

Trauma and Testimony

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This chapter deals with a range of work published on the topics of trauma and testimony in 2009. It is divided into five sections: 1. Beginnings; 2. Amidst the Nightmare; 3. In the Frame; 4. Edited Collections; 5. Inheritances. These sections consider literature that became available in 2009 and address themes such as gender and memory, the politics of memory, sensory witnessing, and trauma and representation. The chapter also considers a number of different media used to convey testimony and to attempt to communicate trauma, including film, monuments, painting, photography, poetry and prose.

1. Beginnings

The film *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (Dir. Werner Herzog, France, 2010) can, in many ways, be read as an exploration of memory. The documentary is centrally an effort to visually document the parietal ‘art’ of Chauvet, a cave located in what is now known as the Ardèche in southeast France. The director, Werner Herzog, was granted exclusive access by the Ministry of Culture to record for posterity the prehistoric paintings that adorn its walls. The earliest of these works were produced 32,000 years ago. Given its great age, the subject matter of *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* appears distant from contemporary concerns. In fact, however, the film’s approach to bearing witness to these ancient images provides a particularly good introduction to a number of the themes that were explored in work on trauma and testimony in 2009, and that feature later in this chapter.

An attractive coffee-table book, containing numerous colour photographs of Chauvet, has already been published (Jean-Marie Chauvet, Eliette Brunel Deschamps and Christian Hillaire, *Chauvet Cave*, T&H [1996]). The cavern has also been digitally mapped. This therefore invites the question as to why further visual documentation was felt necessary. The photographs and the digital charting of contours, however, no matter how detailed or precise they

may be, do not capture the complex ways in which the painters from the Paleolithic exploited the curves and undulations of the rock surface to achieve varied pictorial effects. Herzog's decision to embrace advances in stereoscopic technology and film in 3D provided a way of attesting to the technical sophistication of the images. The film therefore seemingly bears witness better to the paintings than the other media. Ways in which new technologies have influenced the production of other forms of testimony are examined in the edited collection *Documentary Testimonies* and in the special issue of the journal *Convergence* on 'Cultural Memory and Digital Preservation'.

The film combines audio with the visual. It captures the quiet of the cave and also provides spoken and musical commentary about the images upon its walls. The score by Ernst Reijseger, for example, forges particular moods for the audience. It frames our reception, setting up specific responses at the expense of others, encouraging us to receive the paintings with awe and solemnity. The ways in which acts of framing can implicitly guide interpretation, endeavouring to determine it, are explored by Judith Butler in *Frames of War*. The modes by which such frames produce a troubling outside are addressed in the edited collection *Contested Histories in Public Space*. This set of essays examines various means through which historical narratives are presented by museums and memorials, and outlined for a given public.

Cave of Forgotten Dreams, however, is not solely concerned with providing an audio-visual document of Chauvet. Herzog's moving tour of the site also provides a sense of the kinaesthetic experience of walking through the various chambers. In addition, a perfumer is portrayed speculating on the smells that might have been present in the cave in prehistory, the scents of animals, of bears and of humans. The prohibition on touching any of the works in the present appears to discourage Herzog from discussing what the role tactility might originally have played in their reception. This silence occurs despite the repeated handprints that occur throughout much of Chauvet. In his discussion of these prints, David Lewis-Williams argues that the reason people left the impressions had 'more to do with touching the rock surface than with image-making' (David Lewis-Williams, *The Mind in the Cave*, T&H [2002] p. 217). *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* therefore does not seem to go quite far enough in its consideration of the multi-sensory. In a markedly different context, in *The Train Journey*, Simone Gigliotti contends that insufficient attention has been given to the role of senses other than the visual in Holocaust experience. She foregrounds the importance of what she terms 'sensory witnessing' in testimonies of deportation by train. The role of

physical sensation in Holocaust testimony is also addressed by Gene A. Plunka in *Holocaust Drama*.

Returning to the issue of framing, *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* seeks to argue that the origins of art, which is associated in the film with an emerging spirituality, are to be found in Chauvet. This locates the beginnings of culture in what is nowadays understood as Western Europe. It is, however, possible to make a competing claim, to argue for a different site of beginning. In the Introduction to *Re-Figuring Hayden White*, Hans Kellner recounts that White once suggested 'that the difference between a historical system and a biological system is that the biological past is given, and so determines what follows from it, while the historical past is constituted backwards, so that, in effect, we decide who our ancestors were' (p. 3). A piece of ochre incised with a regular pattern was found in Blombos Cave in South Africa, which dates from 77,000 years ago. The work is, admittedly, not figurative; however, 'in certain circumstances designs that seem more complex to modern eyes may have had a precise meaning in the past, whilst apparently simpler images could have carried several different levels of significance' (Richard Bradley, *Rock Art and the Prehistory of Atlantic Europe*, Routledge [1997] p. 177). It provides an alternative location from which to 'begin' culture. In the present, with its continental and national divides, it is easy to clash over history, even over prehistory. In *Multidirectional Memory*, Michael Rothberg argues for the need to break with what he calls 'competitive memory', which is characterized by antagonism generated by conflicting views of the past, and embrace 'multidirectional memory'. Rothberg brings together scholarship from the fields of Holocaust and Postcolonial Studies as he explores how the memories studied in these fields need not necessarily clash but can instead interact and resonate.

