

TRAUMA, HISTORY, MEMORY, IDENTITY: WHAT REMAINS?

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ABSTRACT

Despite the considerable amount of work already devoted to the topic, the nexus of trauma, history, memory, and identity is still of widespread interest, and much remains to be investigated on both empirical and theoretical levels. The ongoing challenge is to approach the topic without opposing history and memory in a binary fashion but instead by inquiring into more complex and challenging relations between them, including the role of trauma and its effects. This account attempts to set out a research agenda that is multifaceted but with components that are conceptually interrelated and that call for further research and thought. In a necessarily selective manner that does not downplay the value and importance of archival research, it treats both the role of traumatic memory and memory (or memory work) that counteracts post-traumatic effects and supplements, at times serving as a corrective to, written sources. It argues for the relevance to history of a critical but nondismissive approach to the study of trauma, memory, and identity-formation, discussing significant new work as well as indicating the continued pertinence of somewhat older work in the field. One of the under-investigated issues it addresses is the role of the so-called transgenerational transmission of trauma to descendants and intimates of both survivors and perpetrators. It concludes by making explicit an issue that is fundamental to the problem of identity and identity-formation and concerning which a great deal remains to be done: the issue of critical animal studies and its historical and ethical significance. Addressing this issue would require extending one's purview beyond humans and attending to the importance of the relations between humans and other animals.

Keywords: trauma, history, memory, identity, transgenerational trauma, animals

Despite the considerable amount of work already devoted to the topic, the nexus of trauma, history, memory, and identity is still of widespread interest, and much remains to be investigated on both empirical and theoretical levels.¹ The ongoing challenge is to approach the topic without opposing history and memory in a binary fashion but instead by inquiring into more complex and challenging

1. See, for example, *Les lieux de mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora. 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984); *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick *et al.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); *Memory, History, Debates*, ed. Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010); Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, transl. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Berghahn, 2012); and Wulf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies," *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (2002), 179-197, and "Genealogy of a Category Mistake: A Critical Intellectual History of the Cultural Trauma Metaphor," *Rethinking History* 8, no. 2 (2004), 193-221. See also my *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), especially chap. 1.

relations between them as well as into what may not be encompassed by the binary. This account attempts to set out a research agenda that is multifaceted but with components that are conceptually interrelated and that call for further research and thought.

Historical research based on written and related documentary sources may contest or correct individual or collective memory, but the opposite may also be the case. The former has generally been the often cogent emphasis of historians. In this account, without downplaying the value and importance of archival research, I shall focus on the latter possibility, that is, memory posing questions to history (or historiography). In a necessarily selective manner, I shall indicate where histories based on standard written archives as well as works claiming historical status may, like memory itself, be problematic and usefully supplemented and even contested or corrected by an appeal to memory. Indeed, what conceptually ties together the various case histories I address is the issue of the role of memory in them, traumatic memory (or post-traumatic effects) and memory (or memory work) that counteracts post-traumatic effects and supplements, at times serving as a corrective to written sources. Of course, written archives themselves are often repositories of testimonies and various accounts that are based on memory, further indication of the dubiousness of a dichotomy between the written and the remembered or the oral. Indeed, what is generative of anxiety and open to question in written history may be projected exclusively onto memory as a scapegoat of sorts.² In any case, it is misleading to see memory only or even distinctively as the locus of an attempt to absorb history or as a misguided quest for heritage, a more real or “present” past, or unproblematic identity (or “identity politics”).³ Certain memorial endeavors may be open to criticism, but that does not entail either a disregard for all approaches to memory or downplaying the at times traumatic

2. One may detect here an inversion of the process Jacques Derrida addresses in one dimension of *Of Grammatology*, transl. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak [1967] (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974; 40th anniversary edition 2016). One may privilege written documents over orality and memory while still scapegoating the subordinated “other” by projecting onto it whatever causes anxiety in the self or the dominant entity. More generally for Derrida, writing and orality (or memory) are inscription systems of instituted traces that may operate differently in various historical and social contexts but should not be construed in terms of a decisive binary opposition that functions as a scapegoat mechanism.

3. By the 1990s, important historians in France expressed strong reservations if not outright hostility to memory studies as inimical to genuine history, including even historians who had been prominent in the study of memory, such as Pierre Nora and Henry Rousso. Rousso, in *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas* (with Eric Conan [Paris: Gallimard, 1994]), singled out Jewish memory as excessive, and Nora in an interview in 2006 went so far as to reference his earlier mention of a “tyranny” while adding to it a charge of the “terrorism” of an “aggressive” and “pathological” memory in French public discourse. (See Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009], 269. On these and related issues, see also Carolyn J. Dean, *Aversion and Erasure: The Fate of the Victim after the Holocaust* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010].) The suspicion or even dismissal of memory studies as well as the postulation of a decisive opposition between history and memory has continued in certain approaches to history. See, for example, François Hartog, “Time and Heritage,” *Museum* 57, no. 3 (2005), 7-17; Kerwin Lee Klein, “On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse,” *Representations* 69, no. 1(2000), 127-150; and Gabrielle Spiegel, “Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time,” *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (2002), 149-162 (where Spiegel arrives at the questionable conclusion that modern historiography postulates a sharp divide between past and present and keeps the past in the past).

pressure of the past and its involvement with, or intrusion into, the present. I argue for the relevance to history of a critical but nondismissive approach to the study of memory, trauma, and identity-formation and discuss significant new work as well as indicate the continued pertinence of somewhat older work in the field.

In recent work, trauma has, often with good reason, come to hold an important place in memory studies.⁴ Trauma brings out in a striking way the importance of affect and its impact on memory, pointing both to traumatic memory in the form of post-traumatic effects (repetition compulsions, startle reactions, over-reactions, severe sleep disorders, including recurrent nightmares, and so forth) and to the challenge to work through them in a viable but perhaps never totally successful fashion. Still, it is important to inquire into trauma and post-traumatic effects in a manner that does not isolate but instead links them to the investigation of other significant problems, including the more general relations between history and memory, involving the role of testimony and oral history.

Trauma and traumatic events, experiences, or processes, such as genocides and other forms of violence and abuse, may involve double binds, and may limit what may be represented with any degree of adequacy. But there are dimensions of the traumatic that can be represented and should be as lucidly and accurately as possible. One familiar double bind, which has to be negotiated by anyone addressing the traumatic, is well expressed in the subtitle of a book by two French psychoanalysts who play on a variation on the final sentence of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus: Whereof One Cannot Speak, Thereof One Cannot Stay Silent*.⁵ Yet silences may also speak in their own way, having a performative dimension that is not devoid of objective significance and moral force. The very breaks or gaps in an account such as a testimony may attest to disruptive experiences and relate to a reliving of trauma that collapses the past into the present, making it seem or feel as if it were more "real" and "present" than contemporary circumstances. With respect to trauma, a simple postulation does not suffice to distinguish between past and present, and it may function to occlude the role of trauma and post-traumatic effects. The ability to make an effective, nondeceptive distinction depends on working through traumatic and post-traumatic experience in a way that requires *inter alia* memory work that situates the trauma in a past related to—even in a sense still bound up with live issues in, but not repeatedly relived or conflated with—the present.

Only in the relatively recent past has trauma become a concern in historiography, even with respect to events and processes in which its role should be apparent. Still, the style of a prevalent approach to historiography, in its quest for objectified facts, ready readability, entertaining anecdotes, free-flowing narrative, and classical balance, threatens to take the trauma out of trauma. Such a narrative may

4. See the perceptive overview in Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008). See also the cautionary ethnographic inquiry into the political uses and abuses of an appeal to trauma and victimhood in Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*, transl. Rachel Gomme [2007] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

5. See Françoise Davoine and Jean-Max Gaudillière, *History beyond Trauma: Whereof One Cannot Speak, Thereof One Cannot Stay Silent*, transl. Susan Fairfield (New York: Other Press, 2004). See also Naomi Mandel, *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).

be like a screen memory that conceals troubling, perhaps traumatic phenomena or, more generally, problems that would call for a different but culturally variable, noncodifiable approach. Notably in certain areas of literary criticism and related forms of critical theory, the reaction to an ameliorative orientation may go to the opposite extreme of construing trauma as an incomprehensible affront to understanding.⁶ In this vein trauma sometimes assumes the form of utterly unspeakable experience, blank unreadability, the unsymbolizable Lacanian “real,” or even the sublime object of endless melancholia and impossible mourning.⁷

Trauma and its causes are indeed a prominent feature of history, which should not be airbrushed or denied. But to construe trauma as evoking essential incomprehensibility is to obscure dimensions of traumatic events and experiences that are amenable to at least limited understanding, which may help to avert the incidence of trauma or to mitigate and counteract its effects. These dimensions include efforts to work on and through compulsive post-traumatic effects in enabling critical judgment, opening possible futures, and diminishing or eliminating the causes of historical traumas such as prejudice, scapegoating, and extreme differences of wealth, status, and power.

In *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma*, a significant book that takes account of much earlier work, Gabriele Schwab stresses the value of situating trauma in larger contexts and histories of violence. She especially emphasizes the study of inter- or transgenerational transmission of trauma and its effects or symptoms to the descendants of both victims and perpetrators. In the latter respect, very important for Schwab and more generally is the work based on interviews and testimonies by Dan Bar-On on Jews and Germans, Israelis and Palestinians.⁸ Also very significant are the classic, at times

6. See Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). An influential (but not the only) line of thought in her work stresses the way “trauma thus seems to evoke the difficult truth of a history that is constituted by the very incomprehensibility of its occurrence.” In contrast to traumatic memory such as “the flashback or traumatic reenactment,” which for the survivor presumably conveys “both the truth of an event, and the truth of its incomprehensibility,” narrative and integration into memory bring a loss of precision, and beyond that, “another, more profound disappearance: the loss, precisely, of the [traumatic] event’s essential incomprehensibility, the force of its *affront to understanding*” (“Recapturing the Past: Introduction,” in her edited volume *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995], 153-154). The traumatic event, bringing an incomprehensible “experience of shock,” seems to assume, at least via its after-effects, a valorized or even sublime status that stymies both historical understanding and perhaps even limited processes of working-through.

