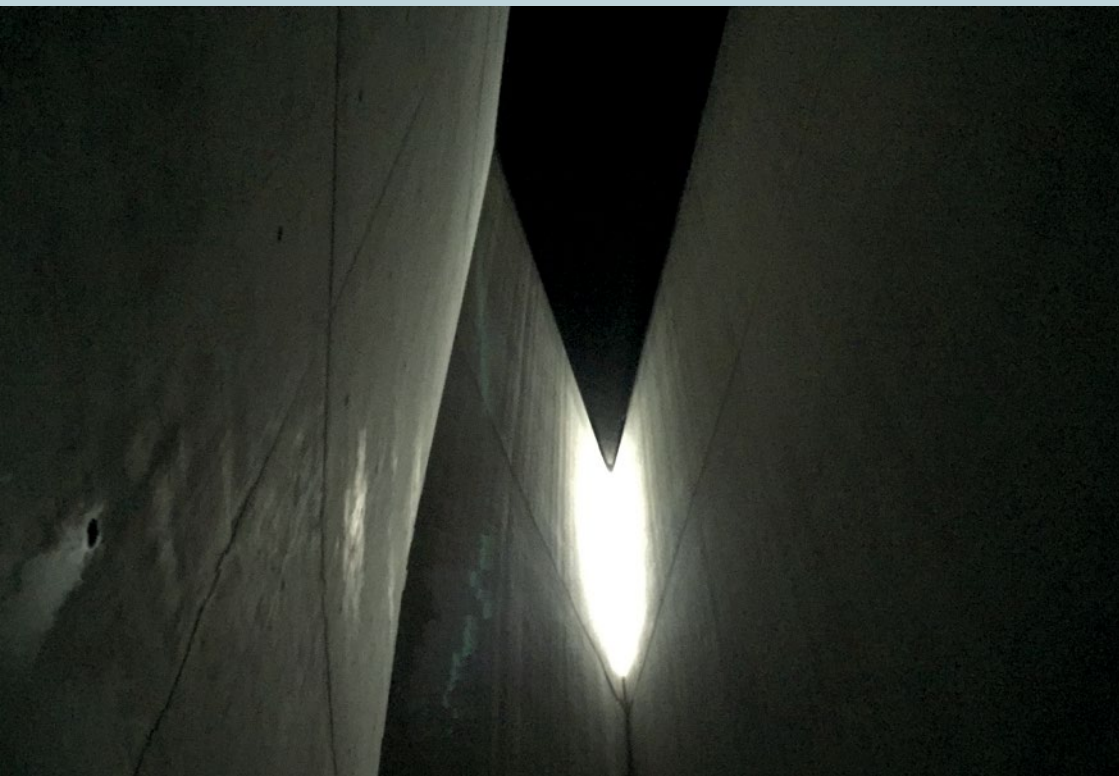# The Memorial Ethics of Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum

Arleen Ionescu

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To
Alicia, Andrei,
Laurent
and my parents

Acknowledgements

express my gratitude. Another instalment of my work in progress, now in Chapter 4, was presented in two different research seminars at my department in 2014 and 2015, and I wish to thank all my colleagues in attendance for their questions and feedback.

I would like to thank the editors at Palgrave for their valuable advice and support during the production of this monograph, and, last but not least, my academic institution, the University of Ploieşti, for awarding me research prizes in 2014 and 2015 in recognition of the international visibility of my work, which helped me self-finance short research trips to Berlin and the British Library in London during holidays.

My love and gratitude go to my children Alicia and Andrei, who often kindly left their mummy to take care of 'her museum' while they were keeping themselves busy with their homework … or with their tablets! I have not benefited from any sabbatical or research leave in the three years during which I wrote this book, and without my parents' assistance on the domestic front, I would not have been able to put in the time and uninterrupted effort needed to complete this project.

Finally, words are way too small to express how grateful I am to my husband, Laurent Milesi, to whom I owe everything. I would never have become who I am today if one day he had not put in my hands Blanchot's *Awaiting Oblivion*, which I read from cover to cover in one short session. Laurent challenged me to think in a way that was entirely new to me and which I would not have discovered on my own. He provided innumerable suggestions throughout the gestation of this book, in particular on its various Germanic contexts; his patient, rigorous feedback and direct input, especially for Chapters 2 and 3, have made all the difference. Little did he know, when he took me to visit Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum during a short stay in Berlin, that its lasting impressions on my mind would change the course of my life for the next few years, as well as my perception of Holocaust memory and representation. This is how this book was born.

Contents

Abbreviations

The following works by Daniel Libeskind and studies on the Berlin Jewish Museum have been abbreviated throughout, with page references inserted in the text.

BG   Libeskind, Daniel. With Sarah Crichton. *Breaking Ground: Adventures in Life and Architecture*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2004.

'BL'   Libeskind, Daniel. 'Between the Lines'. In *The Space of Encounter*. Preface by Jeffrey Kipnis. Afterword by Anthony Vidler. London: Thames and Hudson, 2001. 23–28.

'BLOS'   Libeskind, Daniel. 'Between the Lines: Opening Speech'. In *The Space of Encounter*. Preface by Jeffrey Kipnis. Afterword by Anthony Vidler. London: Thames and Hudson, 2001. 23–29.

C   Libeskind, Daniel. *Countersign*. London: Academy Edition, 1991.

CW   Libeskind, Daniel. *Chamber Works: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus*. With introductory essays by Peter Eisenman *et al.* London: Architectural Association, 1983.

HJMB   Altmeppen, Sonja, Henriette Kolb and Marie Naumann. Editors. *Highlights from the Jewish Museum Berlin*. Berlin: Nicolaische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2010.

JMB   Libeskind, Daniel. *Jewish Museum Berlin*. With a photo essay by Hélène Binet. Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 1999.

RM   Libeskind, Daniel. *Radix-Matrix: Architecture and Writings*. Munich and New York: Prestel, 1997.

SE   Libeskind, Daniel. *The Space of Encounter*. Preface by Jeffrey Kipnis. Afterword by Anthony Vidler. London: Thames and Hudson, 2001.

'T'   Libeskind, Daniel. 'Trauma'. In *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*. Edited by Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003. 43–58.

In addition, the following abbreviations have been used for texts related to deconstruction and architecture that have been frequently referenced:

CLW   Kipnis, Jeffrey and Thomas Leeser. Editors. *Chora L Works: Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997.
'LPE'   Derrida, Jacques. 'A Letter to Peter Eisenman'. Translated by Hilary P. Hanel. *Assemblage* 12 (August 1990): 6–13.
'NPM'   Derrida, Jacques. 'No (Point of) Madness—Maintaining Architecture'. Translated by Kate Linker. In *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume II*. Edited by Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008. 87–103.

LIST OF FIGURES

Introduction: A Museum with a View

This monograph was born from a 2011 trip to Germany, in which my family and I were touring sights associated with the Second World War, including Holocaust memorials and monuments erected in the 1990s, such as Daniel Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum. There were so many reasons to feel overwhelmed in Libeskind's 'experiential'[1] museum that we hardly even noticed that we spent almost a whole day exploring it: the antithesis between the practically untouched baroque building of the Kollegienhaus and its avant-gardist extension, the structure of a distorted Star of David, the descent into Libeskind's voids, the three roads or axes that he built inside his museum (the Axis of Exile, the Axis of the Holocaust, the Axis of Continuity) and the corresponding dead ends to the first and second axes (the Garden of Exile, the Holocaust Tower). All these clashing elements gave us no other choice as visitors but to give up our traditional role as passive consumers of exhibits. I remember to this day staying long in front of every single artefact showcased on the Axis of the Holocaust and the Axis of Exile in an irresistible need for historical recollection and an impossible communion. But the most overwhelming experience was inside the Memory Void and the Holocaust Tower, those empty, jarring spaces cutting vertically through the zigzagging structures of the museum.

Later on, while researching my first paper on Libeskind's museum for a conference on '*Ethos/Pathos/Logos*' at my university, I discovered that the architect thought that his ideal visitors would continue thinking of

the museum after leaving its space, once their visit was over (*JMB* 17). For almost two years, the museum refused to leave my mind, which continued to fill Libeskind's voids with texts, literary or philosophical, that also 'spoke memory' to me. Through his design for the Berlin Jewish Museum, Libeskind had communicated to me in powerful, graphic shortcuts the wartime struggle of the Jewish people that I otherwise knew only from history books, not to mention those inadequate, biased manuals through which we were indoctrinated during my school education in then communist Romania; yet he impressed on me more than ever before how the Holocaust radically changed the way in which history can be perceived and remembered, and how the very possibility of representation had been questioned by such an unimaginable event.

This monograph will explore the Berlin Jewish Museum as the embodiment of what I will call 'memorial ethics', an ethics based on bringing the invisible into visibility. 'Memorial' can be both a noun referring to a monument that commemorates, that calls upon the faculty of memory to testify to historical events, and an adjective denoting the preservation of the memory of a person or thing or pertaining to memory, the mnemonic intended to assist it.[2] Ethics was the 'first philosophy'[3] for Emmanuel Levinas, whose entire philosophical project was understood by Richard J. Bernstein as an ethical response to evil, to those forms of 'Absolute Evil' that appeared in the twentieth century and made demands that modern consciousness could not fathom.[4] For Levinas, to live 'otherwise than being' meant to live as an 'ethical creature'.

In an attempt to find the ultimate sense of ethics, Levinas associated it with optics. This paradigm will be analysed in detail in Chapter 4 and related to the way the visitor to Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum is invited to 'see' history and memory. By 'memorial ethics' I therefore understand the obligation to conceive of memory and the recollection of history as bearing witness, a testimonial act bringing the invisible to the level of the visible, as Libeskind did in his museum, deeply aware that after the Shoah, art had to be infused with a different ethics of representation.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines witnessing as the action of bearing witness or giving testimony in support of a fact or statement. Originally meaning 'knowledge', 'understanding' or 'wisdom', its sense passed from abstract to concrete to refer to the attestation of a fact or event through a statement, such as evidence given in a court of law[5]; 'to bear witness' is synonymous with the action of testifying and providing evidence, of being a spectator or auditor of something, of being present as an observer and

seeing with one's own eyes. Memorial ethics will consequently involve bearing witness by showing oneself in full light, revealing oneself and uttering 'Here I am', I am here in front of you to witness, to give expression to my memory which testifies to the Other, because it is my duty to remember and speak of/to this memory.

My more predominantly historical and 'philosophical' Chapter 2 starts from the multiple guises of memory, and links Aristotle's definitions to contemporary theories of memory put forward by Yosef Yerushalmi and Michael Bernard-Donals. The latter's notion of 'forgetful memory' informs the question of how what one remembers and forgets may influence the way in which one relates to disastrous events. Many forms and manifestations of memory are at stake here, from Maurice Halbwachs's notion of 'collective memory' replaced by 'cultural memory' in more recent studies in order to illustrate the connection between memory and socio-cultural contexts (Section 2), to Paul Ricoeur's phenomenological-hermeneutical interpretation of memory, history and forgetting (Section 3). They all converge in Section 4 towards what 'bearing witness' means; here I address Primo Levi's celebrated distinction between survivors and the true witnesses who perished in the gas chambers, as well as the unreliability of memory that has been subjected to dehumanization: survivors are the bearers of such an impossible history, truth and past that its stressful recollection can warp mnemonic faculties. This discrepancy is also explored from the perspective of Trauma Studies and Theory developed in the work of Dominick LaCapra, Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. My discussion of the incommensurability and unrepresentability of those ordeals that resist being translated into a narrative and, hence, risk becoming erased as silence when the historian brings the witness to attest faithfully to what happened, emphasizes how the traumatic experiences of Holocaust survivors still did not prevent them from testifying and fulfilling the 'duty to remember' (Section 5). Section 6 is dedicated to historical, 'revisionist' debates that erupted almost in parallel in France and Germany in the 1980s: Faurisson's (following Rassinier's) Holocaust denial, countered by Vidal-Naquet and Lyotard, and, on the other side of the Rhine, the 'historians' quarrel' (*Historikerstreit*) about the crimes of Nazi Germany.

The following section reconstructs the more philosophical background to postwar Germany's attitudes towards mourning, forgetting and forgiving, focusing on Adorno's appeal, almost 15 years after the end of the war and soon echoed by Eric Voegelin, to 'work through the past'. After

a short detour through the Mitscherlichs' epoch-making *The Inability to Mourn*, this section investigates Adorno's 'after Auschwitz' era within the larger framework of postmodernity famously equated by Lyotard with the Freud-inspired notion of 'anamnesis' and with the 'sublime'. Lyotard's and Blanchot's 'immemorial' (contrasted with Levinas's slightly different articulation of it) will also underline the difficult relationship between the impossibility of knowledge and the necessity to remember, and can be seen as a conceptual redeployment of an ethics of 'forgetful memory'.

Starting from Adorno's various inflections on his own famous dictum 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric', the last section of Chapter 2 ends on a discussion of the ethical viability of several contemporary 'representative' works dealing in different degrees of literality or oblique metaphoricity with the Holocaust.

Chapter 3 is a foray into the world of architecture after the Second World War, with an emphasis on postmodernism and deconstructivism, which places Libeskind's Museum within a context emphasizing the need to change how history is remembered in commemorative monuments. In a period globally marked by the democratization of art as well as the accent on its social function, postmodernist architects searched for formal techniques of defamiliarization while later generations, including Daniel Libeskind, not only resorted to a different cultural politics of form but also sought greater connectivity between architectural space, its purpose and its intended addressee.

The significance of the 1988 events associated with deconstructivism (the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York entitled 'Deconstructivist Architecture' and the Tate Gallery symposium organized by Andreas Papadakis) is also briefly analysed in Section 1, which looks at the works of those architects for whom Derridean deconstruction operated as an 'architectural metaphor'.[6] The second section traces a difference between Holocaust memorials and museums, which is all the more vital since Libeskind himself repeatedly affirmed that, although dimensions of memory are built into his museum, these should not be construed as 'memorial' (*JMB* 32). To paraphrase Andrew Benjamin, a memorial is caught between performing and offering a history lesson, and hence, through its Axis of the Holocaust and the Holocaust Tower, the Berlin Jewish Museum provides its visitors with a site of and 'for' mourning. Section 3 offers a short survey of how postwar architecture in Germany attempted to demarcate itself from the Third Reich's megalomaniacal vision and, within a reflection on the role of monu-

ments in commemoration and remembrance, traces the emergence of what became known as the counter-monument or the counter-memorial. Eisenman's Holocaust Memorial and Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum are my main examples of the counter-monument's suggestive obliqueness and performative abstraction by which a space induces 'emotional transformation'.[7]

Section 4 discusses the concept of 'experiential museum', or the attempt by recent, more experimental museums to cast the visitor into a less passive, more performative role, such as the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC where visitors are given a victim's 'passport' at the entrance, or Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, where access is up a steep hill and deliberately conceived to be a physical trial. The history of the Berlin Jewish Museum is then recalled in Section 5, which starts from the inauguration of its former avatar only one week before Hitler's installation as chancellor in January 1933 and ends with the completed new Extension on Lindenstraße in 1999.

Chapter 4 'opens Libeskind's Museum' through Levinas's 'ethics is optics', an unexpected, singular assertion from a thinker whose construction of ethics, based on the call of the Other, was more congruent with acoustics. As Hagi Kenaan also pointed out, Levinasian ethics originates in a phenomenological tradition that placed the visual in a central position; Levinas 'offers an understanding of the ethical relationship based on a unique kind of vision. This vision is oriented, on the one hand, towards what appears to the eye, yet it also lacks all the characteristics that define the essence of visual perception'.[8] In *Totality and Infinity*, the act of welcoming the other represents an act of generosity, and involves assuming responsibility. Such an act takes place in full light when relating to the Other, whose face stands before the self in its *visuality* rather than its (physical) visibility. My interpretation of 'ethics as optics' extends Kenaan's valuable insight and explores its occurrence not only in *Totality and Infinity* but also in *Difficult Freedom*, while relating it to Judaic and, more generally, theological sources.

Taking my cue from Levinas, I will interpret Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum as a form of bearing witness, or 'eyewitness', by opening oneself ('I') towards the Other. Libeskind's Museum performatively testifies to a '*here I am*, answering for everything and everyone',[9] by bringing to light the memory of the Berlin Jewish people who were engulfed by Hitler's hell. Libeskind's vision was ultimately infused with the hope that victims of the concentration camps had lived on (*SE* 70), and is the reason why

even in the darkest 'voided void' of the Holocaust Tower a ray of light seeps through into the enclosure. This is only one example of Libeskind's memorial ethics, which is further explored in Section 3, where I return to the notion of the counter-memorial in the light of texts by James E. Young, Richard Crownshaw and Silke Arnold-de Simine highlighting the crisis in commemorative practices. This is followed by 'A Genesis of Libeskind's Structures', an analytic inventory of the main structural elements of the museum (the zigzag, the Star of David and the voids) within the broader context of Libeskind's other analogous, architectural projects.

Section 5, 'The Syntax of the Jewish Museum', is this study's most detailed engagement with the structural elements of the Jewish Museum. Seen overall as a performative attempt to bring the invisible to light and full visibility, Libeskind's architectural structure and the patterns of its fragmentation are deciphered as a new architectural language of museal space. In my analysis, there is an insistence on the meanings of the cuts through the overall structure known as the voids. Thus, its two most striking 'inner sanctums', the 'Memory Void' occupied by Menashe Kadishman's Fallen Leaves (which stages the fragility and unreliability of human memory) and the Holocaust Tower, are given special prominence and interpreted respectively as a project on the Levinasian face (with the help of Kenaan's interpretation of 'ethics is optics') and on vision and ruins (through Derrida's considerations in *Memoirs of the Blind*). This text will neatly segue into the final section of Chapter 4, on Derrida's 'Response' to the Jewish Museum', focusing on the French philosopher's critical distance from Libeskind's 'negative' implementation of the void, and picking up his 'Letter to Peter Eisenman' from where Chapter 3 had left off.

Chapter 5 starts when the museum doors close and I attempt to live up to Libeskind's conception of his experiential space by 'linking' to it with a literary extension of my own. In the momentous section on Auschwitz in *The Differend*, Lyotard spoke of 'the silence imposed on knowledge' (versus 'the silence of forgetting') which 'imposes a feeling': 'The silence that surrounds the phrase *Auschwitz was the extermination camp* is not a state of mind […], it is the sign that something remains to be phrased which is not, something which is not determined. This sign affects a linking of phrases. […] [Auschwitz] marks the confines wherein historical knowledge sees its competence impugned'.[10] Used as an exemplary borderline situation to test the limits of applicability of the differend, 'Auschwitz' signalled for Lyotard the impossibility, yet necessity, of articulating a linkage between the past (the incomprehensibility of the Shoah) and the

'from now on' (the question of its representation): 'il faut enchaîner après Auschwitz, mais sans résultat spéculatif' (one must link after Auschwitz but without a speculative result).[11] Therefore, for Lyotard, '[w]hat is at stake in a literature, in a philosophy, in a politics perhaps, is to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them'.[12]

Libeskind imagined that his ideal visitor would prolong in their imagination, throughout the city of Berlin and beyond, the 'two lines of thinking, organization and relationship' that structured his project (see Section 5 of Chapter 4). This is what Chapter 5, whose overall scope is to connect between Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum and my own testimonial literary museum, attempts to do. According to Kelly Oliver, witnessing can be interpreted both 'as the productive tension at the centre of subjectivity' and as 'the tension between historically determined subject positions and infinitely respons-able subjectivity'.[13] I see the responsible subjectivity which will preside over the creative elaboration of my literary extension as such 'a form of bearing witness to the impossibility of witnessing'.[14]

As self-proclaimed *curator* of a literary extension to the Libeskind museum, I will invite my readers on an imaginary journey along the Axis of Continuity (containing Libeskind's 'bio-note') and the Axis of Exile (populated by some of those who were forced into exile or were 'self-exiled': Paul Celan, Jacques Derrida, Samuel Beckett, Maurice Blanchot, and also Franz Kafka, whose work can be seen as a gloomy prefiguration of what former *Résistant* deportee David Rousset called *L'Univers concentrationnaire* [1946]). Some of Libeskind's structures are said to mirror one another and interlink architecturally; at the junction between affinity and affect, his Extension will likewise link with mine through how the selected texts intersect via interconnecting motifs and analogous or comparable strategies of representation, offering a congruent, kaleidoscopic perspective on the Holocaust. In this ethical 'literary space', at the border between literature and philosophy, all discursive genres are represented and mixed: from prose (Kafka's 'Before the Law', the guardian to the Garden of Exile and commanding a reflection on 'election' and the Law; Wiesel's *Night*, standing lonesome on the Axis of the Holocaust) to drama (the first void, or 'Void of Nothingness', is inhabited by Beckettian fragments and characters) and poetry (that of Celan, via Derrida's 'Shibboleth' essay, one of whose poems in the second void mirrors Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger's in the Holocaust Tower). I also resort to Blanchot's *récit* (fourth void) and Hélène Cixous's 'critifiction'[15] (fifth void), while the third void,

envisioned as his 'sublime' attic space and library, is informed by Derrida's genre-bending 'Circumfession'.

After being open to the public for a few years as an empty building, the Jewish Museum was populated with artefacts and scheduled for inauguration on 11 September 2001 (9/11). The tragedy in New York City on the morning of the same day decided otherwise and led to the opening being postponed. Whether we should or should not read this coincidence as a sign from History that Libeskind's fate was to build the architectural complex that replaced the Twin Towers, his concept for redesigning Ground Zero was no less philosophically motivated than his project for the Berlin Jewish Museum and has already received a good deal of critical attention from scholars interested in the 'architecture of trauma'.

Ashes and dust were to haunt New Yorkers after the fall of their emblematic towers, and their symbolic significance in an impossible ritual of mourning will be addressed in the Epilogue. The book ends on the way Libeskind's Ground Zero, not unlike the Berlin Jewish Museum, bears in itself a healing—*curative* rather than curatorial—power for the American psyche.[16]

Notes

1. This term is borrowed from Amy Sodaro and explored further in Chapter 3. Sodaro's use of the concept refers to museums whose focus is more 'on teaching and creating an experience for the visitor than they are on the more traditional museological functions of collecting and displaying'; Amy Sodaro, 'Memory, History, and Nostalgia in Berlin's Jewish Museum', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 26 (2013), 80.
2. See the *Oxford English Dictionary Second Edition on CD-ROM,* v. 4.0.0.2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), s. v. 'memorial, *a.* and *n.*'.
3. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Ethics as First Philosophy', trans. Seán Hand and Michael Temple, in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 75–87. See also *Ethics as First Philosophy: The Significance of Emmanuel Levinas for Literature, Philosophy and Religion*, ed. and intro. Adriaan T. Peperzak (New York and London: Routledge, 1995).
4. See Susan Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 239, 291.

5. See the *Oxford English Dictionary Second Edition on CD-ROM,* s. v. 'witness', both entries.

6. Jacques Derrida, Interview with Eva Meyer, 'Architecture Where Desire Can Live', in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*: *An Anthology of Architectural Theory, 1965–1995*, ed. Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton University Press, 1996), 146.

7. Irit Dekel, *Mediation at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin* (London: Palgrave, 2013), 57.

8. Hagi Kenaan, *The Ethics of Visuality: Levinas and the Contemporary Gaze*, trans. Batya Stein (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 13.

9. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 114.

10. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 57–58; emphasis in the original.

11. Avital Ronell, *Finitude's Score: Essays for the End of the Millennium* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 256. Lyotard's famous assertion in the debate following his talk 'Discussions, ou: phraser "Après Auschwitz"' at a colloquium in Cerisy-la-Salle on Derrida ('Les Fins de l'homme') in July–August 1980, recorded here by Ronell, was not kept as such in the published transcription nor in what became the section on 'Auschwitz' in *The Differend*.

12. Lyotard, *The Differend*, 13.

13. Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 105.

14. Oliver, *Witnessing*, 88.

15. This term is used by Laurent Milesi in 'Cixanalyses—Towards a Reading of *Anankè*', *Paragraph* 36.2 (2013), 287, and 'Portraits of H. C. as J. D. and Back', *New Literary History*, 37.1 (2006), 54.

16. Kelsey Bankert, *The Architecture of Trauma: Daniel Libeskind in New York City and Berlin*, Kindle Edition (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 52.

Memory, History, Representation

This chapter will explore how memory works in relation to history and representation in the aftermath of any catastrophe that disrupts the linearity of time and the integrity of a community; specifically, for the purpose of this study, the death of millions of Jewish people in concentration camps and ghettos during the Second World War. The Holocaust changed forever mentalities and the way in which humankind perceived and related to history, challenging the very possibility of representation itself as it ushered in an obligation to conceive of memory and the recollection of history differently.