Herzog's documentary, whilst forming a work of remembrance, often, either consciously or unconsciously, also foregrounds the absence of memory. The arguments over what the images from prehistory mean demonstrate that the original significance of these paintings continues to form something of a mystery. The cave embodies a missed experience, the meaning of which is inaccessible to the modern eye. It is difficult to comprehend an ancient culture using a modern mindset, because few, if any, shared beliefs and values may exist. It is similarly difficult to seamlessly relate a hermeneutics developed in one culture to another within the same historical period. This problem is examined in relation to interpretations of bereavement and trauma by Bhaksar Sarkar in *Mourning the Nation*. Sarkar explores how the legacy of the social upheaval caused by Partition in India in 1947 is reflected

subsequently in cinema whilst also considering how the language of trauma is frequently culturally specific.

Trauma is, itself, often described as a missed or unclaimed experience (Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, JHUP [1996]). The edited collection *The Trauma Controversy* considers trauma from a variety of perspectives, including cultural and clinical approaches. Post-traumatic stress disorder also features centrally in Helen Benedict's analysis of the harrowing experiences of female US soldiers serving in Iraq, *The Lonely Soldier*. This book places at the forefront the regularly unrecalled roles of women in the modern military. Memory is, however, impossible without a degree of forgetting: 'memory and oblivion in some way have the same relationship as life and death' (Marc Augé, *Oblivion*, UMinnP [2004] p. 14). This bond is considered at length in relation to the Holocaust by Michael Bernard-Donals in *Forgetful Memory*. Bernard-Donals is, in part, interested in the role of language, in the ways different kinds of writings sustain and support memory, and also influence its form. This concern is also shared, in different ways, by the edited collections *Re-Examining the Holocaust through Literature*, *Re-Figuring Hayden White* and *War Writing*. These sets of essays reflect on, amongst other things, the creative element that characterizes all historical and testimonial writings, their figurative aspect. It is a dimension of witnessing the past that is also present in *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* by way of the camerawork's shaping of our visual experience, the spectacular re-enactments of prehistoric activities (hunting techniques, music making), and the spoken reveries of its director.

2. Amidst the Nightmare

Simone Gigliotti's *The Train Journey: Transit, Captivity, and Witnessing in the Holocaust* focuses on a hitherto neglected aspect of Holocaust experience, the deportation transports that conveyed prisoners to the concentration and extermination camps. Gigliotti argues that scholars have identified the ghettos and the camps as 'the principal locations of victim's suffering and memory' at the expense of the "'cattle car" experience' (p. 2). She suggests that 'the Holocaust train resonates in testimonies, literature, and visual culture as the vehicle to a fatal destination, rather than mobile residences to a life-threatening compression that both prepared deportees for, and disconnected them, from the camp world' (p. 6). The train journeys to the camps, which were frequently, if not exclusively, in boxcars, also constituted highly traumatic experiences that Gigliotti analyses through close-readings of survivor testimonies.

The book is structured in three stages, examining survivor experiences of life prior to departure in the ghettos, of the train journey itself, and of the moment of arrival in the camps, in that order. Gigliotti concentrates primarily on English-language testimonies of Jewish deportees. She makes significant use of the interviews conducted by David Boder with displaced persons in 1946, as well as other sources, such as testimony from the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann, archival material from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and oral histories commissioned in the US in the 1980s. For Gigliotti, testimony is ‘a mediation of experience, language, and memory’ (p. 19). She is interested in how the testimonies she studies strive to communicate the trauma of the train journey, and particularly what they reveal about the harsh physical realities of transportation.

The idea of ‘sensory witnessing’ is of key importance in *The Train Journey*. This relates to the ‘somatic traumas’ experienced by those in the boxcars during their trip to the camps (p. 128). Gigliotti contends that ‘it is the primacy of sight that is often advanced as the most critical and essential condition for assessing the authenticity of victim’s testimony about their Holocaust experiences’ (p. 22). During the train journeys, however, senses other than the visual often assumed greater importance. The latter, such as smell and touch, came to represent ‘for the deportees, a more suggestive expression of their confinement’ (p. 22). Gigliotti draws on the work of Terrence Des Pres here, specifically his examination of the impact of ‘excremental assault’ upon the behaviour of camp inmates, to explain the shame experienced by most prisoners during their train journey (Terrence Des Pres, *The Survivor*, OUP [1976] pp. 51–71). His work is criticized, however, as it minimizes ‘the effects of transport shame, the ubiquitous stench, and presence of excrement, urine, and vomit, as initiations into the camp world’ (p. 21). This is despite the fact Des Pres admits excremental assault ‘began in the trains, in the locked boxcars’ and that ‘from the beginning [...] subjection to filth was an aspect of the survivor’s ordeal’ (Des Pres, *The Survivor*, p. 53). For Gigliotti, however, excremental assault achieved its greatest force during the train journey, so Des Pres’ account of the phenomenon is unbalanced. She states that ‘victim’s testimonies of olfactory trauma suggest that it was inside the trains that excremental assault incited the most intense and transgressive responses, isolating this space as distinct from other sites of assault’ (p. 21).

