nowhere Man: The Pronek Fantasies* (2002)—the fortuitous experience which saw him leave Sarajevo on a month long cultural exchange program in 1992, leaving him an accidental refugee in the United States when war irrupted in the former Yugoslavia. However, Hemon’s and his characters’ migrant statuses can be seen in a different light to Salman Rushdie’s statement in *Shame* (1983) that ‘it is the fate of the migrant to be stripped of history’ (63). Rushdie’s idealized image of the migrant overlapped with a postmodern celebration of self-invention and fluid notions of identity. In today’s globalized world and the developments in communication technology, as Hemon notes in an interview, the migrant is not cut off from his previous life in the way that she was in the past. For Hemon, the ‘multiplicity of identities’ produced by the migrant condition ‘are not necessarily mutually exclusive and they don’t create a vacuum but rather create an overlapping space where interesting things happen’ (‘Exile’). Caren Irr has noted a

shift in the genre of expatriate fiction in the twenty-first-century American novel, a shift away from what she calls the ‘modernist expatriate’s sometimes ecstatic sense of release’. The twenty-first-century migrant novel, Irr argues, is characterised by ‘an evacuated nostalgia that invokes while refusing sentimentality about origins’. Such novels turn not on a narrative of self-invention and possibility, but on an ‘intensified perception of an other with whom [the narrator] retains some close identification’. The contemporary expatriate novel, Irr argues, describes ‘a world of conflict, antagonism, and affection—a world in which space is politically marked, even if a specific political ideology is rarely affirmed’ (677).

In *The Counterlife*, Philip Roth writes, in the voice of Zuckerman, that the Jews ‘are to history what Eskimos are to snow’, a comment which typifies both Roth’s and his character’s perpetual struggle with essentialist notions of identity (326). Yet the phrase equally captures the specifically Jewish focus, filtered through history of the Holocaust, of much of contemporary memorial culture, in which the Jew is typically presented as the survivor or witness to the Holocaust, which is seen as the ultimate example of historical reality.³¹ Indeed, Stefan Maechler points to this privileged status of the Holocaust victim in cultural memory to explain the controversy surrounding Benjamin Wilkomirski’s *Fragments* (1996) when it was discovered that Wilkomirski, whose text had been presented as testimony, was not a survivor, and not Jewish; his real name was Bruno Grosjean.³² In order to make sense of his confused history, writes Maechler, Grosjean ‘became a Jew, the prototypical outsider in the modern world’ (*Wilkomirski* 278). Maechler explains,

Human beings have a need to secure their own identity with a coherent personal history and thus to establish themselves in relation to others. Wilkomirski certainly had some distressing recollections that could not be integrated into a meaningful story and he had gaps in his memory that could not be filled. His first four and a half years were completely closed to him by his adoption. Paradoxically, to make sense of his own story he selected the senseless story of the Holocaust; to tell his own tale he took the supposedly untellable. Thus, he acquired not only a biography packed with the weight of the

³¹ Sander Gilman writes that the ‘multicultural image of the Jew remains that of the ultimate victim’ (176).

³² Elena Lappin’s ‘The Man with Two Heads’ and Philip Gourevitch’s ‘The Memory Thief’ are both good introductions to the Wilkomirski affair.

century but also an explanation of why his past made no sense and could only be partly recalled. ('Wilkomirski' 86)

Grosjean's re-invention of himself as the Jewish survivor Wilkomirski, whether the product of a deliberate fraud or a self-delusion, only worked because of the particular place ascribed to the Holocaust survivor in popular culture. In *The Lazarus Project*, when his wife Mary hears of Brik's decision to write the story of Lazarus Averbuch she is sceptical, in part because she finds it pretentious for Brik to write the tale of a struggling immigrant when his own 'American life was nothing to complain about', but also because he had to 'know a lot about history to write about it' and 'how could I write about Jews when I wasn't one?' (*Lazarus* 41-2).

This issue of Brik's essential non-Jewishness runs through the book. Inevitably, Brik and Rora's retracing of Lazarus's steps from Lviv to Chicago at the beginning of the twentieth century is buried beneath all of the other catastrophes of twentieth century history. Their travels take them to Chernivtsi (formerly Czernowitz), a place where Lazarus would have existed for a time as a refugee fleeing the pogrom in Kishinev to the borders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and where the obvious stop is at the local Jewish Centre. In a dusty office of the unsignposted centre, Brik explains his project to Chaim Gruzenberg, the man running the place, whose response to Lazarus's story is that it was 'so long ago, a whole horrible century ago. So many things happened since then, so much to remember, and forget' (*Lazarus* 155). Brik wants to find a person he can interview, someone who might remember, but, Chaim explains, any such people still living are now 'old, sick people, dying slowly. . . . Why would they want to bring in more death from before they were born?' (156). The only remaining Averbuch in the town in which '[h]alf of the Jews in this part were named Averbuch' is old and 'has lost all her marbles' (157). Chaim is resistant to Brik's questions; the purpose of the centre is not to drag up the past, but to provide support for the elderly Jews of the town, 'those who had no family left'. He is 'not an expert in history', he tells Brik, 'history fed nobody' (156). At the end of their conversation, it transpires that Chaim has believed Brik to be Jewish, asking him to talk about the centre back home at his synagogue, and to ask for donations. Brik does not contradict him because, he explains, 'that would have converted everything I talked about into deception' (158).

Later in Chisinau, Brik and Rora visit the Chisinau Jewish Community Centre guided by Iuliana, a twenty-five-year old volunteer. When Brik tells Iuliana that he is interested in the Pogrom of 1903, she shows him to a room devoted to the subject, with photographs on the wall:

Bearded, mauled corpses lined up on the hospital floor, the glassy eyes facing the ceiling stiffly; a pile of battered bodies; a child with its mouth agape ; a throng of bandaged, terrified survivors; Krusheven the rabid anti-Semite with his pointy beard and curled moustache and the calm, confident demeanour of someone wielding the power of life and death. (230)

Below the photographs, there is a glass case containing the front page of a newspaper and a 'threadbare prayer shawl' (230). Accompanying the artefacts, Iuliana provides a detached commentary which accentuates her conditioned overfamiliarity with the material:

“The hundred years since the pogrom that devastated Kishinev have done little to heal our wounds or grief,” Iuliana said. “The Kishinev pogrom, far from the first or last attack on a helpless community, is indelibly stamped upon our consciousnesses.” (230)

As Iuliana continues to narrate the history of the pogrom, Brik bemoans his inability to 'enter deeply into the history she was telling' when instead all he can do is focus on her delivery and Rora's camera in the background (231). It is only when Brik tells Iuliana the story of Lazarus that she is suddenly overcome with emotion; her grandmother's surname was Averbuch.

When Brik encounters Rora for the first time since before the outbreak of war at the Bosnian Independence Day celebration, he recalls their final meeting in Sarajevo in 1992. Rora had just returned from Berlin; Brik about to embark on the month long trip to America from which he would not return. On that meeting, Brik recalls, Rora told him about a scam that he had running in Berlin, selling pieces of the Berlin wall to 'American tourists chasing the shadows of true experience' (21-2). Again we see this supposedly American obsession with truth and tangibility. Except, what Rora was selling were not pieces of the wall but spray-painted blocks of concrete broken into chunks; with larger pieces the buyer would be provided with a certificate of authenticity, signed by Rora himself (22). Once Rora almost gets caught by the police while 'bargaining with a couple from Indiana who carried empty rucksacks to fill them with concrete history', as they are described, but he gets out of

it by explaining that he is selling ‘replicas’ (22). Brik concludes his account of that moment, recalling Rora’s final piece of advice about going to America:

Over there anything is true, he said, and turned away, walking back into a blizzard – or so I like to picture it, creatively, retroactively. In reality, however, he walked me to the Pofalići intersection, where he flagged a cab and I waited for a street car. In both versions, he dropped a glove without noticing. I picked it up and took it home, where it was to disappear in the war. (22)

These final lines of Brik’s first chapter are typical of Hemon’s vertiginous style, stories within stories, stories that split into two only to converge on a single detail. But there is a certain logic that repeats itself throughout – here, the detail of the glove and the piece of fraudulent concrete. Memories and histories are tainted with the work of imagination; a story can be judged good or bad, but not true or false – and yet, here is a picture, here is a concrete block, in ‘both versions’ of Brik’s recollection there is the dropped glove. As Rora’s sister Azra says near the end of the novel, ‘Something is always true’ (293). This phrase echoes back through Rora’s stories and the picture of Lazarus’s corpse.

III: Living history: death and the photograph

Brik muses on the nature of the dead:

It is so much easier to deal with the dead than with the living. The dead are out of the way, merely characters from stories about the past, never again unreadable, no misunderstandings possible, the pain coming from them stable and manageable. Nor do you have to explain yourself to them, to justify the fact of your life. (*Lazarus* 107)

The image of Lazarus Averbuch provides a useful entrance into the aesthetics of *The Lazarus Project*, if not only because it raises the question about the use of photographs in the novel. If Brik’s narrative of the historical events of the Lazarus affair are, as Wood suggest, an ‘archival fantasy’, then it is through the use of photographs that we can ask to what extent the novel as a whole might be read in such a way. The camera is ‘an archiving machine’, writes Okwui Enwezor, the very desire ‘to make a photograph, to document an event, to compose statements as unique events, is directly related to the aspiration to produce an archive’ (12). However, this archival aspiration is never neutral. The power to ‘see and record’ reality is, as John Tagg argues, invested in the camera by state apparatuses that

‘guarantee the authority of the images it constructs to stand as evidence or register a truth’ (64). Indeed, this gaze of power is manifest in the images of Lazarus Averbuch, to which we will return further on.

Each chapter of *The Lazarus Project* is accompanied by a single uncaptioned monochromatic image centred against a black background on the verso page; the photographs’ softened edges and the stark contrast of whites and greys against black suggest the flicker of a projector. The relationship between the image and its accompanying text is not always clear. We might read these images as visual headings to the otherwise untitled, unnumbered chapters (Ward 196).³³ Occasionally, a detail in the narrative suggests an image’s illustrative function, as in one chapter which is accompanied by an image of a small black dog (*Lazarus* 125); the relevance of the image only becomes apparent in the final paragraphs of the chapter in which Brik witnesses a dog being thrown into a bin full of glass bottles by a drunk couple outside his hotel bedroom (134). Other images evoke rather than illustrate, such as blurred images taken from a moving vehicle which suggest Brik and Rora’s movement from one place on their trip to another. Such images are used alongside Brik’s contemporary travel narrative and are drawn from those captured by Božović on the trip taken with Hemon for research into his novel.³⁴ Photographs that are presented alongside the historical/archival narrative, on the other hand, are drawn entirely from the archive of the now defunct *Chicago Daily News* at the Chicago Historical Society, as credited in the acknowledgements at the end of the novel. These two sets of photographs are integral to the dual structure of the novel as it flits between the events of the early twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

While I intend to focus on the use of the archival photographs and their function in relation to *The Lazarus Project*’s status as historical fiction, it is worth bearing in mind the effect of combining the two series—Božović’s and the

³³ Given the ambiguity/obliqueness that imbues many of the images, we might alternatively see them as epigraphs, whose relationship to the text that accompanies them is only produced in retrospect through the interpretative processes of reading.