7. On this and related issues, see especially my *Writing History, Writing Trauma* [2001] (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), as well as *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), especially chap. 3, “Trauma Studies: Its Critics and Vicissitudes.” See also Karyn Ball, *Disciplining the Holocaust* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), which brings up the vexed issue of affect in scholarship, including sado-masochism and rage. What I term “empathic unsettlement” (that resists unmediated identification) might include, at least in scholarship, not rage but outrage, which is tempered and tested by critical judgment. At points it may also bring a sense of vulnerability and disempowerment.

8. See Gabriele Schwab, *Haunting Legacies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); see also Dan Bar-On, *Legacy of Silence: Encounters with Children of the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), and *Tell Your Life-Story: Creating Dialogue among Jews and Germans, Israelis and Palestinians* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006). Someone interviewed and discussed by Bar-On is Martin Bormann, who bore his father’s infamous name, felt the burden of his legacy, led a difficult life, but emerged in time as a person who steadfastly bore witness to the past.

quite difficult texts of psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, who often draw on their clinical practice.⁹ This work was very important for Derrida in his critique of ontology and turn to what he famously termed hauntology in which the past and its “ghosts” haunt the present, often in elusive and uncanny ways. Abraham elaborated the idea of the transgenerational “phantom” that returns to unsettle the present with respect to crimes or transgressions that have not been worked through (or in his preferred concept, “introjected” in contrast to incorporated as a kind of unrepressed unconscious that does not exert pressure for release but whose “crypts” must be opened and decrypted). A famous example Abraham explores is the ghost of Hamlet’s father, who, he speculates, has committed a secret, unavowed crime, which constrains his restless return to haunt his melancholic son. One elementary implication of this line of thought is that a phantom or ghost, whether as metaphor or as hallucination, is a form of traumatic memory or post-traumatic effect.

Schwab herself was raised in postwar Germany and interweaves into her account the memory of some of her own experiences as a child growing up in a so-called perpetrator nation. She notes the importance of phenomena that may never make it into a written archive: “children of a traumatized parental generation . . . become avid readers of silences and memory traces hidden in a face that is frozen in grief, a forced smile that does not feel quite right, an apparently unmotivated flare-up of rage, or chronic depression. . . . The second generation [and, she also argues, possibly later generations—DLC] thus receives violent histories not only through the actual memories or stories of parents (postmemory) but also through the traces of affect, particularly affect that remains unintegrated and inassimilable.”¹⁰

Schwab also writes:

Is it not plausible that the children of perpetrators would be haunted by the crimes committed by the generation of their parents? . . . This acknowledgment of the effects of transgenerational haunting in no way exculpates or absolves these descendants of perpetrators from assuming responsibility for their legacy. On the contrary, such a systemic perspective suggests that people have no choice but to be responsive to and take responsibility for the history they inherit, no matter on which side of the divide they were born. It is in this sense that the controversial term *Kollektivschuld*, that is, a transgenerational transmission of guilt and shame, can be used in productive ways.¹¹

I would rather refer to descendants’ *feelings* of guilt and shame related to a transgenerational transmission of symptoms or effects of trauma—a process that for Schwab should not be denied, melancholically affirmed, or rendered sublime but arduously worked through. Here the descendants of victims and of perpetrators may possibly share something significant, for they inherit a burden for which they are not, but may feel, guilty and for which they are within limits answerable and may assume responsibility. I would also note that, despite the Nazi cult of hardness

See as well Clara Mucci, *Beyond Individual and Collective Trauma: Intergenerational Transmission, Psychoanalytic Treatment, and the Dynamics of Forgiveness* (London: Karnac Books, 2013).

9. These texts are in part collected in *The Shell and the Kernel*, vol. 1, ed. and transl. with commentary by Nicholas Rand [1987] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

10. Schwab, *Haunting Legacies*, 14.

11. *Ibid.*, 26.

that might serve to avert traumatization of perpetrators, cases of perpetrator trauma along with the transmission of traumatic effects to descendants of perpetrators would contradict Himmler's well-known assertion in his Posen speech (or speeches) of October, 1943 that the Nazi killing of Jews had caused "no defect [or damage] within us, in our soul, in our character" (*keinen Schaden in unserem Innern, in unserer Seele, in unserem Charakter*).¹² This was not quite the case for some, perhaps many perpetrators, at least in relation to their descendants and intimates.

Evident in Claude Lanzmann's 1985 film *Shoah* is the difficulty in getting perpetrators to give testimony without the interviewer resorting to trickery and even lies, as in the exchange with the guard at Treblinka, Franz Suchomel. In Adam Benzine's 2015 documentary, *Spectres of the Shoah*, Lanzmann (in terms hauntingly recalling the testimony of Abraham Bomba in *Shoah*) addresses the very severe beating he received when discovered with a camera by another former SS man. The reluctance of perpetrators to discuss their actions, especially regarding genocidal practices, is one reason one might be inclined to take very seriously and give special prominence to certain portions of Himmler's Posen speeches of October, 1943, for in them one has a major protagonist in the Holocaust in a sense testifying not to outsiders, where one might expect evasion and prevarication, but to high-ranking insiders, who one may assume are attuned to what Himmler is saying. At times the children of even major perpetrators may be more willing to be interviewed. Pertinent here is Philippe Sands's 2015 documentary film *A Nazi Legacy: What Our Fathers Did*, which contains extended interviews with the children of two important perpetrators, Niklas, son of Hans Frank (Gauleiter of the Generalgouvernement [the Nazi occupied portion of Poland]) and Horst, son of Otto von Wächter (Gauleiter of Galicia). Although friends since childhood and burdened with apparently similar pasts, Niklas and Horst have sharply divergent (and no doubt overdetermined) responses. Niklas Frank severely criticizes and heatedly repudiates his father and his crimes, whereas Horst von Wächter remains a devoted son and defends his father's actions as he sees them. Hans Frank was tried and hanged at Nuremberg as a major war criminal, whereas Otto von Wächter was indicted but fled and never came to trial. Near the end of the film, on a trip to Lviv (Lemberg under the Nazis) where they visit a burnt-out synagogue and nearby killing fields, Niklas, increasingly upset by Horst's unwillingness to come to terms with the crimes of his father, realizes he can no longer compartmentalize his friendship with Horst or divorce the man from his unacceptable views and attachments.¹³

Like perhaps many other children of perpetrators, Horst tries to dissociate or split the father into good and bad personas so that he can hold onto and affirm the good while, however indecisively, rejecting the bad. The good father is typically the private family man whom the child can still love, whereas the bad father is

12. For one translation of this section of Himmler's speech, see *A Holocaust Reader*, ed. and transl. Lucy Dawidowicz (West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1976), 133.

13. See also Sands's more comprehensive book, based on memory, oral testimony, and archival documents, *East West Street: On the Origins of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016). One of the epigraphs of this book, which stylistically often resembles a text of W. G. Sebald, is from Nicolas Abraham's 1975 "Notes on the Phantom": "What haunts are not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others."

the political man involved in and perhaps committed to Nazi ideology and even related crimes. Horst, however, makes a further dissociation in splitting the political man, whom he implausibly believes remained good and “liberal,” from the Nazi regime in which the father presumably was implicated only as a cog not responsible for the regime’s quasi-autonomous momentum.¹⁴ More decisive and arguably more ideologically damaged than Horst von Wächter, in her blind dedication to the memory of her father, is the neo-Nazi Gudrun Burwitz, daughter of Heinrich Himmler. Gudrun, born in 1929, has throughout her life defended (if not identified with) her father, sought however unconvincingly to redeem his image, and helped other Nazis either escape or have as good a legal defense as possible in facing prosecution. She blames Allied propaganda for besmirching Himmler’s good name and has adamantly supported Nazi ideology in the postwar period. She is often known (and by neo-Nazis admired) as “the princess of Nazism.”¹⁵

Especially during the most recent generation, testimonies have come into special prominence, forming a genre that cuts across the oral and the written.¹⁶ Their recording in videos raises the question of the digital and its status as a source in which the oral and the written enter into sustained interaction, exemplified in the online article, video, or blog that elicits numerous more or less impromptu comments often having the feel of oral responses. Besides its possible evidentiary value, giving testimony may itself be crucial to working through trauma and its symptoms, and a reason for survival may be the desire (in an oft-repeated phrase) to tell one’s story. Testimony also raises in acute form the role of memory, for it is typically memory that allows witnesses to access their experience of events, and it is significant that testimony has a distinctive dimension with respect to

14. One should not ascribe consistency to Horst von Wächter’s contradictory casting about for ways to justify his father. Sands observes that Horst “had somehow constructed a distinction between his father and the system, between the individual and the group of which he was a leader.” But he also comments that Horst, “unable to condemn,” nonetheless claims “it was the fault of Frank’s General Government, of the SS, of Himmler. Everyone else in the group was responsible, but not Otto. Finally, he said, ‘I agree with you that he was completely in the system’” (Sands, *East West Street*, 245).

15. On Gudrun Burwitz (who refused to be interviewed) and some other children of major perpetrators (including Niklas Frank and Martin Bormann), see Stephan Lebert and Norbert Lebert, *My Father’s Keeper: Children of Nazi Leaders: An Intimate History of Damage and Denial*, transl. Julian Evans [2000] (London: Little, Brown, 2002).