The definition of the olfactory as traumatic here, of the disgusting odour of the boxcars as initially constituting an unassimilated experience, one that wounds the psyche, is grounded in a distinction Charlotte Delbo makes between ‘deep’ and ‘external’ memory, embodied and intellectualized

experience (p. 134). The excremental assault encountered during the journey to the camps is defined as traumatic because it is bodily and therefore not readily communicable through spoken or written testimony. It is not easily carried into language and held within it. This is made most evident in Gigliotti's analysis of the video and written testimony of Leo Bretholz discussed in Chapter 4 (pp. 120–1). The deportee wrestles to communicate his physical experiences, his deep memories, in words. This is in spite of the fact he still possesses such memories in the flesh. Bretholz writes of the stink of piss and shit: 'it's still up my nostrils right now when I talk about it' (p. 121).

Gigliotti, however, feels that the audio-visual testimony does catch something of the sensory experience, although written accounts do not. She writes that 'the intellectual stylization and emplotment of written narrative seems less capable in finding a place for conveying sensory assault and its heroic mastery, and struggles to incorporate the traumatic surplus of memory's smell' (p. 121). There is, however, no detailed explanation as to why speech and image are to be privileged over the written word, as to why the video testimony is superior to that of the printed page. Gigliotti contends that the video testimony provides a 'visceral performance'; yet why is seeing someone describe a smell as still up their nose more visceral than reading that this is the case? This question is, disappointingly, left unanswered. Turning to psychoanalysis, specifically to Julia Kristeva's writings about the drive-invested aspect of language, might have provided a productive way into articulating how certain kinds of testimony are more effective than others in communicating the physical experiences of the camps. This is something I have explored in my own work in *Auschwitz and Afterimages*, which contains a chapter on Delbo (Nicholas Chare, *Auschwitz and Afterimages*, IBTauris [2011] pp. 93–117).

Gigliotti's exploration of sensory witnessing finds inspiration in historians and theorists of the senses, such as Alain Corbin and David Howes. There are, however, other important potential interlocutors who are absent from her analysis. These include Wolfgang Sofsky, who, like Des Pres, considers the sensory assault endured by prisoners in the concentration camps. Sofsky does not discuss the train journey, but his remarks on crowding seem apposite in this context. Sofsky suggests crowding 'shifts the sensual foundations of social contact' such that 'the senses of eye and ear, those main organs of social interaction, forfeit significance to the more proximal senses of touch, heat, and smell' (Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, PrincetonUP [1997] p. 70). The work of Theresa Brennan on smell's relationship to language also seems pertinent. Brennan argues that the complex messages

smell communicates ‘can barely be named in the crudest terms’ (Theresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*, CornUP [2004] p. 154). She adds that ‘information registered via smell can only be conveyed to consciousness when it can be named and translated into conceptual, linguistic information’ (Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*, p. 155). Smell is therefore always, in part, a missed experience although this does not necessarily render it traumatic.

Reading the survivor accounts quoted in *The Train Journey*, however, does provide a growing sense of the trauma of the boxcar by way of the emergence of repeated terms (to call them tropes might be misleading) for describing the experience. Jacqueline Rose suggests that repetition can be understood ‘as insistence, that is, as the constant pressure of something hidden but not forgotten’ (Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*, Verso [1986] p. 228). The persistent references to the railway deportations as a nightmare or nightmarish appear to form such an insistence (pp. 93, 94, 104, 106, 107). The reason underpinning this particular choice of language, which is also frequently used to describe the camps, is not examined by Gigliotti, although it potentially supports her arguments about the importance of sensory memory. Ernest Hartmann, for example, has stated that nightmares ‘are horses of at least two very different colors: a heavy, black shapeless beast crushing the sleeper’s chest as he awakens in terror, and a more ordinary reddish mare galloping off with the sleeper on a frightening and yet relatively familiar dream journey’ (Ernest Hartmann, ‘A Note on the Nightmare’ in S.G.M. Lee and A.R. Mayes, eds, *Dreams and Dreaming*, Penguin [1973] p. 267). The nightmare therefore forms an experience that weighs upon the individual, compressing them. It is a disturbance in the field of vision that is felt more than seen. It is also associated with travel. The repeated decision to describe the train journey as a night terror can therefore be linked to its twin connotations of motion and tactility. The nightmare encapsulates Gigliotti’s description of the deportee as ‘a mobile victim and a sensory witness’ (p. 91).

The Train Journey makes a valuable contribution to the burgeoning area of study of the senses in history and society. The consideration of sensory witnessing will, as Gigliotti envisages, also have applicability ‘to other intense spatial experiences of forced closeness, such as in the trenches of the First World War, bomb shelters, and living in underground sewers, among countless others’ (p. 129). The experience of prisoners in cramped cells, including those allegedly confined in the Black Hole of Calcutta, would form another area in which aspects of Gigliotti’s analysis could be enlightening. *The Train Journey* is, however, primarily of interest to those working in

Holocaust Studies. Through its focus on a relatively neglected aspect of the Shoah, the experience of the boxcar, it constitutes a highly important addition to the field. The text is clear and accessible, and is suitable reading for either undergraduate or postgraduate courses in Holocaust Studies.

Gene A. Plunka's *Holocaust Drama: The Theater of Atrocity* also acknowledges the impact of the transports upon the bodies of prisoners, quoting from Delbo's account of the mental deterioration endured by those confined to boxcars for a significant period of time (p. 73). Additionally, Plunka considers the physical effects of life in the camps. He concludes that 'concentration and extermination camp life consisted of an unmerciful attack on the body' (p. 73). His chapter on 'The Holocaust as Literature of the Body' examines Delbo's play *Who Will Carry the Word?* and Michel Vinaver's *Overboard*. This last play is seen to stage 'an excremental assault on the audience' (p. 86). It therefore potentially provides access to the sensory experiences Gigliotti argues it is difficult to vehicle through language. Plunka makes a slightly different claim for Delbo's drama: 'through gestures and movements of the actresses, the audience experiences how the physical pain of cold leads to a private universe of torture and suffering' (p. 79). Here, it appears that gestures point towards physical sensations that cannot be shared.