³⁴ This trip is documented in an essay, ‘The Lazarus Project: One Writer’s Research’, published in *The Paris Review* in 2005, and illustrated with some of Božović’s photographs, some of which has been adapted—and fictionalized—for the later novel. The official website for *The Lazarus Project* collects the photographs used in the novel alongside others not used; each accompanied by a (sometimes obliquely relevant) passage taken from the novel.

archive's—in the text. Before we come across the acknowledgements at the end of the text, the origins of the photographs are obscured. In some sense, the photographs are used to create an effect of reality, such as in the use of the image of the dog. The photograph itself does not show the dog near or in a glass bin, but it does suggest that the dog in the story is in some way related to the real dog in the photograph.

Similarly, the first chapter is accompanied by an archival photograph of the exterior of the home of George Shippy, 31 Lincoln Place, Chicago, taken in 1908. This information is scrawled in white handwriting along the top edge of the photograph. A white cross also written on its surface tells us that this is a crime scene.

In such moments, the narrative draws upon that indexical quality of the photograph which Roland Barthes reflects on in *Camera Lucida*, when he describes a photograph of some Polish soldiers. 'What I see', Barthes writes, 'is not a memory, an imagination, a reconstitution . . . but reality in a past state: at once the past and the real' (82). Barthes reinforces this statement when he insists that the photograph 'never lies', qualifying his argument to mean that while a photograph can, indeed, lie 'as to the meaning of the thing, being by nature *tendentious*', it can never lie 'as to its existence' (*Camera* 87, original emphasis). Although any certainty about the photograph's direct connection to its referent has been shattered with the development of digital technologies, it remains a paradigm for the way we continue to read and relate to photographs. Yet to point out the indexical relationship of the photograph to its referent is not to say that it has the capacity to register objective historical truth. Susan Sontag offers the example of Mathew Brady's photograph 'The Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter, Gettysburg' (1863) as an example of how early photographers were at ease with arranging the composition of a photographic scene in a way that a contemporary war photographer presumably would not be. Brady and his team moved the soldier's body to a cove to obtain a more dramatic effect for their picture, reminding us that even before the advent of digital photography, the photograph's content could be tampered with. The odd thing, Sontag notes, 'is not that so many of the iconic news photos of the past . . . appear to have been staged. It is that we are surprised to learn they were staged, and always disappointed' (*Regarding* 49). And yet, despite this, even a photograph such as Brady's still possesses the same unmediated relation to its referent. Although the camera does not

register that the soldier's body was moved, it still registers the presence of a body at a specific site and at a particular moment. The image, writes Barthes, 'is not the reality, but at least it is its perfect *analogon*, and it is just this analogical perfection which, to common sense, defines the photograph' (*Responsibility* 5). This is what Barthes calls the photograph's 'denoted' message (*Responsibility* 6), the quality of the photograph to suggest a direct and unmediated relationship to reality.³⁵ Yet, just as the photograph exhibits some incontrovertible existential truth, its ultimate meaning is always left open to interpretation.

It is, for Barthes, the photograph's total immersion in its denotedness which distinguishes it from other forms of representational art in which the denoted is bound to a 'connoted' message, which is the way in which the society represents, to a certain extent, what it thinks of the *analogon*' (*Responsibility* 6, original emphasis). What Barthes means here is that, for example, when a painter paints a scene from reality, the form of the representation by necessity incorporates the painter's attitude to the thing represented; it is not, as with a photograph, a direct translation of the thing into its medium. Unlike other representational forms, writes Barthes,

in front of a photograph, the feeling of "denotation", or if you prefer, of analogical plenitude, is so powerful that the description of a photograph is literally impossible; for to *describe* consists precisely in joining to the denoted message a second message or relay, drawn from a code which is language and which inevitable constitutes, whatever care is taken to be exact, a connotation in relation to the photographic analogue: to describe then is not only to be inexact or incomplete, it is to change structures, it is to signify other than what is shown. (*Responsibility* 6-7, original emphasis)

To describe a photograph, then, is to join its denoted message to a linguistic message that is inherently connotative and which, as with language in general, falls inevitably short of the *real* thing. Though Barthes's terminology is helpful for understanding how photography is used in the mass media, it does not account for how it might work in relation to a piece of fiction.

In a fictional work with realist ambitions, the denotative qualities of a photograph can be used to evoke a sense of the reality of the world which the text is

³⁵ It is this quality of photography, the illusion of its immediacy, which allows Ulrich Baer to link it to the idea of traumatic memory. Baer writes that as 'trauma blocks routine mental processes from converting an experience into memory or forgetting, it parallels the defining structure of photography, which also traps an event during its occurrence while blocking its transformations into memory' (9).

describing. Silke Horstkotte suggests that W. G. Sebald uses such an effect in *Austerlitz* (2001). '[W]hen a photograph is inserted into an imaginary text it opens up a spatial gap that acts as a window through which the reader may see a layer of reality behind or beyond that described by the text' (qtd. in P Davis). The notion of the 'behind' or the 'beyond' of the text suggests that the photograph creates an illusion of depth; it evokes the real world that exists outside of the capacity of language to represent it. In Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn* (originally published 1995; English translation 1998), an excellent example of this is a double-page image of bodies scattered amongst a forest landscape, which appears close to a reference to Bergen-Belsen (59-61). The image is clearly that of a historical massacre, and due to the context, we can assume that it relates to the Holocaust, but it is impossible to date or name the image purely from its place in Sebald's text. It is as if the photograph has a purely indexical function pointing to the historical reality of the genocide outside of any attempt at narrativization. The fact that the blurry image spreads across two pages also has the effect of displacing any text that might have been there. The photograph is not there to illustrate; it intrudes upon and disrupts the text. Yet, to some extent, Horstkotte's point suggests that any photograph in its denotative capacity would perform a similar realist function, in that on some level every photograph simply points to 'reality in a past state'.

Hemon certainly appears to use photographs in such a way in *The Lazarus Project*. In particular, the photographs that accompany the travel narrative in their vague, ambiguous relationship to the text appear to have this indexical role of pointing to a reality that is beyond the fiction. However, there are a number of examples where the narrative structure employs the photograph's inherent indexicality to destabilize rather than reaffirm the notion of the 'beyond' of the text. The image of Shippy's home, for example, can be read as performing the role of an archival trace that provides the historical narrative with an aura of authority, yet the text itself uses a number of techniques to undermine such authority. Peter Davis has argued that the use of photographs as part of a fictional text can become a 'force of interruption to the reader's gaze' which transforms the reader's 'focused gaze upon the text' into a 'double gaze across image and text',

And because a photograph offers evidence of ‘having been’, this double gaze within an imaginative narrative becomes an interrogation of the very space of the novel. In a sense the double gaze becomes an attempt to establish a meaning (connotation) of the photograph beyond its denoted message. (P Davis, ‘Double’)

Davis’s notion of the photograph as interruption is certainly useful, especially if we consider it in the work of a writer such as W. G. Sebald. However, in *The Lazarus Project*, the photographs, presented at the beginning of chapters rather than in the middle of text are not so much an interruption, as a threshold. When the reader first sees the photograph of the Shippy residence, there is no immediate way of knowing its significance to the story; it is only later, having read the chapter, that the photograph takes on a more fixed meaning. In this sense, Hemon’s novel encourages not only a ‘double gaze’ as the reader shifts his or her focus back and forward between text and image, but it also necessitates a double reading of the photograph. The presentation of the image before the chapter forces us to read the photograph twice; the first time as pure denotation, the second in relation to its accompanying narrative. The first time through, the image is merely a house, and because of the age of the photograph, a house in the past. It might be said that the image simply evokes pastness. After, we have read the narrative of Lazarus’s killing, the photograph becomes impregnated with the narrative. ‘Here, this happened.’

Yet, at other moments, as Sonia Weiner notes, ‘Hemon purposefully allows his narrative to clash with the images, a strategy consistent with his belief in the plurality of truths and in his understanding of the ways in which representation (verbal and visual) can distort’ (226). Weiner gives the example of the image of Isador, Lazarus’s friend, which appears to have been taken at the police station where the investigation was carried out (266). In the novel, however, Isadore goes on the run from the police and eventually evades them by being transported in a coffin, a story which contradicts the information that the photograph provides. The ‘clash’ demonstrates not merely that language falls short in representing reality, it asserts the capacity of fiction to say something that is other than the ‘truth’. W. G. Sebald describes the way his narratives originate from his collection of found photographs.³⁶

³⁶ The use of photographs alongside fictional texts long pre-dates Sebald, although Sebald’s influence can certainly be seen in Hemon’s use of photography in *The Lazarus Project*. For a useful introduction to the use of photographs in fictional texts, see Dow Adams

You have a very real nucleus and around this nucleus a large empty space. You yourself don't know the context of the depicted person and which landscape it is. . . . [Y]ou have to start thinking hypothetically. This track inevitably leads you into fiction and storytelling. (Scholz 104)

Sebald suggests that fiction is an inevitable response to the empty space evoked by the photograph; this comment tells us something, perhaps, about the way Sebald makes no mention of the photograph of the bodies in the forest in *The Rings of Saturn*.

The history of writing on photography is littered with reflections on its relationship to death, perhaps most effectively expressed in André Bazin's notion that the development of photography situates it as the inheritor, after sculpture and painting, of the 'mummy complex' in human psychology. 'To preserve, artificially, his bodily appearance', Bazin writes, 'is to snatch it away from the flow of time, to stow it away really, so to speak, in the hold of life' (9). Likewise, for Susan Sontag, a photograph is not only an image, in the way that a painting is an image, 'it is also a trace, something directly stencilled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask' (*Photography* 154). Barthes writes of photography as 'a kind of primitive theatre, a kind of *Tableau Vivant*, a figuration of the motionless and made-up face beneath which we see the dead.' (*Camera* 32). One of *The Lazarus Project*'s most striking images reverses Barthes's image: a young man is seated in a chair, hands rested on his lap; his head held for display by an older man dressed in a long black coat and hat. The older man stares directly into the camera; the younger man's eyes appear to be half open. On the left hand side, we can see the words 'Capt. Evans', and down the right, 'Lazarus Averbuch'. Wood captures the peculiarity of the image: 'Averbuch's eyes are not quite closed, his lips are pursed in vague puzzlement, and he looks not dead but, rather, slightly disgruntled at the prospect of being woken' (Wood, 'Unforgotten').

In Krzysztof Kieslowski's *A Short Film about Killing* (1988), Jacek, the central character, asks a girl in a shop if it is possible tell from a photograph whether a person is alive or dead. The girl laughs at his silly question. Jacek wants a picture of his dead sister enlarged. The photograph of his sister at her first communion does not register her future death, of course. If death is present in the photo, it is only

through the filter of Jacek's knowledge. The photograph of Lazarus achieves an inversion of this logic: Lazarus's posture, his positioning or his being positioned, suggests discomfort but not necessarily death. The freezing of his body in the instant of the photograph seems to reinvest the dead body with life. These two photographs—of Lazarus's body and Jacek's sister—highlight John Berger's assertion that '[w]hen we find a photograph meaningful, we are lending it a past and a future' (89). To lend a photograph a 'past and a future' is to construct a narrative that fills the 'abyss', to use John Berger's words, between 'the moment recorded and the present moment of looking' (John Berger 87). This abyss is the source of the photograph's inherent ambiguity with relation to history. We cannot say for certain from looking only at the photograph whether Lazarus is alive or dead—the knowledge of his death comes from outside the photograph, in this case, the accompanying fiction—and yet this information fundamentally alters our understanding of the photograph. In a similar way to the double reading of the photograph of Shippy's house, as we read the accompanying text to the Lazarus photograph, his body exists, like Schrödinger's cat, between life and death. In this striking image the question of resurrecting the past and the relationship between fiction and reality intersect.