1   *Mnēmē* and *Anamnesis* in History

Memory can take on multiple guises and is generally used as a marker of continuity whose aim is to capture, represent, as well as symbolize the things of the past which are at risk of being lost. The Latin *memorō* and *memini*, meaning 'I call to mind' and 'I remember' respectively, were derived from three cognate Greek verbs: *mimnéskó* (I remember, call to mind, recall), *mnémoneuó* (I remember, hold in remembrance) and *mnaomai* (I am mindful),[1] from which *mnēmē* and *memoria* acquired their semantic palette in classical Greek and Roman culture. But as I will show in the section on 'Bearing Witness', in more recent paradigms of remembrance inflected by historical events, 'memory' evolved and came to be understood more critically either as an emanation of individual trauma, as rhetoric of testimony, or as a collective account endowed with historical and political significance.

In ancient Greek philosophy, *mnēmē* was at the intersection of three correlated activities: *hypomnesis*, which represents the technical support to memory; *mnēmē*, standing for the narratable or the representable; and *anamnesis*, which refers to what is related to the real, yet is characterized by fragmentariness. Aristotle's treatise on memory, *Peri mnēmēs kai anamnēseōs* distinguished between memory (*mnēmē*) or remembering (*mnēmouein*), and reminiscing or recollecting (*anamimnēskesthai*). In *Of Memory, Reminiscence, and Writing: On the Verge*, David Farrell Krell argues that the Greek philosopher bent the 'recalcitrant' grammar of *mnēmouein* and *anamimnēskesthai* to correspond to the passive (affection) and the active (undertaking) respectively, so that 'ana-mnesis', through the various semantic determinations of its prefix, could be suggestive of the kind of motion Aristotle will later attribute to reminiscence.[2] In the wake of Aristotle's interpretation of memory, whilst *mnēmē* has always been considered to be more coherent and amenable to individual knowledge and representation, *anamnesis* has been conceived as intersecting with cultural memory as well as a token of the witness's consciousness providing access to absent events.

In *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory,* an epoch-making study of this Jewish injunction (see *infra*) grounded in a post-Freudian understanding of memory, Yosef Yerushalmi associated *mnēmē* with 'essentially unbroken, continuous' memory, and *anamnesis* with the recollection of that which has been forgotten.[3] Thus, when a nation remembers, its past (which is looked upon as meaningful and has been accepted unanimously) has been actively handed on to the present generation. Conversely, when a nation forgets, 'the generation that now possesses the past does not convey it to the next generation'.[4] Based on Yerushalmi's analyses and the subsequent elaborations by Amos Funkenstein, an eminent scholar of Jewish history, Michael Bernard-Donals construes *mnēmē* as coextensive with 'cultural memory', a 'continuous and unbroken' form of memory, vital for the transmission of cultural knowledge or the survival of a nation and its customs, while *anamnesis* is defined as 'the intrusion of those elements of a culture of events that have occurred either to individual members of a culture or to groups or the culture itself'.[5] Bernard-Donals uses the phrase 'voids of memory' for those memories which are inaccessible 'to the very language and context that is at their disposal' and through which they should be transmitted, in cases when an event has left marks in the memories of both those who participated in it and those who did not. In the context of the Holocaust, this inaccessibility to language does not

make the traumatic event unintelligible or 'absent from memory', since memories of events associated with it are to be assumed as 'knowledge's other'.[6] Bernard-Donals's investigation into what he calls 'forgetful memory' goes in a different direction from Yerushalmi since, from a critical perspective, the concept of collective memory becomes identical to history, yet it can be 'destroyed by anamnesis, that which is forgotten and lies at the core of memory'.[7]

2   Individual Memory, Collective Memory, Historical Consciousness

The present study uses the terms 'individual memory' and 'collective memory' to denote memory that operates at the cognitive level and at 'the levels of the social and the medial' respectively.[8] However, as Funkenstein has shown—expressing his 'reservation' in his 'Introduction' to *Perceptions of Jewish History*[9]—it may on occasion be hard to distinguish between the two and to single out a personal memory from the social context. Stamped with the memory of Émile Durkheim's '*consciousness collective*', the notion of 'collective memory' (*mémoire collective*) was first developed in the 1920s by Maurice Halbwachs (who was to die in the Buchenwald concentration camp in 1945), for whom individual memories represent mere fragments of an all-encompassing collective memory.[10] Owing to its controversial meaning, it was often replaced by '*cultural* memory', which was defined by Astrid Erll as a term that 'accentuates the connection of memory on the one hand and socio-cultural contexts on the other'.[11] It is in this sense that 'cultural memory' will be employed here: collective memory is often shaped by a politics of memory that establishes the framework within which events are to be remembered or forgotten.

Funkenstein also examined historical consciousness, understood as 'the degree of creative freedom in the use of interpretation of the contents of the collective memory'.[12] His view is that history, filtered through historical consciousness, represents the critical manipulation of collective memory;[13] thus, the historian is a reconstructor who can act demiurgically and has the right to obliterate names and identities, as well as events, that he can simply avoid recording.[14] In such a way, not unlike the writer, the historian mediates individual memories that he intertwines with collective memory taken as history. Developing Funkenstein's line of thought, Bernard-Donals assumed that historical consciousness reconciles individual and collective memory, and concluded that the historian can act upon

memory.[15] Noting that until the nineteenth century Jews in the diaspora were not preoccupied with '*history qua history*' and were not affected by political events, Funkenstein had shown how the beginning of Jewish Studies, 'when historical consciousness and historical research became the backbone of the new methodical study of Judaism', was a moment which marked the split between 'critical historical consciousness and collective memory'.[16] What Richard Crownshaw, referring to the work of Susannah Radstone and Annette Wieviorka, has called 'the diremption of history and memory' will find many other instantiations throughout this study, as in the alignment of history and memory with monumentality and counter-monumentality respectively, or, more specifically in the Berlin Jewish Museum, in the equation between the historical experience of trauma and the architectural metaphor of the void.[17]

3   The 'Censure of Memory': On Forgetting, Remembering and Forgiving

In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Paul Ricoeur's phenomenological-hermeneutical construction of memory highlights the joint necessity of a cognitive as well as pragmatic dimension, whereby 'the confrontation between memory and history will play itself out',[18] corresponding respectively to *mnēmē*, or knowledge that claims a truthful relation to the past, and to *anamnesis*, the active search for recollection. As the praxis of recollection, *anamnesis* requires the active use of memory, whose fundamental vulnerability is exposed by three 'forms of misuse':[19] the phenomenon of blocked memory on a pathological and therapeutic level, the manipulation of memory, and the phenomenon of obligated memory on the ethico-political level, when commemoration is synonymous with rememoration.[20] 'Blocked memory' was central to Freud's work on remembering and repression; the Viennese doctor believed that the dynamics of repression entails the compulsion to repeat (*Wiederholungszwang*).[21] Ricoeur's second 'misuse', or the manipulation of memory, implies that any narrative is by definition selective and variable, and can resort to re-telling of truth, therefore hiding or bending part of it. Finally, the phenomenon of obligated memory represents a key issue in Ricoeur's ethics of forgiving, and arguably may be aligned with the Jewish duty to remember known as *Zakhor* ('Remember!'/'Do not forget!'), the Judaic categorical imperative to which we shall return in Section 5. Writing from a Freudian analytic framework informed by the survivor's perspective, the French philosopher

advocates that remembering must be accompanied by a work of mourning that enables those who remember to accept the loss, thereby paving the way to reconciliation.

In Ricoeur's view, the forms of forgetting that correspond to the pragmatic dimension of memory are correlated with the three forms of misuse. Whereas in the case of blocked memory, forgetting is induced by repetition as repression, in manipulated memory it amounts to what was left out of the narratives. The third and most striking example of blocked memory is 'obligated memory' that can be found in the institution of amnesty as 'commanded forgetting', understood not so much as pure amnesia but as a 'wish for a happy forgetting' needed to heal wounds, which prompts Ricoeur to wonder whether a 'sensible politics' is 'possible without something like a censure of memory'.[22] Nevertheless, amnesty has a 'spiritual' stake: 'silencing the non-forgetting of memory'.[23] In a parallel essay on 'Memory and Forgetting', Ricoeur emphasized that the duty to remember is not the same as the duty to forgive, since the former has the role to teach, whereas the latter aims to go 'beyond anger and hatred'.[24] In the light of Ricoeur's ethico-political thought, Richard Kearney considered that the origins of 'genuine amnesty' lie not in 'blind forgetfulness (amnesia)' but in a remembering 'which is prepared to forgive the past by emancipating it from the deterministic stranglehold of violent obsession and revenge'.[25]

The attitude to forgiveness represents a delicate issue in Judaism which will not be dealt with explicitly in this book; as Jacques Derrida has made clear, the discussion on forgiveness is interminable.[26] However, it is worth mentioning here, *obiter dictum*, that whereas forgiveness of one's neighbour and in the eyes of God is very much valued by Christians, the forgiveness after the Holocaust by those murdered in their millions to their murderers proved impossible to grant.[27] Several scholars, including Hannah Arendt and Vladimir Jankélévitch, voiced strong doubts about the possibility of forgiving the Nazi atrocities. Arendt's succinct yet unambiguous discussion of forgiveness in *The Human Condition* puts forward the idea that forgiving and promising should be the two framing 'actions' of political life. Here forgiveness is regarded as an open possibility for 'redemption from the predicament of irreversibility'.[28] According to Arendt, punishment is not the opposite of but the alternative to forgiveness. In 'Personal Responsibility under Dictatorship', she described the Nazi crimes as 'the horror itself, in its naked monstrosity' that transcended 'all moral categories' and exploded 'all standards of jurisdiction; it was something men could neither punish adequately nor forgive'.[29]

In 'The Imprescriptible—to Forgive?', Vladimir Jankélévitch pointed out the inapplicability of the notion of forgiveness after the Holocaust:

> This crime contrary to nature, without reason this exorbitant crime is liter-
> ally a 'metaphysical' crime. The criminals are not mere fanatics, nor are they
> blind doctrinaires or horrible dogmatics: they are, strictly speaking, 'mon-
> sters'. When an act denies the essence of man as man, the prescription which
> would tend to absolve it in the name of morality, contradicts morality itself.
> Is it not here contradictory or even absurd to invoke forgiveness?[30]

Jankélévitch stressed the obligation to remember so as not to allow the past to lapse into oblivion;[31] comparing the Nazis with dogs, Jankélévitch realized that the comparison was very unfair to the latter since '[d]ogs would not have invented the crematoria, nor thought to inject phenol into the hearts of children'.[32] Under such circumstances, '[p]ardoning died in the death camps'.[33] As documented by Michael L. Morgan, Levinas's Talmudic lesson in 1963 was a response to Jankélévitch's passionate analy-sis of the German guilt,[34] and, in spite of Levinas's warning of not repre-senting the Jewish overall point of view, it suggested the impossibility of forgiveness:

> There are two conditions for forgiveness: the good will of the offended
> party and the full awareness of the offender. But the offender is in essence
> unaware. The aggressiveness of the offender is perhaps this very uncon-
> sciousness. Aggression is the lack of attention *par excellence*. In essence,
> forgiveness would be impossible.[35]

In *Nine Talmudic Readings*, Levinas expressed, if not his downright inabil-ity, at least some 'difficulty' to forgive those who acted consciously in sup-port of National Socialism, including Heidegger himself, who seemingly showed no remorse after the War and did not ask for forgiveness: 'One can, if pressed to the limit, forgive the one who has spoken [or acted] unconsciously. … One can forgive many Germans, but there are some Germans it is difficult to forgive. It is difficult to forgive Heidegger'.[36]

Another facet in the thematization of the necessity to remember that needs to be taken into account is that the dynamics of memory involves a continuous interface between remembering and forgetting. Paradoxically, one can remember only by forgetting, and the details of our very own lives are prone to be consigned to oblivion. Despite—or perhaps because of—this tension, memory and forgetting are forever linked, or, in Jean

Bollack's terms, forgetfulness that has the capacity to break with the full preservation of meaning, delivers a revenue to perpetuate: 'Memory thinks, but only manages to do so through forgetting if instead of signifying loss, flight, or abandonment, memory allows us on the contrary to reconstitute a reference'.[37] Referring to the acts of remembering akin to mourning from the Hebrew Bible, Geoffrey Hartman admitted the paradox of placing 'forgetfulness in the service of remembrance', yet accounted for it as follows: 'The need to assimilate extreme events, yet to respect rather than repress the continuing vulnerability of individuals or communities, is a constant of human existence throughout history'.[38]

According to Bollack, the English and German verbs 'to forget' and *vergessen* 'suggest a kind of fluid power that carries away the traces of an experience, which is then out of reach', whereas in French, 'the effacement' of *oublir* (from Low Latin *oblitare*: to erase, to efface) involves 'a more controlled relation' because 'effacement is an object of analysis in itself'. Thus envisaged, forgetting is no longer 'the counterposition of a methodically selective process of remembering or recollecting'; besides, when used to describe artistic creation, it embodies 'the condition of a decisive transition to another order of meaning'.[39] In a comparable line of etymological argument, *denken* in German means both 'to think' and 'to remember', whereas *gedenken* denotes 'the reverence of a solemn and ritual commemoration'.[40] A revealing example adduced by Bollack is the use of 'thinking' for 'remembering' in Celan's poetry, whose 'central focus' is the extermination of the Jews. In Bollack's view, what Celan achieved in his poems was 'binding thought and memory together' because '[t]o think is to "enter forgetfulness"—as one enters a religion—in order to recall, to think about nothing but the object, which never moves away and which shapes the form of every content, whatever it may be, which is created by history'.[41] Thus, Celan restricted the meaning of the verb *denken*.

4   Bearing Witness

In the ruined postwar landscape, in their continuous attempt to deflect pain and transcend hopelessness, survivors are the unwilling bearers of a traumatic past, an impossible history decreed upon them, with which they cannot come to terms and which can taint or distort their memory. C. Fred Alford's description of the survivor endeavours to capture the essence of this condition:

> Having just been separated from parents, spouse, children, and home, the survivor is suddenly surrounded by the stench of death and the taste of ashes. Starving, beaten, freezing, surrounded by walking skeletons, waking up next to a corpse: to be thrown into this world of death beggars the imagination. To continue to live in this world dulls the imagination for any other during the time one resides there—and often for years afterwards.[42]

The survivor has experienced trauma which is hard—if not downright impossible—for others to relate to, as such intense suffering resists domestication by reason within a logical framework. As evidence of this impossibility to comprehend pain and evil, we can quote Itzhak Zuckerman, a surviving leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, who towards the end of Claude Lanzmann's nine-and-a-half-hour-long film *Shoah* declares to the film director, 'If you could lick my heart, it would poison you'.[43]

In the process of witnessing and testifying, the victim needs to exchange the event mediated by memory for a consciousness of the event relating it as knowledge. Despite his/her efforts to recollect the event faithfully, the survivor is prone to omit or obliterate aspects of it that cannot be represented for, or comprehended by, the listener. As Alford suggests, in such cases, being 'comparable' is not the same as being 'commensurable' since, for instance, the sensation of thirst after working in the garden for a couple of hours bears no common measure with the harrowing pangs of thirst of the Holocaust survivor who had been riding in a locked boxcar full of hundreds of deportees with nothing to drink and wet their lips but their own urine.[44]

Alford reports that, having experienced the unthinkable, many survivors find themselves in the position of not believing their own story, regardless of the knowledge that it did happen, a 'basis for doubling' whose persistence is related to the mutual contradictions of factuality and incredulity as well as the enduring inability to work through the dissociative experience.[45] The dehumanization to which the victims were subjected, this expulsion from the human condition, is reflected in the faltering attempt to articulate the traumatic experience, punctuated by symptomatic repetitions and silences:

> The older I get, the more questions I ask. Why am I the only one of the whole family to survive? Who would believe if I can't believe it myself? When I was young it was easier, I was busier …. I can't believe it happened to me …. People ask me to tell the story, and I refuse. I can't believe a human

could go through this …. Every day was a year. How can they believe a human can survive under this if I can't believe it? How can they believe if I can't believe?[46]

Jonathan Druker defines the position of the Holocaust survivor as the inability 'to put the past behind' and the embodiment of 'the guilty history of the entire continent'. He sees the survivor's ongoing trauma as 'Europe's own nightmare: the repressed fear that its civilization produces as much darkness as light, as much violence and destruction as creation'.[47] Identified in the 1970s as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in relation to diagnoses of US military veterans of the Vietnam War, this pathological condition left the survivor profoundly depressed, anxious and suicidal, reliving and mentally re-enacting—as if physically still there—the trauma and its unnameable horror when writing or talking about it. To return to the example of the deportee's experience of extreme thirst, in *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*, Lawrence Langer records Holocaust survivor Barbara T.'s description of her arrival at Auschwitz:

> It was night, but it was light because there were flames and there were powerful searchlights in the square. The air stank. Some people in the cars had died of thirst, of hunger, of madness. I felt a tremendous thirst. We had no water. And as the doors opened, I breathed in air as if it would be water, and I choked. It stank. And eventually we saw these strange-looking creatures, striped pajamas, who got us into a marching line.[48]

At this point, Langer takes over and explains that the witness stopped, as if she were 'half-hypnotized by her own narrative', or 'returning from a strange place', then resumed her narrative with apologies for what she called her 'absence': 'I'm sorry, OK, I … I … forgive me … all right … I'm going to … I kind of was back there'.[49]

From such recurrent patterns in Holocaust victims' testimonies, it has been suggested that the survivor is not in the infallible position of bearing witness since, on the one hand, unlike those who died, s/he feels guilty for still being alive, and, on the other hand, s/he lacks a proper language to relate (to) her/his trauma. In particular, James E. Young and Saul Friedländer have argued that the historical testimony of the Shoah is based on the memory of a traumatic event which cannot be controlled by language. Alford explains that 'traumatic visual images', which are preverbal rather than verbal, are the most burdensome 'to translate into narrative

form' because the emotional ordeal associated with these images tends 'to keep them segregated in the mind'.[50]

Primo Levi, author of *If This Is a Man* (known as *Survival in Auschwitz* in the USA) and *The Drowned and the Saved*, who was detained for one year in Auschwitz and is among the most cited Holocaust writers, testi-fied to the victim's experience in relation to ethics, the limits of language and representation. His poignantly simple acknowledgement of the inad-equacy of survivors' accounts sheds light on the status of those who suc-cumbed to the genocide and remains the most celebrated, oft-reiterated expression of the survivor's indelible guilt:

> I must repeat: we, the survivors, are not the true witnesses …. We, the survivors, are not only an exiguous but also an anomalous minority: we are those who by their prevarications or abilities or good luck did not touch bottom. Those who did so, those who saw the Gorgon, have not returned to tell about it or have returned mute, but they are the 'Muslims',[51] the submerged, the complete witnesses, the ones whose deposition would have a general significance. They are the rule, we are the exception.[52]

In his Foreword to Lyotard's *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, David Carroll echoes the many scholars who have commented on Levi's assessment of the survivor's plight: there is an 'enormous gap between what is told and what cannot be told', an 'abyss separating the drowned and the saved'.[53] Carroll further extends Levi's reflections in a guarded, yet appropriately worded formula: 'The command/plea "Let's not talk about that" is obvi-ously a way of beginning to talk about "that"'.[54] Nonetheless, not being a 'true witness' prevented neither Levi nor others from speaking on behalf of the 'same unnamed and unnameable millions' since the Jew's duty is also to remember, to tell the story no matter how inadequate his/her testimony or its wording may be; the duty to speak responds to the deep necessity to honour the dead, giving the survivor the feeling that s/he is condemned to live on for this very purpose.

The impossibility of 'true witnessing' led to two different approaches of memorialist sources in historical scholarship. On the one hand, in his major study *The Destruction of the European Jews*,[55] Raul Hilberg adamantly refused to rely on first-hand accounts, regarding them as subjective, and instead drew dispassionate vignettes and analyses of victims, perpetrators, collaborators and compromised witnesses alike. Nevertheless, he slightly changed his views on first-hand accounts in his later *Perpetrators, Victims,*

Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945.[56] On the other hand, the two volumes of Saul Friedländer's *Nazi Germany and the Jews*[57] offer a prime example of criticism combining fruitful archival research and survivors' testimonies.

Different attitudes can also be seen in writings related to the Shoah whose authors either experienced the concentration camps directly, or through the loss of close relatives, or were more indirect victims and commentators. Critics and writers whose work engaged with the Shoah, such as Auschwitz survivors Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi, as well as those 'Holocaust analysts', whether by academic trade or more intermittently, whose families fell victims to the mass murders in the Nazi camps, like George Steiner, Irving Howe, Lawrence Langer, Jean François Steiner and Berel Lang, often deprecated their own contributions. For some, such modesty could perhaps also be explained as a desire to put behind them this 'universe outside the universe, a creation that exists outside creation'[58] that threatened the belief in humankind and faith in God in the face of ultimate Evil. However, as Druker aptly surmises in connection with two major contemporary philosophers (one Jewish, the other German):

> the events of the Holocaust signal the definitive end of theodicy for both Levinas and Adorno, who agree, for all their divergence in approach and vocabulary, that to find utility in the victims' suffering, or to lend it moral or transcendental or historical meaning, is to wrong the victims yet again.[59]

Most recently, Giorgio Agamben added his name to those who did not validate ontologically the inconsistencies of a survivor's testimony. He discusses the respective meanings of the two Latin words for 'witness': *testis*, from which our word "testimony" derives, [which] etymologically signifies the person who, in a trial or lawsuit between two rival parties, is in the position of a third party (*terstis)'; and *superstes*, which 'designates a person who has lived through something who has experienced an event from beginning to end and can therefore bear witness to it'.[60] Agamben concludes that, while undeniably belonging to the latter category, a survivor like Primo Levi cannot qualify as a reliable witness in the former sense. The aim of *Remnants of Auschwitz* was to highlight a 'state of exception',[61] what Levi himself called a 'gray zone', when responsibility, ethical and legal judgment as they would prevail in normal situations are suspended. For Agamben, after Levi, such an extreme or 'limit situation' cuts across distinctions between victim and executioner, and obtains

in the case of the 'complete witness', the *Muselmann*, on the threshold between humanity and inhumanity, who really has seen the gas chamber, yet precisely cannot bear witness.[62] The wasted gaze of the *Muselmänner*, whose voices were submerged when the history of humanity caught fire, looms over the act of testifying. Every testimony as an act of speaking *in lieu of* raises the issue of the survivor's shame and the nature of this shame is not ethical but ontological. Agamben wondered whether utter abjection meant the end of all previous ethics or the beginning of a radically new one which could be implicitly connected only to the sublime (see *infra*).[63] In such an aporetic disjunction, in which 'Auschwitz marks the end and the ruin of every ethics of dignity and conformity to a norm',[64] witnessing could even be perceived to '[aestheticize] the remnant, producing a pornographic scene, the pornography of horror'.[65]

Trauma Theory has become a dominant framework within which one can investigate the transmission of experiences of catastrophe and the role of forgetting in cultural memory. More specifically, the work of Dominick LaCapra, Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, to name only a few, has shown that after a horrible accident or an ordeal, the victim's recollection of the event can be obliterated into a blank. In their convergent analyses of the figure of the witness, Caruth and Margalit recall the etymological kinship between Latin *memorō* and the Greek verb *martureō*, 'I bear/am a witness', to uncover a martyrological principle at work in memory, a hypothesis of experience already seemingly imbricated in the responsibility of transmission.[66] In LaCapra's view, since history and memory cannot be conflated, the relations between witness and testimony, between what happened, what we recognize as occurrences, and what we can say about them, are 'exceptionally vexed': 'Memory is both more and less than history, and vice versa, with respect to trauma, memory is always secondary since what occurs is not integrated into experience or directly remembered'.[67] Developing Freud's insights from *Moses and Monotheism*, Cathy Caruth showed that the victim of trauma was not completely conscious during the traumatic event, walking away 'apparently unharmed',[68] an issue also raised by Dori Laub, who similarly concluded that in order to protect itself during a traumatic experience, the victim's consciousness becomes numb. In spite of witnessing the traumatic event, the victim cannot know it, hence finds it impossible to remember.[69] Faced with a traumatic historical event, which in itself resists apprehension, the survivor becomes both a historian and a chronicler (even though he may not be trained as either) who structures his/her testimonial in the form

of a narrative fiction. Since this account is based on the internalization of a trauma, whose unconscious temporality is not that of linear history, it follows a wayward 'chronology', being multilayered, fragmentary and dehistoricized.