16. See, for example, my discussion in *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, chap. 3. Geoffrey Hartman’s role at the Yale Fortunoff archive has been especially prominent, but many other video archives now exist. See Hartman’s *The Longest Shadow* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996). See also Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, transl. Jared Stark [1998] (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006). The traumatic legacies of slavery and the treatment of African Americans in the United States form a vast subject on which much has been written. I shall simply mention two well-known texts. Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987) has been perceptively read as an exploration of the post-traumatic aftermath of slavery and the attempt to work through its disconcerting legacy and haunting “ghosts” (see, for example, Satya Mohanty, *Literary Theory and the Claims of History* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997] and James Berger, *After the End: Representations of Post-apocalypse* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999].) In the form of a testimonial letter to his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates, in *Between the World and Me* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2015), explores at times traumatic problems of racism facing contemporary African Americans, epitomized in the largely unexplained shooting of his young friend, Prince Jones, for Coates a manifestation of racism and police violence against blacks, even in the case of an unpunished officer who himself was black.

experience with its important but problematic relation to events. A witness gives testimony or bears witness to the way he or she experienced events, and it is this experience, which has a *prima facie* “authenticity,” that at times cannot be accessed in other ways. Oral testimonies are of course supplemented by written accounts, such as diaries and memoirs, with possible discrepancies between the two posing a special object of critical analysis. Oral testimony plays no significant role in the work of many historians, notably of the Holocaust, in part because of the plausible fear that the “tricks” memory plays may jeopardize the credibility of other accounts that may be subjected to doubt or denial, especially by negationists. Still, along with the way memory may accurately supplement or even correct written history and its standard archival bases, even memory’s “tricks” and the reasons for their occurrence are themselves valid and valuable objects of historical and critical scrutiny.

It has become evident that one must carefully and at times critically attend to the voices of victims as well as those in other subject positions, such as perpetrators, collaborators, bystanders, and commentators. Although significant studies using testimonies have appeared (for example, those I later mention by Christopher Browning and Jan Gross), one may ask whether historians have made sufficient use of the many testimonies now available or whether they still show a marked preference for written documents in conventional archives. Oral and video testimonies and their own specific archives are, however, worthy of sustained attention for a variety of reasons: their distinctive relation to experience or the way events are lived; their role in the reconstruction of events, especially in the absence or paucity of other sources; the manner in which they enable one to hear the grain of the embodied voice in relation to facial expressions and bodily gestures, making “voice” more than a metaphor; and the way they bring up the issue of the “tricks” memory plays, at times related to post-traumatic effects and the interplay of conscious and unconscious forces involved in the movements and vagaries of memory.¹⁷

The still controversial gray zone is one area in which testimonies may enable development and qualification of Primo Levi’s fine-grained analysis.¹⁸ In other words, there are shades of gray, running from implication to degrees

17. Saul Friedländer, in his monumental two-volume *Nazi Germany and the Jews* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997, 2007), intentionally tries to punctuate or even disrupt his own narrative with the “voices” of victims and survivors (Victor Klemperer, for example), at least with respect to their written accounts in diaries and memoirs but not their oral testimonies or videos. A noteworthy use of testimony based on memory is that of Christopher Browning in his microhistorical study, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave Labor Camp* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2010), which is devoted to reconstructing the history of a small complex of Nazi slave-labor camps in occupied Poland: Wierzbnik-Starachowice. Browning relies primarily on 292 testimonies of Jewish survivors, collected between 1945 and 2008. Despite his awareness of the fallibility of memory, he argues that in this case the oral testimonies, when examined critically, are by and large the most reliable available evidence for reconstructing forms of life and especially the ways victims suffered and struggled to survive in the harsh conditions of life in this work camp. See also Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Gross draws on testimonies given in the course of trials of some of the perpetrators in 1949 and 1953 as well as (*inter alia*) memories and memorabilia (such as photographs) of others, including a rabbi and a survivor hidden by a Polish family.

18. The gray zone of course poses problems of comparative interest, for example, with respect to Vietnamese who cooperated or fought with Americans or *harkis* who assisted the French in Algeria.

of complicity and culpability, that require discriminating analysis, and testimonies often may enable that kind of analysis. Here the judgments of survivors themselves are of particular importance, especially since the commentator may hesitate to assume a subject position that authorizes such judgments. It is noteworthy that, in *The Drowned and the Saved*,¹⁹ where he treats the problem of the gray zone (chapter 2), Levi makes a tensely nuanced argument indicating that the gray zone of often troubled or even forced complicity of victims was most significant in groups such as the *Sonderkommandos* and certain members of Jewish councils (on whom he nonetheless suspends judgment).²⁰ He also argues that victims should not be confounded with perpetrators (which would be for him “a moral disease or an aesthetic affectation or a sinister sign of complicity”²¹), and that he and most other survivors might not be proud of everything they did in surviving or lend themselves to sacralization as saints or martyrs. In a sometimes dubiously appropriated hyperbole acceptable for someone in his position but not I think for others (such as commentators), Levi proposes that not survivors like himself but rather the “drowned”—the killed, the struck speechless, the utterly abject such as *Muselmänner*—were the true “witnesses.” With respect to prisoners “who occupied commanding positions,” such as Kapos, Levi asserts that “judgment becomes more tentative and varied.” Some might be “members of secret defense organizations,” but “the greater part . . . ranged from the mediocre to the execrable,” and “it was not unusual for a prisoner to be beaten to death by a *Kapo* without the latter having to fear any sanctions,” even when limitations were introduced after 1943 as the need for labor became acute.²² Additional close studies of survivor testimonies and commentaries might well reveal a gamut of differential critical judgments or actions with respect to different shades of gray, from degrees of resistance to collaboration and complicity.²³

19. Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* [1986] (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

20. *Ibid.*, 60. Christopher Browning, in *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003) recounts the killing on a deportation train to Auschwitz of privileged members of the Starachowice Jewish council by *Sonderkommandos* from Majdanek (79-82). In *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Hannah Arendt notes that there was an outburst, in both Hungarian and Yiddish, during the Eichmann trial, directed at a witness who was a member of the Budapest Jewish council, Pinchas Freudiger, ostensibly seen by survivors as having betrayed them in his own self-interest (Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* [New York: Viking, 1963], 124). See also Friedländer's critique of Arendt's *carte-blanche* condemnation of Jewish councils and his own useful summary of their differing roles in *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, vol. 2, *1939-1945: The Years of Extermination* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), xxiii-xxiv. See as well the classic work of Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972).

21. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, 47-48.

22. *Ibid.*, 45-46. See also Levi's *Se questo è un uomo*, transl. Stuart Woolf as *Survival in Auschwitz* [1958] (New York: Macmillan, 1961) and René Wolf, “Judgment in the Gray Zone: The Third Auschwitz (Kapo) Trial in Frankfurt (1968),” *Journal of Genocide Research* 9, no. 4 (2007), 617-635. Wolf focuses on the difficulties of prosecution for state-sponsored crimes, but his overall assessment of Kapos is close to Levi's (see especially 619).

23. See Samuel Moyn, *A Holocaust Controversy: The Treblinka Affair in Postwar France* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2005) for a discussion of the heated responses of survivors as well as others (including prominent intellectuals) to the controversial 1966 book of Jean-François Steiner concerning the August 2, 1943 uprising of inmates at Treblinka. See also the long, scathing comment, taking the form of a testimonial letter to Steiner in 1968, by Richard Glazer, one of the

Special mention should be made of oral history, itself based in large part on testimony. Especially in relation to certain indigenous cultures, oral history is crucial in the reconstruction of the past, and archaeology is its vital supplement. Certain sites, such as petroglyphs, may well be living, even sacred parts of a culture, not simply in the past but in the contemporary world as well. Indigenous societies, where religion is not centered on a belief in God or some transcendent, “totally other” being, tend to see the sacred and its spirits in relation to the land or the earth.²⁴ This is one factor that makes land-based sovereignty so important and renders extremely disorienting, even traumatic, the forced displacement of groups onto typically inhospitable reservations, along with the extraction of minerals, often in exploitative ways, by extra-tribal agents and at times involving the desecration or even looting of sacred places. An important book discussing the National Museum of the American Indian, located on the mall in Washington, DC, is entitled *The Land Has Memory*.²⁵ The way land has memory may be more infused with the sacred than what Pierre Nora has famously termed *lieux de mémoire*, although the latter may also at times be sacralized, especially when they are also trauma sites.

I have intimated that the turn to experience and testimony necessarily entails a concern with memory. An important consideration is that in certain cases, oral history drawing from memories, despite its problematic dimensions, is especially important since there may be no written documents or at least few if any such documents left by the less powerful and the oppressed. This is notoriously the case with American Indians and their disastrously beleaguered treatment at the hands of the US government and its “westward-ho” citizens. Note that the

survivors of the uprising at Treblinka (Glazer was a key witness interviewed in Lanzmann’s *Shoah*). His comment on Steiner is available at <http://holocaustcontroversies.blogspot.com/2006/10/richard-glazar-on-jean-francois.html> (accessed December 15, 2015). Steiner’s father died in a sub-camp of Auschwitz. Steiner himself had served for a year (1959) as a parachutist in the French military in Algeria and, still in his twenties, wrote his fictionalized, seemingly historical account (what he termed a “stage-produced or staged narration”) apparently to compensate for what he felt as shame over Jews in the Holocaust putatively “going like sheep to the slaughter.” For him this image might be countered by a version of the uprising at Treblinka—one that nonetheless seemed to present certain heroic resisters as exceptional in contrast to the complicity of many inmates, including Sonderkommandos. Moved by a sense of solidarity with fellow inmates and of memorial duty to get at the truth as faithfully as possible, Glazer was outraged by the book and recounted its many distortions, including its self-serving, uninformed, tunnel-visioned glorification of the uprising. He was especially upset by its misrepresentation of Kapo Kurland who, among the prisoners, was highly respected and served as a senior member of the revolutionary committee. Glazer concludes: “You should not have written such sensation-mongering, cruel concoctions about real people, using their real names, which really existed not so long ago and are remembered, so that their nearest and dearest would have the right to bring you to bear witness before the public—if any of them had lived or had had sufficient money to do so.” On Glazer, see also Moyn, *A Holocaust Controversy*, 137-140.