Plunka's book forms an important addition to existing studies of the role of drama as a means of bearing witnessing to the Holocaust, such as Vivian M. Patraka's *Spectacular Suffering* (Vivian M. Patraka, *Spectacular Suffering*, IndianaUP [1990]). Patraka's interpretations of the significance of theatre as testimony drew upon theorists such as Judith Butler and Jean-François Lyotard for support. Her work is quoted in Plunka's book, although her name is absent from the index. Plunka, however, is not primarily interested in theorizing theatre's effects. His work is largely descriptive and summative (providing numerous quotations from other critics and scholars that relate to the plays under discussion). He is, however, staking a claim for theatre and the immediacy of experience he perceives it can engender by way of the relationship between actor and audience (p. 16). The book argues that theatre as a literary genre 'affects us emotionally, subliminally, or intellectually (sometimes simultaneously) in a direct way that poetry and fiction cannot' (p. 16). The absence of any theoretical framework for explaining how drama performs the kinds of unmediated communications Plunka claims it can disappoints.

Holocaust Drama also frustrates in its lack of reflexivity about the difficulty of writing about a medium that is ephemeral. Plunka does not state which of the plays he writes about he has actually seen (he may have seen all of them,

but given the geographical and temporal difficulties this would have presented it seems unlikely). He also fails to signal when he saw them, which production he saw (if there were more than one), and whether he is working from his memory of each play as it exists in the present of his writing or from notes about the plays he made shortly after their performance. Peggy Phelan, for example, writes of the shifting memories she subsequently has of a performance of Tom Stoppard's play *Hapgood*: 'the play unfolds in my mind like an old movie, Super-8, a little grainy' (Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked*, Routledge [1993] p. 113). Plunka admits to none of this haziness. He also does not address the limitations that accompany working from archives, predominantly comprising of photographic and written accounts, for those plays he presumably has not seen. These aspects of *Holocaust Drama* are significant weaknesses.

There are also notable omissions from the work. Plunka, for example, does not consider Samuel Beckett to write Holocaust plays (p. 19). This is true in terms of direct reference. Theodor W. Adorno no less, however, wrote in the essay 'Trying to Understand *Endgame*' that 'Beckett's trashcans are emblems of the culture rebuilt after Auschwitz' (Theodor W. Adorno, *Can One Live after Auschwitz?*, StanfordUP [2003] p. 286). Plays can become examples of theatre of atrocity through their critical reception, something Plunka cannot countenance. Additionally, *Holocaust Drama* contains some minor factual errors. Clas [sic] Oldenburg, for instance, is credited with inventing the genre of performance art known as the Happening in the 1960s (p. 88). Whilst the invention is occasionally attributed to John Cage, it is generally accepted that Alan Kaprow performed the first Happening *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* in 1959 (Gill Perry and Paul Wood, eds, *Themes in Contemporary Art*, YaleUP [2004] p. 188). The minor mistakes and the omissions should not, however, detract from a work that is admirably clear and accessible. *Holocaust Drama* will provide an invaluable resource for scholars because of the breadth of the material and themes it covers. The work would be a very good text for general courses on Holocaust Literature.

Michael Bernard-Donals' *Forgetful Memory: Representation and Remembrance in the Wake of the Holocaust* provides a sustained meditation on the relationship between memory and writing. Bernard-Donals believes it is time to abandon the idea of memory as a kind of representation. He echoes Plunka's reading of Delbo's play when, drawing on Lawrence Langer's work, he suggests 'the distance between what has been witnessed and what can be committed to testimony—what was seen and what can be said—is often wide and always palpable: not only in the witness's statements but in the shrugged shoulders, the winces, the tears, and the silences that punctuate the oral testimonies and

that are aestheticized but not domesticated in the written language of figure' (p. 11). In spoken testimony, language employed for the purposes of remembrance is therefore always found wanting. This leads Bernard-Donals to suggest that 'the past can make itself bear painfully upon the present but it can't be brought into the present in representation, or mimetically' (p. 15). This means memory should not be conceived of as representation. It would be better to think of memory as a kind of writing that is both memorial and immemorial (p. 177). Memory involves forgetting as much as remembering, it involves absenting as much as re-presenting and re-presenting an event.

Bernard-Donals, whose ideas are informed by deconstruction, explores 'forgetful memory' through case studies from art, literature, and photography. An artwork by Bracha Ettinger, *Autiswork No.1*, is analysed, for example, and found to be 'a figure not of memory but of forgetting, of what escapes the image and the narrative that might tell us what we're seeing' (p. 77). The writers Mahmoud Darwish and Yehuda Amichai, responding to the violence of the nakbah and Shoah, respectively, also feature. *Forgetful Memory* makes a major contribution to the growing literature on remembrance, and will be of interest to all who work in the fields of Holocaust, Memory and Trauma Studies. The text will form a useful addition to supplementary reading lists for courses on Holocaust representation.