Compelled to speak out, the witness feels under the obligation to provide a historically accurate rendering of the event, let alone when the erasure of proofs of the Holocaust defiantly runs parallel to his/her own obliterated consciousness.[70] The incomprehensibility of the Shoah thwarts the traditional historical attempt to account for it rationally and confronts the historian with two momentous implications: firstly, in a post-Shoah era, any act of collective memory is also an attempt to heal the respective community, which puts the onus on the historian to become likewise a physician of memory; and secondly, history and memory may not be able to meet outside forms of representation, such as fiction, where remembering and forgetting are allowed to interpenetrate rather than remain antagonistic. A telltale instance of this inextricable blend of truthful recollection and fictional reworking is recounted by Laub about the inaccurate testimony of an eyewitness to the Auschwitz uprising: 'All of a sudden, we saw four chimneys going up in flames, exploding. The flames shot into the sky, people were running. It was unbelievable'.[71] Playing this video-taped testimony at a conference, Laub called upon those present—historians, psychoanalysts and artists—to interrogate the status of witnessing:

> The testimony was not accurate, historians claimed. The number of chimneys was misrepresented. Historically, only one chimney was blown up, not all four. Since the memory of the testifying woman turned out to be, in this way, fallible, one could not accept—nor give credence to—her whole account of the events. It was utterly important to remain accurate, lest the revisionists in history discredit everything.[72]

For Laub, the blinkered obsession with factuality—the (in)accuracy in the number of chimneys—had to recede behind the 'performative' force of the woman's reconstruction, which entailed the necessity to redefine what 'bearing witness' implied historically:

> The woman was testifying not to the number of the chimneys blown up, but to something else, more radical, more crucial: the reality of an unimaginable occurrence. One chimney blown up in Auschwitz was as incredible as four. The number mattered less than the fact of the occurrence. The event itself

was almost inconceivable. The woman testified to an event that broke the all-compelling frame of Auschwitz, where Jewish armed revolts just did not happen, and had no place. She testified to the breakage of a framework. That was historical truth.[73]

For Caruth, psychic trauma epitomizes a model of history since the traumatic experience is embedded unmediated in the psyche, yet is never fully accessible through consciousness. The person who underwent a trauma relives an 'unclaimed experience'; such a model allows Caruth to go as far as to suggest a similarity between the trauma sufferer and the historian unable to access the past in its fullness: 'Through the notion of trauma we can understand that a rethinking of reference is aimed not at eliminating history but at resituating it in our understanding', that is to say, allowing '*history* to arise where *immediate understanding* may not'.[74] According to Spargo, while remaining distinct from psychoanalytic hermeneutics, the Levinasian tropological function of trauma, as well as his sense of trauma as responsibility, has influenced Caruth's interpretation.[75]

Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* examines the role of memory in witnessing, especially in relation to the Holocaust, which can be singled out as the historical paradigm par excellence of the attempt to eliminate the very possibility of witnessing. In such particular circumstances, the relations between knowledge and event, literature and evidence, witnessing and ethics are thoroughly reconfigured. From Laub's point of view, it is ethical for a historian to respect trauma and the witness's resulting silence since it 'might be useful, sometimes, not to know too much'.[76] However, Elizabeth Jane Bellamy saw such ethical listening as 'the luxury of selective ignorance';[77] while for cultural theorist Susannah Radstone, history's endeavour to think itself through a post-Auschwitz world, with all the challenges posed by the emergence of various 'post' theories, directed it altogether towards memory, in particular traumatic memory.[78] More generally, in the words of Clifton Spargo:

> contemporary trauma theory … might be understood most sympathetically as an attempt to answer the inherent forgetfulness of contemporary culture. What trauma theory proposes as a new mode of historiography is a forgetfulness implicitly full of memory, finding in our most basic structures of avoiding knowledge residues of history as trauma and in that sense also the implicit imperatives for subsequent acts of remembrance—to be elicited from a past we are always in the process of forgetting.[79]

Yet, persuasive as these views may be in claiming that no first-hand witness will be able to testify directly to 'the ultimate degree of violent expression of prejudice'[80] and that forgetting is built right into the heart of the recollection of a traumatic experience, the focus in the present study will be resolutely on the duty to remember, a Judaic imperative without whose understanding a project like the Berlin Jewish Museum would not start acquiring its full sense and value.

5   *ZAKHOR*: THE DUTY TO REMEMBER

An important distinction should be made between how Western philosophers and Jewish philosophers from Europe positioned themselves with regard to the duty to remember. As we shall see in the short analysis of Levinas's *Totality and Infinity* in Chapter 4, there was a surge of vested interest in *Akedah* (or Aqedah; in Hebrew *Akedát Yitzhák*) after the Shoah. Also named 'The Binding' (Genesis 22), *Akedah* refers to God's demand to Abraham that he dutifully sacrifice his son Isaac, a controversial Biblical episode which has generated ethical debates among philosophers and theologians alike overthe centuries, yet one that for some Jewish thinkers became the only narrative capable of spiritually counteracting the trauma and historical monstrosities of the twentieth century.

According to the age-old Jewish commandment and tradition of remembrance, Jews have the obligation to 'speak memory', often performing acts reminiscent of mourning rituals in the Hebrew Bible. Such rituals are commanded in the name of the Biblical *hurban*, which referred to the destruction of the First Temple followed by the Babylonian exile. Yerushalmi draws up an inventory of the occurrences of *zakhor*, as well as of its opposite, 'forget'; *zakhor* appears in its various Biblical declensions 169 times, in sentences where the subject is either God or Israel, for 'memory is incumbent upon both'.[81] The same duty to speak memory is reiterated in Eve Nussbaum Soumerai's *A Voice from the Holocaust: Voices of Twentieth Century Conflict*, dedicated to all those included in a photo of her seventh birthday party who, with one exception, 'disappeared into Hitler's inferno'. For Nussbaum Soumerai, a beneficiary of the *Kindertransport* in December 1939[82] which saved her but not her brother, *zakhor* was an essential obligation. She mentions the three new commandments born from *zakhor* in the aftermath of the Shoah: 'Thou shalt not be a victim. Thou shalt not be a perpetrator. Above all, thou shalt not be a bystander'.[83] In *Smothered Words*, whose protagonist is Sarah

Kofman's own father, a rabbi killed because he attempted to observe the Sabbath in the death camps, the French philosopher highlights the paradox of post-Holocaust language: 'If no story is possible after Auschwitz, there remains, nonetheless, a duty to speak, to speak endlessly for those who could not speak because to the very end they wanted to safeguard true speech against betrayal. To speak in order to bear witness'.[84] Similarly, Levinas's essay on Paul Claudel, 'Poetry and the Impossible', asked whether it is 'for a Jew to say' and pointed to the compelling reason why a Jew has to speak: '*every survivor of the Hitlerian massacres—whether or not a Jew—is Other in relation to martyrs.* He is consequently responsible and unable to remain silent'.[85]

The Jews are under obligation to speak out their memories in order to assume the responsibility of bearing witness in the present and to bring to light the trauma of the Holocaust. Moreover, as Paul Ricoeur emphasized, the '*moral duty*' of recollection is twofold:

> We owe a *debt* to the victims. And the tiniest way of paying our debt is to tell and retell what happened at Auschwitz …. By remembering and telling, we not only prevent forgetfulness from killing the victims twice; we also prevent their life stories from becoming banal … and the events from appearing as necessary.[86]

In *Against the Apocalypse*, David Roskies, one of the foremost historians of Jewish memory and disaster, associates the *yizkor* (memorial) and *Yom Ha'Shoah* (Holocaust Memorial Day) services performed in synagogues with both individual and collective memory because they link those who pray with the 6 million victims of the Holocaust. In Israel, the performative *Yom Ha'Shoah*, observed by Jews throughout the world, is announced by a two-minute-long siren that wails across the country at 8 am to impose silence and standstill. Such events function alongside art as occasions for a public testimonial of feelings of witnesses and survivors alike, commemorating those who died or were injured in wars, and can be taken as a preservation of the collective memory. In David Roskies's words, '[w]hen Jews now mourn in public … they preserve the collective memory of the collective disaster, but in doing so fall back on symbolic constructs and ritual acts that necessarily blur the specificity and the implacable contradiction of the event'.[87]

Bernard-Donals's dual approach to testimony provides an apt conclusion to this discussion on the imperative to remember: testimony comprises

both the memorial (as a name) and the immemorial (as corrupted by language).[88] The events become less important than what the other is allowed to see, and the effect of the eyewitness's testimony upon the listener is that it produces 'the ethical moment', that is to say, the moment in which what happened (prior to memory or to the event-as-experience) materializes in the present as knowledge which is both new and unmatched.[89]

6 Quarrels *Concerning* and Against Revisionists

The Nazi crematoria had not stopped churning out prisoners' smoke for very long before the powerfully insidious rhetoric of 'Holocaust denial', more 'modestly' known as '(historical) revisionism' among its practitioners, busied itself writing another shameful page of humanity's history.[90] In 1950 Paul Rassinier, also known as the 'father of Holocaust denial', published *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse*, the first of several books, spanning some 15 years, in which he refuted the existence of a Nazi extermination policy and dismissed survivor testimony as unreliable gossip.[91] One year after their re-emergence in the limelight via an American-English translation, Robert Faurisson's far more scurrilous 'The Problem of the Gas Chambers, or the Rumor of Auschwitz' appeared in France's major daily newspaper *Le Monde*, arguing that the installations described by survivors would have been technologically incapable of mass gassings, thereby rekindling negationist theses for another generation.[92] Among other fabrications in what soon became known as the 'Faurisson affair' was the specious claim that the notion of a Hitlerian genocide and mass extermination was a Zionist manipulation since not a single witness to the gas chambers had ever returned to testify to their existence, whereas historical protocols dictate that the historian use only historically reliable witnesses. To counter Faurisson's egregious allegations, Pierre Vidal-Naquet wrote a series of five articles between 1980 and 1987 gathered as *Les Assassins de la mémoire*[93]—a title chosen to echo Yerushalmi's phrase at a conference on the question of forgetting in 1987—forcefully reiterating that 'the crime was dissimulated even while it was being perpetrated', the denial being part of the 'crime and state lies' at the very core of the SS apparatus.[94] In *Assassins of Memory*, he also warned that the frequent choice of Auschwitz as synecdoche for all the death camps, made famous by Adorno, unwittingly played into the hands of Faurisson and his revisionist acolytes, who identified Auschwitz solely with an industrial centre for the production of synthetic rubber, the factory camp of Auschwitz III Monowitz,

conveniently blotting out both the extermination camp (Birkenau) and the labour camp (Auschwitz I) that existed at the same time.[95] Referring to Faurisson as a 'paper Eichmann',[96] Vidal-Naquet stated that he imposed on himself the rule 'that one can and should enter into discussion *concerning* the "revisionists"' but not enter into debate '*with* the "revisionists"': 'I have nothing to reply to them and will not do so. Such is the price to be paid for intellectual coherence'.[97]

In consonance with Vidal-Naquet's stance as a historian, both Jean-François Lyotard and Maurice Blanchot were amongst the many philosophers who warned against the irresponsibility of concealing what they asserted repeatedly, after Adorno, was the Nazis' barbaric assault upon civilization. But unlike Vidal-Naquet, who directly and methodically attacked Faurisson for his lack of credibility due to his extremist political affiliation and deeply anti-Semitic views, Lyotard engaged with the negationist on the (philosophical) terrain of silence and the victims' silencing as part of a wider project first aired at a ten-day conference on 'Les Fins de l'homme' around the work of Jacques Derrida in 1980.[98]

Using as 'method' a combination of Kant's *Critique of Judgement* and Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, while extending his own previous discussion of 'language games' from *The Postmodern Condition* and *Just Gaming* (both 1979), Lyotard's *The Differend* reflects on the difficulty of making political and aesthetic judgments when there is no consensual idiom to which opposing parties can appeal. More specifically, in the 'Result' section on 'Auschwitz', he insists on the radical incommensurability of the Nazis' and the deportees' 'phrasing' as proof of the irreparable breakdown of a Hegelian speculative dialectic that would classically still allow for a synthesis. The resulting 'differend' is defined as 'the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be',[99] and it is precisely the philosopher's arduous task to 'link' (*enchaîner*) even what resists articulation. Thus, for Lyotard, 'if Faurisson is "in bad faith", Vidal-Naquet cannot convince him that the phrase *There were gas-chambers* is true'; '[t]he historian need not strive to convince Faurisson if Faurisson is "playing" another genre of discourse, one in which conviction, or, the obtainment of a consensus over a defined reality, is not at stake'.[100]

For Lyotard, at Auschwitz 'the testimonies which bore the traces of the *here*'s and *now*'s, the documents which indicated the sense or senses of facts, and the names, finally the possibility of various kinds of phrases whose conjunction makes reality' were destroyed.[101] However, while the

name 'Auschwitz' 'marks the confines wherein historical knowledge sees its competence impugned', Lyotard adds that '[i]t does not follow from that that one falls into non-sense'.[102] His counter-claim also pertains to how the survivors' silence should be interpreted:

> The silence of the survivors does not necessarily testify in favor of the nonexistence of gas chambers. As Faurisson believes or pretends to believe. It can just as well testify against the addressee's authority (we are not answerable to Faurisson), against the authority of the witness him- or herself (we, the rescued, do not have the authority to speak about it), finally against language's ability to signify gas chambers (an inexpressible absurdity).[103]

Faurisson's deceitful inference of the non-existence of gas chambers from the lack of any ocular evidence is countered—in an argument analogous with the contemporary interest in an unthinkable, unpresentable post-Apocalyptic 'nuclear sublime'[104]—by the supposition of an earthquake which would destroy everything, 'not only lives, buildings, and objects but also the instruments used to measure' quantitatively. Likewise, in the post-Holocaust landscape, 'the silence imposed on knowledge does not impose the silence of forgetting, it imposes a feeling', and the historian needs to find 'unknown phrases to link onto the name of Auschwitz'.[105]

This silence that cannot 'be verified historically as *a fact* of history', David Carroll comments, in the particular context of the Shoah 'evokes the enormity of the loss and destruction, the incurable wound in reality and the thinking and representation of the real, and the incalculable and unlitigatable injustices inflicted on victims', thus becoming a substitute for historical proof and an 'explicit testimony'.[106] Thus, to pursue Carroll's line of thought, historians who for various reasons disregard such a silence on grounds of cognitive irrelevance 'silence in their turn the silences of survivors', and in this way deny the witnesses' right to give evidence or not. They 'deny the effects of destruction and the different signs of that destruction', which amounts to negating the 'very "factual reality" they claim (in bad faith) to defend'.[107]

In support of Lyotard's agonistics of the differend, Carroll formulates a critique of historical remembrance. There comes a point when history, like literature, must admit that there are things that cannot be said, events that have incomparable referents and are also impervious to representation. Ultimately, there remains something in survivors' confessions that transcends established protocols for historical knowledge and must be taken

into account in the name of history and justice; '[h]istorical knowledge per se, no matter how complete, does not and cannot suffice'.[108]

While France was still in the lingering throes of the Faurisson affair, unaware of the 'Heidegger affair' that would soon brew with the publication of Victor Farías's tendentious *Heidegger and Nazism* (1987), the 'historians' quarrel' or *Historikerstreit*,[109] concerning the crimes of Nazi Germany, took hold of West Germany in the years preceding the Reunification (1986–87), soon after the controversy surrounding Ronald Reagan's visit to the German military cemetery at Bitburg on 8 May 1985 in a ceremony designed to contribute to the 'normalization of the past' under the conservative Kohl Administration. These often bellicose, *ad hominem* exchanges flared up with the publication in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, at Joachim Fest's invitation, of 'Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will' (The Past That Won't Go Away) by philosopher-historian Ernst Nolte. A former student of Heidegger, Nolte argued that with one single exception ('the technical procedure of gassing'),[110] there had been manipulations and exaggerations in the ways mass deportations, executions and torture had been reported, and that the nation's murky past should be finally laid to rest or 'transcended' (to use Heidegger's concept) as it deflected attention from the urgencies of the present.[111] His main historical contention, around which much of the ensuing debate between left-wing and right-wing intellectuals polarized, was that the Soviet Union constituted 'both model and cause for the worst aspects of Nazi Germany, above all the Holocaust',[112] and that the *Vernichtungslager* were Germany's response out of fear and in self-defence against the Stalinist model of class extermination of the *kulaks* in the early 1930s and the state system of political concentration camps or *gulags*. According to Konrad Jarausch, Nolte became 'the first professional historian to call publicly for the cessation of global condemnations of the Nazi era', an appeal which 'fell on fertile ground' in the context of the Federal Republic's economic prosperity, political stability and regained international respectability.[113]

While Nolte's theses were a distillation of ideas that he had first introduced in lectures delivered in 1976 and 1980, and that could already be found *in nuce* in the widely-acclaimed *Fascism in Its Epoch* (1963),[114] *Germany and the Cold War* (1974) and *Marxism and Industrial Revolution* (1983), their more extreme formulations caused sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas to wonder why a newspaper which had campaigned against the planned production of Fassbinder's play *The Garbage, the City and Death*[115] (in 1985) had decided to publish Nolte's

article. Habermas's rejoinder—published in *Die Zeit* on 11 July 1986, 'A Kind of Settlement of Damages'—framed its refutation of Nolte's factually incorrect 'philosophical historiography' within the larger context of several earlier interventions and debates, among which Nolte's own essay 'Between Myth and Revisionism' (1980, republished in 1985),[116] where the maverick historian had defended the need today for a revision of the history of the Third Reich 'with the assertion that it has been largely written by the victors and thus made into a "negative myth"'.[117] Prior to Nolte's original article, fellow historian Andreas Hillgruber had published two lectures on 'the destruction of the German Empire and the end of European Jews' which, while admitting the cruelty of Hitler's murders, 'empathized more eloquently with the sufferings of the Germans than with the destruction of European Jewry' and bewailed the disappearance of Germany's political and cultural influence in East Central Europe.[118] Habermas's scathing reply took Nolte, Michael Stürmer and Hillgruber to task for their unabashed 'apologetic tendencies', condemning Nolte's amalgamation of all genocides regardless of their radically incomparable historical-economic contexts (such as Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge Regime) and castigating Hillgruber for (in Jarausch's account) 'evading moral questions, talking about the East "in the language of war comics" and attributing the Holocaust solely to Hitler and his close collaborators, thereby rehabilitating the German majority'.[119]

Described as 'a somewhat less controversial tangent to the main debate between Habermas and the conservative historians' by Andrei Markovits, a later, more civilized epistolary exchange of views took place between Saul Friedländer and historian Martin Broszat in the last months of 1987. The latter had never sided with the right-wing intellectuals and in fact had unequivocally denounced the notorious 'Gang of Four' (Nolte, Hillgruber, Hildebrand,[120] Stürmer).[121] But his 1985 article in the prestigious journal *Merkur* (republished in 1986), 'A Plea for the Historicization of National Socialism',[122] in spite of 'the impeccable anti-Nazi credentials of its author', elicited detailed 'Reflections' from Friedländer to the delicate points it had raised: namely, his call for a 'more circumscribed view of National Socialism's aggregate evil' and the advocacy of a wholesale change in terminology, for instance from 'National Socialist Dictatorship' to 'National Socialist Period'.[123] Contrasting Broszat's 'blockage to history' with Nolte's 'negative myth', Friedländer summarized the objectives of historicization as he saw them in four central points: the study of National Socialism should be the same as that of any other historical

phenomenon; the political-ideological-moral framework of interpretation should be re-evaluated and refined; the years 1933–45 should be reinserted into the wider trend of historical evolution; the self-imposed distancing of historians from National Socialism should give way to moral sensitivity.[124]

In his letters to Friedländer, Broszat defended a historicization that keeps an awareness of a 'double objective in gaining and transmitting historical insight' and that, contrary to Friedländer's opinion, does not represent a 'danger whatsoever of relativizing the atrocities of National Socialism'.[125] A second, important clarification concerned the very evolution of the attempt to 'master the past' (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) in the Federal Republic, where the younger people were keen to understand a past 'with which they are repeatedly confronted as a special legacy and burden, a kind of "mortgage", yet a past which for them can only be experienced intellectually and in historical terms'. Thus, despite Friedländer's fear, this did not mean that 'the moral evaluation and condemnation of the crimes and failures of the Nazi period are passing from the scene'.[126]

In his own responses, Friedländer still pointed out that for him there was a 'discrepancy between the general state of the historiography of the Nazi epoch and the tone of urgency' of Broszat's 'Plea',[127] worrying that, in light of ongoing debates about Germany's *Sonderweg*—the theory in German historiography according to which Germany followed a 'special' (*sonder*) historical course from aristocracy to modern democracy—Broszat's overall presentation of the German historiography of the Third Reich implied 'a very significant change of focus'[128] and, in the wording of his original intervention, 'represents an important transformation of the historical conception of the Nazi era'.[129]

For Mary Nolan, the *Historikerstreit* was 'part of a larger controversy about the political uses of history and the relationship between historical consciousness and identity'. Beyond the verbal sparring between right-wing and left-wing intellectuals, it was indicative of the fear that Germany had become 'a [prideless] land without history' after Fascism,[130] an interrogation that helps account for the polemic surrounding plans (supported by Stürmer and Hillgruber) in the early 1980s for two national historical museums and whether these would 'promote a critical engagement with historical issues' rather than endeavour to exonerate the past.[131] In 1987, the Kohl Government finally decided on the exact location for the Museum of German History in then still divided Berlin. Its remit was the full sweep of German history until 1945, whereas the Bonn House of

History was to be devoted solely to the Federal Republic, 'thereby supporting the *Stunde Null* hypothesis of a sharp break between the Federal Republic and the previous period'.[132]

7   Working-Through, Anamnesis and the Immemorial

During the first decade or so after the war, West Germany rebuilt its destroyed cities and its economy soon enjoyed an unexpectedly swift recovery, a relative prosperity which, in 1959, *The Times* dubbed the 'economic miracle' (*Wirtschaftswunder*) or 'Miracle of the Rhine'. While the fast pace of Reconstruction raised the defeated Germanic countries back to strong economic powers, to West Germans in particular it also brought the ardent desire to put the past behind them with as much haste as convenience. In addition, with the exception of the writers of *Gruppe 47*, who addressed issues related to the connivance of Germans with Hitler's plans, the Holocaust remained for most intellectuals and literati a representational no man's land.[133]

1945 became known as *Jahr Null*,[134] the year 0 of a new calendar which showed the country's desire to move forward and put to rest its recent Nazi past. But whereas the Holocaust victims were faced with the immediate urgency to find the energy and will to go on living, the realization of how much collective psychological work of self-reparation the German nation had to undergo, how much admission of guilt was needed before coming to terms with the past, was a painstakingly slow process. Around 1953 the phrase *unbewältigte Vergangenheit* ('unmastered past') started being used to describe this harsh reality, but in late 1950s became known more publicly and 'conceptualized' as *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or the 'mastering of the past'. The subtle change of linguistic as much as psychological register is significant here: from passive ('unmastered') subjection to the affirmation of a struggle to overcome, from impotence to overpowering.