24. See, for example, John (Fire) Lame Deer and Richard Erdoes, *Lame Deer Seeker of Visions: The Life of a Sioux Medicine Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972) and *Spirit and Reason: The Vine Deloria, Jr., Reader*, foreword by Wilma P. Mankiller, ed. Barbara Deloria *et al.* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1999).

25. *The Land Has Memory: Indigenous Knowledge, Native Landscapes, and the National Museum of the American Indian*, ed. Duane Blue Spruce and Tanya Thrasher (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2008). On indigenous and especially American Indian societies, see Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*, foreword by Leroy Little Bear, JD (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers, 2000).

binary opposition between history and memory obscures the ways written history and not only memory may be affected by ideology, emotion, self-interest, and manipulation as well as by problematic archival sources, hence at times open to question as an accurate account of the past. It is a commonplace that modern historiography, notably (but not only) in Germany with a key figure such as Ranke, arose in a symbiotic relation with pronounced, emotionally laden nationalism. And Frederick Jackson Turner influentially postulated an open frontier in the western United States, even presenting it as a basis of American democracy—a frontier that could be perceived as open or generative of democracy only by vaporizing American Indians inhabiting the land and the country.²⁶ Indeed, archives themselves, rather than being seen as the bedrock of certainty in history or even as the invariably more reliable source of documentary evidence, might arguably be understood more critically as an inscription system whose contents and processes may, to a greater or lesser extent, be worked over by forces, including affective and ideological forces, comparable to those at play in memory with its suppressions, repressions, and selective inclusions, exclusions, and distortions.

A recent book offers a view of the archive as a problematic “source”: Anne Laura Stoler’s widely praised *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. While seeking as accurate an account of the past as possible, Stoler treats the archive of the Dutch East India Company from the 1830s to the 1930s not simply as a repository of facts but as a process shaped in good part by the affective investments of mid-level administrators in charge of dealing with the mixed population of the Dutch East Indies, notably in the case of the nineteenth-century administrator Frans Carl Valck. As Stoler puts it, the archive harbors

unsure and hesitant sorts of documentation and sensibilities. . . . Grids of intelligibility were fashioned from uncertain knowledge; disquiet and anxieties registered the uncommon sense of events and things; epistemic uncertainties repeatedly unsettled the imperial conceit that all was in order. . . . Against the sober formulaics of officialese, these archives register the febrile movements of persons off balance—of thoughts and feeling in and out of place. In tone and temper they convey the rough interior ridges of governance and disruptions to the deceptive clarity of its mandates.²⁷

To the extent this evocation of the affectively charged, sometimes problematic written archive accounts for a significant dimension of its nature, it renders at least that dimension in a manner that makes it as reliable or unreliable as memory and provides little purchase for a decisive opposition between the two.

In her acclaimed *Allure of the Archive*, Arlette Farge, who works on judicial archives (including police reports), makes an argument that parallels Stoler’s.

26. With the political resurgence of fact-free assertion and even the big-lie technique (tell a big prejudicial lie and stand your ground), such views are far from a thing of the past. A self-proclaimed Christian tea-party member and supporter of Donald Trump, one William Strong of Pennsylvania, stated to a reporter after a visit to New Mexico: “They call themselves Native Americans, but anybody that’s right-minded knows that America was an uninhabited country and some of the Indians moved in there and now that they want their land, they’re calling themselves native, meaning first in time [and] first in right and that therefore they’re entitled to it.” Reported by Daniel J. Chacón, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, June 16, 2016, A-4.

27. Anne Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 1-2.

The suggestive French title is *Le goût de l'archive*, with *goût* having a more sensually aesthetic range of connotations than “allure,” especially given its proximity to *dégoût* (disgust), not so much its opposite as its dangerous supplement, which at times threatens to surface as Farge evokes the quirks and exasperations of her experience in archives. While avowing her passion for archives and her quest for ways of translating them into convincing, nondistortive, self-questioning narratives, Farge sees the archive as “a gap-riddled puzzle of obscure events” marked by “ruptures and dispersion . . . stutters and silences. It is like a kaleidoscope revolving before your eyes.”²⁸ Like Stoler, Farge makes frequent reference to Michel Foucault, but one might also refer to Jacques Derrida’s *Archive Fever*, where he relates the archival to an intricate, even vertiginous series of problems, including memory, messianicity, virtuality, haunting, and the political. After an allusion to the ghost of Hamlet’s father, one even has an enigmatic, seemingly Nietzschean reference to “the coming of a *scholar of the future*, a scholar who, in the future and so as to conceive of the future, would dare to speak to the phantom.”²⁹ Without daring to speak to the phantom and restricting my account to an interpretation of haunting revenants as post-traumatic effects, I would note that another translation of the French title *Mal d’archive*, on the analogy of *mal de mer* (sea-sickness), would be “archive sickness,” of which fever would be only one possible symptom, the other and perhaps more pressing one being vertigo, even or perhaps especially in the historian with a passion for the archives. Vertigo may be induced in archives when one is overwhelmed by an excess or unsettled by a paucity of information, both of which may render dizzyingly problematic or contestable assertions and narratives one bases on what is present (or at times absent, interpolated, or hypothesized) with respect to an archive. The status of the archive is of course further complicated by the play of forces that go into the creation and composition over time of what is (or is not) placed and preserved in it.³⁰

In an expanded sense, the archive can be taken to include published texts and available artifacts. This is especially the case when they are read or interpreted with an attentiveness to their less manifest or secret, even hidden, dimensions that may connect with related dimensions of society and culture. Here deserving of special notice are texts that are marginalized, less read, perhaps even frequently

28. Arlette Farge, *Allure of the Archive*, foreword by Natalie Zemon Davis, transl. Thomas Scott-Railton [1989] (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 94.

29. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, transl. Eric Panowitz [1995] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 39.

30. See, for example, the account in Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America’s Holocaust Museum* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). See also *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2005). Expanding the notion of the archive to include various non-conventional sources, notably oral accounts, Burton in her introduction asserts that “by foregrounding a variety of archive stories,” her collection aims “to begin to diffuse the aura which now more than ever surrounds the notion of the ‘real’ archives, especially those which historians have dealt with” (6). It also attempts to counteract “historians’ comparative silence about the personal, structural, and political pressures which the archive places on the histories they end up writing—as well as those they do not” (90). In *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), Carolyn Steedman takes what she puts forth as a critique of Derrida into a materialization of the archive as a source of infectious dust that literally causes fever in the dedicated historian with a *goût de l’archive*.

read but not well understood or rendered thought-provoking. An important initiative of recent movements in critical theory, such as deconstruction notably in its interaction with psychoanalysis, has been to inquire into what might be termed the more archival dimensions of even seemingly well-known texts that resist ready understanding. One provocative insight into the aporia or double bind is that it marks a textual trauma, possibly related to an existential trauma, that has not been worked through and may resist closure as well as the latter's mistaken conflation with the process of working-through. To offer but one example, the Holocaust and the Algerian war have been at times coupled as interacting or linked phenomena with traumatic dimensions, notably in French writing and sociopolitical life, as in the work of Charlotte Delbo.³¹ Here a series of traumatic events or experiences may function variably both to conceal and to point to one another in intricate and contestable ways, for example, in the writings of Camus, Foucault, and Derrida. What are the positioning and role of the Holocaust in Camus's *The Fall* (1956) compared with the at most obscure role of the Algerian war in that text as well as the war's more explicit status in other of Camus's texts, including his political and social writings around the same time?³² Does Derrida's assertion that "cinder" or "ash" may be the best way to render "trace" in his understanding of it provide a belated recognition into the more covert effects of the Holocaust in his earlier writings, which often seem, at least on one level, to resemble a survivor's discourse alluding to a disruption or catastrophe that is not or cannot be named? Where if anywhere is the Nazi genocide and its perpetrators and victims in Foucault's 1961 book on madness, a book published the year of the Eichmann trial?³³ And why is Foucault so insistently critical of Freud and prone (like Gilles Deleuze) to read him in a very restricted manner even when Foucault addresses problems, such as the archaeological, the genealogical, and the related role of displacements (rather than simple epistemological breaks) over time, in ways that arguably parallel Freud's thinking on these issues? A more general point with respect to such questions is that an interest in the archival need not exclude and may instead invite a renewed interest in what is published, even though its pressure may give the latter a distinctive swerve.

Deserving much more than brief mention is the role of testimony, memory, and trauma, as well as the status of archives, with respect to the highly charged problem of child abuse, including in institutions where children are under the supervision and control of often respected or even revered authority figures. Attention has been focused on "pedophile priests" in the Catholic Church in a manner that should be more comparative but not diversionary or prone to

31. On this and related issues, see Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

32. For my view, see LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz*, chap. 3. For an opposing interpretation, see Debarati Sanyal, *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015).