3. In the Frame

Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* seeks to move beyond memory framed as a site of competition towards memory considered as multidirectional (p. 3). The attention to frameworks and to the kinds of knowledge framings enable and exclude causes Rothberg's work to resonate strongly with Judith Butler's *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* Butler states that the way a frame organizes and presents a deed 'leads to an interpretative conclusion about the deed itself' (p. 8). The frame, literal or conceptual, will act as a guide to interpretation. There is, however, always an outside to the frame that means that it can never quite determine 'what it is we see, think recognize, and apprehend' (p. 9). Butler's remarks here resonate with Bernard-Donals' contention in *Forgetful Memory* that memories have contours and what lies at their margins 'disrupts our knowledge' (p. 79). Rothberg's exploration of memory sometimes exposes how this outside, what is marginalized, troubles conventional narratives about given artworks and literature.

In his discussion of Nathan Rapoport's *Warsaw Ghetto Monument* (1948), for example, Rothberg moves beyond David Roskies' construction of the

memorial as a capitulation to a Stalinist aesthetic (p. 129). Roskies chastises Rapoport for producing a monument that does not embody a singular memory of the Holocaust generated through the fusion of traditional and innovative artistic forms. He would rather see a memorial in a style free from Socialist Realist influences, exemplifying instead 'the autonomous Jewish tradition' (p. 129). The monument, as it stands, places dual claims on memory, celebrating the triumph of Stalinism and commemorating the catastrophe of the Shoah. For Roskies, one of these claims must win out. He is a proponent of competitive memory and his condemnation of Rapoport's sculpture is framed by his beliefs. Rothberg, however, draws on the essay 'The Negro and the Warsaw Ghetto' by W.E.B. Du Bois to challenge such an interpretation. Du Bois reads the monument as combing 'a recognition of the specificity of the Jewish catastrophe [...] and a broad understanding of how that history forms part of a larger path of destruction premised on an unusually virulent biopolitical vision of racial segregation' (p. 129).

The work of Du Bois is usually associated with Postcolonial rather than Holocaust Studies. *Multidirectional Memory*, however, brings writings from these two areas of study into fruitful dialogue. As well as Du Bois, Rothberg draws on writings by Aimé Césaire, Caryl Phillips and, to a lesser extent, Franz Fanon, to demonstrate how theorists and writers of the postcolonial do not always regard histories of victimization, memories, as in competition with each other. The same can also be said of theorists and writers who are usually associated with the Holocaust, such as Hannah Arendt and Charlotte Delbo. Rothberg believes that there is scope for mutual understanding between scholars of the postcolonial and of the Shoah, and uses the thinkers just mentioned as examples of individuals who, at times, formulated a multidirectional rather than a competitive conception of remembrance. Rothberg also explores instances of multidirectional memory that have arisen in visual culture, analysing, for example, paintings by André Fougeron and Boris Taslitzky and films directed by Michael Haneke and Jean Rouch and Edgar Marin. He believes that what the examples all reveal is that 'coming to terms with the Nazi genocide of European Jews has always been intertwined with ongoing processes of decolonization' (p. 309).

The interconnection of decolonization and the memory of the Holocaust is particularly forcefully attested to by Rothberg in his reading of Delbo's relatively neglected *Les belles lettres*, which were first published in 1961. This work, which relates to the Algerian War, is a compilation of letters collected from Parisian magazines and newspapers over a twelve-month period and of commentary provided by Delbo. This renders it 'halfway between a

non-fictional epistolary novel and a commonplace book of quotations' (p. 207). Rothberg finds the form of the work to be as important as its content arguing that its reliance on previously published work by other writers orients it towards a public (p. 212). It serves as a call for 'a counter-public that would remake the space of the public in the light of the resistance, trauma, and state criminality that define its contemporary moment and remembered past' (p. 220). The remembered past is not the Algerian War but the Holocaust. Delbo was a survivor of Auschwitz, where she was held as a political prisoner. Rothberg traces the impact of Auschwitz upon her writings about Algeria and the subsequent influence of the Algerian War upon her Holocaust testimony. This chapter builds on Rothberg's important earlier work on Delbo's writings in *Traumatic Realism* (Michael Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism*, UMinnP [2000] pp. 141–77).

The analysis of *Les belles lettres* ends with section titled 'Between Algeria and Abu Ghraib'. It includes an extract of testimony by a prisoner who describes being tortured whilst incarcerated, which is taken from Mark Danner's book *Torture and Truth* (Mark Danner, *Torture and Truth*, New York Review [2004]). Rothberg argues that whilst the testimony of the prisoner from Abu Ghraib echoes that of prisoners tortured during the Algerian War, the works by Danner and Delbo are markedly different. Delbo writes as part of a collective organization contesting State policy towards Algeria. Her work, with its multiple voices, reflects this collective and their shared politics. Danner, however, simply reveals injustice. Rothberg proposes that 'if testimony and documentation are to have a politics, they must be oriented toward the creation of publics, towards circulation and not just exposure. The suffering of those at Abu Ghraib, for example, is already in the frame, in the public eye. What is required is the mobilization of collective memories (such as those of the Holocaust during the Algerian War) in order to build a counterpublic. Rothberg acknowledges that 'collective memory is not simply an archive awaiting political instrumentalization; the haunting of the past cannot be harnessed in the present without unforeseen effects' (p. 223). He does, however, regard multidirectional memory to form valuable material for a future politics. Memory is of the past, but its consequences in the present can influence a time that is yet to come.