This strange, ambiguous space between life and death is essential to the novel. In one chapter, Olga tries to compose a letter to her mother in Moldova to inform her of Lazarus's murder; she even considers telling her that Lazarus has found a job and is planning to get married (90). Brik reflects on Olga's letter and the months it would have taken to arrive: 'As it travelled, Lazarus was still alive for her: she worried about his working so hard. . . . She hoped he would marry a nice Jewish girl. . . . Then she got a letter from Olga and read it and reread it, arguing against it, thinking up misunderstandings that could be undone so he could be restored to life' (74). In the months between Lazarus's death and his mother's being informed of his death in this situation, Lazarus is still alive for her. What appears as a gap between life and death can be conceived in Lacanian terms as the gap between two deaths; as Slavoj Žižek explains, 'between real (biological) death and its symbolization' (*Sublime* 135). While Lazarus is biologically dead, he continues to exist as part of his

mother's symbolic universe until she is informed in the letter. This structure of private mourning can be extended to understand wider historical processes.

For Žižek, a society's coherent sense of identity and continuity with the past is achieved through a constant process of reordering, which he describes according to the notion of the symptom. When we find meaning in a remnant of the past, such as a photograph, this meaning is not something that inheres in the object itself, but is dependent on the one who recognises the trace ascribing it a position in the symbolic order. In this way, symptoms, Žižek writes, 'are meaningless traces, their meaning is not discovered, excavated from the hidden depth of the past, but constructed retroactively' (55-56). This process is founded on the gap between the real and its reinscription in the symbolic order, the very gap that exists between biological and symbolic death. In this sense, the novel's attempt to retrieve the story of Lazarus from the archive, resurrects him from one symbolic order to retranscribe him in another. The photo of Lazarus is presented alongside a chapter that tells the story of the aftermath of Lazarus's shooting. In this sense, it performs, like the photograph of Shippy's house, the function of an archival trace. Yet, at the same time, it suggests an unsettling instability in the photograph's ability to tell us anything about the past. The photograph as a (meaningless) trace confirms the existence of the real in its unique relationship with the past just as it remains open to the whims of ideological fantasy: whatever ideology (memory/fiction) seeks in the photograph, it will not only find, but will find confirmed.

For Walter Benjamin, it is the task of the historical materialist to 'brush history against the grain' in order to resist the idea of history propelled forward in a 'storm' of progress, that could only be what it did become, a history of the victors that consolidates the present (*Illuminations* 248-9). To brush against the grain is to be conscious of the vulnerability of the past. It is to realise that 'every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably' (*Illuminations* 247). Thus, for Benjamin, the historical act (in the sense of both writing history and acting in history) is not the reconstruction of 'the way it really was' (Ranke qtd. in Benjamin, *Illuminations* 247),

It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a

moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it. (*Illuminations* 247)

In this way, *The Lazarus Project* can be understood as a work of historical materialism both in the way it rescues Lazarus Averbuch's story from the dustbin of history, and in the way it exposes the capacity to make meaning from the historical trace. As with Rora's stories, Hemon's novel utilizes the power of fiction to reinvest the dead past with life. History is always a matter of fictions that we believe are worth telling and our memories of the stories that we believe are worth remembering, and these are always moulded in response to our conscious and unconscious concerns of the present. Hemon's self-reflexive fiction exploits the illusion of historical truth invoked by the photographs to give us a brief glimpse of how these processes work.

Conclusion

Nothing can attest that the real is the real, nothing but the system of fictions wherein it plays the role of the real.

Alain Badiou, *The Century* (52)

This thesis explores some of the curious knots where literary and critical discourses cross with notions about memory and trauma that pervade contemporary culture. In the 1990s, theorists such as Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub and Lawrence Langer reintroduced a notion of the real into critical language through the application of theories of trauma to the reading of literary texts. The influence of this work cannot be overestimated. Literary and cultural criticism has come to rely on the Caruthian model of trauma as a ‘speechless void, unrepresentable, inherently pathological, timeless, and repetitious’ (Balaev 2). This model for understanding trauma, and its application to literary criticism, is problematic not only because of the assumptions it makes about the working of the traumatized psyche, drawn, as Ruth Leys and Allan Young show, from only one contested school of the scientific literature. Not only is the experience of trauma more variable and complex than the trauma theory adopted widely in the humanities allows, but even if this model were universally accepted by the scientific community, its usefulness to the interpretation of literary texts would nevertheless be questionable. This is because trauma theory is underpinned by a theory of language as symptom and text as testimony which grossly oversimplifies the literary text’s relationship to history, ideology and the real. This thesis sets out to resist the theoretical creep that would see all history as trauma and all text as testimony, and instead reasserts the necessary and unavoidable role that fiction plays in constructing our imaginative relationship to the past.

The present study proposes that trauma theory be seen as just one aspect of a more general tendency towards the memorialization of history in contemporary culture. This trend is characterized by its emphasis on the punctuality of the traumatic moment, the fetishization of the historical trace, the privileging of witness subjectivity, and the ethical impetus to bear witness to the traumas of twentieth century history through practices of remembrance. Underpinning these central themes of memorial culture is an idea of history as trauma, impossible to

comprehend and resistant to representation, whose truth is only approachable through modes of practice that create a feeling of proximity to whatever traces of the event still remain, whether these be artefacts, ruins, writing, or the scars of memory in the mind of the survivor. The rise of trauma discourse can thus be seen to go hand in hand with an archival drive to assemble and preserve the hundreds of thousands of Holocaust testimonies in institutions such as Yad Vashem or Fortunoff Video Archive that have been established since the 1980s, as well as the memorial museums and public monuments to historical catastrophe that have become a feature of late twentieth century urban landscapes.

Furthermore, following Fredric Jameson, these memorial tendencies can be contextualized as more generally complementary with some of the features of the culture of late capitalism at the 'end of history'. If, as Jameson argues, postmodernism can be understood as a 'crisis of historicity' (*Postmodernism* 25), part of this crisis is the turn towards ever more experiential, personal forms of relating to history, as a consolatory response to the disorientating speeds of information and ideas in our technologically advanced global marketplace. The aesthetic practices of memorial museums are designed to evoke a sense of the presence of the past and to evoke feelings of loss, sorrow, and helplessness. Yet, in contemporary memorial culture, the ethical imperative to bear witness to historical trauma comes at the expense of developing understanding and critique. Within this context, the specific notion of trauma through which our narratives of the past are filtered neatly overlaps with 'end of history' discourse. In the first place, the focus on the punctuality of the traumatic moment, at the expense of more complex ideas about the political and ideological historical processes, asserts an idea of the historical subject as passive victim rather than active participant. History appears as an irresistible force of nature rather than the result of the choices and actions of historical human beings. Secondly, trauma theory reasserts a notion of historical truth, albeit now rediscovered in the traumatized mind of the survivor, at a time when historical authority has seemingly been discredited. The objects in the museum become traces of this 'unpresentable' history, as are the traumatic symptoms of the survivor. At the 'end of history', we find history has been transformed into memory and trauma.

To read a literary text as if it were testimony relies on a complex tension between memory, history and trauma. Here, we find a transformation of the understanding of trauma from a private, psychological phenomenon pertaining to the experience of one individual into an idea of historical trauma inscribed into the fabric of textual production; this transformation encompasses a transition from the idea of history as discourse into a concept of the pure unmediated historicity of the traumatic symptom. The witness's trauma comes to be seen as symptomatic of the reality of the past experience, even if she struggles to communicate that experience. The language of trauma thus attempts to resolve an anxiety about historical representation; if language reorders and manipulates, then it is supposedly only in the traumatic symptoms which resist and deform the surface of the narrative that we can be certain of our proximity to 'historical truth'. In this sense, we can read the turn to trauma, testimony and the witness as a response to the perceived artificiality of postmodernism.

The question of trauma as an aesthetic logic which is at the heart of this thesis, inspired by Jacques Rancière's work on the relationship between politics and aesthetics. In the last decades Rancière has developed his ideas about this relationship through his notion of the 'distribution of the sensible'. At the core of Rancière's project is an ongoing disagreement with Althusser's theory of ideology; Rancière rejects the notion of false consciousness which requires a critical art to emancipate the masses from their real conditions of existence. For Rancière, such thinking only serves to maintain the authority of the master who happens to be blessed with the capacity to see through the ideological conditions to which the masses are supposedly blind. For Rancière, the politics of aesthetics is not related to this myth of ideological revelation. Both politics and aesthetics have the capacity to alter the distribution of the sensible, the contours and terrain of what it is possible to think and see.

Jane Kilby argues that trauma theory 'demands a new form of reading' (218), but to read literature through the lens of trauma means that a certain distribution of the sensible exists in which certain forms of artistic practice are understood to have traumatic origins and thus interpreted as symptoms of historical trauma. To read a literary text for its traumatic symptoms means to presuppose the relationship of the

text to history. Every sign of fragmentary narrative, paradox, contradiction, manipulation of temporality, linguistic complexity, metafictional play is found to point to the same conclusion, namely that it points to the text's fraught relationship with some inarticulable traumatic history. But the fact of a novel's being about a traumatic historical event can only come from its language, not its silences.

Each of the texts studied in this thesis can be seen as a response to these concerns and obsessions of contemporary memorial culture at the 'end of history'. *Operation Shylock* and *The Lazarus Project* make explicit something that *Atonement* and *Fatherland* do only implicitly, something that Jameson draws attention to when he defines literature as 'an operation we perform on reality' ('On' 2). Jameson uses the term 'literature' in a similar way to how Rancière uses the term 'fiction'. Rancière defines fictions as '*material* rearrangements of signs and images, relationships between what is seen and what is said, between what is done and what can be done' (Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics* 39, original emphasis). Both share an understanding of the implicit relationship that every work of fiction, indeed any work of the imagination, has with politics. Each sees literature and fiction, respectively, as a way of describing that imaginative impulse by which human beings make sense of their world but also make the world sensible. Trauma theory has been so focused on the former that it has all but forgotten how intricately it is tied into the latter. That is to say, every imaginative act of representation is equally an act of production. The narratives that we tell about the past, and the aesthetic forms that we use to construct them, influence and direct the contours of what is visible and thinkable about our present day situation. Thus what is at stake in these tendencies of contemporary culture is our ability to think ourselves historically, as actors in history rather than passive witnesses to the traumatic past.

These tensions can be found both in Ian McEwan's *Atonement* and critical responses to the novel. *Atonement* is a text both thematically and formally engaged with notions of traumatic experience. At the same time it shares some of the wider concerns of memorial culture. Briony Tallis is both witness and rememberer, protagonist and narrator. The dramatic tension of this split in Briony is reflected in the intricate metafictional structure of the novel, a technique often associated with postmodern literary aesthetics. In *Atonement*, the metafictional strategies are

intricately tied up with notions of trauma; the palimpsest of Briony's novel-within-a-novel can be read as her attempt to work through her traumatic misreading of Robbie and Cecilia's meeting at the fountain, and her feelings of guilt for the unforeseen consequences of her actions that come in the form of the lovers' deaths. However, in this case, the metafictional framework of the novel functions not to raise doubts about the nature of reality and truth but to point to a notion of the real, to 'what *really* happened', beyond the text, which is authentic but unknowable. In this way the novel utilizes techniques often assumed to be related to a postmodern aesthetic for the purpose of making us believe more fully in the real historical world represented in the novel. *Atonement's* aesthetics chimes with the wider trauma discourses of memorial culture in its conflation of the problems of historical representation with the particularities of historical witnessing, presenting us with a theory of history without historical agency; the historical actor replaced by a passive, traumatized victim.