33. See Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1961); translated by Jonathan Murphy and Jean Kalpha as *History of Madness* (New York: Routledge, 2006) with a foreword by Ian Hacking and an introduction by Jean Khalfa. See also my discussion of the book in LaCapra, *History and Reading: Tocqueville, Foucault, French Studies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

homophobic appropriation.³⁴ The problem in the Catholic Church has nonetheless been systemic and worldwide, not simply a question of random individuals or a few “bad apples” in the clergy. A researcher restricted to available written documents would not have gotten very far in the investigation of this problem. What seems evident is the protection of offending clergy not only by police or judges but also by the church hierarchy up to the highest levels, including the episcopate and the Vatican. From their avoidance or suppression of the issue as well as many of their guarded statements, the concern of the hierarchy has seemed to be more the status and reputation of the Church than the fate of the victims or arriving at the truth. One key factor making it difficult to determine the precise extent of the problem is the secret and closed status of the centralized archives in the Vatican where information on abuse has presumably been stored for a very long time. Marco Polito, the Vatican correspondent for *Fatto Quotidiano*, in a statement in *Mea Maxima Culpa*, claims that such information has been archived since the fourth century.³⁵

In *Sex, Priests, and Secret Codes*, the authors assert that secrecy about the most severe sexual crimes has been especially pronounced in the Church since the issuance to hierarchy of a little-known 1962 papal document: “The tribunal and other church personnel who were involved in processing cases were bound by the church’s highest degree of confidentiality—the Secret of the Holy Office—to maintain total and perpetual secrecy” under pain of automatic excommunication. Although automatic excommunication was not imposed on accusers and witnesses, they were nonetheless obliged to take the oath of secrecy and could be threatened with excommunication for breaking silence.³⁶ A later papal document of 2001 imposed further restrictions, for example, the obligation of the bishop or other superior to send results of a preliminary investigation to the Vatican, where officials would decide whether the case would be processed in the Vatican or returned to the local diocese for prosecution. The authors further note: “Because the archives of the Holy Office, now known as the CDF [Congregation for the Defense of the Faith], are closed to outside scrutiny, it is impossible to determine the number of cases referred to it between 1962 and the present.”³⁷ On the basis of interviews between 1960 and 1985 with 1,500 priests or their sexual partners, Sipe estimated that 6 percent of priests were sexually involved with minors, 20–25 percent with adult women, and 15 percent with adult men³⁸—findings

34. For example, Amy Berg’s 2015 documentary *Prophet’s Prey* brings out the extent of sexual and spiritual abuse, prominently including that of minors, in the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints, whose leader, Warren Steed Jeffs, received a life sentence. Arguably pertinent also would be a comparison with rapes in the military, or for that matter in academic institutions, and the defensive, self-protective response of the institution, its hierarchy, and its “faithful.”

35. See note 41.

36. Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. Richard Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, *Sex, Priests, and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church’s 2,000 Year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse* (Los Angeles: Volt Press, 2006), 49. Among many other works, see also the relatively early and extremely judicious account by Philip Jenkins, *Pedophilia and Priests: Anatomy of a Contemporary Crisis* [1996] (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

37. Doyle, Sipe, and Wall, *Sex, Priests, and Secret Codes*, 51.

38. *Ibid.*, 58.

largely confirmed by later studies.³⁹ With respect to the harm done to victims, Sipe and his co-authors take note of the incidence of trauma and post-traumatic symptoms and refer to an “open wound,” observing: “There is an incredible helplessness on the part of the abused child—most abused minors either feel responsible for the abuse occurring, or so powerless that they feel they cannot disclose the abuse to their parents or, often, anyone else.”⁴⁰ What seems clear is the importance, in the disclosure of abuse, of the testimony and memory of both victims and others, such as investigative journalists, lawyers, and recently, members of the Church hierarchy itself, including Australian cardinal and Vatican treasurer George Pell.⁴¹

In a different register, the Pulitzer-prize winning *New York Times* journalist Timothy Egan, in his 2012 book *Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher*, gives one prominent example of the importance of memory and oral history in checking, contesting, and possibly changing a dominant narrative.⁴² (Here, despite the traumatizing dimensions of conflict between colonists and American Indians, key witnesses do not seem to have been confronted with the difficulty of working through immediate traumatic or post-traumatic experience to be able to remember and give testimony.) Custer’s famous last stand at Little Big Horn in June of 1876 soon became the occasion for a national story of tragic heroism and military prowess attaining an almost mythical status that has recently undergone significant demystification. Edward S. Curtis, Egan’s *Shadow Catcher*, is or should be well known for his twenty volumes containing some 40,000 photographs of numerous Indian tribes as well as for his ethnographic knowledge and his role in the preservation of native languages. His vision was not only justifiably sharpened by increasing sensitivity to the injustice to which American Indians were subjected, but at times shaped by the then widespread idea that Indians were a vanishing race (the theme of one of his most famous photos of Navajos, who of course did not vanish and are the largest tribe of American Indians, with some 300,000 members). Curtis became a staunch, even outraged defender of the rights of indigenous peoples, including their right to continue practicing their religions

39. *Ibid.*, 68, 212.

40. *Ibid.*, 79.

41. See the February 29, 2016 BBC article on Pell: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-35665405> (accessed March 2, 2016). Largely nonsensationalistic but hard-hitting accounts are provided in Alex Gibney’s 2012 film *Mea Maxima Culpa: Silence in the House of God*, and Tom McCarthy’s 2015 academy-award-winning film, *Spotlight*, which focuses on Boston. In *Mea Maxima Culpa*, a particularly disorienting rationale is offered by perhaps the most notorious offender at St. Michael’s School for the Deaf in Milwaukee, Father Lawrence Murphy—predatory, protected, praised, and unpunished through retirement, despite the abuse of some 200 children. One of Murphy’s contentions is that by victimizing defenseless children, he was taking their sins upon himself, seemingly construing his behavior as some perverse *imitatio Christi*. Sipe’s earlier work was important for the *Spotlight* reporters, and Thomas P. Doyle appears in *Mea Maxima Culpa*.

42. Timothy Egan, *Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher: The Epic Life and Immortal Photographs of Edward Curtis* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012), see especially 164–175. Almost every aspect of Custer’s career, and nothing more than the battle at Little Big Horn, remains hotly contested, and in treating Custer, one is on unsettled ground. For a good sense of the problems in the historiography on Custer, see the review by Thomas Powers, “Custer’s Trials: A Life on the Frontier of a New America by T. J. Stiles,” *New York Review of Books* 62, no. 20 (December 17, 2015), 78–80. Powers stresses the strongly positive affective investment of many historians (including Stiles) in Custer and his representation.

and other customs, at a time when such practices were not only excoriated by many but actually made illegal, with prosecution for offenses that might even be applied to students of native cultures who took part in or represented their ceremonies and way of life.⁴³ Curtis, always threatened by prosecution and at times incarcerated, interviewed (with the assistance of his close friend and associate, the Crow Alexander Upshaw) three Crow (or Apsaroke) scouts (Goes Ahead, Hairy Moccasins, and White Man Runs Him—a name that seems ironic). The three had served with Custer against the Sioux, the Cheyenne, and the Arapaho, and observed Custer's behavior at Little Big Horn. Their memories converged on a counter-narrative of Custer as a coward if not a traitor who allowed his officer, Major Marcus Reno, an object of extreme mutual dislike, to engage the Indians gathered at Little Big Horn, without Custer's assistance and support. Custer waited on the sidelines until the American military forces under Reno underwent significant losses and retreated. Then Custer, expecting glorious victory, entered into battle himself and led his troops to their destruction. This behavior seemed strange to the Crow Indians observing it, one of whom (White Man Runs Him) "said he begged Custer to intercede, scolding him for letting soldiers die," but to no avail.⁴⁴ Curtis believed that "had Custer charged, at a time when the Indians had yet to fully assemble, the battle might have ended in victory for the Americans, or in a draw."⁴⁵

Curtis's attempt to make public this oral-history-based version of the Battle of Little Big Horn was opposed or suppressed from a variety of directions, including Custer's dedicated and determined wife Libby and her allies in more or less high places. Even Curtis's friend and supporter, Teddy Roosevelt, expressed what was no doubt the face-saving and nationalistic view of many in urging, if not demanding, that Curtis not shake the ship of state by revealing an account presumably damaging to its interests—an account, in Roosevelt's words, that "makes Custer out to be both a traitor and a fool."⁴⁶ Curtis restricted himself to observing in volume III of his monumental *North American Indian*: "Custer made no attack, the whole movement being a retreat."⁴⁷ Egan clearly finds credible the account Curtis arrived at through oral history based on the testimony of Indian survivors of the battle who were allied with Custer. In any event, this episode brings out the importance of oral history and the way it may challenge prevalent narratives or even become integrated into the prevalent if not dominant narrative, especially when there is an absence or paucity of credible written accounts and testimony from witnesses with other perspectives.

43. Curtis is not uncontroversial. Although he attempted to increase recognition of the adverse conditions and mistreatment of Indians and to counteract negative stereotypes of them, his photographs have been seen as romanticizing Indians and, despite his own financial sacrifices in undertaking his massive project, became increasingly high-priced, iconic prizes sought by collectors. A recent exhibition of some of his work and that of indigenous artists at the Portland Art Museum is entitled "Contemporary Native American Photographers and the Edward Curtis Legacy," <http://portlandart-museum.org/exhibitions/contemporary-native-photographers/> (accessed May 12, 2016).