It was no doubt to warn against the pernicious effects of regaining too much self-confidence and sense of domination that the influential critical social theorist Theodor Adorno titled his 1959 public lecture—first delivered to the German Social Council for Coordinating Collaborative Work between Christians and Jews—'Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit?' (literally: 'What Does Working Through the Past Mean?') Taking to task '[t]he attitude that everything should be forgotten and forgiven, which would be proper for those who suffered injustice

[but] is practiced by those party supporters who committed the injustice', this landmark address shook the young German democracy out of its progressive self-complacency as it peremptorily conjured up National Socialism as a threatening, lingering presence which might return with spectral vehemence if the nation were not watchful.[135] With innuendoes of *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment), the modern (Kantian) process for the development (*Bildung*) of personal and social maturity and responsibility which had been so damagingly derailed during the Nazi interregnum, the 'Aufarbeitung' in the title was designed to capture the serious introspective work of mourning which Freud, in his 1914 paper 'Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through',[136] had called *Durcharbeitung*. It can thus be interpreted as a portmanteau word sketching a trajectory from *Auf-klärung* to *Durch-arbeitung*. (In his ground-breaking essay, Freud had distinguished between *Erinnerung* [remembering] and *Durcharbeitung* [working-through] to differentiate between the straightforward, conscious operations of memory and the more roundabout, unconscious work required in traumatic situations.)[137] Adorno's lecture also opened with an explanation: dismissing the careless understanding of *Aufarbeitung* as a 'modish slogan' for the perfunctory discharge of an unpleasant obligation, a clearing of one's desk from the accumulated clutter of the past in reference to the need to master it, 'to close the books on the past and, if possible, even remove it from memory', he proposed instead a serious 'working upon' (*verarbeiten*) in the sense of 'coming to terms with'.[138] His contention was that one can work through the past only on condition that the causes of past dramatic events are eliminated: 'Only because the causes continue to exist does the captivating spell of the past remain to this day unbroken'.[139]

Among the most articulate critics of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* were not only Adorno, including in some of his 1965 Lectures on metaphysics[140] and his later radio interview 'Education After Auschwitz' (1966),[141] but also German-born US political philosopher Eric Voegelin, author of four books criticizing Nazi racism between 1933 and 1938 (which almost resulted in him being captured by the Gestapo after the 1938 *Anschluss*). In the summer of 1964, Voegelin delivered a set of lectures on 'Hitler and the Germans' at the University of Munich.[142] Querying the possibility of a collective guilt and insisting instead that guilt must be considered individually, Voegelin saw contemporary history's exhibitionism of past atrocities as an emotional exoneration from dealing with guilt in the present, an 'alibi procedure' which, far from being an attempt to come to

terms with the past, rejected the responsibility of assuming a past collective guilt:

> … the unearthing of all that happened under National Socialism is by no means a mastering of the past. It is quite the contrary: the attempt not to master the present by always talking only of those things that have already happened and that cannot be changed anyway, whereas what should be changed is our attitude in the present. …
>
> The other method is the rejection of a collective guilt for the past, again with the ulterior motive of refusing to master the present: One is not responsible for what happened in the past but is, however, by no means prepared to do what one should do in order to master the present.[143]

However, in spite of these vocal opponents, and, more hopefully, the slow emergence of a discourse emphasizing the nation's duty to assume its culpability towards the Jews,[144] the redemptive practice and issue of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* was kept alive and, losing whatever ironic edge of highly ritualized soul-searching it might have been tinged with at the beginning, 'came to denote all discussions about the appropriate political, social, and oral agendas … and all initiatives designed to implement these alleged historical lessons'.[145]

The avoidance of direct emotional confrontation with the Nazi past in West Germany was compounded by the dejection felt by a rudderless nation deprived of a powerful identity and father figure after the demise of the Führer. In the context of the uneasy climate briefly evoked above, and using a Freudian interpretive apparatus, Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich's *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern* (*The Inability to Mourn*), published in 1967, brought into sharp relief the mixture of depression and melancholy in a nation still in search of its bearings, whose citizens were in their worst reactive elements, ready to reimagine themselves as the War's collateral victims. According to the Mitscherlichs:

> [Hitler] had become the embodiment of their ego-ideal. The loss of an object so highly cathected with libidinal energy—one about whom nobody had any doubts, nor dared to have any, even when the country was being reduced to rubble—was indeed reason for melancholia. Through the catastrophe not only was the German ego-ideal robbed of the support of reality, but in addition the Führer himself was exposed by the victors as a criminal of truly monstrous proportions. With this sudden reversal of his qualities,

the ego of every single German individual suffered a central devaluation and impoverishment.[146]

The Mitscherlichs' diagnosis of an impossible collective *Trauerarbeit* and of an unconscious narcissistic identification of the German people with Hitler and the ideology of National Socialism chimed with Adorno's appeal to a form of Freudian working-through to avoid turning the tables on whom the real mourning victims were. Such a reversal of roles is strikingly summed up in the following logic:

> To the conscious mind the past then appears as follows: We made many sacrifices, suffered the war, and were discriminated against for a long time afterward; yet we were innocent, since everything that is now held against us we did under orders. This strengthens the feeling of being oneself the victim of evil forces; first the evil Jews, then the evil Nazis, and finally the evil Russians. In each instance the evil is externalized. It is sought for on the outside, and it strikes one from the outside.[147]

In Eric Santner's accurate appraisal, '[t]he postwar generations have … inherited not guilt so much as the denial of guilt, not losses so much as lost opportunities to mourn losses'.[148] Although symbols, organizations and everything to do with the Nazi past were forbidden, Nazi structures, as Margarete Mitscherlich warned, could not be exorcized 'from the realms of education and politics, from behaviour, from modes of thinking and interpersonal communication', hence 'the younger generation, which feels itself to be innocent, has inherited not a past that has been worked through, but rather its denial and repression'.[149]

Studies of the Holocaust's impact on perpetrators' descendants reveal how unprepared second-generation children (Hirsch's 'postgeneration') were to integrate their parents' memories. Santner points out that 'the second generation bears deep psychological wounds left by elders whose own inability to work through the radical disenchantment of narcissistic phantasms predisposed them to seeing their progeny primarily as a resource for the reparation of their depleted sense of self'.[150] His conclusions were borne out by close readings of works dealing with what he called a 'new discovered discourse', otherwise analysed by Saul Friedländer, books released in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as well as a series of interviews with children and grandchildren of several more or less known Nazi figures by Austrian journalist Peter Sichrovsky, himself the son of an Austrian-Jewish refugee.[151] Sichrovsky reported that many of the inter-

viewees perceived themselves as 'the victims of a mentality which, even though the war had been lost, fostered a fascistic attitude in the home'.[152] The following reaction is typical of how the roles of victimizers and victimized could perversely change sides in the next generation's mental set-up:

> Most of the time they tried to explain to me that because of my relationship to my parents, which undoubtedly was different from theirs, I could not understand what growing up with Nazi parents was like. Occasionally this took the form of almost aggressive attacks and accusations that in my situation, despite the sufferings of my family, I had had an easier time of it than they, the sons and daughters of murderers. I had to agree. The crucial difference between the children of victims and the children of perpetrators is that the former do not have to live with the fear and suspicions of what their parents had done during the war.[153]

Bewilderingly oblivious to the inconsolable torment of those whose families had been decimated by the flames of the Final Solution, Nazis' children could even go as far as to deplore how—unlike the children of the Jews, whose ordeals ended with the demise of the Third Reich—their own suffering was still going on: 'The Jews now are better off than anybody else. They're being pampered, just like the blacks. Only we, the children of the Nazis, are ignored and overlooked'.[154] In Santner's assessment, even third-generation Germans experience 'a still traumatically burdened symbolic order',[155] witness Stefanie, the 19-year-old granddaughter of a former Nazi high official executed immediately after 1945, who rejected her teacher's lessons about 'history, guilt and shame'[156] as follows:

> I didn't murder anyone, I didn't mistreat anyone, I didn't cheer Hitler. If they believe they'd made mistakes, okay. Let them put on a crown of thorns and cry and cry. I'm sick and tired of it. Enough that we Germans are always the bad ones, that we have constantly to be reminded of it. What does that mean—we started the war, we gassed the Jews, we devastated Russia. It sure as hell wasn't me.[157]

Although 'trivialization of horror' and 'banalization of the Holocaust' are tags used by Romanian political scientist Vladimir Tismăneanu to document the historical and psychological reality of the former communist block after the Second World War, where 'the essentialization of the Jew as the Other is part of the mythological construction of the East European national identity',[158] they neatly capture a more global dimension in the

inexorable dangers of repression and repetition that were to haunt the old continent for decades to come.

The unprecedented technologization that characterized the Nazis' attempted Final Solution, and eventually led to Germany losing sight of the war effort, raised serious doubts regarding the feasibility or even desirability of carrying on with the modern inherited version of the Enlightenment project. Polish-born sociologist Zygmunt Bauman neatly summed up the prevalent suspicion among some intellectuals that, rather than constituting an aberrant, anomalous interlude in the course of human betterment, the systematization and industrialization of mass murder, on a par with the assembly line of capitalist production, marked the logical outcome and inevitable bankruptcy of such a programme;[159] the end of modernity had *de facto* happened and ushered in a new era, later known as 'postmodernity'.

In the late 1970s the Conseil des universités du Québec commissioned a report from Jean-François Lyotard on the legitimation of knowledge and influence of technology in exact sciences. Published as *The Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard's analyses quickly became influential and triggered various heated debates across philosophy, art and architecture on the relationship between modernity and the postmodern, to which he replied in a famous 'Appendix', 'Answering the Question: What Is Postmodernism?'[160] Opening with a sketchy summation of his opponents' objections, the Appendix emphasizes the 'severe reexamination which postmodernity imposes on the thought of the Enlightenment', a critique initiated by Wittgenstein and Adorno, Lyotard's two major influences alongside Freud.[161] Lyotard then charts a tripartite evolution in the realm of modern aesthetics, from realism to modernism, then postmodernism, loosely reminiscent of Ernest Mandel's theorization of a third stage of capitalism beyond those of the classical or market capitalism, analysed in Marx's *Capital*, and of the 'imperialist' monopoly stage proposed by Lenin, without however adhering to a strictly linear, Marxist periodization of history.[162] This non-linear modalization of the postmodern in relation to modernity was expressed in the now celebrated paradox of the future perfect (*futur antérieur*), in two celebrated near-aphorisms:

> A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state and this state is constant.
>
> *Post modern* would have to be understood according to the paradox of the future (*post*) anterior (*modo*).[163]

A later 'Note' further illustrated and clarified the psychoanalytic orientation of this disruption of linearity—and in its final compact formula gave more resonance to 'analysis' and 'anamnesis' casually hinted at in *The Postmodern Condition*. Lyotard compared the work of modern painters with anamnesis understood as a psychoanalytic therapy, a technique of free association of 'apparently inconsequential details with past situations—allowing them to uncover hidden meanings'. Thus, the work of modern painters from Cézanne to Duchamp was interpreted as a '"perlaboration" (*durcharbeiten*) performed by modernity on its own meaning', akin to the temporal logic of 'deferred action' or *Nachträglichkeit* which Freud had uncovered as the temporality of unconscious trauma.[164] When it is understood in this way,

> the 'post-' of 'postmodern' does not signify a movement of *comeback, flashback* or *feedback*, that is, not a movement of repetition but a procedure in 'ana-': a procedure of analysis, anamnesis, anagogy and anamorphosis which elaborates an 'initial forgetting'.[165]

Lyotard belonged to the generation of young French students for whom studying philosophy after the War implied the ethical predicament of reading and responding to German existentialism, therefore a necessity to resort to a (Freudian) psychoanalytic framework of analysis in order to deal with the thought of intellectuals, some of whom, like Heidegger, had been tacit accomplices of the Third Reich. This also accounts for his marked interest in Freudian anamnestic *Durcharbeitung* as an 'ethical'[166] tool for understanding the post-Holocaust era and its logic of traumatic reinscription, but also—and here we may recall Voegelin's caveat about the necessity of coming to terms with the present, or *Gegenwartsbewältigung*—for his dissatisfaction with periodization, which, as 'Réécrire la modernité' (collected in *L'inhumain: Causeries sur le temps* [1988]) would later claim, 'leaves unquestioned the position of the "now"'.[167]

In his corrective emphasis on the *Jetztzeit* in *The Inhuman*, Lyotard mentions that the Austrian psychoanalyst himself abandoned 'the realism of the beginning' in favour of the conception of the cure as an interminable process; when people remember, they want 'to get hold of the past, grasp what has gone away, master, exhibit the initial crime, the lost crime of the origin, show it as such as though it could be disentangled from its affective context, the connotations of fault, of shame, of pride, of anguish',[168] whereas interminable 'working-through' is needed in order to avoid the temptation of succumbing to the desire to close the narrative:

> Contrary to remembering, working through would be defined as a work without end and therefore without will: without end in the sense in which it is not guided by the concept of an end—but not without finality.[169]

For Saul Friedländer, Holocaust historians are confronted with a double bind when facing the traumatic past: a 'numbing and distancing effect of intellectual work on the Shoah' is needed, but such work comes with 'strong emotional impact' which is hard to avoid. In this context, 'working-through' can be interpreted as 'being aware of both tendencies, allowing for a measure of balance between the two'.[170] Such perlocutionary effects may account for Dominick LaCapra's suggestion of a connection between working-through and acting-out, in the wake of Laplanche and Pontalis's mitigation of the difference between the two based on a common element of repetition, as well as of 'a linkage in recent theory of acting-out not only with possession by the repressed past, repetition compulsions, and unworked-through transference but also with certain modes of performativity, inconsolable melancholy, and the sublime'.[171] As we have seen both with the Mitscherlichs' warning of the danger of a nostalgic acting-out and in the second-generation Nazi children's aggressive denials of sharing in their elders' responsibilities, what must be overcome is not the past, as Adorno first admonished, but the compulsion to repeat the past in whatever unrecognized, performative guise, and this imperative is also the Holocaust historian's and, more generally, the contemporary intellectual's.

This intractable residue that at once calls for and defies historical knowledge and memory, that cannot be remembered or forgotten, is named by Lyotard, Blanchot and others the 'immemorial'; it is the sum total of all the 'incommensurables' and 'unrepresentables' that always risk petrifying into silence once the historian compels his interlocutor, the witness, to relate faithfully what happened. The immemorial comprises all those traumatic events of history which cannot be translated into shareable narrative memories and are consigned to silence.

Heidegger and 'the jews' represents one of Lyotard's most sustained elaborations of a discontinuous thinking of the immemorial as that which can neither be remembered (represented to consciousness, made the object of a present representation) nor forgotten (obliterated, consigned to oblivion), a thinking that remembers that there is always a forgotten that remains unthought as well as unthinkable.[172] A figure of the unphraseable differend here translated into a problematic of unrepresentability, it is

often found in the proximity of—or can be associated with—anamnesis as an interminable process 'in search for lost time' (Proust) that characterizes psychoanalysis, 'true history', writing and art:

> It follows that psychoanalysis, the search for lost time, can only be interminable, like literature and like true history (i.e., the one that is not historicism but anamnesis): the kind of history that does not forget that forgetting is not a breakdown of memory but the immemorial always 'present' but never here-now, always torn apart in the time of consciousness ….
>
> Thought cannot equal the Other, the unforgettable, through representations, because it is prehistoric, and it is to this immemorial dispossession that writing and art have always exposed themselves.[173]

The 'war cry', rounding off the Appendix to *The Postmodern Condition*, 'to be witnesses to the unpresentable',[174] then '[t]o bear witness to the differend' in his eponymous project,[175] is here rephrased as the duty of thought and writing to the immemorial, to the forgotten and to the unrepresentable 'after Auschwitz'.

In a dialogue that took place in April 1994, in response to a question by Richard Kearney about whether his politics of the immemorial provided a critical task of anamnesis, Lyotard gave his most explicit definition:

> By the term *immemorial*, I try to express another time, where what is past maintains the presence of the past, where the *forgotten* remains *unforgettable* precisely because it is forgotten. This is what I mean by anamnesis as opposed to memory. … Anamnesis works over the remains that are still there.[176]

Among Holocaust scholars, one of the most eloquent defenders of the immemorial is Lawrence Langer who, in his evocatively titled *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*, suggests that the very impossibility of accessing past sufferings could be erected as a safeguard against its attempted reimagining and reintegration into the world outside, a postmodern stance about which Kearney expressed strong reservations:

> … if Holocaust survivors such as Primo Levi or Elie Wiesel had not recorded their memoirs of unspeakable loss, thus making remembrance possible for future generations, would not the Nazi attempt to wipe out the history of the Jews have triumphed? And is not the duty to retell the monstrosity of Auschwitz *again and again* not the best assurance, to cite Primo Levi, that it will 'never happen again?'[177]

Kearney's most trenchant criticism, however, is levelled at Lyotard himself, against the 'inordinately nihilistic' implications of his fixation on unadjudicatable language games, the ineffable and the 'immemorial' to the detriment of any reality claim, which he sees as jeopardizing the possibility of a critical hermeneutics, historical truth and a politics of memory.[178] Extrapolating the project of *The Differend* as well as, perhaps, deflecting some of Lyotard's concluding remarks on *justesse* (rightness), rather than *justice*, in the earlier dialogue 'What Is Just?', Kearney writes:

> For Lyotard and certain other die-hard sceptics, any attempt to come to terms with the horror of the immemorial past is an abdication of justice. In the final analysis, no analysis of memory is possible. Only the immemorial is just.
>
> … To suggest that the only genuine response to the horror of the Holocaust is to bear witness to the impasse of the ineffable is to deny the victims their right to be remembered—a right which cannot be adequately respected, it seems to me, without some recourse (however minimal and problematic) to narrative images and representations.
>
> … by consigning the alterity of the past to the unpresentable void of prehistory, does not Lyotard himself rule out the possibility of historical remembrance …? The horrors of history thus become subject to the imperative of the immemorial.[179]

Leaving aside more serious accusations of Lyotard's arguments pandering to the revisionists' denial of historical representation, as well as the issue of a 'just' or 'right' representation (to which we shall return later), it is worth pointing out the 'injustice' not only of aligning silence with legitimacy ('the only legitimate response becomes one of "silence"')—which the incommensurability between 'phrases' in *The Differend* never meant to suggest, quite the opposite—but also of sidelining the victims themselves, whose first reaction was often a reluctance to speak.

The aporia of the immemorial, self-imposed silence or an emphasis on the inability to represent will never be commensurate with the active silencing-as-erasure of history: Lyotard concluded his clinical account of the Final Solution in *Heidegger and 'the jews'* by saying that the Nazis' attempted 'perfect crime' would have ensured that 'one would plead not guilty, certain of the lack of proofs. This is a "politics" of absolute forgetting, forgotten'—a 'politics' between quotation marks since 'a "politics" of extermination exceeds politics',[180] just as 'the jews' of the book's title, also decapitalised and pluralised, are not real Jews but Lyotard's wish to

record, even if somewhat provocatively (and, as it turned out, polemically[181]), the Nazis' expropriation of the singular proper name 'Jew'.[182]

Maurice Blanchot also questioned the hermeneutic possibility of recovering a historical past, and many of his writings have been more generally concerned with the immemoriality of time ('from time immemorial'). As early as 'The Absence of the Book' (1969), in the section on 'Forgetful Memory', he spoke of 'immemorial memory that originates in the time of the "fabulous", at the epoch when, before history, man seems to recall what he has never known'.[183] Whereas history is supposed to be preserved as memory in the form of a narrative or written discourse, the event that represents the object of history is erased. Once a disastrous event occurs—and in a sense any (historical) event is always already such a 'disaster' for Blanchot—and is forever lost, there is the 'immemorial' and the double bind, set out most clearly in '"Do Not Forget"', according to which we will never know (because recollection is impossible), yet must not forget:

> Must it be repeated (yes, it must) that Auschwitz, an event which makes a ceaseless appeal to us, imposes, through testimony, the indefeasible duty not to forget: remember, beware of forgetfulness and yet, in that faithful memory, *never will you know*. I stress that, because what it says refers us to that which there can be no memory of, to the unrepresentable, to unspeakable horror, which however, one way or another and always in anguish, is what is immemorial.[184]

Thus, once writing begins, weeping has already ceased and 'tears have long since gone dry';[185] we are then already in a time that no longer belongs to memory but rather to forgetfulness, which is the source of memory. If the Shoah was the moment of 'interruption' in history, writing becomes fragmentary and its main feature is 'the interruption of the incessant'.[186] Under such circumstances, remembering becomes 'a sense of what has been dismembered, that which is not whole, which doesn't obey the rules of logic or knowledge, and what is not fully present'.[187] The disaster brings about the only perspective from which one can speak about the Holocaust, the victim's un-knowing and irrational position testifying to the defeat of knowledge: 'How can thought be made the keeper of the holocaust where all was lost, including guardian thought? In the mortal intensity, the fleeing silence of the countless cry'.[188] In Spargo's view, the association of the singular 'cry' with the plural qualifier 'countless' indicates that 'the disaster already eludes knowledge via an experiential multiplication graduating

toward a numerically sublime proportion', a disaster that designates silence as its own language while acknowledging at the same time the failure of ordinary language to explain 'the ethical and psychological depths of suffering'.[189] It destroys the language by which memory is represented, a relation that Blanchot calls 'the writing of the disaster', which occurs when the event is lost to memory. Such a writing is the experience that prevents the moment from being completely erased. Blanchot attempts to imagine an *écriture* that has been forever altered by what it cannot designate and yet can never shirk its duty to testify to the disaster.

Memory before the event of death is inadequate, as shown by the paradox of an ethics that does not entail any collective representation of the absent other. This is Levinas's specific interpretation of the 'immemorial'. Using a different approach from those of Lyotard and especially Blanchot, although Levinas is likely to have originated the concept,[190] he designated that which can never be paired or associated with a history of the relationship. Unavoidably incomplete, the past obligates the idea of a cure based on a definitive remembering of first causes to define ethics as always opening toward the Other in a relation never to be fully accomplished.[191] Central to the present study is the question of ethics, a watchword for Levinas, who believed that ethics begins once language, freed from the historical constraints of factuality, turns to the Other and attempts to utter the impossible. As a result, Levinasian ethics is born in forgetful memory, at the moment when memory and testimony coalesce, when '[a]ll the negative attributes which state what is beyond the essence become positive in responsibility'.[192] In his book on Levinas and the Holocaust, Spargo sets forth the 'immemorial' aspect of Levinasian ethics that helps us see how a survivor's memory enters directly in competition with his/her compulsion towards an apparently 'obsolete form of relationship', which can only place his/her ability 'within a set of permanent concepts or principles as yet invulnerable to the loss of the other, achieved in a present tense tantamount to the rights of the vanquisher'. Spargo goes on:

> It is only through the paradox of an ethics that does not require any recollective representation of the absent other that we begin to see how the inadequacy of memory before the event of death signifies an alternate mode of memory—derived as memory's vigilance—to be valued apart from its practical or historical capabilities.[193]

Any testimony whose purpose is to reflect and re-present exactly what happened is doomed to fail; yet, at the same time, the testimony is the

only instrument that can convey the event, ungraspable as it might be in its eventhood. Any utterance originates in an immemorial past, in a memory that becomes forgetful: 'Immemorial, unrepresentable, invisible, the past that bypasses the present, the pluperfect past, falls into a past that is a gratuitous lapse. The past cannot be recuperated by reminiscence, not because of its remoteness, but because of its incommensurability with the present'.[194]

As so many twentieth-century thinkers and writers (Adorno, Levinas, Blanchot, Lyotard, Derrida, Jabès, Rosenzweig, Agamben, Celan, etc.) have claimed, the task of thinking (after) the Shoah is interminable and will remain a continuous process of incompletion. More recently, Josh Cohen has named this process and task 'interrupting Auschwitz', explaining that the verbal form can be construed both as a participial adjective that 'suggests the effect of the inassimilable trauma of Auschwitz on thinking ("Auschwitz interrupts")' and as a present participle that denotes 'the imperative of thinking and acting against the recurrence of Auschwitz ("Auschwitz must be interrupted")'.[195] This articulation of a double-sided interruption can be seen as a correlate to Lyotard's insistence on a necessary linkage in the face of the impossible. Likewise, describing what he called a 'rhetoric of mourning', marked by 'the recurrence … of a metaphorics of loss and impoverishment', and the consequent appeal in such discourses to notions of 'shattering, rupture, mutilation, fragmentation, … images of fissures, wounds, rifts, gaps, and abysses', Santner has urged that this insistence on 'loss and dispersion' compels the postmodernist to 'invest his or her libidinal energies in the process of improvising new associations and correspondences'.[196] It is this urgency of imagining and finding new correlations in the face of a shattering of historical and artistic representations to which we shall now turn in the final section of this chapter.

8   Representation 'after Auschwitz': The Barbaric and the Unpresentable

The Holocaust was a limit case, the test case of a disaster that interrupted the metaphysical, ontological and phenomenological tenets of Western thought and caused a crisis of representation by exceeding the limits of the conceivable and the speakable. The impasse of artistic representation after the Holocaust can be traced back to Theodor Adorno's conviction that

art as we knew it is unable to do justice to the horrors of the camps. His famous, if misunderstood and often truncated dictum from 'Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft' ('Cultural Criticism and Society', originally written in 1949) that 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric' has often been wrenched out of context to signify an indictment of the whole of culture, rather than of what is 'barbaric' in it—a term usually glossed over or taken as self-evident in Adorno's discourse:[197]

> Cultural criticism finds itself faced with the final stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today.[198]

Possibly in reply to adverse reactions, Adorno reiterated his position in 'Commitment' (1962), within a discussion opposing 'autonomous art' to Sartre's notion of 'committed literature' from *What Is Literature?*: 'I have no wish to soften the saying that to write lyric poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric; it expresses in negative form the impulse which inspires committed literature'.[199]

In *Negative Dialectics* (orig. 1966), however, the German philosopher retracted a slightly reworded version of this affirmation, conceding that 'perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems'.[200] A more nuanced explanation came in 'Zur Dialektik von Heiterkeit' (1968)—published one year earlier as 'Is die Kunst heiter?', hence its English translation as 'Is Art Lighthearted?':

> The statement that it is not possible to write poetry after Auschwitz does not hold absolutely, but it is certain that after Auschwitz, because Auschwitz was possible and remains possible for the foreseeable future, lighthearted art is no longer conceivable.[201]

Leaving Adorno's equivocation aside, it has been argued[202] that the initial reference to the 'barbaric' alluded to Paul Celan, 'the most important contemporary representative of German hermetic poetry', especially the poem 'Todesfuge' (Death Fugue) in which Adorno had sensed an excess of lyricism deemed inappropriate to express the horrors of the War and removed from the harsh external reality. In *Aesthetic Theory*, his posthumous *magnum opus*, Adorno observes that:

His poetry is permeated by the shame of art in the face of suffering that escapes both experience and sublimation. Celan's poems want to speak of the most extreme horror through silence. Their truth content itself becomes negative. They imitate a language beneath the helpless language of human beings, indeed beneath all organic language: It is that of the dead speaking of stones and stars.[203]

Adorno's mistrust of poetry after Auschwitz has been echoed by a wide variety of public figures and intellectuals, such as German writer-critic Reinhard Baumgart, for whom the artificial constraints imposed on Holocaust literature prevent it from dealing adequately with the horror and mass suffering and therefore doing justice to the victims, or, even more forcefully, Michael Wyschogrod, who wished to forbid the fictional-ization of the Holocaust since '[a]ny attempt to transform the holocaust into art demeans the holocaust and must result in poor art'.[204] This position is consonant with Elie Wiesel's categorical view that

There is no such thing as a literature of the Holocaust, nor can there be. The very expression is a contradiction in terms. Auschwitz negates any form of literature …

Ask a survivor, any one of them, and he will bear me out. Those who have not lived through the experience will never know; those who have will never tell; not really, not completely. … A novel about Auschwitz is not a novel, or else it is not about Auschwitz. The very attempt to write such a novel is blasphemy, as is any attempt to explain or justify …[205]

However, during a meeting with François Mauriac in 1954,[206] Wiesel was persuaded to write about his experience of the death camps; the result was his memoir *La Nuit* (1958; *Night* [1960]), a condensed version of the original Yiddish *Un di Velt Hot Geshvign* (*And the World Was Silent*, 1954) that has earned international acclaim and been translated into more than 30 languages—and was to be followed by some 60 books of fiction and non-fiction. When architect James Ingo Freed was selected to build the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1986, Wiesel stressed once more the urge to speak out: 'The Holocaust in its enormity defies language and art, and yet both must be used to tell the tale, the tale that must be told'.[207] Wiesel's change of heart over the years, from the desire to keep silent to the urge to speak in spite of language's inadequacy, brings to mind the double bind of the immemorial, between the imperative to remember and yet, in that faithful memory, the impossibility to know.