Another shared characteristic of memorial culture and trauma theory is a fascination with the Holocaust and its perpetrators. The presence of the Holocaust at the heart of memorial culture can be explained by a number of reasons. Not least of these is the necessity to respond to the perverse logic of genocide which directs its violent impulses, as Marc Nichanian shows, to archives and memory as much as it does people. When faced with such deliberate erasure, it is a natural response to insist on remembering that which was threatened, not to mention remembering the erasure itself. Yet, if there is a generational and historical explanation for the centrality of the Holocaust in memorial culture, the forms which that remembrance takes have a wider influence as, what Michael Rothberg calls, a 'multidirectional memory' (*Multidirectional*); that is, the forms and practices that have come to be associated with the memorialization of the Holocaust inform the aesthetic practices of memory more generally. However, one effect of the memorialization of the past through the filter of such an extreme moment in history, compounded by the binary of victim and perpetrator through which affective memorial practices often perpetuate, is to project the notion of ideology into the past. In the age of postmodern incredulity, the Nazi represents to us a warning of the dangers of believing in a totalizing worldview, and the propensity of belief, in itself, to become totalizing and

totalitarian. In a world whose slogan is ‘there is no alternative’, the othering of the past consolidates and normalizes the ideology of late capitalism.

In Robert Harris’s *Fatherland*, we find this curious logic at work. *Fatherland*’s popularity might be understood by its canny tapping into this fascination with the Nazi and Nazism that pervades contemporary culture; the ghosts of Nazism reanimated by the novelty of the other world with its other history which they inhabit. Refracted in *Fatherland*’s mirror, the relationship between the present and the past, as figured through the relationship between the Nazi state and its genocide, is different from the world in which the novel was written. In *Fatherland*’s world, the genocide has been carried out to the point that there are no witnesses left. Indeed, the plot hinges on the murders of its logical final witnesses, namely the originators of the Final Solution. Despite the efficiency of the Nazi state’s genocidal machinery, however, the truth of the repressed past returns with the investigations of Xavier March and Charlie Maguire. In this sense, much as *Fatherland* veers from the facts of our world, it nevertheless retains the forms of our discourses surrounding memory and the Holocaust. It enacts our worst fears that the Holocaust might be forgotten, yet at the same time shows us that even if it were forgotten, the repressed memory could still resurface. *Fatherland* is thus an interesting text through which to consider the relationship between fiction and history. If it is to be understood as allohistorical, it nevertheless collides with the historical at certain junctures. For the novel to have an effect, it relies on a certain ability of the reader to recognise the signs of historical reality that have been modified, so, just as the genocide remains absent for the most part of the novel, its presence must be intuited by its reader for the novel to make any sense of it. In this way, *Fatherland* can be seen to restage the loss and recovery of memory of an event that by necessity it assumes is sufficiently present in cultural memory for its plot to work.

If *Atonement* and *Fatherland* can be read as examples of some of the ways that contemporary ideas about memory and trauma intersect and reproduce ‘end of history’ discourse, we find in Philip Roth’s *Operation Shylock* and Aleksandar Hemon’s *The Lazarus Project* interesting countertexts. Like *Atonement*, both of these texts utilize metafictional devices in order to unsettle the boundaries between fiction and history. In *Operation Shylock*, Roth uses a mixture of autobiography and

presentation of a number of real and fabricated documents to performatively explore the problem faced by the prosecutors at the Demjanjuk trial at the centre of the novel, namely what is the relationship between a fiction, in Rancière's sense, and the real? How to attach the testimonies of the survivors to the living body of a man identified as their persecutor forty years after the events? Roth's novel thus problematizes some of the assumptions about historical truth which *Atonement* seems to espouse. Roth's novel prises open the same kinds of gaps between language and history that MacEwan does in *Atonement*; but where MacEwan's novel does this to insist upon the innate unknowability of the real, Roth's novel demonstrates that the last word lies with the imagination and fiction; the politics of the novel lies in its attempt to highlight this ongoing dialectical instability between the real and the fictions that we construct to make sense of it, an instability which *Atonement* simultaneously exposes but seeks to close over.

Aleksandar Hemon's *The Lazarus Project* appropriates the aesthetic of contemporary memorial culture through its use of parallel narratives unfolding in the present and the past, as found in novels such as Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* to create a sense of emotional relationship between present and past. While the two novels appear to share many similarities, Hemon's calls into doubt the comforting reassurances that such a relationship to the past offers us. Where *Operation Shylock* used verifiable documents, *The Lazarus Project* uses photographs to point to the historical real. Yet the "truth" of the photographs is constantly called into question by the uneasy relationship the photographs have with its accompanying fictions. Brik, it becomes clear, uses his project to distract from his own sense of displacement as an accidental refugee of the Bosnian war, yet his research trip into the life of the murdered immigrant Lazarus Averbach a century before always fails to produce the emotional connection to history that he desires. The novel's historical fiction is mirrored by stories that Rora tells Brik about his experience during the war in Sarajevo. At the end of the novel, when Rora is murdered arbitrarily in the street, the stories of his adventures provide Brik with an explanation for the murders. It is only later when he talks to Rora's sister that he learns that most of what Rora has told him was made up. In this way the novel makes visible the dialectical relationship between the real and the fictions we construct; if historical fiction pertains to the

stories that we construct in order to retroactively make sense of an event, these fictions equally provide us with the contours of our imaginative relationship with the real. The fictions we construct about the past directly impact how we understand the present.

To paraphrase Cathy Caruth, the history of humankind is a history of the traumas we inflict on one another in the name of our beliefs and ideologies. Our collective narrative is made up of genocides, wars, nuclear bombs and gas chambers, but is also one of slavery and economic exploitation. As technology advances, we find ourselves increasingly distanced from the consequences of our decisions and actions. If part of our fascination with the figure of the Nazi is related to the capacity of a person to be both a murderer and a family man at the same time, today's technologies which make it possible for one human being in the United States to kill another in Afghanistan by remote control, or the global networks of trade which mean fashionable shoes worn in one part of the world are manufactured by the hands of enslaved children in another, only accentuates these issues. We should remember the legacies of past traumas in the hope that we might learn from the mistakes of history, and we must do our best to repair the wounds that have been inflicted. But we should be wary when our stories about the past are used to console and distract us from our complicity in the violence and brutality of the world we live in today. Our capacity to craft stories, to construct imaginary worlds of the past, to make things up, is what allows us the possibility of finding other possible futures; it is put to poor use when it is reduced to the perpetual task of bearing witness.

Works Cited

- Adorno, Theodor. 'Commitment.' *Aesthetics and Politics*. Adorno et al. London: Verso, 2007. 177-95. Print.
- . 'Cultural Criticism and Society.' *Prisms*. Trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981: 19-34. Print.
- Adorno, Theodor W. and Max Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002. Print.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. New York: Zone Books, 1999. Print.
- Albers, Stefanie and Torsten Caeners. 'The Poetics and Aesthetics of Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *English Studies* 90.6 (2009): 707-20. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 11 July 2014.
- Alexander, Jeffrey. 'On the Social Construction of Moral Universals: The "Holocaust" from War Crime to Trauma Drama.' *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Ed. Jeffrey Alexander et al. Berkeley: U of California P, 2004. 196-263. Print.
- Alphen, Ernst van. *Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature, and Theory*. Stanford: California UP, 1997. Print.
- Althusser, Louis. *Essays on Ideology*. London: Verso, 1984. Print.
- . *For Marx*. Trans. Ben Brewster. London: Allen Lane, 1969. Print.
- Amis, Martin. *Time's Arrow or the Nature of the Offence*. 1991. London: Penguin, 1992. Print.
- Anelli, Sara. 'Counterfactual Holocausts: Robert Harris' *Fatherland* and Martin Amis' *Time's Arrow*.' *Textus* 20 (2007): 407-432. Web. 28 Feb. 2010.
- Aristotle. *Poetics (Unabridged)*. Trans. S. H. Butcher. Ed. Richard Koss. Mineola, NY: Dover, 1997. Print.
- Assmann, Aleida. 'History, Memory and the Genre of Testimony.' *Poetics Today* 27.2 (2006): 261-73. *Duke UP Journals*. Web. 29 May 2014.
- Assmann, Jan. 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity.' Trans. John Czaplicka. *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125-33. *JSTOR*. Web. 3 Oct. 2012.
- Auschwitz through the Lens of the SS: Photos of Nazi Leadership at the Camp*. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d. Web. 27 Feb. 2010.
- Badiou, Alain. *The Century*. Trans. Alberto Toscano. London: Polity, 2007.
- Baer, Ulrich. *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002. Print.
- Balaev, Michelle. *The Nature of Trauma in American Novels*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 2012. Print.
- Ball, Karyn. 'Trauma and its Institutional Destinies.' *Cultural Critique* 46 (2000): 1-44. *JSTOR*. Web. 7 June 2014.
- Banita, Georgiana. *Plotting Justice: Narrative Ethics and Literary Culture After 9/11*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2012. Print.
- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. 1981. Trans. Richard Howard. London: Vintage, 1993. Print.
- . 'The Eiffel Tower.' Trans. Richard Howard. *A Barthes Reader*. Ed. Susan Sontag. New York: Hill and Wang, 1996. 236-50. Print.

- . 'Historical Discourse.' Trans. Peter Wexler. *Structuralism: A Reader*. Ed. Michael Lane. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970. 145-155. Print.
- . *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*. Trans. Richard Howard. Berkeley: U of California P, 1991. Print.
- . *Roland Barthes*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977. Print.
- Basu, Ann. 'Before the Law: *Operation Shylock: A Confession*.' *Philip Roth Studies* 8.2 (2012): 179-95. *Project Muse*. Web. 29 May 2014.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *The Illusion of the End*. Trans. Chris Turner. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994. Print.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Modernity and the Holocaust*. 1989. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005. Print.
- Baxter, Greg. *The Apartment*. 2012. London: Penguin, 2013. Print.
- Belsey, Catherine. *Critical Practice*. London: Routledge, 1994. Print.
- . *Culture and the Real: Theorizing Cultural Criticism*. London: Routledge, 2005. Print.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zorn. London: Pimlico, 1999. Print.
- . *Selected Writings: Volume 1 1913-26*. Eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1996. Print.
- Benn Michaels, Walter. *The Shape of the Signifier: 1967 to the End of History*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004. Print.
- Berger, James. *After the End: Representations of Post-Apocalypse*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999. Print.
- . 'Falling Towers and Postmodern Wild Children: Oliver Sacks, Don DeLillo, and Turns Against Language.' *PMLA* 120.2 (2005): 341-61. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Nov. 2013.
- Berger, John. 'Appearances.' *Another Way of Telling*. John Berger and Jean Mohr. London: Writers and Readers, 1982. 81-129. Print.
- . *G*. 1972. London: Bloomsbury, 1996. Print.
- Bergson, Henri. *Matter and Memory*. Trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer. Mineola, NY: Dover, 2004. Print.
- Berman, Marshall. *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New ed. New York: Penguin 1988. Print.
- Bernard-Donals, Michael and Richard Glejzer. *Between Witness and Testimony: The Holocaust and the Limits of Representation*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2001. Print.
- Bernstein, Michael Andre. 'Homage to the Extreme: the Shoah and the Rhetoric of Catastrophe.' *TLS* (6 Mar. 1998): 6-8. Print.
- Binet, Laurent. *HHhH*. Trans. Sam Taylor. London: Vintage, 2013. Print.
- Blair, Elaine. 'In Search of the Outrageous Past.' Rev. of *The Lazarus Project* by Aleksandar Hemon. *New York Review of Books* 55.19 (4 Dec 2008): 55-8. Print.
- Bloch, Ernst. 'Nonsynchronism and the Obligation of its Dialectics.' Trans. Mark Ritter. *New German Critique* 11 (1977): 22-38. *JSTOR*. Web. 21 Mar. 2013.
- Bloxham, Donald. *The Final Solution: A Genocide*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. Print.
- . 'Europe, the Final Solution and the Dynamics of Intent.' *Patterns of Prejudice* 44.4 (2010): 317-35. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 20 Apr. 2014.

- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Sociology in Question*. Trans. Richard Nice. London: Sage, 1993. Print.
- Braiterman, Zachary. 'Against Holocaust-Sublime: Naive Reference and the Generation of Memory.' *History and Memory* 12.2 (2000): 7-28. *Proquest*. Web. 22 Apr. 2008.
- Brauner, David. *Philip Roth*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2007. Print.
- Brecht, Bertolt. 'Against Georg Lukács.' Trans. Stuart Hood. *Aesthetics and Politics*. Theodor Adorno et al. London: Verso, 2007. 68-85. Print.
- Brooks, Peter. *Realist Vision*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2005. Print.
- Brown, Wendy. 'Neo-liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy.' *Theory and Event* 7.1 (2003): n.p. *Project Muse*. Web. 15 June 2014.
- Browning, Christopher R. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992. Print.
- . *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Print.
- Buttsworth, Sara and Maartje Abbenhuis. Introduction. *Monsters in the Mirror: Representations of Nazism in Post-War Popular Culture*. California: Greenwood, 2010. xiii-xxxvi. Print.
- Caruth, Cathy. 'Recapturing the Past.' Introduction to Part 2. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Ed. Cathy Caruth. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1995. 151-7. Print.
- . 'Trauma and Experience.' Introduction to Part 1. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Ed. Cathy Caruth. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1995. 3-12. Print.
- . *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. London: John Hopkins UP, 1996. Print.
- Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. London: U of California P, 1988. Print.
- Codde, Philippe. "'Burned by the History of the Twentieth Century": Trauma and Narrative Containment in Daniel Stern's Holocaust Novels.' *Partial Answers* 5.1 (2007): 51-75. *Project Muse*. Web. 23 June 2014.
- Cohen, Josh. 'Roth's Doubles.' *The Cambridge Companion to Philip Roth*. Ed. Timothy Parrish. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 82-93. Print.
- Cole, Tim. *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler: How History is Bought, Packaged, and Sold*. New York: Routledge, 1999. Print.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. Print.
- Connor, Steven. *The English Novel in History: 1950-1995*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Cooper, Alan. *Philip Roth and the Jews*. Albany: State U of New York P, 1996. Print.
- Cormack, Alistair. 'Postmodernism and the Ethics of Fiction in *Atonement*.' *Ian McEwan: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. Ed. Sebastian Groes. London: Continuum, 2009. 70-82. Print.
- Crapanzano, Vincent. 'The Postmodern Crisis: Discourse, Parody, Memory.' *Cultural Anthropology* 6.4 (1991): 431-46. *JSTOR*. Web. 27 Sept. 2012.
- Craps, Stef. 'Wor(l)ds of Grief: Traumatic Memory and Literary Witnessing in Cross-cultural Perspective.' *Textual Practice* 24.1 (2010): 51-68. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 3 Dec. 2013.

- Crosthwaite, Paul. 'Speed, War, and Traumatic Affect: Reading Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *Cultural Politics* 3.1 (2007): 51-70. *SocINDEX*. Web. 23 Aug. 2012.
- . *Trauma, Postmodernism and the Aftermath of World War II*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print.
- Crownshaw, Richard. 'Reconsidering Postmemory: Photography, the Archive, and Post-Holocaust Memory in W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*.' *Mosaic* 37.4 (2004): 215-36. *ProQuest*. Web. 28 June 2013.
- Cubitt, Geoffrey. *History and Memory*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2007. Print.
- Currie, Mark. *About Time: Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007. Print.
- Dardot, Pierre and Christian Laval. *The New Way of the World: On Neo-Liberal Society*. Trans. Gregory Elliott. London: Verso, 2013. Print.
- Davis, Oliver. *Jacques Rancière*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010. Print.
- Davis, Peter. 'Double Gazing and Novel Spaces: Examining Narrated and Manifest Photographs in the Novel.' *Double Dialogues* 7 (2007). Web. 7 Aug. 2012.
- Dawidowicz, Lucy S. *A Holocaust Reader*. New Jersey: Behrman House, 1976. Print.
- de la Durantaye, Leland. 'How to Read Philip Roth, or the Ethics of Fiction and the Aesthetics of Fact.' *The Cambridge Quarterly* 39.4 (2010): 303-30. *Project Muse*. Web. 6 May 2014.
- Deleuze, Gilles. 'Postscript on the Societies of Control'. *October* 59 (1992): 3-7. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 Apr. 2014.
- Deranty, Jean-Philippe. 'Regimes of the Arts.' *Jacques Rancière: Key Concepts*. Ed. Jean-Philippe Deranty. Durham: Acumen, 2010. 116-30. Print.
- de Rosnay, Tatiana. *Sarah's Key*. 2007. London: John Murray, 2008. Print.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Trans. Eric Prenowitz. London; Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996.
- Dobozy, Tamas. 'The Holocaust as Fiction: Derrida's *Demeure* and the Demjanjuk Trial in Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock*.' *Philip Roth Studies* 1.1 (2005): 37-52. *Project Muse*. Web. 5 May 2014. Print.
- Doctorow, E. L. 'False Documents.' *American Review* 26 (1977): 215-32. Print.
- . 'A Multiplicity of Witnesses: E. L. Doctorow at Heidelberg.' *Conversations with E. L. Doctorow*. Ed. Christopher D. Morris. Mississippi: UP of Mississippi, 1999. 112-28. Print.
- Douglass, Ana and Thomas A. Vogler. Introduction. *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma*. Eds. Ana Douglass & Thomas A. Vogler. New York: Routledge, 2003. 1-53. Print.
- Dow Adams, Timothy. 'Photographs on the Walls of the House of Fiction.' *Poetics Today* 29.1 (2008): 175-95. *Duke UP Journals*. Web. 7 Aug. 2014.
- Dunst, Alexander. 'After Trauma: Time and Affect in American Culture Beyond 9/11.' *Parallax* 18.2 (2012): 56-71. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 23 June 2014.
- Dyer, Geoff. *Out of Sheer Rage: in the Shadow of D. H. Lawrence*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2012. Print.
- . 'Who's Afraid of Influence?' Rev. of *Atonement* by Ian McEwan. *theguardian.com*. Guardian News & Media, 22 Sept. 2001. Web. 10 July 2014.

- Eaglestone, Robert. *Contemporary Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Print.
- . *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. Print.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory*. London: NLB, 1976. Print.
- . *Ideology: An Introduction*. London: Verso, 1991. Print.
- . *Walter Benjamin, or, Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*. London: Verso, 1981. Print.
- Edkins, Jenny. *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. Print.
- Elias, Amy J. 'Meta-mimesis? The Problem of British Postmodern Realism.' *British Postmodern Fiction*. Eds. Theo D'haen and Hans Bertens. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993. 9-31. Print.
- . *Sublime Desire: History and Post-1960s Fiction*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2001. Print.
- Elsaesser, Thomas. 'Postmodernism as Mourning Work.' *Screen* 42.2 (2001): 193-201. *Oxford Journals*. Web. 7 June 2012.
- Enwezor, Okwui. *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*. New York: Steidl, 2008. Print.
- Epstein, Leslie. 'Writing about the Holocaust.' *Writing and the Holocaust*. Ed. Berel Lang. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988. 261-270. Print.
- Eyers, Tom. *Lacan and the Concept of the "Real"*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Print.
- Ezrahi, Sidra DeKoven. *By Words Alone: The Holocaust in Literature*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980. Print.
- Farrell, Kirby. *Post-traumatic Culture: Injury and Interpretation in the Nineties*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1998. Print.
- Fassin, Didier and Richard Rechtman. *The Empire of Trauma: An Enquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*. Trans. Rachel Gomme. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009. Print.
- Felman, Shoshana. 'Camus' *The Fall*, or the Betrayal of the Witness.' Felman and Laub. 165-203.
- . 'Camus' *The Plague*, or A Monument to Witnessing.' Felman and Laub. 93-119.
- . 'The Return of the Voice: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*.' Felman and Laub. 204-83.
- Felman, Shoshana and Dori Laub, M.D. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- Fine, Ellen S. 'The Absent Memory: The Act of Writing in French Post-Holocaust Literature.' *Writing and the Holocaust*. Ed. Berel Lang. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988. 41-57. Print.
- Finkelstein, Norman G. 'Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's "Crazy" Thesis: A Critique of *Hitler's Willing Executioners*.' *New Left Review* I/224 (1997): 39-87. Print.
- Finney, Brian. 'Briony's Stand Against Oblivion: The Making of Fiction in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *Journal of Modern Literature* 27.3 (2004): 68-82. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 June 2012.
- Fisher, Mark. *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* Hants: Zero Books, 2009. Print.

- Fisher, Mark and Jeremy Gilbert. 'Capitalist Realism and Neoliberal Hegemony.' *New Formations* 80/81 (2013): 89-101. Print.
- Forster, Greg. 'Freud, Faulkner, Caruth: Trauma and the Politics of Literary Form.' *Narrative* 15.3 (2007): 259-85. *Project Muse*. Web. 13 June 2013.
- Foster, Hal. 'Obscene, Abject, Traumatic.' *October* 78 (1996): 106-24. *JSTOR*. Web. 23 Aug. 2012.
- . *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*. London: MIT, 2001. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. London: Tavistock, 1994. Print.
- . 'Return to History.' Trans. Robert Hurley. *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology. Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*. Vol. 2. Ed. James Faubion. London: Penguin, 1998. 419-32. Print.
- Frank, Thomas. *One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism, and the End of Economic Democracy*. New York: Anchor Books, 2001. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund. 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle.' *Beyond the Pleasure Principle; Group Psychology; and Other Works*. London: Hogarth Press, 1995. 7-64. Print. Vol. 18 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Ed. James Strachey. Trans. James Strachey. 24 vols. 1995.
- Friedländer, Saul. 'History, Memory, and the Historian: Facing the Shoah.' *Disturbing Remains: Memory, History, and Crisis in the Twentieth Century*. Eds. Michael S. Roth and Charles G. Salas. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2001. 271-82. Print.
- . Introduction. *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution"*. Ed. Saul Friedländer. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992: 1-21. Print.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 'The End of History?' *The National Interest* 17 (1989): 3-18. Print.
- . *The End of History and the Last Man*. Ontario: The Free Press, 1992. Print.
- Funkenstein, Amos. 'History, Counterhistory, and Narrative.' *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution."* Ed. Saul Friedländer. London: Harvard UP, 1992. 66-81. Print.
- Gauthier, Tim S. *Narrative Desire and Historical Representations: A. S. Byatt, Ian McEwan, Salman Rushdie*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Gibbs, Alan. "'The Problem is, I'm Not Sure I Believe in the Thunderclap of Trauma': Aesthetics of Trauma in Contemporary American Literature.' *The Edges of Trauma: Explorations in Visual Art and Literature*. Eds. Tamás Bényai and Alexandra Stara. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2014. 148-68. Print.
- Giddens, Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991. Print.
- Gilman, Sander L. *Multiculturalism and the Jews*. Oxon: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Goldhagen, Daniel Jonah. *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. 1996. London: Abacus, 2003. Print.
- Gooblar, David. 'The Truth Hurts: The Ethics of Philip Roth's "Autobiographical" Books.' *Journal of Modern Literature* 32.1 (2008): 33-53. *Project Muse*. Web. 2 May 2014.