44. Egan, *Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher*, 165.

45. Quoted in *ibid.*

46. Quoted in *ibid.*, 173.

47. Quoted in *ibid.*, 175.

It is widely recognized but still worth emphasizing that memory, including traumatic memory, has a crucial role in the formation of individual and collective identities (a principal reason why Alzheimer's is such a dreaded condition). And the tense relation of memory and history is particularly fraught with respect to identity-formation. The problematic nature of both memory and historical representation is bound up with the problematic nature of identity itself. History, memory, and identity may be marked by both a desire for unification or integration and by processes of decentering, pluralization, and splitting. Trauma is paradigmatic of the latter processes. Traumatic experience has dimensions that may threaten or even shatter identity and may not be "captured" by history, recorded in written archives, or contained by conscious recall. Yet it may paradoxically become the center or vortex-like hole of identity-formation, especially in the founding or foundational trauma, an issue to which I shall return. More generally, there is a complex relation between identity and processes such as repression, dissociation, and denial that resist conscious recollection, especially with respect to a self or community seeking unity through identity-forming memory. Repression, dissociation, and denial are typically related to disconcerting events or experiences one resists acknowledging as unsettling aspects of the problematic identity of oneself or one's group. And the line between at times interacting processes of conscious suppression and unconscious repression or denial may in certain cases not be altogether clear-cut. Still, in an apparent paradox, the extremely disconcerting or traumatic may also be affirmed or embraced as the foundation of identity.

Without discounting the role of manipulative interests that may well have a role in shaping concepts or deploying memory, one may maintain that historical repetitions may go beyond an instrumental frame of reference and have a compulsive, even post-traumatic dimension when patterns or templates from the past are regenerated, at times in self-defeating ways, to prefigure contemporary situations that may in fact significantly differ from them. The struggle in the 1970s between the German government and the Baader-Meinhof group (or Red Army faction) tended to be patterned, at times compulsively, on the opposition between the Nazis and their opponents, especially resisters, or rather their relative absence or limitations that had to be compensated for by contemporary activists, with both the government and Baader-Meinhof seeing their opponent as the resurgent Nazi menace.⁴⁸

In *The Seventh Million* (1993), Tom Segev has traced the nature and effects of the resurgent Nazi scenario in Israeli policy in the postwar generation. For example, he quotes David Ben-Gurion on December 13, 1951, addressing members of his party with particular reference to its Holocaust survivors: "We don't want to reach again the situation you were in. We do not want the Arab Nazis to come and slaughter us."⁴⁹ For Ben-Gurion, as for prosecutor Gideon

48. This dynamic is investigated carefully and with extensive use of oral history in Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004). Varon's book is itself an excellent example of critical comparative history in treating together, while being alert to the differences between, Baader-Meinhof in Germany and the Weather Underground in the United States.

49. Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 369.

Hausner, the import of the Eichmann trial in 1961 transcended the individual, Adolf Eichmann. Notably through witnesses whose testimony might have only an indirect or tangential relation to Eichmann, the trial broke the silence in Israel itself about the Holocaust and its victims as well as serving to unify the nation. Moreover, Segev is quoted as saying that Ben-Gurion wanted everyone to recognize that “whatever the world owes to the victims, they now owe to Israel.”⁵⁰

In *The Seventh Million* itself Segev presents Menachem Begin as obsessed by the memory of the Holocaust, attempting to make it part of the culture of all Israelis whatever their origins, and prone to repeat its scenarios in current political situations. He refers to a letter to President Ronald Reagan in which Begin “wrote that the destruction of Arafat’s headquarters in Beirut had given him the feeling that he had sent the Israeli army into Berlin to destroy Hitler in his bunker.”⁵¹ With apparent agreement, Segev quotes the noted writer Amos Oz, writing in an Israeli newspaper (*Yediot Aharonot*) on July 2, 1982:

Hitler is already dead, Mr. Prime Minister. . . . Again and again, Mr. Begin, you reveal to the public eye a strange urge to resuscitate Hitler in order to kill him every day anew in the guise of terrorists. . . . This urge to revive and obliterate Hitler over and over again is the result of a melancholy that poets must express, but among statesmen it is a hazard that is liable to lead them along a path of mortal danger.⁵²

Benjamin Netanyahu often appears to operate in terms of a combination of instrumental rationality and *Realpolitik*. But, in the address he gave at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem on April 27, 2014, commemorating Holocaust Remembrance Day, his approach was at least somewhat different. In deriving supposed lessons from the past, Netanyahu relied on a “today-just-like-then” trope in drawing a direct parallel between the threat posed by Nazis to Jews in the period leading up to the Holocaust and the contemporary threat posed by Iran to Israel. He asserted:

I have said many times in this place that we must identify an existential threat in time and take action in time. . . . Iran is calling for our destruction. . . . Today, just like then, there are those who dismiss Iran’s extreme rhetoric as one that serves domestic purposes. Today, just like then, there are those who view Iran’s nuclear ambitions as the result of the natural will of a proud nation—a will that should be accepted. And just like then, those who make such claims are deluding themselves. They are making an historic mistake.⁵³

With the existence of the state of Israel and its military power (its allies, notably the United States, remained unmentioned), there was for Netanyahu one decisive difference between then and now: “Unlike our situation during the Holocaust, when we were like leaves on the wind, defenseless, now we have great power to defend ourselves, and it is ready for any mission.” To the extent one may take these statements at face value or perhaps see them as recognizing the force

50. See Gavin Esler, “How Nazi Adolf Eichmann’s Holocaust Trial Unified Israel,” BBC World News, April 6, 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-12912527> (accessed June 1, 2016).

51. Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 399-400.

52. Quoted in *ibid.*, 400.

53. See the “Full Transcript of Netanyahu Speech for Holocaust Remembrance Day,” <http://www.timesofisrael.com/full-transcript-of-netanyahu-speech-for-holocaust-remembrance-day/> (accessed December 4, 2015).

of traumatic memory by making ideological and political use of it, Netanyahu would seem to be within the same frame of reference as predecessors such as Begin. Moreover, in inaccurate, incendiary comments made at the thirty-seventh Zionist conference of 2015, Netanyahu in effect blamed the Palestinians for initiating genocide during the Holocaust by asserting that “Hitler didn’t want to exterminate the Jews at the time, he wanted to expel the Jews” and pointing to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, as convincing Hitler to turn from expulsion to genocide.⁵⁴

For many Israelis, the 1948 war has been seen and celebrated in terms of the achievement of an independent state. For many Palestinians and their sympathizers, it is the Nakba (catastrophe or disaster—the Hebrew word would be Shoah). During it, almost three-quarters of a million Palestinian Arabs fled or were driven from their homes, which created a massive refugee problem for themselves, their descendants, and Israel and the Middle East in general. A planned launch of a Hebrew-language book (with the translated title *The Holocaust and the Nakba: Memory, National Identity, and Jewish-Arab Partnership*) at the Van Leer institute in Jerusalem, focusing on a multidimensional and relational instead of an invidiously comparative or competitive approach to the Holocaust and the Nakba, drew criticism from those who nonetheless took the event as not merely involving competitive memory but what they saw as an inadmissible (if not sacrilegious) comparison with the Holocaust. The director of the Van Leer, Professor Emeritus at the Hebrew University Gabriel Motzkin, who asserted he was “a Zionist through and through,” defended the event and is quoted as saying that the book “has many different views,” including several “right-wing” articles, and that “the real issue about the Nakba is that Israeli society is ‘unwilling to understand the trauma that constitutes the identity of this other people.’”⁵⁵

54. See, for example, Greg Botelho, “Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu Criticized for Saying Holocaust Was Mufti’s Idea, Not Hitler’s,” CNN.com, October 22, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/21/middleeast/netanyahu-hitler-grand-mufti-holocaust/> (accessed October 23, 2015). In the face of widespread criticism, including that of Israeli historians, Netanyahu retracted his statement within ten days. See Jodi Rudoren, “Netanyahu Retracts Assertion that Palestinians Inspired Holocaust,” *New York Times*, October 30, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/31/world/middle-east/netanyahu-retracts-assertion-that-palestinian-inspired-holocaust.html?_r=0 (accessed December 8, 2015). Nonetheless, the fact that Netanyahu was initially inclined to make such an extreme, even outlandish statement is significant as an indication of his state of mind. The political assassination of Yitzak Rabin on November 4, 1995 was undertaken by Yigal Amir, an orthodox Jew opposed to Rabin’s sustained peace initiative on the grounds that withdrawal from the West Bank would deny Jews their biblical heritage presumably reclaimed by establishing settlements. Rabin’s assassination had a disastrously chilling effect on the peace process, furthered the rise of right-wing prime ministers, and abetted the building of settlements in the occupied territories, often illegally financed with state funds and housing some 400,000 “settlers” whose numbers continue to grow. See Shimon Dotan’s documentary *The Settlers*, released in January 2016 at the Sundance Film Festival as well as Dotan’s on-site interview with Amy Goodman on January 28, 2016, http://www.democracynow.org/2016/1/28/the_settlers_new_film_reveals_history (accessed January 29, 2016).