It is also fairly representative of the overall trajectory of critical debates that have prevailed in Holocaust studies ever since the first stutterings of what became known as Holocaust Literature, soon after the end of the Second World War.

The publicity of Adorno's injunction against poetic representation might have helped crystallize the scandal which marked the reception of Sylvia Plath's posthumous confessional volume of poetry *Ariel* in 1965. That the young American woman poet, who was found dead of carbon monoxide poisoning with her head in the oven, had finally succeeded in taking away her own life after several failed attempts did not mitigate the outcry from (Jewish) critics and Holocaust survivors alike against what they saw as an illegitimate appropriation of the incomparable sufferings of Nazi victims in order to convey her own psychological torment, in poems like 'The Jailer', 'Lady Lazarus' and especially 'Daddy'.[208] Among the few who vindicated her transposition of the ordeal of those whom the Nazis nicknamed *Figuren* into a personal poetic artifice was George Steiner, who recognized that Plath's perspective and detachment as an 'outsider'—she was of mixed German-Austrian descent—was perhaps precisely what allowed her to break the literal silence and overcome the still prevailing malaise in verbal representation. The gist of Steiner's defence is best captured in his statement (apropos Kafka) that '[t]he world of Auschwitz lies outside speech as it lies outside reason. To speak of the *unspeakable* is to risk the survivance of language as the creator and bearer of humane, rational truth'.[209] In her remarkable study *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath*, relying on a psychoanalytic framework of interpretation, and analysing the blurring of the divide between victim and aggressor in second-generation children, Jacqueline Rose similarly investigates what was at stake in critics' outrage against Plath's metaphorical identification with the Jew as victim (and her oppressive father figure as a Nazi) in relation to the attempt to overcome the death of the figural possibility of language marked by the event 'Auschwitz'.[210] More recently, in his construction of an 'ethics of mourning' whereby 'the work of mourning can be conceived as a useful act of commemoration', Clifton Spargo has extended Rose's 'therapeutic' reading and insight into how the mechanism of fantasy needs to work out a relation to history in order to restore the impaired function of metaphor in language.[211]

Shoshana Felman reinterpreted Adorno's famous dictum on poetry after Auschwitz as a means of expressing not so much that poetry could or should no longer be created but rather that it had to write 'through'

its own impossibility.[212] Karyn Ball put forward the theory according to which 'Adorno's so-called lyric prohibition was not targeting lyrics or poetry *tout court*, but the possibility of "private" expressions of resistance that proclaim the individual's uniqueness in spite of and in complicity with a reified society that spawned anonymous mass murder in the death factories'.[213] Andreas Huyssen, author of several excellent studies on cultural memory and historical trauma, also cautioned against the hasty misreading of Adorno's remarks, which as a consequence might result in positioning trauma studies solely under the aesthetics of non-representability:

> When acknowledging the limits of representation becomes itself an ideology, we are locked into a last ditch defence of modernist purity against the onslaught of new and old forms of representation, and ethics is in danger of being turned into moralizing against any form of representation that does not meet the assumed standard.[214]

Yet, for Liliane Weissberg, Adorno's recognition of the right of 'perennial suffering' to expression envisions a new aesthetics that would save art by 'sever[ing] its ties with beauty'—even though it could be argued easily that such a dissociation was already at work in modernism and other early twentieth-century aesthetic currents—ushering in what she calls an 'aesthetics of pain' that would 'parallel a scream'.[215]

In the 'Appendix' to *The Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard had stated famously that the postmodern sublime is 'that which, in the modern, puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself',[216] a disjunctive paradox which in *The Differend* took the form of the impossibility yet necessity of linking incommensurable phrases. Returning once more to the issue of the unpresentable in *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, Lyotard explains that in order to attempt to represent the Shoah, one would need to make visible what cannot be perceived: '[w]hat art can do is bear witness not to the sublime, but to this aporia of art and to its pain. It does not say the unsayable, but says that it cannot say it'.[217] In other words, in a post-Auschwitz world, what is required is 'an "aesthetics" of the memory of the Forgotten, an anesthetics, let us say: a "sublime" …'.[218]

With the passing of time, the question *whether* to represent the Holocaust in literature, film, and the visual arts gave way to the issue of *how* to represent it. A turning point was Claude Lanzmann's epic film *Shoah* (1985), a true landmark exception for Lyotard, for whom, contrary to the assumption that representation inscribes in memory and is therefore 'a good

defence against forgetting', '[o]nly that which has been inscribed can, in the current sense of the term, be forgotten, because it could be effaced':

> … to make us forget the crime by representing it is much more appropriate if it is true that, with 'the jews', it is a question of something like the unconscious affect of which the Occident does not want any knowledge. … I am thinking of those very cases [representing 'Auschwitz'] that, by their exactitude, their severity, are, or should be, best qualified not to let us forget. But even they represent what, in order not to be forgotten as that which is the forgotten itself, must remain unrepresentable. Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah* is an exception, maybe the only one. Not only because it rejects representation in images and music but because it scarcely offers a testimony where the unpresentable of the Holocaust is not indicated, be it but for a moment, by the alteration in the tone of a voice, a knotted throat, sobbing, tears, a witness fleeing off-camera, a disturbance in the tone of the narrative, an uncontrolled gesture.[219]

Despite periodically renewed claims that the Holocaust lies beyond the limits of representation,[220] testimonial or imagined literature was written, films were directed, memorial museums erected, and, increasingly, concentration camp sites, ruins or buildings that were the sites of Holocaust atrocities were rehabilitated and preserved. In Geoffrey Hartman's view, art has the licence to escape official meaning and thus becomes the performative medium most prone to transmit communal memory; when it remains accessible, it 'provides a counterforce to manufactured and monolithic memory' and, regardless of its recourse to imagination, it frequently embodies 'historically specific ideas' better than history itself.[221]

The now well-established field (bolstered by academic departments and research centres) of Holocaust Studies boasts an ever renewed, extensive scholarship on the issue of Holocaust representation. David Roskies and Naomi Diamant's *Holocaust Literature: A History and a Guide* maps a cartography of Holocaust literature, between the 'Jew zone' (which was any part of occupied Europe) and the 'free zone' (consisting mainly of the USA and Palestine), while grouping together anything written (or sung) in Yiddish by the Yiddish-speaking writers of the ghettoes such as Abraham Sutzkever from Vilna (Vilnius) or Yitzhak Katznelson in Warsaw.[222] Lawrence Langer deals with representing and witnessing in survivors' recollections, fiction and poetry, and, in the wake of the uniqueness and unprecedentedness of this historical 'interruption', questions the humanistic enterprise of culture beyond the metaphysical groundings

of discourse.[223] In his exploration of the ways in which the war atrocities affected literature, Alvin Rosenfeld's *The Double Dying*[224] illustrates the misappropriation of pain and horror in literature, among which he enlists Sylvia Plath's confessional poetry and William Styron's later *succès de scandale Sophie's Choice* (1979). *The Double Dying* also deals with Elie Wiesel's contention in *Legends of Our Time* that the Jews underwent a double death, not only as human beings but also in the demise of the idea of human beings, a perspective which recalls Lyotard's analogous argument of 'the death of the magical, "beautiful death"' (for example, dying a noble, heroic death for one's country or willed by oneself) in *The Differend*.[225] Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi's *By Words Alone: The Holocaust in Literature* brings together a collection of texts beyond national and cultural boundaries. Starting from the relative advantage of the visual arts which, unlike literature, can better respond to 'historical discontinuities' since they can non-verbally represent 'violent disruptions in human affairs and distortions of the human image', she illustrates her point with Picasso's *Guernica* and Alain Resnais's early documentary film *Nuit et brouillard* (1955), whose use of techniques of juxtaposition 'assault the senses with an immediacy and a brutality that can hardly be matched in any other medium'.[226] James E. Young's *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*, referred to before, reveals the narrative structure of memory, whereas *At Memory's Edge* examines the 'antiredemptory' (or 'antiredemptive') context for a generation whose memory must be re-created since its members were born after the War's traumatic events.[227] Both Langer and Young deal with the tension between the survivor's individual memories and collective memory, conveying the certainty that the Holocaust, as a catalyst for literary representation, can offer a glimpse of the structure of knowledge.

To end this minimal roll-call, Barbie Zelizer's edited book *Visual Culture and the Holocaust* proposes to view representation 'as translation work rather than mere reportage, as metaphor rather than index, as incomplete rather than comprehensive', and to come to terms with 'the frailty of representational codes into our own expectations of what each representational code can and should do'.[228] Her perspective is in agreement with the aim of the present monograph in what will follow a concise retrospective, in Chapter 3, of architecture's dealings with the Shoah: to take Holocaust representation beyond its '"preferred" template, that which has tended to privilege the factual over the represented',[229] into the more figural levels of an aesthetic envisioning not severed from the ethical implications of the 'memorial'.

Notes

1. See the various lexemes on the *Bible Hub* website, at http://biblehub.com/ (accessed 2 February 2016).
2. See David Farrell Krell, *Of Memory, Reminiscence, and Writing: On the Verge* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 13 (and ff.), who also refers to Richard Sorabji's *Aristotle on Memory*.
3. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, WA and London: University of Washington Press, 1984), 107.
4. See Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 109.
5. Michael Bernard-Donals, *Forgetful Memory: Representation and Remembrance in the Wake of the Holocaust* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009), 162.
6. Bernard-Donals, *Forgetful Memory*, 167.
7. Bernard-Donals, *Forgetful Memory*, 162. Bernard-Donals defines 'forgetful memory' as what 'comes as an involuntary and unbidden flash of the event that disrupts collective memory and history (that sees it, in other words, as a variety of *anamnesis* rather than as *mnēmē*, as a marker of what has been lost rather than as a representation of what can be remembered)'. Although Blanchot is often invoked in this study, the French writer's similarly titled sketch on poetry as forgetful memory (therefore *mnēmē* and Mnemosyne) is not mentioned. See Maurice Blanchot, 'Forgetful Memory', in *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. and foreword Susan Hanson (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 314–317.
8. Astrid Erll, 'Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction', in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (New York and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 5.
9. Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 4.
10. Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris: Alcan, 1925). See also Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter, intro. Mary Douglas (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 22–49.
11. Erll, 'Cultural Memory Studies', in *Media and Cultural Memory*, ed. Erll and Nünning, 4.

12. Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, 10.
13. See Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, 14–15.
14. Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, 30. Funkenstein's assessment of the historian's role and duty was shared by Hayden White, who in *Metahistory* and other subsequent works, speaks about the historian's 'emplotment of narrative'; see Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). Pierre Nora, Michel de Certeau, Hayden White and Dominick LaCapra, among others, have also theorized the intersection of all historical praxes to the point of transforming history into a narrative of allusiveness.
15. Bernard-Donals, *Forgetful Memory*, 165.
16. Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, 10.
17. Richard Crownshaw, *The Afterlife of Holocaust Memory in Contemporary Literature and Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 33, 185, 196.
18. Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blarney and David Pellauer (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 57.
19. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 57; translation modified. I opted for 'misuse' instead of 'abuse' to avoid meanings which would go against Ricoeur's original *abus.*
20. See Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 57.
21. See in particular Sigmund Freud, 'Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through' (1914) and 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and gen. ed. James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, vol. XII (1911–13): *The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works* (London: Hogarth Press, 1958), 145–156, and vol. XVIII (1920–22): *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works* (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 3–64 respectively.
22. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 500.
23. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 501.
24. Paul Ricoeur, 'Memory and Forgetting', in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, ed. Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (London and New York: Routledge, 2002 [1999]), 11.

25. Richard Kearney, 'Narrative and the Ethics of Remembrance', in *Questioning Ethics*, 27.
26. Jacques Derrida, 'To Forgive: The Unforgivable and the Imprescriptible', trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg, in *Questioning God*, ed. John D. Caputo, Mark Dooley, and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 21–50.
27. In this context, for a detailed analysis of the different attitudes of Judaism and Christianity to forgiveness, see Richard Harries, *After the Evil: Christianity and Judaism in the Shadow of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), especially the chapter entitled 'Forgive and Forget', 65–87.
28. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 212–213.
29. Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. and intro. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), 23.
30. Vladimir Jankélévitch, 'The Imprescriptible—to Forgive?', 25 (unpublished trans., from MS), in Michael L. Morgan, *Discovering Levinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 35.
31. Jankélévitch, 'The Imprescriptible—to Forgive?', 62.
32. Vladimir Jankélévitch, 'Should We Pardon Them?', trans. Ann Hobart, *Critical Inquiry* 22 (Spring 1996), 565.
33. Jankélévitch, 'Should We Pardon Them?', 567.
34. Morgan, *Discovering Levinas*, 36.
35. Emmanuel Levinas, *Nine Talmudic Readings*, trans. Annette Aronowicz (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 25.
36. Levinas, *Nine Talmudic Readings*, 25.
37. Jean Bollack, 'Memory/Forgetfulness', in *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, ed. Barbara Cassin, trans. Steven Rendall *et al.*, trans. ed. Emily Apter *et al.* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 645.
38. Geoffrey Hartman, 'History Writing and the Role of Fiction', in *After Representation? The Holocaust, Literature, and Culture*, ed. R. Clifton Spargo and Robert M. Ehrenreich (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 33.
39. Bollack, 'Memory/Forgetfulness', in *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, ed. Cassin, 637.

40. Bollack, 'Memory/Forgetfulness', in *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, ed. Cassin, 646.
41. Bollack, 'Memory/Forgetfulness', in *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, ed. Cassin, 646.
42. C. Fred Alford, *After the Holocaust: The Book of Job, Primo Levi, and the Path to Affliction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 72.
43. Itzhak Zuckerman, in *Shoah*, dir. Claude Lanzmann (The Criterion Collection, Blu-Ray, 1985 [DVD, 2013]).
44. See Alford, *After the Holocaust*, 68. Alford's conclusions are based on survivors' testimonies and Charlotte Delbo's *Days and Memory*, trans. Rosette Lamont (Evanston, IL: Marlboro Press/Northwestern University Press, 2001), 3–4.
45. Alford, *After the Holocaust*, 73.
46. Eva L. quoted in Alford, *After the Holocaust*, 73.
47. Jonathan Druker, *Primo Levi and Humanism after Auschwitz: Posthumanist Reflections* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 91.
48. Lawrence L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 17.
49. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, 17.
50. Alford, *After the Holocaust*, 84.
51. In Auschwitz inmates' cant, a *Muselmann* ('Muslim') was used derogatorily for a prisoner who had become too worn out from exhaustion and starvation, and was resigned to being transferred from the labour camps to the gas chambers and ovens at Birkenau. For a compelling account of the status and condition of the *Muselmann*, see Manuela Consonni, 'Primo Levi, Robert Antelme, and the Body of the *Muselmann*', *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 7.2 (2009): 243–259. Grounding her argument on a minute examination of Marguerite Duras's *La douleur*, which describes in lurid terms Robert Antelme's physical degradation upon his return from the camps, and using the theoretical framework of Agamben's *Remnants of Auschwitz*, her essay analyses the returning *Muselmann*'s attempt to testify to the 'unwitnessed, unwitnessable'; the *Muselmann* 'was one whom no human eye could stand to behold', 'the terror of the camp—the body of death' (250).

52. Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Summit Books, 1988), 83–84. As if taking her cue from Levi himself, in her tripartite classification of witnesses—from the testimonies left hidden by ghetto and *Sonderkommando* victims to the emergence and evolution of the witness as a social figure—Annette Wieviorka goes as far as to wonder why so much attention has been given to the writings of Primo Levi and Robert Antelme, 'neither of whom is representative of the Jews killed in the genocide', as opposed for instance to the diary of Adam Czerniaków, head of the Warsaw Ghetto *Judenrat.* (Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, trans. Jared Stark [Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2006], 21).

53. David Carroll, 'Foreword: The Memory of Devastation and the Responsibilities of Thought: "And Let's Not Talk About That"', in Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, trans. Andreas Michel and Mark S. Roberts (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), viii.

54. Carroll, 'Foreword', in Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, xi.

55. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, rev. ed., 3 vols (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1985 [1961]).

56. Raul Hilberg *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

57. Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997); *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 1939–1945 (New York: HarperCollins, 2007).

58. Elie Wiesel, quoted in Eric McGlothlin, 'Theorizing the Perpetrator in Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader* and Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow*', in *After Representation?*, 211.

59. Druker, *Primo Levi and Humanism after Auschwitz*, 30; also 12: 'to lend transcendental or historical meaning to the victims' torment is to renew in thought the violence they suffered in body'.

60. Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 1999), 17.

61. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, 48–49.

62. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, 33, 39, 47, 60, 82, 133, 150.

63. See Dominick LaCapra, 'Approaching Limit Events: Siting Agamben', in *Witnessing the Disaster: Essays on Representation and*

the Holocaust, ed. Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 295–296.

64. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, 69.
65. J. M. Bernstein, 'Bare Life, Bearing Witness: Auschwitz and the Pornography of Horror', *parallax* 10.1 (2004): 3.
66. See R. Clifton Spargo, *Vigilant Memory: Emmanuel Levinas, the Holocaust, and the Unjust Death* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 258. The two works that Spargo refers to are: Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), and Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
67. Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 20.
68. Freud quoted in Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 16.
69. See Dori Laub, M.D., 'An Event without a Witness: Truth, Testimony and Survival', in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, ed. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, M.D. (New York: Routledge, 1992), 75–92.
70. For a chilling evocation of the Nazis' systematic attempt to eradicate all traces of the 'Final Solution', see Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, 25.
71. Laub, 'Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening', in *Testimony*, ed. Felman and Laub, 59.
72. Laub, 'Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening', in *Testimony*, ed. Felman and Laub, 59–60.
73. Laub, 'Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening', in *Testimony*, ed. Felman and Laub, 60.
74. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 11.
75. See Spargo, *Vigilant Memory*, 304, and Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 104–107.
76. Laub, 'Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening', in *Testimony*, ed. Felman and Laub, 60.
77. Elizabeth Jane Bellamy, '"Laboratories" Against Holocaust Denial— Or, the Limits of Postmodern Theory', *parallax* 10.1 (2004), 96. Despite acknowledging Lyotard's 'philo-Semitism' and close affinity with Levinasian ethics, her more fully fledged argument, in *Affective Genealogies: Psychoanalysis, Postmodernism, and the 'Jewish Question' after Auschwitz* (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska

Press, 1997), 109–148, still somewhat reductively sees his stance against (verbal) representations of the figure of the Jew as an appropriation of Judaism by a 'postmodern ethics' (111).

78. Susannah Radstone, 'Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics', *Paragraph* 30.1 (2007), 21.
79. Spargo, *Vigilant Memory*, 257.
80. Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1954), 15.
81. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 5.
82. The German *Kindertransport* (children's transport) refers to an organized rescue from the United Kingdom that saved almost 10,000 Jewish children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Free City of Danzig, nine months prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. Eve Nussbaum Soumerai's book gives an impressive account of how children were placed in British families that offered them the bare minimum to live but no love. Similar to many other children from the *Kindertransport*, she was the only survivor of her family.
83. Yehuda Bauer, quoted by Carol D. Schulz, in Eve Nussbaum Soumerai and Carol D. A. Schulz, *A Voice from the Holocaust: Voices of Twentieth Century Conflict* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003), xiv.
84. Sarah Kofman, *Smothered Words*, trans. Madeleine Dobie (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 36.
85. Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. Seám Hand (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 132; emphasis in the original.
86. Paul Ricoeur, 'The Memory of Suffering', in *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative and Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 290.
87. David Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse: Response to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 4. See also Chapter 10 in James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 263–281.
88. Bernard-Donals, *Forgetful Memory*, 29.
89. See Bernard-Donals, *Forgetful Memory*, 32.
90. On the history of revisionism in relation to the Holocaust, the following titles are particularly relevant: Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Assassins*

of Memory: Essays on the Denial of the Holocaust, trans. and Foreword by Jeffrey Mehlman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York: Free Press, 1993); Nadine Fresco, 'Negating the Dead', in *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman (Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1994), 191–203; Valérie Igounet, *Histoire du négationnisme en France* (Paris: Seuil, 2000).

91. Four of these were later gathered and partially translated into English in an omnibus volume titled *Debunking the Genocide Myth: A Study of the Nazi Concentration Camps and the Alleged Extermination of European Jewry*, intro. Pierre Hofstetter, trans. Adam Robbins (Torrance, CA: Noontide Press, 1977).

92. Robert Faurisson, *Mémoire en défense: contre ceux qui m'accusent de falsifier l'histoire* (Paris: La Vieille Taupe, 1980), 73–75.

93. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Les assassins de la mémoire: 'Un Eichmann de papier' et autres essais sur le révisionnisme* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1987).

94. See Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 'The Holocaust's Challenge to History', trans. Roger Butler-Borruat, in *Auschwitz and After: Race, Culture, and 'the Jewish Question' in France*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 2014), 30 [25–34]. The French original was published as 'L'épreuve de l'historien: réflex-ions d'un généraliste', in *Au sujet de Shoah: le film de Claude Lanzmann*, ed. Bernard Cuau (Paris: Belin, 1990), 198–208.

95. Vidal-Naquet, *Assassins of Memory*, 43.

96. Vidal-Naquet, 'A Paper Eichmann', in *Assassins of Memory*, 1–64. The original 'Un Eichmann de papier—Anatomie d'un men-songe', published in 1980, was the first in his series of responses to Faurisson.

97. Vidal-Naquet, *Assassins of Memory*, xxiv–xxv; emphasis in the original.

98. Jean-François Lyotard, 'Discussions, ou phraser "après Auschwitz"', in *Les Fins de l'homme. À partir du travail de Jacques Derrida*. Colloque de Cerisy, 23 Juillet—2 Août 1980, ed. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy (Paris: Galilée, 1981), 283–315; in English as 'Discussions, or Phrasing "After Auschwitz"', trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele, in *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 360–392.

99. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 13.

100. Lyotard, *The Differend*, 18, 19, who also recalls Vidal-Naquet's dubbing of his opponent as a 'paper Eichmann' (32).

101. Lyotard, *The Differend*, 57.

102. Lyotard, *The Differend*, 58.

103. Lyotard, *The Differend*, 14.

104. See the special issue on 'Nuclear Criticism', *Diacritics* 14.2 (1984), especially Jacques Derrida, 'No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives)', trans. Catherine Porter and Philip Lewis (20–31), and Frances Ferguson, 'The Nuclear Sublime' (4–10).

105. Lyotard, *The Differend*, 56–57.

106. See David Carroll, 'Memorial for the *Différend*: In Memory of Jean-François Lyotard', *parallax* 6.4 (2000), 22.

107. Carroll, 'Memorial for the *Différend*', 22–23.

108. Carroll, 'Memorial for the *Différend*', 21.

109. For an insightful analysis of *Historikerstreit*, see also Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, *Hi Hitler! How the Nazi Past Is Being Normalized in Contemporary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

110. Jürgen Habermas expressed his concern about Nolte's reductionist stance in 'Concerning the Public Use of History', trans. Jeremy Leaman, *New German Critique* 44: Special Issue on the *Historikerstreit* (Spring–Summer 1988): 50.