- Gourevitch, Philip. 'The Memory Thief.' *The New Yorker* (14 Jun. 1999): 48-68. Print.
- Granofsky, Ronald. *The Trauma Novel: Contemporary Symbolic Depictions of Collective Disaster*. New York: Peter Lang, 1995. Print.
- Gray, Alasdair. *Lanark: A Life in Four Books*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2002. Print.
- Greenspan, Henry. 'Imagining Survivors: Testimony and the Rise of Holocaust Consciousness.' *The Americanization of the Holocaust*. Ed. Hilene Flanzbaum. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1999. 45-67. Print.
- Groot, Jerome de. *The Historical Novel*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010. Print.
- Gross, Andrew S. 'Holocaust Tourism in Berlin: Global Memory, Trauma and the "Negative Sublime".' *Journeys: The International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing* 7.2 (2006): 73-100. Print.
- Hall, Katharina. 'The "Nazi Detective" as Provider of Justice in Post-1990 British and German Crime Fiction: Philip Kerr's *The Pale Criminal*, Robert Harris's *Fatherland*, and Richard Birkefeld and Göran Hachmeister's *Wer Übrig Bleibt, Hat Recht*.' *Comparative Literature Studies* 50.2 (2013): 288-313. *Project Muse*. Web. 15 Apr. 2014.
- Hansen, Miriam Bratu. 'Schindler's List is not Shoah: The Second Commandment, Popular Modernism, and Public Memory.' *Critical Inquiry* 22.2 (Winter 1996): 292-312. *Project Muse*. Web. 13 May 2014.
- Harold, James. 'Narrative Engagement with *Atonement* and *The Blind Assassin*.' *Philosophy and Literature* 29.1 (2005): 130-45. *Project Muse*. Web. 24 July 2012.
- Harris, Greg. 'Men Giving Birth to New World Orders: Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow*.' *Studies in the Novel* 31.4 (1999): 489-505. *Literature Online*. Web. 28 Feb. 2010.
- Harris, Robert. *Fatherland*. London: Arrow Books, 2012. Print.
- Hartman, Geoffrey H. 'Public Memory and Modern Experience.' *Yale Journal of Criticism* 6.2 (1993): 239-47. *Proquest*. Web. 18 Mar. 2013.
- Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992. Print.
- Head, Dominic. *Ian McEwan*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2007. Print.
- Heise, Ursula K. *Chronoschisms: Time, Narrative, and Postmodernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. Print.
- Hemon, Aleksandar. 'A Conversation with Aleksandar Hemon.' Interview by Lania Knight. *The Missouri Review* 32.3 (2009): 85-101. *Project Muse*. Web. 3 Aug. 2014.
- . *The Book of My Lives*. London: Picador, 2013.
- . 'Exile on Any Street.' Interview by Irena Reyn. *Guernica*. Guernica, 1 Feb 2010. Web. 31 July 2014.
- . *The Lazarus Project*. London: Picador, 2008. Print.
- . 'Mapping Home.' *New Yorker* (5 Dec. 2011): 40-9. Print.
- . *Nowhere Man: The Pronek Fantasies*. London: Picador, 2003. Print.
- Herman, Judith. *Trauma and Recovery*. New York: BasicBooks, 1997. Print.
- Hidalgo, Pilar. 'Memory and Storytelling in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *Critique* 46.2 (2005): 82-91. *Proquest*. Web. 14 Dec. 2012.

- Hillis Miller, J. 'Some Versions of Romance Trauma as Generated by Realist Detail in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *Trauma and Romance in Contemporary British Literature*. Eds. Jean-Michel Ganteau and Susana Onega. New York: Routledge, 2013. 90-106. Print.
- Hirsch, Marianne. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1997. Print.
- . 'Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory.' *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14.1 (2001): 5-37. *Project Muse*. Web. 28 June 2013.
- Holton, Robert. *Jarring Witnesses: Modern Fiction and the Representation of History*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994. Print.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. 2nd Edition. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- Huyssen, Andreas. 'Authentic Ruins: Products of Modernity.' *Ruins of Modernity*. Eds. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle. Durham: Duke UP, 2010. 17-28. Print.
- . 'Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age.' *Yale Journal of Criticism* 6.2 (1993): 249-61. *ProQuest*. Web. 15 Mar. 2013.
- . 'Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia.' *Public Culture* 12.1 (2000): 21-38. *Project Muse*. Web. 15 Mar. 2013.
- . *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003. Print.
- . 'Trauma and Memory: A New Imaginary of Temporality.' *World Memory: Personal Trajectories in Global Time*. Eds. Jill Bennett and Rosanne Kennedy. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003. 16-29. Print.
- . *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- Ingersoll, Earl. 'Intertextuality in L. P. Hartley's *The Go-Between* and Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *Forum of Modern Language Studies* 40.3 (2004): 241-58. Print.
- Irr, Caren. 'Toward the World Novel: Genre Shifts in Twenty-First-Century Expatriate Fiction.' *American Literary History* 23.3 (2011): 660-79. *Oxford Journals*. Web. 18 June 2014.
- Jacobi, Martin. 'Who Killed Robbie and Cecilia? Reading and Misreading Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *Critique* 52 (2011): 55-73. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 24 July 2012.
- Jameson, Fredric. 'The Antinomies of Postmodernity.' *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*. London: Verso, 1998. 50-72. Print.
- . 'Cognitive Mapping.' *The Jameson Reader*. Eds. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. 277-87. Print.
- . "'End of Art" or "End of History".' *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*. London: Verso, 1998. 73-92. Print.
- . 'The End of Temporality.' *Critical Inquiry* 29.4 (2003): 695-718. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Apr. 2014.
- . 'Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, Psychoanalytic Criticism, and the Problem of the Subject.' *Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading: Otherwise*. Ed. Shoshana Felman. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1982. 338-95. Print.
- . 'On Not Giving Interviews.' Introduction. *Jameson on Jameson: Conversations on Cultural Marxism*. Ed. Ian Buchanan. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2007.

- . *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.
- . *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso, 1991. Print.
- . *Signatures of the Visible*. London; New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.
- Jenkins, Keith. *Re-thinking History*. London: Routledge, 2003. Print.
- Jones Jr., Malcolm. 'Was He a Spy or Wasn't He?' *Newsweek* 121.12 (22 Mar 1993): 71. EBSCO. Web. 21 Sep. 2007.
- Joy Division. 'Heart and Soul.' *Closer*. London Records, 1999. CD.
- Kaes, Anton. 'Holocaust and the End of History.' *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution."* Ed. Saul Friedländer. London: Harvard UP, 1992. 206-22. Print.
- Kafka, Franz. *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*. Trans. Michael Hofmann. London: Penguin, 2007. Print.
- Kansteiner, Wulf. 'Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies.' *History and Theory* 41 (2002): 179-97. JSTOR. Web. 8 Oct. 2013.
- . 'Genealogy of a Category Mistake: A Critical Intellectual History of the Cultural Trauma Metaphor.' *Rethinking History* 8.2 (2004): 193-221. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 8 Oct. 2013.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgement*. Trans. James Creed Meredith. Ed. Nicholas Walker. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.
- Keneally, Thomas. *Schindler's Ark*. 1982. London: Sceptre, 2007. Print.
- Kermode, Frank. *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1968. Print.
- Kilby, Jane. 'The Writing of Trauma: Trauma Theory and the Liberty of Reading.' *New Formations* 47 (2002): 217-30. Print.
- King, Nicola. *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000. Print.
- Kirn, Walter. 'Everything is Included.' Rev. Of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer. *New York Times* (3 Apr. 2005). Web. 24 Apr. 2014.
- Klein, Kerwin Lee. *From History to Theory*. London: U of California P, 2011. Print.
- . 'On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse.' *Representations* 69 (2000): 127-50. JSTOR. Web. 29 July 2014.
- Kuznetsov, A. Anatoli. *Babi Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel*. Trans. David Floyd. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1970. Print.
- Lacan, Jacques. 'Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*.' Trans. James Hulbert. *Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading: Otherwise*. Ed. Shoshana Felman. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1982. 11-52. Print.
- . *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. Trans. Bruce Fink in collaboration with Héloïse Fink and Russell Grigg. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006. Print.
- . *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-54*. Trans. John Forrester. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1991. Print.

- . *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-60*. Trans. Dennis Porter. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. London: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- . *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. London: Routledge, 1998. Print.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *History and its Limits: Human, Animal, Violence*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2009. Print.
- . *History and Memory After Auschwitz*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1998. Print.
- . *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994. Print.
- . *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2001. Print.
- Landsberg, Alison. 'America, the Holocaust, and the Mass Culture of Memory: Toward a Radical Politics of Empathy.' *New German Critique* 71 (1997): 63-86. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 Feb. 2011.
- Lang, Berel. 'Holocaust Genres and the Turn to History.' *The Holocaust and the Text: Speaking the Unspeakable*. Eds. Andrew Leak and George Paizis. Basingstoke: MacMillan, 2000: 17-31. Print.
- Langer, Lawrence. 'Hearing the Holocaust.' *Poetics Today* 27.2 (2006): 297-309. *Duke UP*. Web. 25 May 2011.
- . *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1991. Print.
- Lappin, Elena. 'The Man with Two Heads.' *Granta* 66 (1999): 7-65. Print.
- Laplanche, Jean. *New Foundations of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. David Macey. London: Basil Blackwell, 1989. Print.
- . 'Notes on Afterwardsness.' *Essays on Otherness*. Ed. John Fletcher. London: Routledge, 1999. 264-9. Print.
- Latour, Bruno. 'Why has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern.' *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004): 225-48. *JSTOR*. Web. 15 May 2013.
- Laub, M.D., Dori. 'Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening.' Felman and Laub. 57-74.
- . 'An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony and Survival.' Felman and Laub. 75-92.
- Lee, Alison. *Realism and Power: Postmodern British Fiction*. London: Routledge, 1990. Print.
- Lejeune, Philippe. 'The Autobiographical Pact.' *On Autobiography*. Ed. Paul John Eakin. Trans. Katherine Leary. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1989. 3-30. Print.
- Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Dispossessed*. New York: Perennial, 2003. Print.
- Lemke, Thomas. "'The Birth of Bio-Politics": Michel Foucault's Lectures at the Collège de France on Neo-liberal Governmentality.' *Economy and Society* 30.2 (2001): 190-207. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 15 June 2014.
- Lerner, Ben. *Leaving the Atocha Station*. London: Granta, 2012. Print.
- Letissier, Georges. 'The Eternal Loop of Self-Torture: Ethics and Trauma in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *Ethics and Trauma in Contemporary British Fiction*. Eds. Susana Onega and Jean-Michel Ganteau. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009. 209-26. Print.