Multidirectional Memory is therefore an effort to demonstrate how materials drawn from Holocaust Studies and Postcolonial Studies that embrace multidirectional rather than competitive memory can inform social theory. These materials provide templates for how memory can transcend a particular identity politics as a means to assist different, perhaps more recent,

struggles. Rothberg's book, by way of its resolute and refined interdisciplinarity, seeks to demonstrate the necessity of 'crossing conceptual, geographical, and material borders in pursuit of shared problems' (p. 133). Through the numerous case studies it provides, it shows how 'memory puts the past into circulation, opening up possibilities for unexpected acts of solidarity' (p. 221). The work will be of key interest to scholars working in Holocaust, Memory and Postcolonial Studies.

In *Frames of War*, Butler turns to the idea of the frame as a means to analyse why certain lives are apprehensible, and hence grievable, and others are not, within contemporary culture. The book extends ideas first examined by Butler in *Precarious Life* and can be read as a companion volume to this earlier work (Judith Butler, *Precarious Life*, Verso [2004]). The second chapter of *Frames of War*, 'Torture and the Ethics of Photography: Thinking with Sontag', will probably be of most interest to scholars of trauma and testimony. Bearing witness, however, also arises as an issue elsewhere. In the first chapter, for example, in relation to the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, Butler asks why it is that 'we are not given the names of all the war dead, including those the US has killed, of whom we will never have the image, the name, the story, never a testimonial shard of their life, something to see, to touch, to know?' (p. 39). Butler's testimonial shard, the attesting fragment, is an image, an object, or a quantity of information. It is an indexical or symbolic trace of a life which provides enough of a presence for there to be recognition of something lost, of something recognizable as having been lost, of someone, of an identity that can then be mourned. Testimony can enable the process of grieving to begin.

Grief, for Butler, can often become bound up with outrage (p. 39). It therefore possesses political potential. This is why grief is policed, regulated. Limits are put in place that ensure some testimonies, some images, objects, facts, fail to become knowable. Butler states that 'our ability to respond with outrage depends upon a tacit realization that there is a worthy life that has been injured or lost in the context of war' (p. 54). In this context, she discusses the poetry produced by detainees at Guantánamo. Twenty-two poems by detainees have been published as *Poems from Guantánamo* (Marc Falkoff, ed., *Poems from Guantánamo*, UIowaP [2007]). These works form only a small quantity of the literature that has been produced by inmates at the coastal detention camp. Most poems written by detainees, including 25,000 lines of verse by Shaikh Abdurraheem Muslim Dost, have been confiscated or destroyed (p. 55). The censorship of many of the poems is justified because poetry is claimed by the Pentagon to pose 'a special risk' to national security due to its 'content and format' (p. 55).

Butler asks why the poetry causes the Pentagon such anxiety. She reads the poetry as linked with ‘survival, with the capacity to survive, or survivability’ (p. 56). The power of words to act as a form of resistance to efforts to deny or destroy the self has a long history and provides an instance of multidirectional memory of the kind described by Rothberg. In a Cuban context, for example, the actions of the author Reinaldo Arenas, openly gay and a critic of Castro at a time when both activities were frequently punished by the authorities, who was imprisoned and continued to write under extremely difficult circumstances in the 1970s, echo those of the detainees. There is a shared history of what Rothberg calls ‘savvy and creative resistance’ (p. 23). The lengths to which those at Guantánamo went to write is evident from Butler’s description of the materials they used:

at the beginning of their detention, prisoners in Guantánamo would engrave short poems on cups they had taken away from their meals. The cups were Styrofoam and so not only cheap, the very emblem of cheapness, but also soft, so that prisoners would have no access to glass or ceramics, which could more easily be used as weapons. Some would use small rocks or pebbles to engrave their words on the cups; passing them from cell to cell; and sometimes toothpaste was used as a writing instrument. (p. 56)

The material of inscription here appears almost as important as the writings themselves. The determination to write is so great that cups and pebbles become the instruments used to produce fragile texts. In the absence of pen and paper, in their initial denial as resources, the prisoners improvise. In such circumstances, the object, the inscribed Styrofoam, forms a powerful example of material testimony alongside the text that it supports. Butler, however, is most interested in the significance of the words of the poems. Their potential threat inheres in the ways in which they assert a body, a character, behind this use of language. The words are carved, written ‘in an effort to leave a mark, a trace, of a living being—a sign formed by a body, a sign that carries the life of the body’ (p. 59). There is human action and thought at the back of these words. The poems therefore form appeals for recognition. They also, for Butler, form ‘critical acts of resistance, insurgent interpretations, incendiary acts that somehow, incredibly, live through the violence they oppose, even if we do not yet know in what ways such lives will survive’ (p. 62).

The chapter on the photographs of torture at Abu Ghraib forms an extended dialogue with Susan Sontag’s writings on photography. It considers how ‘even the most transparent of documentary images is framed, and

framed for a purpose, carrying that purpose within its frame, and implementing it through the frame' (p. 70). This action of framing is, however, usually absent to the viewer. Only rarely does this 'operation of mandatory and dramaturgical "framing" become part of what is seen, much less of what is told. But when it does, we are led to interpret the interpretation that has been imposed upon us, developing our analysis into a social critique of regulatory and censorious power' (p. 72). Butler's discussion of the Abu Ghraib photographs seeks to make this framing operation visible. She suggests visual culture has a critical role to play during times of war such as the present which is 'to thematize the forcible frame, the one that conducts the dehumanizing norm, that restricts what is perceivable and, indeed, what can be' (p. 100). *Frames of War* will therefore be required reading for those working in Art History and Visual Culture as well as Comparative Literature, Memory Studies, Politics, and Trauma Studies.