111. Ernst Nolte, 'Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will: Eine Rede, die geschrieben, aber nicht gehalten werden konnte', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (6 June 1986): 39–47. For an account of the *Historikerstreit*, see Konrad H. Jarausch, 'Removing the Nazi Stain? The Quarrel of the German Historians', *German Studies Review* 11.2 (1988): 285–301.

112. Nolte, quoted in Mary Nolan, 'The Historikerstreit and Social History', *New German Critique* 44: Special Issue on the *Historikerstreit* (Spring–Summer 1988), 71.

113. Jarausch, 'Removing the Nazi Stain?', 287.

114. Also known in English as *The Three Faces of Fascism* (*Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche* in German), the book argued that Fascism arose as a form of resistance to and a reaction against

modernity. Nolte's basic hypothesis was steeped in the tradition and methodology of German 'philosophy of history' (*Geschichtsphilosophie*), a form of intellectual history whose premise is that historical events and society are shaped by the 'metapolitical' dimension and spiritual force of grand ideas (what Lyotard would call and dismiss as 'grand narratives').

115. Originally written in 1975, the play stages the deliberate attempt by a 'rich Jew'—likely to be an oblique attack on local business magnate Ignatz Bubis, active in Jewish communal politics—to destroy the real estate of the city through speculation in retaliation for the Holocaust. In response to its anti-Semitic clichés, the Frankfurt Jewish community occupied the stage of the theatre and prevented the play's debut. This marked the community's first public stance against anti-Semitic representations in Germany and has been seen as a turning point in the relationship between Germans and Jews.

116. See Ernst Nolte, 'Between Myth and Revisionism? The Third Reich in the Perspective of the 1980s', in *Aspects of the Third Reich*, ed. H. W. Koch (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1985), 17–38.

117. Jürgen Habermas, 'A Kind of Settlement of Damages (Apologetic Tendencies)', trans. Jeremy Leaman, *New German Critique* 44: Special Issue on the *Historikerstreit* (Spring–Summer 1988), 33. The 'Settlement of Damages' in the title referred to Michael Stürmer's conception of modernization processes (28).

118. Jarausch, 'Removing the Nazi Stain?', 286.

119. Jarausch, 'Removing the Nazi Stain?', 287.

120. Klaus Hildebrand had sided with Nolte *et al.*, in 'The Age of Tyrants: History and Politics', published on 31 July 1986 in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, to which Habermas had likewise responded in a 'Letter to the Editor'; see *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler?*, ed. Ernst Piper (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993), 58–60.

121. Andrei S. Markovits, 'Introduction to the Broszat-Friedländer Exchange', *New German Critique* 44: Special Issue on the *Historikerstreit* (Spring–Summer 1988), 81.

122. Martin Broszat, 'A Plea for the Historicization of National Socialism', in *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust, and the Historians' Debate*, ed. Peter Baldwin (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1990), 77–87.

123. Markovits, 'Introduction to the Broszat-Friedländer Exchange', 82.

124. Saul Friedländer, 'Some Reflections on the Historicization of National Socialism' (1987), republished in an abridged version in *German Politics & Society* 13: 'The Historikerstreit' (February 1988): 11–12.

125. Broszat, in Martin Broszat and Saul Friedländer, 'A Controversy about the Historicization of National Socialism', *New German Critique* 44: Special Issue on the *Historikerstreit* (Spring–Summer, 1988), 87.

126. Broszat, in Broszat and Friedländer, 'A Controversy about the Historicization of National Socialism', 88, 89. Broszat's third and last point was that to reassert his belief that 'a German-centrist perspective alone' on the history of the Nazi period was insufficient (90).

127. Markovits, 'Introduction to the Broszat-Friedländer Exchange', 83.

128. Friedländer, in Broszat and Friedländer, 'A Controversy about the Historicization of National Socialism', 93.

129. Friedländer, 'Some Reflections on the Historicization of National Socialism', 9.

130. See Michael Stürmer's 1986 essay 'History in a Land Without History', in *Forever In The Shadow of Hitler*?, ed. Piper, 16–17.

131. Nolan, 'The *Historikerstreit* and Social History', 53, 63, and 63–64 for a summary of the museum controversy. See also Siobhan Kattago, *Ambiguous Memory: The Nazi Past and German National Identity* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2001), 52–57 (museum controversy) and 57–71 (historians' debate), and *Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit: Der 'Historikerstreit' und die deutsche Geschichtspolitik*, ed. Steffen Kailitz (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008). Kattago's monograph also contains (46–48) a succinct analysis of the various attitudes to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, discussed *infra*.

132. See Nolan, 'The Historikerstreit and Social History', 63–64.

133. See Ernestine Schlant, *The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust* (New York: Routledge, 1999), and Thomas A. Kovach and Martin Walser, *The Burden of the Past* (New York: Camden House, 2008).

134. Stuart Parkes, *Understanding Contemporary Germany* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 148. *Germany, Year Zero* (1948) was also the title of the final film, shot in bombed-out Berlin, in Roberto Rossellini's war film trilogy.

135. Theodor W. Adorno, 'The Meaning of Working Through the Past', in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans., Preface by Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 89.

136. According to Jonathan Lear, we owe the therapeutic invention of working-through to Freud's 'dawning recognition that simply speaking the truth to his patients was not sufficient for cure'. See Jonathan Lear, 'Working Through the End of Civilization', *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 88.2 (2007), 291.

137. According to Bollack in 'Memory/Forgetfulness', in *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, ed. Cassin, 643, in German *Erinnerung* conveys the meaning of 'an action, within the individual confines of a person's inner self, as if actualizing one of a thousand possible memories', and can also be opposed to *Gedächtnis*, related to *denken* (to think), which refers rather 'to a cerebral capability than to the soul'. This distinction will become relevant when we consider those works of remembrance and commemoration known as 'monuments' (in German *Denkmal*).

138. Adorno, 'The Meaning of Working Through the Past', 89 and 337–338, n. 1.

139. Adorno, 'The Meaning of Working Through the Past', 103.

140. Theodor W. Adorno, *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001). See especially 'Athens and Auschwitz' (Lecture 13) and the whole section on 'Metaphysics after Auschwitz' (Lectures 14–18), 93–145.

141. The essay's very first sentence lays out Adorno's socio-pedagogical agenda in clear terms: 'The premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again". See Theodor W. Adorno, 'Education after Auschwitz', in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 191. Together with other similar radio interviews and interventions on education and 'maturity', 'Erziehung nach Auschwitz' was first gathered posthumously in *Erziehung zur*

Mündigkeit. Vorträge und Gespräche mit Hellmut Becker 1959–1969 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971).

142. Eric Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans*, in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 31, trans., ed. and intro. Detlev Clemens and Brendan Purcell (Columbia, MO and London: University of Missouri Press, 1999). Voegelin's lectures were reconstructed from a series of audio recordings, with interludes provided by notes from students in attendance.

143. Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans*, 77.

144. For instance, Hannah Vogt's 1961 *Schuld oder Verhängnis?: Zwölf Fragen an Deutschlands jüngste Vergangenheit* (Guilt or Disaster?: Twelve Questions to Germany's Most Recent Past) urged the German people not to add 'the injustice of forgetting' to the injustice committed in their name, and to preserve the Jewish victims' memory as a 'sacred duty' imposed by the responsibility Germans bore towards their Jewish fellow-citizens. See Hannah Vogt, *The Burden of Guilt: A Short History of Germany, 1914–1945*, trans. Herbert Strauss, intr. Gordon A. Craig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 234.

145. Wulf Kansteiner, 'Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle: The Legacy of Nazism, World War II, and the Holocaust in the Federal Republic of Germany', in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ed. Richard Ned Lebow *et al.* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 102, who refers to a sceptical article which appeared in *Die Zeit* in September 1963, titled '"Bewältigte Vergangenheit" und "Aufgearbeitete Geschichte"' ('Mastered Past' and 'Worked-Through History') in reply to an earlier article by Gerhard Schönberner striving to reclaim several working definitions of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (139, n. 1).

146. Alexander Mitscherlich and Margarete Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of Collective Behavior*, trans. Beverly R. Placzek (New York: Grove Press, 1975), 26.

147. Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn*, 45–46.

148. Eric L. Santner, *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory and Film in Postwar Germany* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 34.

149. Margarete Mitscherlich, 'Rede über das eigene Land'; quoted in Santner, *Stranded Objects*, 35.

150. Santner, *Stranded Objects*, 36–37. For an account of 'the relationship of the second generation to the powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right', see Marianne Hirsch, 'The Generation of Postmemory', *Poetics Today* 29:1 (Spring 2008), 103.

151. These works included Paul Kersten's *Der alltägliche Tod meines Vaters* (The Everyday Death of My Father, 1978), Ruth Rehmann's *Der Mann auf der Kanzel: Fragen an einen Vater* (The Man in the Pulpit: Questions for a Father, 1979), Sigfrid Gauch's *Vaterspuren* (Traces of a Father, 1979), Heinrich Wiesner's *Der Riese am Tisch* (The Giant at the Table, 1979), Peter Härtling's *Nachgetragene Liebe* (Love in the Aftermath, 1980), Christoph Meckel's *Suchbild: Über meinen Vater* (Image for Investigation about my Father, 1980), Brigitte Schwaiger's *Lange Abwesenheit* (Long Absence, 1983), Ludwig Harig's *Ordnung ist das ganze Leben: Roman meines Vaters* (Order is the Essence of Life: Novel of my Father, 1985), and Michael Schneider's *Vater-Literatur* (Father-Literature). Peter Sichrovsky's interviews were collected in *Born Guilty: The Children of the Nazis*, trans. Jean Steinberg (London: I. B. Taurus, 1988).

152. Sichrovsky, *Born Guilty*, 7–8.

153. Sichrovsky, *Born Guilty*, 12.

154. See Sichrovsky, *Born Guilty*, 145.

155. Santner, *Stranded Objects*, 42.

156. Santner, *Stranded Objects*, 43.

157. Sichrovsky, *Born Guilty*, 32.

158. Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation: Democracy, Nationalism, and Myth in Post-Communist Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 107, 109.

159. See Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989).

160. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Foreword by Fredric Jameson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 71–82.

161. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 73.

162. This rapprochement is warranted by Fredric Jameson's several mentions of Ernest Mandel's *Late Capitalism* in his Foreword. See *The Postmodern Condition*, especially xiv, as well as his own *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), *passim* (especially 35).

163. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 79, 81.

164. Used to refer to his view of psychical temporality and causality, whereby memory traces of former events may be revised retrospectively to fit in with analogous, fresh experiences, Freud's concept, whose centrality was highlighted by Jacques Lacan, has not been consistently translated into English across its numerous occurrences; see for instance vol. 2 (1893–95): *Studies on Hysteria*, and 'From the History of an Infantile Neurosis', vol. 17 (1917–19): *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, 7–121, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and gen. ed. James Strachey, in Collaboration with Anna Freud (London: Hogarth Press, 1955).

165. Jean-François Lyotard, 'Note on the Meaning of "Post-"', in *The Postmodern Explained to Children: Correspondence 1982–1985*, trans. Don Barry, Bernadette Maher, Julian Pefanis, Virginia Spate, Morgan Thomas, trans. and ed. Julian Pefanis and Morgan Thomas (London: Turnaround, 1992), 93.

166. See his 'Anamnèse', *Hors Cadre* 9 (Spring 1991), which highlights 'une éthique de l'anamnèse tout court' (113), and also 'Anamnesis of the Visible', trans. Couze Venn and Roy Boyne, *Theory, Culture & Society* 21.1 (2004): 107–119.

167. Jean-François Lyotard, 'Rewriting Modernity', in *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), 24.

168. Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 30, 29, and also *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, especially 20, 22, 94, for the interminable.

169. Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 30.

170. Saul Friedlander, 'Trauma Transference and "Working Through"', *History and Memory* 9 (1992), 51.

171. Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 209, who refers to Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis's *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, intro. Daniel

Lagache, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1973). Using the Freudian framework of the 1914 essay on 'Remembering, Repetition and Working-Through', in order to explain why the narrative repetition of the past, 'when obsessional or coercive, needs to be undone so that another kind of narrative, more capable of addressing the true tasks of remembrance, can take its place', Richard Kearney also notes that repetition can become the worst kind of forgetting: 'It is a forgetting that has forgotten its own forgetting and so compels us to "act out" our pain in a compulsive fashion'. See Richard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 180.

172. Aside from Carroll's Foreword, cited previously, Bill Readings's *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991) contains some valuable definitions and insights into the workings of the immemorial, especially xxii, xxviii, 17, 43–47.

173. Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, 20, 45. See also Lyotard's extended discussion in talks at the Vienna and Freiburg Conferences (1989), in *Political Writings*, trans. Bill Readings with Kevin Paul Geiman, Foreword and Notes Bill Readings (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003 [1993]), 135–147, especially the statement: 'Anamnesis is not an act of historical memorization'. (143).

174. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 82.

175. Lyotard, *The Differend*, xiii.

176. Jean-François Lyotard, 'What Is Just?', trans. Richard Kearney, in Richard Kearney, *Debates in Continental Philosophy: Conversations with Contemporary Thinkers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 203.

177. Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 180.

178. See Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, Chapter 8: 'The Immemorial: A Task of Narrative', especially 184–187.

179. Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 186, 187.

180. Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, 25.

181. The road to hell is paved with good intentions, and critics were prompt in blaming Lyotard for such a choice and strategy, which confirmed the heterogenization of Jews as Europe's Other, whereas real Jews as individuals of a hated kind had been

exterminated. See Stephen David Ross, 'Lyotard and Disaster: Forgetting the Good', in *Postmodernism and the Holocaust*, ed. Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1998), 287–302.

182. See Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, 3. For the recent 'Heidegger affair' in France, which served as immediate background to Lyotard's polemic study, see Carroll's Foreword, xvi.
183. Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, 317.
184. Maurice Blanchot, '"Do Not Forget"' (1988), trans. Michael Holland, in *The Blanchot Reader*, ed. Michael Holland (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 247–248.
185. Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock, new ed. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 21.
186. Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, 21.
187. Bernard-Donals, *Forgetful Memory*, 14, and also 17–37 on 'Ethics, the Immemorial, and Writing'.
188. Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, 47.
189. Spargo, *Vigilant Memory*, 123.
190. See also Lars Iyer, 'The Unbearable Trauma and Witnessing in Blanchot and Levinas', *Janus Head* 6.1 (2003): 37–63, and James Hatley, 'Lyotard, Levinas, and the Phrasing of the Ethical', in *Lyotard: Philosophy, Politics, and the Sublime*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (London: Routledge, 2002), 75–83, for an attempt to trace Lyotard's notion of ethical obligation to (an appropriation of) Levinas's own rethinking of ethics and reconsideration of subjectivity. For the immemorial's relation to Levinasian ethics, see the opening section of Chapter 4.
191. See Spargo, *Vigilant Memory*, 59–60.
192. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 12.
193. Spargo, *Vigilant Memory*, 59.
194. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 11.
195. Josh Cohen, *Interrupting Auschwitz: Art, Religion, Philosophy* (New York and London: Continuum, 2005), xvii.
196. Santner, *Stranded Objects*, 7, 12.
197. For a careful teasing out of Adorno's term, which 'reoccurs in the context of his critiques of technical rationality, of mass culture, and of progress. In short, in his radical critique of the

Enlightenment as adhering to an exclusionary form of instrumental reason', see Anna-Verena Nosthoff, 'Barbarism: Notes on the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno', *Critical Legal Thinking—Law & the Political*, 15 October 2014, at http://criticallegalthinking.com/2014/10/15/barbarism-notes-thought-theodor-w-adorno/ (accessed 8 February 2016).

198. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Cultural Criticism and Society', in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983 [1955]), 34; also 70, 73.

199. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Commitment', trans. Francis McDonagh, in Ernst Bloch *et al.*, *Aesthetics and Politics*, Afterword Fredric Jameson, trans. and ed. Ronald Taylor (London: Verso, 1980), 188.

200. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (London and New York: Routledge, 2004 [1973]), 362.

201. Theodor W. Adorno, *Notes to Literature, Volume 2*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 251.

202. See for instance Shira Wolosky, 'The Lyric, History, and the Avant-Garde: Theorizing Paul Celan', *Poetics Today* 22.3 (2001), 655, and n. 5, where Celan's response, 'we know at last where to seek the barbarians', is quoted as evidence.

203. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, new trans., ed. and intro. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 322. Celan's idiosyncratic effort to convey the inexpressibility of horror also prompted Primo Levi's judgement on his later poetry, which he saw as an 'atrocious chaos', 'a darkness' increasing one page after another 'until the last inarticulate babble consternates like the rattle of a dying man'. See Primo Levi, *Other People's Trades*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Summit Books, 1989), 143.

204. Quoted in Alvin H. Rosenfeld, 'The Problematics of Holocaust Literature', in *Literature of the Holocaust*, ed. and intro. Harold Bloom (Broomall, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004), 23.

205. Elie Wiesel, 'For Some Measure of Humility', *Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Responsibility* 5.100 (31 October 1975), 314.

206. A moving account of this encounter can be found in the 1996 interview for Academy of Achievement, 29 June 1996, at

http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/wie0int-3 (accessed 20 February 2016).

207. Quoted in Herbert Muschamp, 'Shaping a Monument to Memory', *New York Times* (11 April 1993), sec. 2, 1.

208. See *The Collected Poems of Sylvia Plath*, ed. Ted Hughes (New York: Harper & Row, 1981 ed.), especially most of the October 1962 poems, 208–261. It is not inappropriate to note that 'Daddy' came to stand in a comparably synecdochic relation to the whole *Ariel* collection as Auschwitz did to Nazi concentration camps.

209. George Steiner, 'K' (1963), in *Language and Silence: Essays 1958–1966* (London: Faber, 1967), 182, and 324–331 for his 1965 essay on Plath, '"Dying Is an Art"' and his famous assessment of 'Daddy' as 'the "Guernica" of modern poetry' (330).

210. Jacqueline Rose, *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath* (London: Virago, 1991), especially her discussion of 'Daddy', 205–238.

211. See R. Clifton Spargo, *The Ethics of Mourning: Grief and Responsibility in Elegiac Literature* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 19; 241–274 (258ff. on 'Daddy'). Spargo reads mourning 'as both a figure for and expression of an impossible responsibility' (274). See also Chapter 7 of James E. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 117–133.

212. Shoshana Felman, 'Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching', in *Testimony*, ed. Felman and Laub, 34. For another look at Adorno's modulations of his original statement, see for instance Liliane Weissberg, 'In Plain Sight', in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Barbie Zelizer (London: The Athlone Press, 2001), 15, and Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 5.

213. Karyn Ball, *Disciplining the Holocaust* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), 9.

214. Andreas Huyssen, Lecture on 'Resistance to Memory: The Uses and Abuses of Public Oblivion' (Porto Alegre, 2004); quoted in Marcelo Brodsky, *Memory under Construction*, ed. Guido Indij, trans. David Foster (Buenos Aires: La Marca Editora, 2005), 266. (One should note in passing that, for Lyotard especially,

so-called 'modernist purity' would be such an old form of representation 'after Auschwitz'). Organized around the subject of Argentina's 'Disappeared', the volume collects artworks and texts by leading Argentine artists, intellectuals and human rights organizations, regarding the Space for the Memory of Human Rights (*Espacio Memoria y Derechos Humanos*), which was being built at one of Argentina's most notorious concentration and extermination camps of the 1970s and 1980s.

215. Weissberg, 'In Plain Sight', in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Zelizer, 15. It should also be noted that Edvard Munch's *The Scream*, a series of four paintings and pastels created between 1893 and 1910, thus spanning the birth and development of modern (expressionist) art, has been seen as the emblematic icon of such an early modern expression and aesthetics of angst and pain.

216. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 81.

217. Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, 47.

218. Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, 80.

219. Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, 26.

220. Another such instance is the collection edited by Saul Friedländer, *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the 'Final Solution'* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

221. See Geoffrey Hartman, 'Public Memory and its Discontents', in *Literature of the Holocaust*, ed. Bloom, 210.

222. David G. Roskies, Naomi Diamant, *Holocaust Literature: A History and a Guide* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2013).

223. Lawrence L. Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975); *Versions of Survival* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1982); *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

224. Alvin Rosenfeld, *The Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1980).

225. See Lyotard, *The Differend*, 89, and also 99–100 ('Beautiful Death').

226. Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi, *By Words Alone* (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 4.

227. See James E. Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 5.

228. Barbie Zelizer, 'Introduction: On Visualizing the Holocaust', in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Zelizer, 2.

229. Zelizer, 'Introduction', in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Zelizer, 2.

Representing the Holocaust in Architecture

Of all arts, architecture in particular proves to be a medium most readily suited to provide viewers with an exceptional experience of the materiality of trauma as the purpose of commemorative buildings is to exhibit and embody the imperative to remember in spatial, physical representation. The Latin word *monumentum* is derived from *monere*: to warn, to recall; a 'monument' calls upon the faculty of memory to testify to historical events, to subsume history in a memorial culture. Consequently, monuments become artefacts commemorating events for future generations and individuals. Besides, twentieth-century and in particular Second World War monuments, which rely decreasingly on conventional or academic forms, invite critical reflection and an interpretive empathy with a past collective trauma in the act of mourning and grieving for the dead. In order to understand how monuments evolved from earlier twentieth-century modernist conceptions to the more experimental visions from the 1980s onwards, a brief exploration of what is at stake in this 'rethinking of architecture'[1] is necessary.