55. See Ariel Ben Solomon, “Israel Unwilling to Understand Nakba, the Trauma that Constitutes Palestinian Identity,” in *The Jerusalem Post*, August 28, 2015, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Israel-unwilling-to-understand-Nakba-the-trauma-that-constitutes-Palestinian-identity-413486> (accessed December 3, 2015). Of course Motzkin himself and other Israelis, such as Dan Bar-On and Amos Goldberg, are trying to foster an active appreciation of the plight and suffering of Palestinians and, in spite of seemingly intractable problems, to further the peace process. For a collaborative effort between a Palestinian and an Israeli, see Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg,

It would be misguided to ignore the actual threats posed to Israel by its declared enemies, including Iran, or to leave unmentioned the severe treatment of Palestinian refugees in other countries.⁵⁶ Still, the Israeli government has treated the occupied territories in harsh and violent ways that have been opposed by a segment of the Israeli population, including Refuseniks in the army who, while devoted to Israel and to its military, have found certain policies unacceptable and have refused to implement them. But the scenario may be reversed, with the Jew or the Israeli seen as the neo-Nazi, and the Arab or, more specifically, the Palestinian, as the victim. Without being able to do justice to the intricacies of the situation in the Middle East or American reactions to it, including the role of extremism and terrorism in segments of Islam, recently reaching a high point in ISIS, I would simply point out what should be apparent: without attributing excessive causal weight to trauma and its after-effects, one may nonetheless insist that an unfortunate feature of more or less compulsive repetition is to obscure the significance of other factors and to severely limit political and social options in the present that would require, among other things, a careful analysis of the at times manipulative role of present forces, as well as an attempt to work through the past rather than to displace and repeat it under the influence (or making use) of compulsive, traumatic memories.⁵⁷

Already invoked is a notion that warrants more reflection and research: the founding or foundational trauma, the trauma that carries a powerful affective charge and may be transformed or transvalued in ideological ways.⁵⁸ Here a crisis or catastrophe that disorients and may devastate the collectivity or the individual may uncannily become the basis of an origin or renewed origin myth that authorizes acts or policies that appeal to it for justification. A foundational trauma and a related myth of origins may be operative both in written histories and in collective (or individual) memory.⁵⁹ Unworked-through trauma, especially when it is

“Deliberating the Holocaust and the Nakba: Disruptive Empathy and Binationalism in Israel and Palestine,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 16, no. 1 (2004), 77-99. See also the compassionate, informative account in Jo Roberts, *Contested Land, Contested Memory: Israel’s Jews and Arabs and the Ghosts of Catastrophe* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2013).

56. Among the many commentaries on the issue, see, for example, Olga Khazan, “Refugee: Palestinians in Arab Countries Have It Bad, Too,” in *The Washington Post*, November 30, 2012, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2012/11/30/palestinians-israel-settlements-arab-countries-refugees/> (accessed December 2, 2015).

57. Relevant in this respect are discussions in the journal *Tikkun* as well as Avraham Burg’s *The Holocaust Is Over, We Must Rise from Its Ashes* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). See also the review of this book in *Tikkun* 26, no. 2 (2011), 37-39 by Jonathan Friedman. Friedman writes that, for Burg (a former member as well as speaker of the Knesset), “Holocaust memory, identity politics, and the Israel–Palestine conflict are indelibly linked by trauma, and the inability to resolve the lingering effects of this trauma has crippled all efforts at peace. In the years that have passed since the publication of Burg’s book in 2008, Israel has moved further away from the place of healing and reconciliation he calls for and instead toward a place of greater fear and anger” (37). Unfortunately, a significant segment of the population in the United States has recently been very close to that fearful place.

58. Compare my discussion in *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, chap. 2, especially xii-xiv and 80-85.

59. For example, witness the role until recently of the French Revolution in French history, memory, and politics, a phenomenon given an explicitly religious, indeed sacrificial significance by

foundational or structural, can become invidious and self-centered, lending itself to some very dubious uses and abuses. It can even assume an ambivalently sacred or sublime status, both terrifying and awe-inspiring in nature.

The so-called Western tradition and societies that appeal to it have had founding traumas as myths of origin. Indeed, the construction of modern societies as having too much memory or exceptional “trauma cultures” may be short-sighted and at times exaggerated. The fall of Adam and Eve, as interpreted in much of Christianity, plays the role of a foundational trauma, leaving a legacy of exile, distance from the divine presence, and “original sin.” It may also be construed as an ambivalent *felix culpa* linked to redemption and hope for a reborn, higher spirituality. Original sin has had quite a future under Christianity as well as in secular analogues (such as Freud’s primal crime and “archaic heritage” of guilt, the Lacanian “real,” or the melancholic and/or traumatic sublime). With reference to the New Testament, along with the fall and original sin, the new founding trauma is, of course, the agonized crucifixion of Christ. Along with their irreducible religious significance as signs of sanctity, stigmata have as one, perhaps obvious but still pertinent, interpretation their status as post-traumatic effects in one who identifies with and incorporates the life of Christ to the point of reliving psychosomatically and psychically what one did not in fact live: Christ’s suffering and crucifixion leading to his death and resurrection.

In the United States, the devastating suicide bombing of the twin towers on 9/11 were immediately perceived in terms of a new founding trauma, supplementing and perhaps displacing earlier myths of origin. 9/11 also quickly achieved a quasi-sacral quality, giving rise to commemorative events and making almost taboo certain kinds of critical analysis, for example, into causes of such an event, both shockingly unexpected and all-too-expectable, with respect to animosity toward the United States and certain of its policies. In the aftermath of the Cold War, 9/11 provided a new enemy that could unite the country in solidarity against the terrorists or even the more abstract notion of terror itself. Repeated invocation of the war on terror has functioned to screen or divert attention from other problems, including the destructive, traumatizing nature of American bombing of the Middle East. It has also served to justify intensified surveillance and data collection and to legitimate the suspension of constitutional rights for those accused of terrorism, at times enabling or even authorizing the use of terror and traumatization in handling those suspects.⁶⁰ How to pursue other than militaristic and repressive policies in the aftermath of 9/11, with their effect on the national (self-)image and troubled sense of identity, has become a dilemma for the United States.

Joseph de Maistre on the far right and imbued with a more secular religiosity by Jules Michelet and others in the Republican tradition. A somewhat analogous point might be made about the Civil War in the United States and its legacy of divided loyalties and fervid commitments if not a perceived “clash of civilizations.” I have alluded to the role of the Holocaust as a contested foundational trauma experienced by some as a religious *tremendum* or as the basis of an identity-forming civil religion. These examples could be multiplied.

60. For the illegal use of torture during the administration of George W. Bush, see the Senate summary report released in October of 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/12/09/world/cia-torture-report-document.html?_r=1 (accessed on December 4, 2015).

I shall draw to a close with an ethically, politically, and affectively charged issue that is fundamental to the problem of identity and “identity-formation” and concerning which a great deal remains to be done: the issue of critical animal studies. This issue is quite pertinent to a discussion of history, memory, and trauma, and it warrants attention, even though obvious constraints enable only the raising of certain questions, the making of some more or less controversial claims, and the attempt to prompt further discussion.

As Éric Baratay writes in introducing his ambitious study, *Le point de vue animal*, “History, constructed by human societies, is always recounted as an adventure that only concerns humans [*l’homme*]. However, animals have participated or still participate abundantly in the great events or in the slow phenomena of civilization.”⁶¹ One may reinforce Baratay’s assertion by pointing out that even references to the universal and the global are generally restricted to humans. (It is also noteworthy that genocide, even when extended to other than national or ethnic groups, remains confined to humans while excluding animal species, and the related notion of crimes against humanity is not crimes against humanity or other animals.) Engaging the problem Baratay raises would require extending research beyond humans and stressing the importance of decentering and situating humans in a larger network of relations. It would involve a careful, comparative study of memory, trauma, affect, and identity with respect to other animals along with a noninvidious comparison of humans and other animals with an emphasis on their interactions and co-evolution. And it would bring out mutual dependency in a larger ecological setting, at times in a cooperative rapport but at other times under the hegemonic and self-interested control of humans.⁶²

An obvious issue is whether the multiplicity of differences, specificities, and similarities both between and within humans and other animals can be totalized into a binary opposition justifying the postulation of a gap or decisive break between “the” human and “the” animal—a break itself at times construed as a foundational trauma taking the human away from animality and instinct into the “higher” realm of culture.⁶³ Perhaps more basically, one may question the very motivation that induces time and again in history the desire to locate the decisive

61. Éric Baratay, *Le point de vue animal: Une autre version de l’histoire* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2012), 11 (my translation). However, Baratay’s work along with that of others indicates that changes have been underway. See also Eric Baratay and Elizabeth Hardouin-Fugier, *Zoo: A History of Zoological Gardens in the West*, transl. Oliver Welsh (London: Reaktion Books, 2004). An important instance of the increased interest of historians in such questions is the theme issue, *Does History Need Animals?*, *History and Theory* 52, no. 4 (2013), edited and introduced by David Gary Shaw. In his insightful introductory essay, Shaw elucidates the rise of the historical interest in other animals and their relations with humans as well as the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological problems that accompany this turn.

62. In this account, given the attention to trauma and its effects, I focus on the latter eventuality while in no sense denying more positive and mutually beneficial relations between humans and other animals that both may remember quite well. Such relations are crucial in averting, or counteracting the effects of, trauma, as is evidenced in the role of certain animals in therapy for humans as well as the possible success of caring for traumatized animals.

63. This so-called passage from nature to culture has been discussed by many, including Sigmund Freud and Claude Lévi-Strauss. It is arguably at issue in the fall and original sin. In H. G. Wells’s 1896 novel, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (New York: Dover, 1996), the attempt is made to terrorize and traumatize animals into becoming hybrid humans.

(but recurrently shifting, contestable, and recalibrated) criteria that presumably separate or create a gap between humans and other animals.⁶⁴ In an important sense, a transformative recognition would be that the very symptom to be worked through—psychically, ethically, and politically—is that repetitive, seemingly compulsive desire issuing from anthropocentric fixation and the drive to have secure, essential knowledge of precisely what it is to be human. (A more or less displaced religious quest for “redemption” from animality and embodiment may also be at play.) This recognition might serve to further an other than anthropocentric orientation geared to demonstrating supposed human self-identity and superiority, if not exceptionalism, and too easily serving to justify questionable human uses and abuses of other animals, including imprisoning, (at times needlessly) experimenting on, buying, selling, killing, and eating them.