- Levi, Primo. *The Drowned and the Saved*. Trans. Raymond Rosenthal. London: Michael Joseph, 1988. Print.
- . *The Periodic Table*. Trans. Raymond Rosenthal. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995. Print.
- Leys, Ruth. *Trauma: A Genealogy*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000. Print.
- Libeskind, Daniel. 'Between the Lines.' *Studio Daniel Libeskind*. N.p. n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2010.
- . 'Trauma.' *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*. Eds. Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2003. 43-58. Print.
- Lifton, Robert Jay. *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*. London: Papermac, 1987. Print.
- Ligotti, Thomas. *Teatro Grottesco*. London: Virgin, 2008. Print.
- Lipovetsky, Gilles. *Hypermodern Times*. Trans. Andrew Brown. Cambridge: Polity, 2005. Print.
- Lipstadt, Deborah E. *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*. New York: The Free Press, 1993. Print.
- Lipsyte, Sam. *The Ask*. London: Old Street Publishing, 2010. Print.
- Littell, Jonathan. *The Kindly Ones*. Trans. Charlotte Mandell. London: Vintage, 2010. Print.
- Lodge, David. *Consciousness and the Novel: Connected Essays*. London: Secker & Warburg, 2002. Print.
- Louvish, Simon. 'Rothology.' Rev. of *Operation Shylock: A Confession*, by Philip Roth. *New Statesman & Society* (9 Apr. 1993): 57.
- Lowenthal, David. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. Print.
- Luckhurst, Roger. 'Beyond Trauma: Torturous Times.' *European Journal of English Studies* 14.1 (2010): 11-21. *Taylor and Francis Online*. Web. 15 Oct. 2013.
- . 'Traumaculture.' *New Formations* 50 (2003): 28-47. Print.
- . *The Trauma Question*. London: Routledge, 2008. Print.
- Lukács, Georg. *The Historical Novel*. Trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell. London: Merlin Press, 1989. Print.
- . 'Realism in the Balance.' Trans. Rodney Livingstone. *Aesthetics and Politics*. Theodor Adorno et al. London: Verso, 2007. 28-59. Print.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*. Trans. Georges van den Abbeele. Minnesota: U of Minnesota P, 1988. Print.
- . *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997. Print.
- . *The Postmodern Explained: Correspondence, 1982-1985*. Ed. Julian Pefanis and Morgan Thomas. Trans. Don Barry et al. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997. Print.
- MacCabe, Colin. 'Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses.' *Theoretical Essays: Film, Linguistics, Literature*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1985. 33-57. Print.
- Macherey, Pierre. *A Theory of Literary Production*. Trans. Geoffrey Wall. Oxon: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Maechler, Stefan. *The Wilkomirski Affair: A Study in Biographical Truth*. Trans. John E. Woods. New York: Picador, 2001. Print.

- . 'Wilkomirski the Victim: Individual Remembering as Social Interaction and Public Event.' Trans. Moira Moehler-Woods. *History and Memory* 13.2 (2001): 59-95. *JSTOR*. Web. 7 Apr. 2011.
- Maier, Charles S. 'A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial.' *History and Memory* 5.2 (1993): 136-52. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Oct. 2010.
- Manzoni, Alessandro. *On the Historical Novel*. Trans. Sandra Bermann. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1984. Print.
- Marcus, Laura. 'Ian McEwan's Modernist Time: *Atonement* and *Saturday*.' *Ian McEwan: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. Ed. Sebastian Groes. London: Continuum. 2009. 83-98. Print.
- Mathews, Peter. 'The Impression of a Deeper Darkness: Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *English Studies in Canada* 32.1 (2006): 147-60. *Project Muse*. Web. 4 July 2012.
- McEwan, Ian. *Atonement*. London: Vintage, 2002. Print.
- . *Black Dogs*. London: Picador, 1993. Print.
- McClanahan, Annie. 'Investing in the Future: Late Capitalism's End of History'. *Journal of Cultural Economy* 6.1 (2013): 78-93. *Taylor and Francis Online*. Web. 26 Mar. 2014.
- McLoughlin, Kate. "'Dispute Incarnate": Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock*, the Demjanjuk Trial, and Eyewitness Testimony.' *Philip Roth Studies* 3.2 (2007): 115-30. *Project Muse*. Web. 31 Mar. 2011.
- Michaels, Walter Benn. *The Shape of the Signifier: 1967 to the End of History*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004. Print.
- Middleton, Peter and Tim Woods. *Literatures of Memory: History, Time and Space in Postwar Writing*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000. Print.
- Milowitz, Steven. *Philip Roth Considered: The Concentrationary Universe of the American Writer*. New York: Garland, 2000. Print.
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. London: Picador, 1988. Print.
- Murphy, J. Stephen. 'Past Irony: Trauma and the Historical Turn in *Fragments* and *The Swimming Pool Library*.' *Literature & History* 13.1 (2004): 58-75. *EBSCO*. Web. 1 Oct. 2012.
- Nichanian, Marc. *The Historiographic Perversion*. Trans. Gil Anidjar. New York: Columbia UP, 2009. Print.
- Nora, Pierre. 'Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*.' *Representations* 26 (1989): 7-24. *JSTOR*. Web. 28 Jan. 2008.
- O'Hara, David K. 'Briony's Being For: Metafictional Narrative Ethics in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *Critique* 52 (2011): 74-100. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 17 Dec. 2012.
- Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. London: Penguin, 1989.
- Panagia, Davide. "'Partage du Sensible": the Distribution of the Sensible.' *Jacques Rancière: Key Concepts*. Ed. Jean-Philippe Deranty. Durham: Acumen, 2010. 95-103. Print.
- Parey, Armelle. 'Ordre et Chaos dans *Atonement* d'Ian McEwan.' *Cercles*, Occasional Papers Series (2007): 93-102. Web. 25 May 2012.
- Parrish, Timothy. 'Imagining Jews in Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock*.' *Contemporary Literature* 40.4 (1999): 575-602. *JSTOR*. Web. 28 June 2011.

- Pedot, Richard. 'Rewriting(s) in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *Études Anglaises* 60.2 (2007): 148-59. *Cairns*. Web 5 July 2012.
- Phelan, James. 'Narrative Judgments and the Rhetorical Theory of Narrative: Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Eds. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. 322-36. Print.
- Posnock, Ross. *Philip Roth's Rude Truth: The Art of Immaturity*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006. Print.
- Pyrhönen, Heta. 'Purloined Letters in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *Mosaic* 45.4 (2012): 103-118. *Project Muse*. Web. 11 July 2014.
- Pyzik, Agata. *Poor but Sexy: Culture Clashes in Europe East and West*. Winchester: Zero Books, 2014. Print.
- Radhakrishnan, R. *Theory in an Uneven World*. Malden: Blackwell, 2003. Print.
- Radstone, Susannah. 'Social Bonds and Psychical Order: Testimonies.' *Cultural Values* 5.1 (2001): 59-78. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 23 July 2013.
- . 'Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics.' *Paragraph* 30.1 (2007): 9-29. *JSTOR*. Web. 24 Oct. 2012.
- . 'The War of the Fathers: Trauma, Fantasy, and September 11.' *Signs* 28.1: 457-9. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 June 2013.
- Ramadanovic, Petar. *Forgetting Futures: On Memory, Trauma, and Identity*. Lanham: Lexington, 2001. Print.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Althusser's Lesson*. Trans. Emiliano Battista. London: Continuum, 2011. Print.
- . *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*. Trans. Julie Rose. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999. Print.
- . *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. Trans. Steve Corcoran. London: Continuum, 2010. Print.
- . *The Emancipated Spectator*. Trans. Gregory Elliott. London: Verso, 2009. Print.
- . *Film Fables*. Trans. Emiliano Battista. Oxford: Berg, 2006. Print.
- . *The Future of the Image*. 2007. Trans. Gregory Elliott. London: Verso, 2009. Print.
- . *The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge*. 1992. Trans. Hassan Melehy. London: U of Minnesota P, 1994. Print.
- . *The Politics of Aesthetics: the Distribution of the Sensible*. Trans. Gabriel Rockhill. London: Continuum, 2007. Print.
- . *The Politics of Literature*. Trans. Julie Rose. Cambridge: Polity, 2011. Print.
- Rau, Petra. *Our Nazis: Representations of Fascism in Contemporary Literature and Film*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2013. Print.
- Richardson, Anna. 'In Search of the Final Solution: Crime Narrative as a Paradigm for Exploring Responses to the Holocaust.' *European Journal of English Studies* 14.2 (2010): 159-71. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 21 Apr. 2014.
- Ricoeur, Paul. 'Narrative Time.' Trans. Robert Sweeney. *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*. Ed. Mario J. Valdés. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991. 338-354. Print.
- Robinson, Richard. 'The Modernism of Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.' *Modern Fiction Studies* 56.3 (2010): 473-495. *Project Muse*. Web. 7 May 2012.
- Robson, Mark. 'Jacques Rancière's Aesthetic Communities.' *Paragraph* 28.1 (2005): 77-95. *EUP*. Web. 3 June 2013.

- Rosenfeld, Alvin H. *A Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988. Print.
- . 'The Problematics of Holocaust Literature.' *Literature of the Holocaust*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Broomall, PA: Chelsea House, 2004. 21-47. Print.
- Rosenfeld, Gavriel D. *The World Hitler Never Made: Alternate History and the Memory of Nazism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. Print.
- Roth, Michael S. *The Ironist's Cage: Memory, Trauma, and the Construction of History*. New York: Columbia UP, 1995. Print.
- . *Memory, Trauma, and History: Essays on Living with the Past*. New York: Columbia UP, 2012. Print.
- Roth, Philip. 'The Art of Fiction No. 84.' Interview by Hermione Lee. *The Paris Review* 93 (1984). Web. 15 Nov. 2013.
- . 'A Bit of Jewish Mischief.' *Nytimes.com*. The New York Times Company, 7 Mar. 1993. Web. 23 Sep. 2007.
- . *The Counterlife*. London: Vintage, 2005. Print.
- . *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1989. Print.
- . *Operation Shylock: A Confession*. London: Vintage, 2000. Print.
- . 'Reading Myself.' *Conversations with Philip Roth*. Ed. George J. Searles. Mississippi: UP of Mississippi, 1992. 63-76. Print.
- . 'Writing American Fiction.' *Commentary* 31 (1961): 223-33. *ProQuest*. Web. 1 June 2014.
- Roth, Walter and Joe Kraus. *An Accidental Anarchist: How the Killing of a Humble Jewish Immigrant by Chicago's Chief of Police Exposed the Conflict Between Law & Order and Civil Rights in Early 20th Century America*. San Francisco: Rudi, 1998. Print.
- Rothberg, Michael. 'Beyond Tancred and Clorinda: Trauma Studies for Implicated Subjects.' *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*. Eds. Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone. London: Routledge, 2013. xi-xvii. Print.
- . *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2009. Print.
- . 'Multidirectional Memory and the Implicated Subject.' *Performing Memory in Art and Popular Culture*. Eds. Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik. New York: Routledge, 2013. 39-58. Print.
- . *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. London: U of Minnesota P, 2000. Print.
- Rothe, Anne. *Popular Trauma Culture: Selling the Pain of Others in the Mass Media*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2011. Print.
- Rowland, Antony. 'The Future of Testimony: Introduction.' *The Future of Memory*. Eds. Richard Crownshaw, Jane Kilby and Antony Rowland. Oxford: Berghahn, 2010. 113-21. Print.
- Royal, Derek Parker. 'Texts, Lives, and Bellybuttons: Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock* and the Renegotiation of Subjectivity.' *Shofar* 19.1 (2000): 48-65. *EBSCO*. Web. 20 July 2011.
- Rubin-Dorsky, Jeffrey. 'Philip Roth and the American Jewish Identity: The Question of Authenticity.' *American Literary History* 13.1 (2001): 79-107. *Project Muse*. Web. 22 Sep. 2007.