1   ARCHITECTURE AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR: FROM POSTMODERNISM TO DECONSTRUCTIVISM

According to Peter L. Laurence, the second half of the twentieth century was characterized by 'an unprecedented pluralism in architecture' featuring a series of 'movements that came in its wake' and thus unique as well as diversified architectural creation.[2] After the end of the Second World War,

rather than being seen as inert objects or cognitive landmarks, monuments became sites of interpretation and reflection on history and the past.[3] In this changing context, postmodernism would later emerge from a double disillusionment: with the 'redemptive power' of architecture in the face of the Nazis' unprecedented viciousness, 'the purges of Stalinist Russia, the advent of the atom bomb, and the increasing dominance of multinational capitalism'; with the 'destructive' rather than 'productive' revolutionary fervour of past modernist architects, responsible for 'the desolate mass-housing projects, the wasteland of urban renewal, the alienation resulting from an architectural language' that felt 'arcane, mute, and of little appeal outside a narrow cultural elite'.[4] Under the increasing influence of structuralism, with its emphasis on understanding elements of culture in terms of their interrelations within a wider, overarching system, the integration of art in daily life also became a growing concern among artists from the 1960s onwards in the hope that it would foster art's democratization and, indirectly, educate society.[5] According to Mary McLeod, the aim of postmodern architecture was 'the search for architectural communication and the desire to make architecture a vehicle of cultural expression'.[6]

Architects' and social critics' suspicion and sense of alienation towards their modernist predecessors grew simultaneously with the early postmodern search for formal techniques of defamiliarization. The 1950s' near-consensual agreed view of the shortcomings of earlier twentieth-century modern architecture was characterized by Robin Boyd as 'Functional Neurosis'.[7] In its trans-historical criticism, Robert Venturi's landmark *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966),[8] 'frequently misread as an apologia for eclecticism', focused on 'architectural qualities that are common to different historical epochs rather than tied to specific cultural contexts'.[9] Similarly, Aldo Rossi's influential monograph *The Architecture of the City* (also 1966)[10] 'explicitly rejected the reductive principle of "Functionalism"' which was 'a central tenet' of modernist architecture, while *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* by the self-proclaimed 'apostle of the new movement' Charles Jencks,[11] initially published in 1977 and later reprinted several times with new articles and projects, was instrumental in crystallizing the paradigm shift from modern to postmodern architecture.[12]

In 1980, the Venice Biennale added an Architecture Sector, for which a landmark exhibition on 'The Presence of the Past' was directed by Italian architect Paolo Portoghesi, who invited 20 architects to create facades along an imaginary street called 'La Strada Novissima'. Among the most

vocal critics of postmodern architecture were Jean-François Lyotard, Jürgen Habermas and, to a much lesser extent, Fredric Jameson, despite their mutual antagonism that had brewed in the wake of Lyotard's controversial *Postmodern Condition* (1979). Starting from Portoghesi's definition of 'the rupture of postmodernism' as 'an abrogation of the hegemony of Euclidean geometry', and following Gregotti's distinction between modernism and postmodernism, 'the disappearance of the close bond' which used to link 'the project of modern architecture to an ideal of the progressive realisation of social and individual emancipation encompassing all humanity', Lyotard expressed his doubts about postmodern architecture. He saw it as 'condemned to undertake a series of minor modifications in a space inherited from modernity, condemned to abandon a global reconstruction of the space of human habitation', with 'no longer any horizon of universality, universalisation or general emancipation to greet the eye of postmodern man, least of all the eye of the architect'.[13] Likewise recalling the Venice Biennale event, Habermas, prompted by his untiring belief in the project of modernity, dubbed postmodern architecture 'an avant-garde of reversed fronts' and bemoaned its 'antimodern' jettisoning of reason, logic, objective science and universal morality.[14] In his critique of the 'waning of affect' and dehistoricizing trend of postmodernism, Jameson saw postmodern architecture as 'a kind of aesthetic populism, as the very title of Venturi's influential manifesto, *Learning from Las Vegas*, suggests'. However, in true Marxist spirit, he also admitted that this populism had one merit: it had the capacity to efface the older high-modernist opposition between 'high culture and so-called mass or commercial culture' and lead to 'the emergence of new kinds of texts infused with the forms, categories, and contents of that very culture industry so passionately denounced by all the ideologues of the modern, from Leavis and the American New Criticism all the way to Adorno and the Frankfurt School'.[15] Jameson could at least identify in various postmodernist apologias or manifestos a 'cultural mutation, in which what used to be stigmatized as mass or commercial culture is now received into the precincts of a new and enlarged cultural realm'.[16]

The impact of phenomenology and, later on, deconstruction contributed provocative perspectives for architects who no longer simply created but also theorized the philosophy behind the buildings they erected. Phenomenology provided postmodernist architects with a framework of enquiry within which they could investigate anew the connection between building and dwelling. Heidegger's seminal 1954 essay 'Building

Dwelling Thinking', first made available in an English translation in 1971, had blazed a suggestive trail from its inception:

> *In what follows we shall try to think about dwelling and building.*
>   This thinking about building does not presume to discover architectural ideas, let alone to give rules for building. This venture in thought does not view building as an art or as a technique of construction; rather it traces building back into that domain to which everything that is belongs. We ask:
>
>   1.   What is it to dwell?
>   2.   How does building belong to dwelling?[17]

From a phenomenological perspective, the architect's role was to query and respond to the ontological potential of space. In *Existence, Space and Architecture*, Christian Norberg-Schulz developed such an existential-phenomenological approach to architecture based on Heidegger's later writings, arguing that architecture had to relate to and make manifest the specific nature of a place.[18] Later, in *Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, Norberg-Schulz extended Heidegger's seminal reflections on the poetic relationship to space, building and dwelling, drawing specifically on the German philosopher's analyses of Hölderlin in *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Pointing out the relevance of light (*phos*, hence 'phenomenology') for the communities of the ancient Greeks, as well as for Christians and the Renaissance who associated it with divine love and God, he showed how architecture is born 'when a total environment is made visible' (exposed to light), when the *genius loci*—the 'spirit of the place' which the ancients had to placate in order to dwell harmoniously in a place—is concretized.[19] In *The Concept of Dwelling* he made his call for the 'figural' quality of architecture more explicit in his claim that what 'villages and towns always had in common is the figural quality which is the condition of any "here"', emphasizing that the figural quality of the settlement allows for 'natural dwelling'.[20]

In 1994 the academic journal *Architecture and Urbanism* ran a special issue on 'Questions of Perception', featuring articles by the phenomenologist architects Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa and Alberto Pérez-Gómez. These essays explored the extent to which senses are involved in the architecture of the last decade of the twentieth century and feature prominently in contemporary academic architectural debates focusing on the loss of a multi-sensory design of the built environment in a vision-dominated world. In Pallasmaa's opinion, a building is 'an end to itself' that 'frames,

articulates, restructures, gives significance, relates, separates and unites, facilitates and prohibits'.[21] He urged architects to start apprehending built space as a language and, hence, a man's habitus, 'the refuge' of his 'body, memory and identity'.[22] Man and environment are in a constant interaction so that detaching 'the image of the Self from its spatial and situational existence' becomes impossible, an idea that Pallasmaa illustrated with a line from poet Noel Arnaud: 'I am the space, where I am'.[23] According to Stephen Holl, as long as the role of architecture is 'to transcend its physical condition, its function as mere shelter, then its meaning, like interior space, must occupy an equivalent space within language'.[24]

By 1984, when Swiss-born French architect Bernard Tschumi, together with Colin Fournier, started work on the 13-year-long project of the Parc de la Villette in Paris, an 'architecture against itself: a disintegration',[25] deconstructivism had already become almost synonymous with contemporary or even 'postmodern' architecture. Jacques Derrida's ideas on a discipline which he called 'the last fortress of metaphysics' ('NPM' 92) had been adopted by Tschumi, whose *cases vides* (the three-storey red cubes) or 'follies' lived up to their name for puzzled critics. For Derrida, however, Tschumi's *folies*, like madness in general, were 'anything but the chaos of anarchy. Yet, without proposing a "new order", they locate the architectural work elsewhere, a work that, at least in its principle, in its essential impetus, will no longer obey these external imperatives' ('NPM' 94).

As Douglas Tallack has argued, deconstructivist and postmodern architectures were bound by a common 'interest in that which cannot be abstracted and reduced in the service of recognizability' as well as by 'their implication in the already constructed'.[26] If, for Tallack, the overall transition from modernism to postmodernism was a fairly smooth, continuous one, in architecture 'the break between the modern and the postmodern was dramatically evident with the demolition of some high-rises (the Pruitt-Igoe estate in St. Louis) or the collapse of others (Ronan Point in London)'.[27]

Two events in 1988 were connected to deconstructivism: the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York entitled 'Deconstructivist Architecture' and a symposium at the Tate Gallery in London, organized by Andreas Papadakis, the editor of *Academy Editions*.[28] The MoMA exhibition featured works by Frank Gehry, Daniel Libeskind, Rem Koolhaas, Peter Eisenman, Zaha Hadid, Coop Himmelb(l)au, and Bernard Tschumi, and was followed one year later by

the opening of the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, designed by Peter Eisenman. The manifesto presented by Philip Johnson, the guest curator of 'Deconstructivist Architecture', is revealing about deconstruction's impact in its strategic self-definitions as what it is not rather than as what it is:

> Deconstructivist architecture is not a new style. We arrogate to its development none of the messianic fervor of the modern movement, none of the exclusivity of that Catholic and Calvinist cause. Deconstructivist architecture represents no movement; it is not a creed. It has no 'three rules' of compliance. It is not even 'seven architects'.
>
> It is a confluence of a few important architects' work of the years since 1980 that shows a similar approach with very similar forms as an outcome. It is a concatenation of similar strains from various parts of the world.[29]

Not all architects involved in the 'Deconstructivist Architecture' exhibition shared the same understanding of deconstructivism, however. As Tallack implies, Hal Foster's emphasis on 'a postmodernism of resistance' (versus 'a postmodernism of reaction'),[30] 'in an effort to rescue postmodernism for radical cultural politics',[31] would trace a fault line between Gehry, with his 'particular interest in remodelling', and Tschumi and Eisenman, whose works addressed 'disturbance' and 'de-architecture'. Deconstructivism rejected 'the modern movement's messianic faith in the *new*' and condemned 'the notion of a zeitgeist that obliterated the past and wiped out differences in tradition and experience'.[32]

For balanced observers of the postmodern cause in architecture, the most successful works, such as Venturi's Vanna House (1961) and James Stirling and Michael Wilford's Stuttgart Museum (1977–84), had reinstated a dialogue with history and highlighted the tension between two different attitudes: on the one hand, history 'meant freedom and a chance to recoup lost values'; on the other hand, 'it suggested that the present was no better than the past, that aesthetic and political choices might be arbitrary'.[33] However, although 'dualities of tradition and innovation, order and fragmentation, figuration and abstraction' helped to articulate the contradictions of modernism, in Venturi's work especially (hence a target for thinkers as different as Lyotard and Jameson), the '[h]istorical allusion rapidly becomes nostalgia, escape, or enjoyable simulacrum', which for McLeod could go as far as 'a denial of history itself'.[34]

At first sight, attempts to engage with history are hard to discern in 'the new objectives' of deconstructivists' vehement reaction against

postmodernism: 'fragmentation, dispersion, decentering, schizophrenia, disturbance'.[35] For Eisenman, Tschumi and curator Mark Wigley—the latter also influenced by Heidegger's reflections on building[36]—architecture rejected the political role espoused by the modern movement that sought 'the transformation of production processes and institutional boundaries', and instead gained political purchase through a display of the cultural sign, or rather 'through revealing the disintegration of that sign'.[37]

Architects like Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Thom Mayne (all Pritzker Prize winners) as well as Daniel Libeskind have often been assimilated with deconstructivism because they rebelled against the Corbusian right angles and modernist pure form, and introduced a free form based on folding and smoothing that became the physical embodiment of a new vision. Libeskind in particular saw the right angle as 'a product of spiritual history', capable of functioning only within it, but 'when that spiritual history is no longer decisive, the right angle changes. Perhaps yesterday's perfection is no longer "right" for us' (*HJMB* 38). These architects as well as names as diverse as Rem Koolhaas, Coop Himmelb(l)au, Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi have been associated with Derrida's project of deconstruction as an operative 'architectural metaphor'.[38] In this extended list, only Himmelb(l)au, Hadid and Libeskind produced works characterized by what Wigley saw as the basic attribute of deconstructivism: 'the extreme fragmentation of diagonal forms—the dismantling of constructivist imagery', and only Eisenman and Tschumi publicly declared their interest in Derrida's philosophy, claiming 'to stress process over form' and making use of 'the poststructuralist notion of intertextuality to assert a new contamination that challenges the autonomy of the designed object'.[39] Eisenman's major essay on the deconstruction of architecture, 'The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End',[40] whose title may allude to Derrida's chapter 'The End of the Book and the Beginning of Writing' in *Of Grammatology*,[41] was influenced by several concepts: Foucault's *episteme*, used by Eisenman to define classical architecture based on knowledge, Baudrillard's *simulation*, and especially the Derridean notion of the *trace*. According to Elie G. Haddad, Eisenman's purpose was to set 'the task of critically exposing architecture as a humanist discipline, founded on the *logocentric* discourses of the Renaissance'. In Eisenman's view, the role of the architect was to decipher and bring to light 'hidden fragments, repressed meanings or traces of other significations, transforming the site of each project into a palimpsest where architecture would be called upon to generate new fictions, multiple histories and narratives'.[42]

Buildings designed by Eisenman and Libeskind, as well as Tschumi's design for the Parc de la Villette, are in different ways responses to and/or implementations of Derrida's philosophy, prompted by the deconstructivists' belief in architecture as a representation of absence. Derrida himself engaged with the relation between deconstruction and architecture in several talks, essays and interviews mainly between 1984 and 1993, with two belated interventions: in the 'Afterword' to *Chora L Works* and at a round table on 'Deconstruction—Architecture' in Madrid (both 1997).[43] Of these, leaving aside those close collaborations and denser exchanges with Peter Eisenman and Daniel Libeskind with which I will engage more closely, the most significant are 'Fifty-two Aphorisms for a Foreword' (1986),[44] another conversation with Peter Eisenman titled 'Talking about Writing' (1993),[45] talks with the students in Architecture at Columbia University and to the avant-garde theorists Mark Wigley, Jeffrey Kipnis, Kurt Forster, Anthony Vidler,[46] and interventions at the Berlin Stadtforum, organized to discuss the future of the city after the Fall of the Wall (both 1992).[47] While guarding against being seen to outline directions for a new architecture, Derrida encouraged a different practice whereby projects could become socially aware and engage critically with the cultural dimension of architecture. His belief was that, unlike art or photography, architecture shared with philosophy not only analogies but also the idea of foundation and structure.[48]

In 'The Translation of Architecture, the Production of Babel', Mark Wigley argued that deconstruction called for 'a complete rethinking of the supplemental relationship organized by the architectural motif of ground/structure/ornament'.[49] According to Wigley—who looked for considerations on structure not only in Derrida's specific interventions on architecture but also in his early corpus—'Force and Signification' reveals the French philosopher's displacement of 'the architectural motif' by digging for what threatens the structure's integrity from within:

> Structure is perceived through the incidence of menace, at the moment when imminent danger concentrates our vision on the keystone of an institution, the stone which encapsulates both the possibility and the fragility of its existence. Structure then can be *methodically* threatened in order to be comprehended more clearly and to reveal not only its supports but also that secret place in which it is neither construction nor ruin but lability. This operation is called (from the Latin) *soliciting*.[50]

Wigley also highlighted Derrida's recognition of the 'structural necessity of the abyss',[51] a point I will return to in my more detailed analysis of the structure of voids in Daniel Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum (Chapter 4).

Although Derrida's seminal reflections on structure, as early as his elaboration of deconstructive thinking, would provide a relevant, wider context to understand his interest in a discipline traditionally associated with 'construction', I shall dwell more specifically on his pivotal texts pointing towards a deconstructive syntax of architecture, written in connection with two projects for the Parc de La Villette: 'Point de folie—maintenant l'architecture' (on Bernard Tschumi)[52] and, initiated in 1985 together with Peter Eisenman, *Choral Work*—later republished with subsequent debates and interventions in the suggestively titled *Chora L Works*, a fuller textual, visual and 'artefactual' record of their eventful collaboration, with architectural patterns of squares punched through the book's pages partly obliterating small clusters of print.[53] In an interview with Iman Ansari on the concern of some of his projects with 'the social sense of the word or the cultural sense, but with their "architectural meaning"' and the role they played in the critical culture of architecture as it evolved over time', Peter Eisenman declared that his work was interested in syntax and grammar, a dialogue between language and architecture which brought him to his joint project with Derrida.[54]

Derrida's purpose was 'to take on' architecture, not in the sense of attacking, criticizing or disqualifying it, but in a gesture meant 'to *think* it in fact, to take sufficient distance from it so as to apprehend it in a thought that carries beyond the theorem—and becomes an *oeuvre* in turn' ('NPM' 92–93). Such a gesture had to be performed with caution, by respecting architecture's specificity, its 'powerful metonymy' and 'consistency' ('duration, hardness, the monumental, mineral or ligneous subsistence, the hyletics of tradition') ('NPM' 92).

'No (Point of) Madness—Maintaining Architecture' (1986)[55] is constructed on the figure of speech called 'prolepsis', which allows the French philosopher to present the unbuilt park as already finished.[56] For Derrida, the structure and syntax of architecture need commanding '*from the outside*, according to a principle (*archi*), a grounding or foundation, a transcendence or finality (*telos*) whose locations are not themselves architectural' ('NPM' 91). From this 'anarchitectural topic', four 'points of invariance' were derived: 'the experience of meaning must be the *dwelling* [habitation], the law of the *oikos*, the economy of men or gods'; the law of

commemoration consists in an 'architectural organization' that 'will have had to fall in line with the anamnesis of its origin and the basis of a foundation'; such an economy becomes, 'of necessity, a *teleology* of dwelling', subscribing to 'all the regimes of finality'; the values of beauty, harmony and totality, aesthetics establish that, irrespective of its period or dominant style, 'this [principle of the archi-hieratic] order ultimately depends on the *fine arts*' ('NPM' 91–92).

As can be anticipated from its title, especially in the reworked form *Chora L Works*, the original project related in Derrida's mind to Plato's *chora*, the spacing and interval which is 'a difference with no opposition' (Derrida, in *CLW* 109). The purpose of Derrida's philosophical dialogue with Peter Eisenman was for the philosopher and the architect to meet half way: to write 'an architectural text' which could be brought together with a philosophical text (Eisenman, in *CLW* 33). While exchanging views on *chora* with Jeffrey Kipnis, Thomas Leeser and Renato Rizzi, Eisenman and Derrida, both of Jewish descent, expand 'on the topic of the role of being Jewish, in the thought of displacement', concluding that there was no connection between their origin or upbringing and the project. Without denying being a Jew by birth, Derrida pointed out that he found his 'Jewish background and history' too 'poor' to be meaningful in the interpretation of his work, a disclaimer that Eisenman also personally endorsed. However, the relevant extract of dialogue, reported here in full, is strikingly suggestive of a possible link between the two thinkers' origins and their views on architecture:

> **PE** I have no Jewish religious experience at all, but I think that I sense in your work an innately Hebraic way of thinking. **JK** The currency of doubt, which is the medium of exchange in both your economies, is a Hebraic. **JD** There is something specific in the Hebraic tradition referring to architecture. **PE** There is the temple … George Steiner in a very interesting essay called 'The Text, My Homeland', talks about the fact that the temple may have been a transgression against Hebraic thought. **JK** A transgression because it involves representation? **PE** Representation, concretization of presence and being. That is what so interests me about chora. As you say, it is a non-Platonic idea. To me, it seems more like a Hebraic notion. (Eisenman, in *CLW* 11)

Among Derrida's evocations of the Platonic *chora*, perhaps the most significant is that it 'looks as though it were "giving" place' (*donner lieu*), an attempted definition which he had fleshed out in a 1987 text specifically

devoted to Plato's 'virgin place', an 'impossible surface' which does not receive or give anything but an undetermined place where '[e]verything inscribed in it erases itself immediately, while remaining in it' (Derrida, in *CLW* 10).[57]

After closely collaborating on this implementation of deconstruction in architecture, Eisenman dissociated himself from Derrida and devised projects that departed significantly from the seemingly common agenda in *Choral Work*. In 'A Letter to Peter Eisenman', written in October 1989 in lieu of his presence at the conference 'Postmodernism and Beyond: Architecture as the Critical Art of Contemporary Culture', Derrida remarked that deconstructivism was irremediably compromised by the frame of absence and negativity in the structures which both Eisenman and his former student Daniel Libeskind erected. Among the many carefully contextualized questions and doubts levelled at Eisenman—and, as we shall see in Chapter 4, Libeskind—Derrida homes in on issues reflective of his own take on representation in architecture in relation to 'the place without place of deconstruction'. In particular, querying conceptions of 'invisibility' and '"Jewish" or not "Jewish" architectural space', Derrida wondered whether the frequent references to *chora* in terms of 'void, absence, negativity' in their work were sufficiently deontologized and detheologized, and whether Eisenman's 'architectural experience of memory' does not amount to a certain (Benjaminian) 'mourning in affirmation' of a present that would harbour the traces of its future destructibility ('LPE' 8, 11, 12).[58]

Eisenman's somewhat inadequate response came a few months later and was marked by self-contradictions, as in his preoccupation 'with absence, not voids or glass' on grounds that, similarly to a language, architecture 'is dominated by presence, by the real existence of the signified. Architecture requires one to detach the signified not only from its signifier but also from its condition as presence'.[59] In his review of what had become an exchange at cross purposes, Constantinos V. Proimos characterized such statements as 'disappointing' because Eisenman uncritically resorted to ideas that the reader would rather assume his critics to formulate.[60] Furthermore, the Greek scholar found it 'naïve' and bordering on 'mystical elitism' that an architect should wish to restore meaning in architecture by reinstating a difference between theory (signifier) and practice (signified, condition as presence), regarding architecture as 'a form of secret writing unlike all others, both in terms of its physicality and its mysteries', which would become accessible only to selected *cognoscenti*.[61] Eisenman's occasional

enigmatic reply, and indulgence in uneasy puns,[62] seemed more symptomatic of his inability to cope with Derrida's critical assessment of his instrumentalization of deconstructive ideas in architecture and his desire to reassert the plasticity of semantic material, strengthened by his claim that the French philosopher had failed to understand that ideas became malleable architectural material once they left their field of abstraction:

> when you leave your own realm, when you attempt to be consistent, whatever that might mean in architecture, it is precisely then that you do not understand the implications for deconstruction in architecture—when deconstruction leaves your hands. For me to toe the party line is useless; for in the end, Jacques, you would be more unhappy with an architecture that illustrates deconstruction than with my work, wherein the buildings themselves become, in a way, useless—lose their traditional significance of function and appropriate another aura, one of excess, of presentness, and not presence.[63]

Derrida's adherence to a deontologized Platonic *khora* was ultimately irreconcilable with neither Eisenman's nor Libeskind's perspectives since both liked 'to ontologize in quasi-theological ways'.[64] Both Derrida's 'Letter to Eisenman' and the speech on Libeskind's 'Between the Lines' that will be addressed in Chapter 4 evidence Derrida's disappointment with the world of architects; they also signalled his farewell to a domain which had promised yet failed to deliver an actualization of what the philosophical thought called 'de-con-struction' had been trying to articulate.

2   Holocaust Memorials Versus Museums

As we saw in Chapter 2, the barbarity of the Nazi crimes put to the test contemporary art's belief in its capacity of representation. For architects as well, the atrocities of the crimes demanded a rethinking of their role as builders and commemorators as well as what public monuments should stand for.

Commemorative architecture after the Second World War, or what became known as 'trauma architecture', had the duty to explore the implications of historical events and record their impact on society. It also had to transmute memory, collective as well as individual, into a coherent, visible narrative that could enable people to cope with the past and carry on living in the present. However, despite contemplating the incomprehensible,

trauma architecture also had to enact the kind of continuity that could define a nation or a community and its values. In this perspective, museums are spaces that engrave history into the nation's spirit, 'engender and consolidate social practices' of remembrance.[65] Housing artefacts which give the visitor a sense of how the past was shaped, memorials create new hallmarks for collective memory in the way they grapple with the unpresentability of disaster; in so doing, they are endowed with restorative as well as instructive powers.

For Andrew Benjamin, museums and memorials operate with different conceptions of temporality and construction. While the museum engages with temporality, a memorial presupposes a more complex relation which connects commemoration with public space. A museum encloses 'built time' and works 'in terms of historical continuity', in the sense that 'historical time is constructed by the museum's formal presence'.[66] The work of a museum seals or freezes time into historical time. In dealing with history, a museum's purpose is to preserve and protect, whereas a memorial will retain 'the incomplete' by holding 'open the work of memory, insofar as the incomplete allows memory's work an opening and thus a form of continuity'.[67] A memorial figures alterity which for Benjamin is always linked to 'the specific; the particular generic repetition', and related to a distance which brings 'a type of spacing' and 'figures within the concrete practice of memory at work within the process of establishing the memorial'.[68] Indeed, caught between performing and offering a history lesson, the memorial also provides a site of mourning. Aware that in addition to creating historical continuity, a memorial is also meant to atone for the sin of what is recalled, Benjamin links the existence of memorials to the name of national unity, which would impose a twofold task for a Holocaust memorial:

> In the first instance sin and absolution create a conception of unity that yields an occurrence that in being identified as aberrant may then, and only then, come to be excised. It is the identification and the act of excision that creates the unity. The second is the possible pathology inherent in the logic of confession; a pathology emerging because of the impossibility of either a sustained active forgetting or a systematic disavowal.[69]

Holocaust memorialization does not take place in the name of unity since, on the one hand, forgetting the Holocaust would prevail over remembering, making the task of memory redundant, and, on the other, 'the

distinction between the identity of being a Jew and Jewish being … complicates the subject positioning proper to memory's concrete work'.[70] In the concrete practice of memorialization, '[s]pacing insists', and, 'for the project of present remembrance to be at work', it is the '*sine qua non*'.[71] A Holocaust memorial can be only what Benjamin calls an 'incomplete' work of architecture that holds the project of memory open, because post-Shoah memory 'can only be maintained within the structure of the question'; the force of this incompletion lies in 'the already present inter-articulation of function and form'[72] defining the work of architecture.

James E. Young's survey of Holocaust memorials in Germany, Poland, Israel and the USA concluded that, unlike the monuments of the past which embodied a petrified conception of history, memorials erected in the second half of the twentieth century as a result of the community's needs for remembrance bring a more participatory dimension to historical events.[73] According to Young, in assuming the recollection of tragedy, the memorial offers visitors a space for exteriorizing public remembrance: 'rather than embodying memory, the monument displaces it altogether, supplanting a community's memory-work with its own material form'.[74] Young acknowledges the diversity of Holocaust memorials and museums corresponding to the kind of memory they activate and 'to a variety of national myths, ideals and political needs'[75]: some were built in response to traditional Jewish injunctions to remember (*zakhor*), or responded to the acute necessity to explain a nation's past to itself, others were erected with the purpose of educating the next generation by cultivating empathy in the experience of the Second World War; some were designed to expiate guilt while others were more simply geared towards attracting tourists. In short, memorial images and spaces have ideological implications and no conception or design can be seen as neutral or unmotivated. Mindful of the various debates on the role and structure of such monuments, Young contends that a discussion about memorials is itself already a memorial[76] since architects often conceive monuments as a foreshortening of conscious public memories that alleviates the individual obligation to remember the past. Thus, we are in part relieved from keeping the harmful past in memory as the monument, building or statue materially enshrines it and does that for us. Young's general assessment of memorials is that of a historian, hence his view that the aim of memorials is 'not to call attention to their own presence so much as to past events *because* they are no longer present'.[77] However, such a position is challenged by those who write from an art historian's perspective, for whom a monument 'has to

speak for itself'.[78] Invoking Hans-Georg Gadamer's view that 'the meaning it acquires [lies] in the work of art' itself,[79] Tanja Schult disagrees with Young, asserting instead that '[i]t is not the artwork's intention to act as a historical document'.[80]

Informed by a conception of memory as both an architectural and a literary trope, the present study acknowledges Schult's idea of the unicity of the art work in its own right. Yet its critical outlook on Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum, including as an experiential venue, will be closer to Young's, arguing that it embeds a global memory of the Holocaust which exceeds national consciousness, and that it endeavours to create a more universal ethics grounded in individual perception. In *The Destruction of Memory*, asserting that '[h]istory moves forward while looking over its shoulder', Robert Bevan wondered how much one commemorates and remembers and 'how much needs to be forgiven then forgotten in the interests of peace within and without'.[81] This monograph will also bear this in mind when analysing Libeskind's epoch-making architectural creation in Chapter 4.