In a nonanthropocentric manner, Frans de Waal, in his wittily entitled *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?*, stresses the various types of intelligence and ability in different animals, including remarkable cognitive achievements and feats of memory. Like Darwin, he argues for differences of degree, not kind, between humans and other animals and observes that “uniqueness claims typically cycle through four stages: they are repeated over and over, they are challenged by new findings, they hobble toward retirement, and then they are dumped into an ignominious grave.”⁶⁵ However one eventually constructs the complex configuration of similarities and differences bearing on any putative differentiating criterion, the question remains whether and in what manner it would validate human uses and abuses of other animals—a question that would have to be addressed not on narrowly scientific but on ethical and political grounds. An initial consideration is that, insofar as animals are under human supervision and control, a minimal ethical condition in their treatment is how they are allowed or made to live as well as die, notably when they are killed for human consumption. (This has, of course, been an important concern in the work of Temple Grandin, who addressed ways of averting or at least mitigating the traumatization of animals in slaughterhouses.) This condition is far from acceptably met in many agribusiness firms and factory farms.

A nuanced appraisal of the possibilities and limits of reform under capitalism is offered by Peter Singer in “Open the Cages!,” a review of Wayne Pacelle’s *The Humane Economy: How Innovators and Enlightened Consumers Are Transforming the Lives of Animals*.⁶⁶ Singer argues that capitalism did not cause “speciesism,” which has existed in many cultures and political regimes and, I would add, whose history over time and space itself offers a vast field for

64. A recent attempt in a seemingly endless series is Thomas Suddendorf’s well received *The Gap: The Science of What Separates Us from Other Animals* (New York: Basic Books, 2013).

65. Frans de Waal, *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2016), 126. De Waal offers a general survey of recent research and an extensive bibliography. His work also shows the possible extent of bonding, respect, and affection between humans and the animals with whom they interact.

66. Wayne Pacelle, *The Humane Economy: How Innovators and Enlightened Consumers Are Transforming the Lives of Animals* (New York: HarperCollins, 2016). Singer’s review is in *The New York Review of Books* 63, no. 8 (May 12, 2016), 22–26. Pacelle took office on June 1, 2004 as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Humane Society of the United States.

comparative research. But, less optimistic than Pacelle about the possibilities of basic change under capitalism, Singer indicates how the unregulated profit motive may pose barriers to a humane or moral economy and aggravate the exploitation of other animals (and, it should be obvious, human beings as well). Without seeing them as structural changes with respect to the relation between humans and other animals, he notes with approval certain reforms, such as the prohibition in California and the European Union of crates for veal calves and gestating sows and of battery cages for egg-laying chickens, enclosures that are extremely confining and prohibit basic movements such as getting up, lying down, or turning around.⁶⁷ But Singer also notes how much is still permitted, notably in the United States with its business-friendly federal and state governments, even in the face of significant public advocacy of “animal rights” that often fails to register in government action and major political parties. He observes that “the overwhelming majority of calves, pigs, and laying hens will . . . still be kept indoors, in large crowded sheds, and the reforms do nothing to change the ways they are transported or slaughtered. Nor do any of these reforms touch the industrial production of chickens for meat, which John Webster, professor of animal husbandry at the University of Bristol’s School of Veterinary Science . . . has described as ‘in magnitude and severity, the single most severe, systematic example of man’s inhumanity to another sentient animal.’”⁶⁸ Singer adds: “The problems of chicken production are not simply due to the fact that the birds are raised in vast crowded sheds in air reeking of ammonia from their accumulated droppings. The more fundamental problem is that today’s chickens have been bred to grow three times as fast as chickens raised in the 1950s. Now they are ready for market when they are just six weeks old and their immature legs cannot handle the weight they gain.”⁶⁹ Given that there are eight billion chickens raised annually for meat in the United States, the result is that 2.6 billion birds live in chronic pain for the last third of their short lives. With respect to the wretched conditions of these animals, the discourse of trauma might seem euphemistic.⁷⁰

67. Such confinement of movement was a key feature of the “little ease” torture chamber, for example, in the Tower of London.

68. John Webster, *Animal Welfare: A Cool Eye Towards Eden* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Science, 1994), 156, quoted in Singer review of Pacelle, *The Humane Economy*, in the *New York Review of Books*, 26.

69. Singer review of Pacelle, *The Humane Economy*, in the *New York Review of Books*, 26.

70. Despite the availability of much information, certain ways animals are treated may still be subject to the operation of the open secret, that is, one knows enough to know that, at least at a certain point and for a variety of reasons (including apprehension about unsettling effects on oneself), one does not want to know more. It should nonetheless be noted that humans who handle animals in arguably abusive ways, at times under the constraint of finding underpaid and unwanted work, are liable to undergo post-traumatic effects. On workers in slaughterhouses, see, for example, Donald D. Still and Michael J. Broadway, *Slaughterhouse Blues: The Meat and Poultry Industry in North America*, foreword by Eric Schlosser (Belmont, CA: Wordsworth/Thompson Learning, 2004). Moreover, “hunting” with a misnamed “sports” rifle, such as the AR-15 assault weapon (easily converted to a fully automatic gun and also a blatant threat to humans), is not a sport but a form of slaughter, although conventional hunting for food by knowledgeable people may be less harmful to both animals and the environment than certain forms of factory “farming.”

A crucial question here is whether a different orientation would involve getting beyond the frame of reference in which “the” animal is the paradoxical “other” that is both mere life or foodstuff and a sacrificial object to be killed or otherwise rendered a victim for the material or spiritual benefit of some “higher” being (including human beings). In any event, how humans and animals relate to one another is part and parcel of their complex, far-from-certain “identities,” and a comparative study of the variations in this relationship over time and space is a crucial concern of history in its interaction with memory.⁷¹ I have also indicated that there is a nontrivial, metaphorical—but not “simply” metaphorical—sense in which the land or the earth may be said to have memory and perhaps even to be wounded and desecrated by invasive, destructive, exploitative procedures such as drilling and fracking, not to mention bombing with its often unnoticed, disastrous effects on animals in zoos, homes, the streets, and the wild.⁷²

Changing the frame of reference to include other animals need not be taken as a panacea, indentured to a golden-age mythology, obliterating distinctions, denigrating humans, or rejecting everything that has been done under the rubric of humanism. As I have intimated, it should be seen as interwoven with the entire network of problems raised earlier with respect to history, memory, trauma, and identity. Moreover, one may criticize anthropocentrism along with human exceptionalism and still acknowledge the at times beneficial or even inevitable role of a critically tested anthropomorphism, which involves processes similar to those operative in empathy.⁷³ Empathy or compassion, not unmediated (projective or incorporative) identification, enables attentive listening (or reading, including of animals’ body language) and responsive yet possibly critical and self-critical understanding. Empathy may be understood in terms of an affective rapport that involves yet also limits identification, engages the imagination, problematizes identity, and allows for recognition of alterity with respect to both self and others, including possible limits to communication, self-knowledge, and “feeling one’s way into” another being. Moreover, it should be evident that empathy or compassion is not sufficient for understanding or action, and both contextualization and theorization are

71. For one thought-provoking study, see Boria Sax, *Animals in the Third Reich: Pets, Scapegoats, and the Holocaust*, foreword by Klaus P. Fischer (New York: Continuum, 2000). For a discussion of relations to other animals in American Indian societies, see Cajete, *Native Science*, chap. 5.

72. In the growing literature on the relations between humans and animals, see, for example, Kari Weil, *Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), and Cary Wolfe, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), as well as *What Is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). (In the latter book, Wolfe asserts, with respect to relations with other animals, the basis of justice is not rights or even capabilities, but [quoting Derrida] “the finitude that we share with animals, the mortality that belongs to the very finitude of life, to the experience of compassion” [81]). See also Jacques Derrida, *L’animal que donc je suis*, ed. Marie-Louis Mallet (Paris: Editions Galilée, 2006), transl. David Wills as *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), as well as Derrida’s *The Beast and the Sovereign*, 2 vols. (The Seminars of Jacques Derrida), transl. Geoff Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 2011). See as well my *History and Its Limits: Human, Animal, Violence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), and *History, Literature, Critical Theory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

73. See *Thinking with Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism*, ed. Lorraine Daston and Greg Mitman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). See also de Waal, *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?*, especially 24–26, and on empathy 132–133.

significant checks on the tendency toward unmediated identification (and possible secondary traumatization).

I would stress that the overall point of the foregoing discussion has not been to reverse fixated binaries and attendant hierarchies, whether between humans and other animals or between history based on standard archives and the role of memory work, especially in its recognition of and attempt to work through pervasive traumatic legacies. The point has rather been to further a different frame of reference with enhanced complexity and flexibility. In the process, I have questioned the overly general rejection of memory and memory studies, which is based on a rigid binary orientation. I have also tried to further ways in which historiography and critically tested memory, understood as having a supplementary relationship, can converge in the interest of a self-questioning but more accurate representation of the past and a more desirable bearing on the present and future. The only historiography making a difference in the present and future may well be one that conjoins critically tested memory and comparably tested document-and-text-based knowledge in furthering collective projects seeking truth, compassion, and justice. Of course, the examples or case studies I address could well be reoriented or multiplied to include many others. And in pursuing the global initiatives of recent historiography, the problems become more rather than less difficult, and the chances of misdirection (for example, through “humanitarian” interventions) increase alarmingly. Here the best directive may still be a variant of Gramsci’s truly memorable injunction: pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will—a will, I would add, not driven by apocalyptic desire for some unknown, “totally other” state of affairs but tempered and informed by critical judgment and knowledge of the past.

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