- Rüsen, Jörn. 'Trauma and Mourning in Historical Thinking.' *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in History and Archaeology* 1.1 (2004): 10-21. Print.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Shame*. London: Picador, 1984. Print.
- Safer, Elaine B. *Mocking the Age: The Later Novels of Philip Roth*. Albany: State U of New York P, 2006. Print.
- Safran Foer, Jonathan. *Everything is Illuminated*. London: Penguin, 2003. Print.
- Samuel, Raphael. *Theatres of Memory*. Vol. 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture. Rev. ed. London: Verso, 2012. Print.
- Santner, Eric L. 'History Beyond the Pleasure Principle: Some Thoughts on the Representation of Trauma.' *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution"*. Ed. Saul Friedländer. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992. 143-54. Print.
- Schindler's List*. Dir. Steven Spielberg. 1993. DVD. Universal. 2005.
- Scholz, Christian. "'But the Written Word is not a True Document": A Conversation with W.G. Sebald on Literature and Photography.' Trans. Markus Zisselsberger. *Searching for Sebald: Photography after W.G. Sebald*. Ed. Lise Patt. Los Angeles: Institute of Cultural Inquiry, 2007. 104-109. Print.
- Schwartz, Lynne Sharon. 'Quests for Redemption.' Rev. of *Atonement*, by Ian McEwan. *The New Leader* 85.2: 23-5. Web. 13 May 2013.
- Sebald, W. G. *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. London: Penguin, 2002. Print.
- . *The Rings of Saturn*. Trans. Michael Hulse. London: Vintage, 2002. Print.
- Seiffert, Rachel. *The Dark Room*. London: Vintage, 2002. Print.
- Seltzer, Mark. 'Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere.' *October* 80 (1997): 3-26. *JSTOR*. Web. 24 Oct. 2012.
- Sennett, Richard. *The Fall of Public Man*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977. Print.
- Siegel, Ben. 'Introduction: Reading Philip Roth: Facts and Fancy, Fiction and Autobiography – A Brief Overview.' *Turning Up the Flame: Philip Roth's Later Novels*. Eds. Jay L. Halio and Ben Siegel. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2005. 17-30. Print.
- Shostak, Debra B. *Philip Roth: Countertexts, Counterlives*. Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 2004. Print.
- Sicher, Efraim. 'The Future of the Past: Counteremory and Postmemory in Contemporary American Post-Holocaust Narratives.' *History & Memory* 12.2 (2000): 56-91. *Project Muse*. Web. 20 May 2014.
- Silver, Maury and Daniel Geller. 'On the Irrelevance of Evil: The Organization and Individual Action.' *Journal of Social Issues* 34.4 (1978): 125-36. *Wiley Online*. Web. 16 Apr. 2014.
- Shoah*. Dir. Claude Lanzmann. 1985. DVD. Eureka. 2005.
- Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. London: Penguin, 1979. Print.
- . *Regarding the Pain of Others*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 2003. Print.
- . *Under the Sign of Saturn*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980. Print.
- 'Speech by Himmler to SS-Gruppenführer in Posen, 4 October 1943.' *Sources of the Holocaust*. Ed. Steve Hochstadt. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004. 163-5. Print.
- Spiridon, Monica. 'The (Meta)narrative Paratext: Coda as a Cunning Fictional Device.' *Neohelicon* 37 (2010): 53-62. *SpringerLink*. Web. 6 Aug. 2013.
- Stavrakakis, Yanni. *Lacan and the Political*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.

- Steiner, George. *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman*. Yale: Yale UP., 1998. Print.
- Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham: Duke UP, 1996. Print.
- Sturken, Marita. *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1997. Print.
- Tagg, John. *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*. Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1988. Print.
- Tal, Kalí. *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print.
- Tanke, Joseph J. *Jacques Rancière: An Introduction*. London: Continuum, 2011. Print.
- Terdiman, Richard. 'Given Memory: On Mnemonic Coercion, Reproduction, and Invention.' *Memory Cultures: Memory, Subjectivity and Recognition*. Eds. Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin. New Jersey: Transaction, 2009. 186-201. Print.
- . *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis*. London: Cornell UP, 1993. Print.
- Thomas, D. M. 'Face to Face with His Double.' Rev. of *Operation Shylock: A Confession*, by Philip Roth. *Nytimes.com*. The New York Times Company, 7 Mar. 1993. Web. 23 Sep. 2007.
- . *Pictures at an Exhibition*. 1993. Kent: Sceptre, 1994. Print.
- Tighe, Carl. 'Pax Germanica: The Future Historical.' *Journal of European Studies* 30.3 (2000): 297-328. Print.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *Hope and Memory: Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. Trans. David Bellos. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003. Print.
- Tresize, Thomas. 'Between History and Psychoanalysis: A Case Study in the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony.' *History & Memory* 20.1 (2008): 7-47. *Project Muse*. Web. 13 July 2011.
- Tuerk, Richard. 'Caught Between *The Facts* and *Deception*.' *Philip Roth: New Perspectives on an American Author*. Ed. Derek Parker Royal. London: Praeger, 2005. 129-42. Print.
- Updike, John. *More Matter: Essays and Criticism*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1999. Print.
- Vermeulen, Pieter. 'The Critique of Trauma and the Afterlife of the Novel in Tom McCarthy's *Remainder*.' *Modern Fiction Studies* 58.3 (2012): 549-68. *Project Muse*. Web. 13 Oct. 2013.
- Vice, Sue. *Holocaust Fiction*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.
- Vickroy, Laurie. *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2002. Print.
- Vidal-Naquet, Pierre. *Assassins of Memory: Essays in the Denial of the Holocaust*. Trans. Jeffrey Mehlman. New York: Columbia UP, 1992. Print.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. *Historical Capitalism with Capitalist Civilization*. London: Verso, 1996. Print.
- Ward, Wendy. 'Does Autobiography Matter?: Fictions of the Self in Aleksandar Hemon's *The Lazarus Project*.' *Brno Studies in English* 37.2 (2011): 185-99. Web. 23 June 2014.

- Wegner, Phillip E. *Life Between Two Deaths, 1989-2001: U.S. Culture in the Long Nineties*. Durham: Duke UP, 2009. Print.
- Weigel, Sigrid. 'The Symptomatology of a Universalized Concept of Trauma: On the Failing of Freud's Reading of Tasso.' Trans. Georgina Paul. *New German Critique* 90 (2003): 85-94. *JSTOR*. Web. 27 May 2012.
- Weiner, Sonia. 'Double Visions and Aesthetics of the Migratory in Aleksandar Hemon's *The Lazarus Project*.' *Studies in the Novel* 46.2 (2014): 215-35. *Project Muse*. Web. 23 June 2014.
- Weissman, Gary. *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2004. Print.
- Wells, Lynn. *Ian McEwan*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.
- White, Hayden. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1987. Print.
- . 'The Fictions of Factual Representation.' *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1985. 121-34. Print.
- . 'The Modernist Event.' *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2000. 66-86. Print.
- Whitehead, Anne. *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004. Print.
- Wiesel, Elie. 'Does the Holocaust Lie Beyond the Reach of Art?' *New York Times*. (17 Apr. 1983). Web. 29 Jan. 2008.
- . 'The Holocaust as Literary Inspiration.' *Dimensions of the Holocaust: Lectures at Northwestern University by Elie Wiesel, Lucy S. Dawidowicz, Dorothy Rabinowitz, Robert McAfee Brown*. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1977. 5-19. Print.
- . 'Trivializing the Holocaust: Semi-fact and Semi-fiction.' *New York Times* (16 Apr. 1978). Web. 25 Feb. 2010.
- Wieviorka, Annette. *The Era of the Witness*. Trans. Jared Stark. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2006. Print.
- Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977. Print.
- Winter, Jay. 'The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the "Memory Boom" in Contemporary Historical Studies.' *Archives & Social Studies: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* 1.0 (2007): 363-97. Web. 5 July 2014.
- Winthrop-Young, Geoffrey. 'The Third Reich in Alternate History: Aspects of a Genre-Specific Depiction of Nazi Culture.' *The Journal of Popular Culture* 39.5 (2006): 878-96. *Humanities International Complete*. Web. 15 Apr. 2014.
- Wood, James. 'James Wood Writes About the Manipulations of Ian McEwan.' *London Review of Books* 31.8 (2009): 14-16. Web. 10 July 2014.
- . 'The Trick of Truth.' Rev. of *Atonement* by Ian McEwan. *The New Republic* (25 March 2002): 28-34. *Academic Search Elite*. Web. 20 June 2012.
- . 'The Unforgotten.' Rev. of *The Lazarus Project* by Aleksandar Hemon. *New York Review of Books* (28 July 2008). Web. 24 Aug. 2013.
- Wood, Nancy. *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe*. Oxford: Berg, 1999. Print.
- Woolf, Virginia. 'Modern Fiction.' *Selected Essays*. Ed. David Bradshaw. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. 6-12. Print.
- Young, Allan. *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995. Print.

- Young, James E. 'The Holocaust as Vicarious Past: Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and the Afterimages of History.' *Witnessing the Disaster: Essays on Representation and the Holocaust*. Eds. Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003. 23-45. Print.
- . *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*. London; New Haven: Yale UP, 1993. Print.
- . *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narratives and the Consequences of Interpretation*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990. Print.
- Zeitlin, Froma I. 'Imaginary Tales in the Land of the Perpetrators.' *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 5.2 (2006): 213-28. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 12 Feb. 2013.
- Zelizer, Barbie. *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1998. Print.
- Žižek, Slavoj. *First as Tragedy, then as Farce*. London: Verso, 2009. Print.
- . *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. 2nd Edition. London: Verso, 2002.
- . 'The Lesson of Rancière.' Afterword. *The Politics of Aesthetics*. By Jacques Rancière. London: Continuum, 2007. 69-79. Print.
- . *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*. London: MIT Press, 1997. Print.
- . *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Women and Causality*. London: Verso, 1994. Print.
- . 'Multiculturalism, or, The Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism.' *New Left Review* 1/225 (1997): 28-51. Print.
- . *The Parallax View*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2009. Print.
- . *The Plague of Fantasies*. London, Verso. 1997. Print.
- . 'The Spectre of Ideology.' *Mapping Ideology*. Ed. Slavoj Žižek. London: Verso, 1994. 1-33. Print.
- . *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. Rev. Ed. London: Verso, 2008. Print.