Helen Benedict's *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq* considers the, often overlooked, roles of women in the US military. Benedict exposes the violence women are subjected to in the army, frequently by fellow soldiers, and their often subsequent trauma. *The Lonely Soldier* is composed of a series of vignettes of soldiers. Women are still banned from ground combat by the US military, but the Iraq war has 'made a mockery' of this 'because its battlefields are towns and roads, there is no frontline' (p. 5). *The Lonely Soldier* exposes how inadequate the provisions made by the army for dealing with the traumatic effects of combat actually are. One vignette, detailing the experiences of a sergeant, Eli PaintedCrow, recounts how a group of soldiers came under attack and inadvertently killed some civilians in the ensuing firefight. A sergeant who accompanied this group becomes angry and upset when she returns to the army base. PaintedCrow explains that 'Soldiers who've been in battle are supposed to be debriefed by a group of trauma experts on their return, with the idea of staving off psychic distress. But nobody had bothered to come' (p. 151).

Benedict's book makes a crucial contribution to the small, yet growing, literature on women's roles in the military, adding to existing contributions on the Iraq war by Kelly Oliver (Kelly Oliver, *Women as Weapons of War*, ColUP [2007]) and earlier historical accounts such as Leisa D. Mayer's *Creating GI Jane* about the Women's Army Corps WW2 (Leisa D. Mayer, *Creating GI Jane*, ColUP, [1996]). *The Lonely Soldier* will be of interest to those working on issues of testimony and trauma in History, Memory Studies, and Women's Studies.

Bhaskar Sarkar's *Mourning the Nation: Indian Cinema in the Wake of Partition* examines how the losses suffered in Partition, the trauma of the event,

have gradually become visible, knowable, through Hindi and Bengali cinema. Cinema is understood by Sarkar to form a kind of mourning in itself as well as providing the means with which to grasp and thereby mourn a loss. This mourning is tied to particular cultural contexts in India: ‘the textures, rhythms, and repertoires of local lifeworlds mold the specific modalities of mourning’ (p. 300). This means ideas about trauma and memory formed in other contexts are not always adequate when related to Indian history and culture. Sarkar argues that ‘the translation of seemingly universal categories of traumatic loss and mourning to a historically contingent context presents multiple analytic challenges’ (p. 6). *Mourning the Nation* therefore advances an Indian paradigm of mourning tied to the country’s film industry. This book constitutes an important contribution to Trauma Studies. It will also appeal to scholars in Film and Postcolonial Studies. The book would be a useful addition to undergraduate reading lists for any courses that examine film as a form of testimony.

4. Edited Collections

The collection *Documentary Testimonies: Global Archives of Suffering*, edited by Bhaskar Sarkar and Janet Walker, includes ten essays that examine audio-visual testimony in relation to specific instances of suffering drawn from a number of different national contexts, including Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Korea, Norway, Rwanda, South Africa and the United States. This collection therefore works hard to examine documentary in a global context. The book will become a key resource for Film Studies and would make a significant addition to undergraduate reading lists for courses that explore documentary film as a medium or the capacity of film to bear witness to trauma. *Documentary Testimonies* will additionally certainly appeal to those working in Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, Human Rights, Memory Studies and Postcolonial Studies.

The collection *Contested Histories in Public Space: Memory, Race, and Nation*, edited by Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa Maya Knauer, includes thirteen essays that analyse how historical narratives are constructed and presented to the public through festivals, memorials, and museums. Case studies include the Alamo in the United States, New Zealand’s New National Museum and the Voortrekker Monument in South Africa. Histories from countries including Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Nepal and the United Kingdom are also considered. Like *Documentary Testimonies*, *Contested Histories in Public Space* places its central issue, contested history, in a global context. The collection

will be of interest to historians and also to scholars working in Museum Studies and Postcolonial Studies.

The collection *The Trauma Controversy*, edited by Kristen Brown Golden and Bettina G. Bergo, includes eleven essays that consider the issue of trauma from a variety of perspectives, including how it is understood by psychoanalysis and phenomenology, how it disturbs the body, how it is conceived of clinically, and how it informs cultural practice. This is a highly thought-provoking collection, with a broad scope, which is destined to become a classic alongside Cathy Caruth's *Trauma* (Cathy Caruth, *Trauma*, Johns HopkinsUP [1995]). It will be required reading for those working in Holocaust and Trauma Studies.

The collection *Re-Examining the Holocaust through Literature*, edited by Aukje Kluge and Benn E. Williams, contains ten essays and an international bibliography of Holocaust literature. The bibliography is far from comprehensive, Ber Mark's *The Scrolls of Auschwitz*, for example, is glaringly absent, yet it still provides an extremely useful resource (Ber Mark, *The Scrolls of Auschwitz*, Am Oved [1985]). The essays examine works of literature by writers such as Charlotte Delbo, Peter Weiss and Elie Wiesel. The collection will be of interest to those working in Holocaust Studies.

The collection *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing*, edited by Kate McLoughlin, contains twenty essays grouped into three sections: Themes, Influences, and Poetics. The essays all examine American or British war writing, with the exception of one on the Bible and one on Classical war literature. The number of essays in the collection renders the analyses brief, meaning the work will be most useful as an addition to undergraduate courses which examine issues linked to war and testimony.

The collection *Re-Figuring Hayden White*, edited by Frank Ankersmit, Ewa Domńska and Hans Kellner, which was produced to celebrate the historian's eightieth birthday, is a delight. The book comprises fifteen essays and is divided into four sections: Philosophy, Narrative, Discourse, and Practice. Contributors whose essays will be of particular interest to those working in the fields of trauma and testimony include Judith Butler, Dominick LaCapra, and Verónica Tozzi. Butler's essay uses White's article, 'Figural Realism in Witness Literature', published in the journal *parallax*, as its starting point (P 10:i[2004]). This important departure by White into the field of Holocaust testimony also informs Gliotti's *The Train Journey*.

Butler examines Levi's politics, including his complex relationship to Israel in the final years of his life, and how these relate to his Holocaust experiences. Butler also examines the nature of testimony, arguing of efforts to bear witness that 'communication does not take place if the mode of

relaying events seeks to separate the happening of those events from their affective and psychic dimensions' (p. 285). This understanding of testimony requires that its figurative dimension, its rhetorical aspect, be embraced rather than rejected because of its capacity to vehicle the emotional reality of an event. Verónica Tozzi's essay examines the conflicting interpretations which exist of the Falklands War or Malvinas War experience. LaCapra's essay examines how historiography might provide ways of working through symptoms of trauma whilst simultaneously continuing to acknowledge rather than transcend them. *Re-Figuring Hayden White* should attract a broad audience. The volume will appeal to those interested in the philosophy of history, but also speaks to scholars working in Art History, Comparative Literature, Cultural Studies, Memory Studies and Trauma Studies.

The journal *Convergence* produced a special issue in 2008 entitled 'Cultural Memory and Digital Preservation'. The issue, which is highly topical for UK researchers (given that the Arts & Humanities Research Council announced Digital Transformations as one of its emerging themes in 2011), contains seven articles that examine technical and theoretical questions related to memory and new media. Issues that are examined include the indexical properties of digital images, the materiality of the digital, the tendency of recording technologies to become obsolete and the challenges this poses for their preservation, the impact of digital technology upon archiving practice, and the roles of spatial practices in memory making. Case studies that are examined include digital games from New Zealand, early cylinder recordings, film depictions of the Second Gulf War, such as *In the Valley of Elah* (Dir. Paul Haggis, USA, 2006), and media and video art including works by Doug Back, Thierry Kuntzel, Antonio Muntadas, Michael Snow and Norman White. The special issue will be of interest to a broad readership from the Humanities and Social Sciences.

5. Inheritances

Werner Herzog claims in his voiceover to *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* that in the same period that the 'artists' who produced the works at Chauvet lived and hunted in the gorges of the Ardèche, Neanderthals also inhabited the landscape. It is probable there were still Neanderthals alive 30,000 years ago, but only in remote, island regions. Herzog, however, uses his imagined Neanderthal population in the Ardèche as a foil against which to set off the achievements of the Cro-Magnons who painted the works in the cave at Chauvet. The Neanderthals are not credited with possessing a culture.

The reasons why Neanderthals disappeared from the fossil record around 30,000 years ago are hotly debated. One theory that has been advanced, however, is that they were the victims of genocide. This version of prehistory is embraced by William Golding in *The Inheritors*, his fictional account of the fate of the last of the Neanderthals (William Golding, *The Inheritors*, Faber & Faber [1955]).

Golding does attribute a sophisticated culture to the Neanderthals that feature in the novel. He also ascribes its destruction to the actions of *Homo sapiens*. They are portrayed as fearful of the forest-dwelling Others, who they interpret as devils. They obliterate what they do not understand, what they perceive as wholly different from them despite the numerous similarities which actually exist between the two peoples. Whether this prehistoric genocide actually occurred or not, the cycle of violence that Golding traces the beginnings of to this period is very much with us in the present. In *Frames of War*, Butler suggests the way such a cycle might be broken is to contest the domain of appearances and the senses 'in order to overcome the differential ways through which grievability is allocated and a life is regarded as a life worth living or, indeed, as a living life' (p. 182).

For an ethics to emerge, for the question of whether or not to do violence to arise, the 'you' who figures as the potential object of industry must be recognized. Butler argues that 'if there is no "you", or the "you" cannot be heard or seen, then there is no ethical relation' (p. 181). The 'you' therefore has to be attested to and the media has a key role to play in forming such testimony. In showing the shared precariousness of the I's of its audience and the 'you' it brings to perception, the media can establish a relation. If such a relation comes into being then the ethical claim of the Other can be recognized. It then lies with the self to decide whether to respond to acts of violence perpetrated by the Other with more violence or not to act. Butler argues that, on occasion, not acting as an action can form 'a mode of resistance, especially when it refuses and breaks the frame by which war is wrought time and again' (p. 184). *Frames of War*, like many of the other works discussed in this chapter, endeavours to provide ways of thinking about testimony not simply as a passive activity of representing, or failing to represent, past experiences. Testimony acts and enables alternative politics to those destructive forms we have currently inherited to emerge. Many of the works from 2009 discussed here provide vital signposts towards such alternatives. These texts therefore invite and require serious reflection.

Books Reviewed

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Walkowitz, Daniel J. and Lisa Maya Knauer, eds. *Contested Histories in Public Space: Memory, Race, and Nation*. DukeUP. [2009] pp. 376. pb. £15.99 9 7808 2234 2366.