3   Architecture After the Second World War in Germany

Unprecedented mass devastation throughout the countries involved in the Second World War, some of whose cities had their architectural past flattened beyond recognition, gave way to a vast reconstruction programme, as in Warsaw or many medieval towns in Germany—with the French 'martyred village' Oradour-sur-Glane being left exceptionally in its ruined state as a reminder of the brutality of Nazi occupation. In Germany, in particular, the Allied forces levelled almost 80 per cent of the historical buildings, an all-round destruction somehow ironically commensurate with the attempted systematic annihilation of Jewish landmarks and traditions under the Third Reich.

Some of the destroyed edifices had been built during the rise to power of National Socialism and were tokens of an aesthetics that had imposed a grandiose architecture 'without human beings to animate it'.[82] This glorifying aesthetics was the product of Hitler's megalomania; yet, as Neil Leach emphasized in *The Anaesthetics of Architecture*, it was also matched by 'the insensitivity' of the architect who engaged 'in a curious power game through the vicarious use of architectural models'.[83] The architectural projects for the New Reich, some built, others remaining as works

in progress, were 'gargantuan', bearing the pompous marks of Hitler's obsession with German superiority in their often classically inspired models. Among these, one can list the enormous stadiums and political arenas in the Nuremberg Nazi headquarters, some designed to hold up to half a million people at vast Party rallies, such as the Zeppelinfeld or the half-aborted Deutsches Stadion, as well as the North–South Axis in Berlin, of which only a small portion was built between 1937 and 1943. The 50-metre-wide Axis was projected by Hitler with the help of chief architect Albert Speer and formed part of the dictator's elated vision of the future after the planned victory in the Second World World War.[84] Leach characterized Third Reich architecture as indebted stylistically to 'the *völkisch* trend for the vernacular' that called upon local materials and traditional building techniques. This style appealed to Germans' feeling of 'nostalgia for a sense of community' (*Gemeinschaft*) that promoted the cult of deep roots—that can also be detected in Heidegger's philosophical attempt to find German origins in Ancient Greece—and saw Germany as 'an inheritor of Roman imperial tradition'.[85]

In this historical context, postwar reconstruction was a problematic affair since many German architects actively sought to come to terms with this painful heritage and were deeply distrustful of the 'monumentality still redolent of fascist tenets';[86] not only did they have aesthetic but also ethical grounds for repudiating the previous solemnity that standardized artistic experience through a totalitarian world view. After the war, Speer's architects reverted to Bauhaus, the most influential current in modernist architecture under the Weimar Republic, spearheaded by Walter Gropius (1919–28), Hannes Meyer (1928–30) and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1930–33). In 1933, the school was closed down by its own leadership under pressure from the Nazi Regime, which associated the 'degenerate art' of its 'un-German' modernism with social and communist liberals, and its adepts were often persecuted during the War. Thus, reconnecting with the Bauhaus architectural style could be seen as the affirmation of an ethical turn.

Germany's post-Holocaust architecture developed in two opposite directions which ran concurrently in intersecting timelines: on the one hand, the regrettable conflation of victims and perpetrators in testimonial monuments; on the other hand, the moral duty that emanated from the injunction not to forget, whose purpose was to stir a numbed collective guilt into acknowledging who the real victims of the Second World War were.

The early postwar period approach to memorialization did not segregate memorials from perpetrator sites, a trend that was revived in the conservative late 1980s and in the years following the Fall of the Berlin Wall. Although special emphasis was placed on the memorialization of concentration and labour camp sites as part of the West German state's commemorative policy, many examples were designed of what Markus Urban called the 'evasion of history', by building monuments and adding 'plaques with the intention of blurring the definition of "victim" beyond recognition'.[87] Such a tendency served to mask the past, to paper over the cracks of a traumatic history which a defeated nation was reluctant to acknowledge. Perhaps the best-known instances of this are the memorial stone in Bonn's North Cemetery and the Käthe Kollwitz sculpture in Berlin's Neue Wache (New Guardhouse), near the site of the new Deutsches Historisches Museum (Museum of German History). This approach was condemned by Jürgen Habermas in his response to Nolte, 'A Kind of Settlement of Damages (Apologetic Tendencies)', during the *Historikerstreit*, discussed at greater length in Chapter 2. Habermas showed how memorials were erected to honour indiscriminately both culprits and victims at the same time and in the same place. For the German philosopher, an inscription such as 'To the victims of war and the rule of violence' on the memorial stone in Bonn's North Cemetery required 'an enormous abstraction on the part of the observer'.[88] In particular, Habermas castigated Alfred Dregger, the leader of the Christian Democratic Union, for his appeal to 'deep-seated moral intuitions when, in his speech to the Bundestag on 25 April 1986, during the discussion about the erection of a new Bonn memorial, he adamantly rejected the view that one should distinguish between the culprits and the victims of the Nazi regime', as his agenda was clearly that 'the ritualizing recollection of the mutual experience of the nation's triumph and the nation's defeat was then supposed to help stabilize the unity and identity of the community'.[89]

In 1993, on *Volkstrauertag* (People's Mourning Day, celebrated annually on 14 November), the Neue Wache in Berlin was officially consecrated as Nationale Mahn- und Gedenkstätte (National Site of Admonition and Remembrance). An enlarged Käthe Kollwitz sculpture ('Mother with her Dead Son'), made by Harald Haacke and representing a woman who mourns for her child, was installed in the New Guardhouse and, on Chancellor Helmut Kohl's recommendation, was rededicated 'to the victims of war and the rule of violence'. Reproaches of the German politician soon followed, since the inscription, rather than paying a respectful

tribute to the Holocaust victims and the mass deaths of the Second World War, instead acknowledged the 2 million German soldiers who lost their lives during the First World War, to whom Käthe Kollwitz's original Pietà actually referred.[90] Embarrassingly, the new dedication now coincided with the very same ambiguous inscription, criticized seven years before by Habermas, on the Bonn memorial stone, a monument which should have illustrated West Germany's healthier politics of memory for generations born after the Second World War—to whom Kohl himself, born in 1930, therefore did not belong, despite his mesmerizingly self-indulgent excuse of having 'the grace of late birth'.[91]

The opposite attitude to commemoration is explored by Tania Schult, for whom the early 1980s marks a period when a 'renewal of the monument genre' took place, involving 'intense discussions about the genre's function, use, and possible appearance'.[92] Her chosen example is not of a monument erected in that decade but relates to a paradoxical event that took place in April 1990, when, at night and in secret, the German artist Jochen Gerz removed paving stones from the alley crossing the square in front of the Saarbrücken Castle, the seat of the Provincial Parliament, and replaced them with engraved ones bearing the names of Jewish cemeteries in use before the Second World War. The stones were placed with the inscribed side facing the ground so that the inscription remained invisible. Such a bold yet illegal gesture ironically sparked off a passionate public debate since '[t]he process of engraving names on the bottom side of the stones and replacing the stones in exactly the same order brings to mind the acts of concealment of the Nazi crimes during and after the war. It visualized the all-too-common pattern of brushing Nazi crimes under the carpet and pretending that nothing had happened'.[93] Gerz's three-year project was eventually approved by Parliament and retrospectively commissioned, with more names of Jewish cemeteries added. The name of the monument, 2146 Steine—Mahnmal gegen Rassismus (2146 Stones—Memorial against Racism), accounts for the number of stones engraved until its completion in May 1993. The whole area was also subsequently renamed Platz des unsichtbaren Mahnmals (The Square of the Invisible Monument).[94]

In 1993, the project of installing commemorative brass plaques in the pavement in front of the Nazi victims' last address of choice was formulated by artist Gunter Demnig in 'Größenwahn—Kunstprojekte für Europa' (Megalomania: Art Projects for Europe), perhaps an ironic recall of the utopian megalomania of National Socialism's architectural designs. Known as *Stolpersteine* (literally: 'stumbling blocks'), these 10 × 10

'stones', all beginning with 'HERE LIVED …', started being produced one year later; since then they have been laid in over 300 German cities, with over 4500 in Hamburg and around 3000 in Berlin alone, and have spread to some 16 other European countries.[95]

This more 'discreet', academically sanctioned form of remembering the Holocaust, which developed throughout the 1980s, corresponds to what Richard Crownshaw has called a 'countermonumental turn'. For Crownshaw, '[c]ountermonuments are designed to avoid the perceived fascistic connotations of monumentalism (the imposition on the public of a monolithic version of the past)'.[96] Whereas a traditional monument suggestively tells the visitor what to think, which could induce forgetting, a counter-monument aims to make them think so they can remember the process and experience. Nevertheless, such well-intentioned projects took shape alongside renewed attempts at toning down the past after the Fall of the Berlin Wall. Known as the 'Berlin Wall syndrome', this reactionary impulse in the throes of Germany's Reunification triggered a new stage in the building of memorials and monuments. Although many memorials were erected in post-Reunification Germany, which would seem to attest to a sustained positive attitude towards the past, Andreas Huyssen shrewdly observed that the more memorials are being constructed, thus trivialising the act of commemoration, the more invisible the past may paradoxically risk becoming, making redemption possible through oblivion. Huyssen's contention was that 'the discourse of redemption [*Erlösung*] had all but replaced the earlier discourses of restitution [*Wiedergutmachung*] and reconciliation [*Versöhnung*]. Indeed, the Germans have eagerly appropriated the first part of an old Jewish saying "the secret of redemption is memory"'.[97] This propensity towards redemption can also be understood within the framework of a 'politics of regret'[98] that is related to an endeavour to memorialize the negative past so as to be able to glimpse a bright future beyond, when the lessons from history will have been learnt and mistakes not repeated.

On the whole, more foreigners (often of Jewish origin) than native Germans contributed to changing radically the perception of memorials in Germany, and in Berlin in particular. In her somewhat excessive criticisms against Libeskind's Jewish Museum and Eisenman's National Holocaust Memorial, which will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 4, Bettina Mathes characterized as a 'refusal of responsibility' the German readiness to call on Jewish architects to build memorials to the crimes of National Socialism.[99] Adding the other examples of Micha Ullman (the Israel Prize laureate of the book-burning memorial

at Bebelplatz, Berlin) and Richard Serra (who erected the memorial to those murdered in the Nazi euthanasia programme), she wondered whether victims have a better memory and whether it was somehow easier for Germans to 'delegate the task of giving expression to the memory of Nazism and the Holocaust to those who once were the targets of Germany's genocidal politics'.[100] My contention is, on the contrary, that entrusting the construction of commemorative monuments to Jewish architects clearly reflects the country's matured decision to shoulder (rather than abdicate) its moral responsibility by putting the victimized people in charge of a reparative, participatory enterprise. *Pace* Mathes's charge of German sentimentalism towards 'Jews as "lost", and Jewish culture as ruin', her examples—either minutely criticised or mentioned in passing—should not be dismissed merely as 'national monuments [that] invite a certain degree of nostalgia as they fix memory, idealise history and transform the past into a lost home'.[101]

Between 1960 and 1963, when architect Hans Scharoun built the Philharmonie (Philharmonic Hall) in Berlin, a building which is now a twentieth-century cultural landmark, he may have been unaware that the place he had chosen for his construction was exactly where the National Socialists had planned some of their most atrocious murders: the programming of forced euthanasia, known as Aktion T4, that ran from September 1939– August 1941, when 70,273 people were killed in German and Austrian psychiatric hospitals at different extermination centres. In the 1980s, when the Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt (Berlin History Workshop) found out that the administration of Aktion T4 had taken place on the location of the Philharmonie at Tiergartenstraße 4, the West Berlin Senate decided to 'develop' a monument that would replace the exhibition for Berlin's 750-year jubilee which was being held here in a mobile school bus. The American minimalist sculptor and video artist Richard Serra was invited to place there a monument that already stood not far away from the site, in front of the Martin-Gropius-Bau. The artist's words and design fitted the architecture of the Philharmonie but were improper for the commemoration of those killed, provoking indignation among the Berliner Geschichtwerkstatt. Owing to people's protests, almost 50 years after Hitler's decision to eliminate disabled patients, in 1988, the Senate decided to proclaim the sculpture as a monument for euthanasia victims and to lay down a commemorative plate recalling the forgotten victims; the text on the plaque ended with the sentence: 'The number of the victims is great, small the number of convicted culprits'.

Mathes's second example is that of Micha Ullman's memorial, erected on the invitation of the city of Berlin after the architect won a 1993 competition, involving both German and foreign artists as well as art professors, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Nazi Book Burning of 10 May 1933. Ullman's design is an underground empty library with white concrete shelves that the visitor can see through a thick glass plate level with the ground on August-Bebel-Platz. The shelves can hold about 20,000 books, the estimated number consumed by fire on the infamous day when German libraries were 'purified' of around 400 blacklisted authors associated with 'Jewish intellectualism'.[102] A chillingly premonitory line of Heinrich Heine from his 1821 play *Almansor* is engraved on a bronze plaque inset in the square: 'Das war ein Vorspiel nur, dort wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man am Ende auch Menschen'. (That was only a prelude; where one burns books, one will in the end also burn people.) Both through a keen sense of historical reconstruction and in Heine's memorable prophecy, Ullman's memorial stands as a faithful, honest and evocative tribute to the victims of National Socialism.

Her last two examples are Peter Eisenman's National Holocaust Memorial and Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum, both of which were the winning entries for their respective national competitions. Peter Eisenman (initially in collaboration with Richard Serra, who left the project to Eisenman's sole direction after June 1998) was the winner for the National Holocaust Memorial out of 12 submissions judged by representatives not only from the field of architecture but also from urban design, history, politics and administration, including Frank Schirrmacher, co-editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Daniel Libeskind's entry to build a 'Jewish Department' extension to the Berlin Museum was selected from a pool of 165 German and 12 foreign participants.

With the exception of Serra's memorial, the other three projects were declared winners of a national contest adjudicated by panels of experts, whose criteria of assessment were, one would hope, based on the entries' architectural merits and originality rather than being influenced in any way by the competitors' origins. Be that as it may, it is obvious that both Eisenman and Libeskind irrevocably changed the course of memorial architecture, relegating to the dusty shelves of history the monolithic creations of yore in favour of provocative edifices endowed with more affect and versatile significance. I will illustrate this point by looking at the innovative ways in which the two architects engaged with the commemorative and historical dimension of architecture.

Eisenman's Holocaust Memorial and Libeskind's Jewish Museum

If, as we saw, several writers turned to the affective resources of silence-as-metaphor to deal with the difficulty of representing the unpresentable, an analogy could be made with the ways in which several architects relied on suggestive obliqueness and performative abstraction to evoke similar themes. In his conception of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (opened on 10 May 2005) as an 'architecture of affect', Peter Eisenman invented a space 'for the performance of emotional transformation'.[103] In his own words, the memorial did not invoke the 'memory of the past' but 'the living memory of the individual experience', thus making the past available through a personalized embodiment and manifestation in the present.[104]

The exterior monument comprises 2711 massive rectangular concrete slabs (*stelae*) conceived as cemetery stones and arranged in a grid pattern on an undulating field. An underground 'Place of Information' is attached to it, holding the names of approximately 3 million Jewish Holocaust victims, obtained from the Yad Vashem database, in the Room of Names. Other main spaces include: the Room of Sites, which records 200 sites of destruction and persecution of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe; the Room of Dimensions, home to diaries, letters, postcards and the last news ever received from the victims; the Room of Families, which presents 15 families and the Jewish way of life; and the Commemoration Site Portal, which offers information on other memorial sites of remembrance in Germany and Europe.[105] The *stelae* vary in height and width in somewhat unpredictable fashion, and, by being placed on a sloping surface the size of two football fields, they induce a feeling of seclusion and claustrophobia, a somatic and kinaesthetic affect conducive to experiencing ever so slightly the disarray of displaced and Holocaust victims. In Andreas Huyssen's view, the memorial is a perfect example of the strategy of 1990s memorial architecture, functioning 'both as mimesis and cover-up of another site memory, with the requisite monumentality to match the dimensions of Speer's original plan' of the North–South Axis and located north of Hitler's bunker, 'between [Speer's] megalomaniac Great Hall just north of the Brandenburg Gate and Hitler's triumphal arch to the south, which called for the names of the fallen of World War I to be carved in stone'.[106]

However, Huyssen's view is not unanimously shared. Brigitte Sion voiced her concern at the memorial's failure 'to perform remembrance'

because of its location in what used to be the old ministerial gardens, a place with no symbolic significance. In her opinion, the success of the monument is mainly as a public artwork in the heart of the Berlin urban landscape, its first stelae seemingly a natural prolongation of the sidewalk: 'There is no separation between the street and the memorial, which seems to grow from and recess into the asphalt'.[107] For Irit Dekel, Eisenman's Holocaust Memorial did not generate 'a narrative of rupture' but 'a movement between narratives of memory action, and not of the unmediated past': the memorial experience of visitors 'through representation, projection and reinscription of a visceral experience' is ultimately not one relating to trauma, and 'is not achieved in modes of transmission, however productive they may be, but instead of transformation'.[108] According to her, this severance from an increasingly receding past may help explain why Libeskind's Holocaust Tower in the Jewish Museum is sometimes confused by children with the gas chambers, or why visitors similarly compare the security personnel with Kapos or Stasi agents.[109] Dekel sees Eisenman's monument as a site of memory that belongs to 'a post-post-memorial age that brings into being the memory of an experience that is only loosely related to its historical references': when 'the imagination and creation is of a lost world', one does not focus on the past but on the present, which 'helps us depart from trauma as a main theoretical lens in studying memory action'.[110]

Similarly, in her analysis of several memorials, including Peter Eisenman's, Karyn Ball addresses the issue of what the intended audience of the memorial is and to whom its message is directed—in Young's words: 'Will it be a place for Jews to mourn lost Jews, a place for Germans to mourn lost Jews, or a place for Jews to remember what Germans once did to them?'[111] As a reply, Ball invokes Charlotte Knoblauch, the president of the Central Council of the Jews in Germany, who expressed the view that '[n]o member of the postwar generations should feel guilty', adding that 'whoever cannot feel proud of his or her nation, will become susceptible to the words of the radical right'.[112] In Ball's explanation, 'Knoblauch's reprieve calls for a frank confrontation with the question of why the generations born after the war should become the addressees of the memorial's message of responsible remembering, as if they could compensate for its stubborn repression among the generations who were complicit, not only with the crimes themselves, but also with a widespread failure to punish criminal individuals, groups, and businesses after the war'.[113]

Approaching the issue of the memorial's temporal endurance and functionality from Jewish practices, Johan Åhr contends that the abstractness of the monument 'cues the viewer to look beyond the individual, intimate face of death' and 'to philosophize universally about life', a form of productive memorialization through which 'to obliterate prejudice and all attendant evil, including violence and, through charity (*tzedakah*), poverty. This is to repair and revive the world, *tikkun olam*'.[114] For Åhr, confronting the visitors with abstraction proves to be more efficient than the bimillenary tendency 'to caricature and dehumanize our enemies', and transforms the monument into 'a nuanced and eclectic memorial'.[115]

Mathes's own objection to Eisenman's monument is that she is made to experience feelings at odds with his conception (with which she fully agrees) of what a Holocaust memorial should perform and avoid being:

> The memory of the Holocaust can never be a nostalgia. … The Holocaust cannot be remembered in the … nostalgic mode, as its horror forever ruptured the link between nostalgia and memory. … In this context, the monument attempts to present a new idea of memory as distinct from nostalgia.[116]

Confessing that, 'the further I walk into the memorial the more I am made to experience disorientation, loss and despair—"Jewish" disorientation, loss and despair', she then makes a useful distinction 'between empathy (a motivation towards the other person in which self and other remain separate) and identification (the self strives to become the other)', between 'feeling for' and 'feeling as'.[117] Identification brutally erases the respectful distance between the deportee's original incomparable experience and the visitor's imposed feelings, and collapses the necessity 'to be in memory of' into the kind of appropriative nostalgia from which Eisenman had wished to demarcate himself. The following captures the rejection of her overall experience of the Holocaust Memorial:

> I do not like how the memorial affects me. I do not want to be made to identify with Jewish Holocaust victims. I find it presumptuous to put myself in the position of a Jewish woman about to be deported to Auschwitz. I do not agree that the appropriation of a victimised position is an adequate form for the nation of perpetrators to remember its crimes. To me the memorial justifies Germany's sentimental investment in Jews as 'lost', and Jewish culture as ruin. I remain unconvinced by Eisenman's design and leave the site somewhat frustrated.[118]

The unmediated affect in her critical account ('I do not like', 'I do not want') feels slightly at odds with the distance (empathy versus identification) which she otherwise advocates as an equivalent of the 'rupture' between the traumatic memory and experiences of the past, and the visitor's present re-enactment. Emphasizing the necessity to maintain a gap between narrator and listener, Marco Belpoliti, the editor of Levi's interviews,[119] showed that distance between any form of representation of the Holocaust and subsequent critical examinations is indeed mandatory. Coincidentally, Dominick LaCapra stressed the necessity of a similar crucial opposition between 'empathetic unsettlement', which recognizes the difference of one's own position from the victim's and resists the appropriation of the experience of the other, and 'extreme' or 'unchecked identification', which merges one's subject position with that of the victim, resulting in 'making oneself a surrogate victim'.[120] But should the danger of this 'incorporation' of the other in the self— which would prevent the process of mourning from successfully taking place[121] and is associated by LaCapra and others with the overzealous identification of the historian or 'second witness' with the victims' testimonial writing—be transposed onto the case of a 'more casual' visitor like Mathes, even on her second visit? And is her excessive affective response precisely and ironically not also a form of 'identification in reverse' which suggests to her that she is made to put herself in the position of a deportee, extrapolating Eisenman's claims[122] and losing sight of the purpose of his project—regardless of the perverse use as 'a café, a backyard, an adventure playground, an apartment, a bedroom'[123] to which, as she rightly complains, the Memorial has been subjected? Far from involving herself in 'a critically controlled dialogic exchange with the past', as advised by LaCapra,[124] Mathes is reminded of her frustration 'larger than Peter Eisenman's architecture' on her way home, feeling that Eisenman's 'insistence on the anti-nostalgic character of his memorial seems like a defence against the nostalgic impulse inherent to all memorials', and is ultimately a 'belated attempt to fend off the ghosts of nostalgia'.[125] In the end, Mathes's annoyance at post-Wall Germany, which provides the wider ideological context for her approach to Eisenman's Memorial, is so deep that such memorials conceived under the aegis of Reunification become a novel form of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*: 'Despite the suffering the Berlin Wall inflicted, on a collective level it helped both West Germany and East Germany to split off feelings of guilt for the Holocaust and to move on into a brighter future untarnished by mass murder and war—the Wall as ersatz therapy'.[126]

Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum is not spared either, and this time Mathes's target is the architect's most innovative feature, which will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 4: the void. Libeskind's key structural element becomes, under her pen, an 'architectural metaphor' that 'builds a defence against recollection', a symbol associated with 'the perverse fantasy of total elimination: in a world in which the dead do not leave a trace behind, the past ceases to exist; in a world where the past is conceived of as void the obligation to address its consequences does not make sense'.[127] In her acerbic tone, one senses an impatience with, at best, what can be called the 'sublime aporia' of the void, or more sombrely the evacuation of the duty to keep present or 're-present': 'does the void allow Germans to ignore the repercussions of anti-Semitism, murder and the Holocaust in the present?'[128]

Mathes's petulant reasoning, however, does not stand up to scrutiny if one takes remotely seriously any of Libeskind's numerous explanations or comments about his museum and his work in general, in particular his insistence on history. In a lecture he gave in Weimar in 1998, the Polish-American architect spoke of the duty of responsibility one has towards history, and how the past was not to be regarded passively but rather had to be actively engaged with:

> History is not a story with a happy or unhappy ending, but rather a process that in its very anonymity produces no meaning at all. Rather, this process calls for a human response to its own injustice. The call of the process asks one to preserve the trace of the unborn—not to obliterate its absence or evade its groundlessness—to do justice to it through the work of memory. (*SE* 21)

If one explicitly addresses Mathes's own interpretive framework (post-Wall Germany), Libeskind was among those architects who fought against completely erasing the memory of a regime associated with the 'Wall of Shame' and who deplored the alacrity with which the Wall was vanishing physically as much as symbolically (with as much speed as it had been erected) without much public debate. In this light, the view of this insistent structural element of the void in the Jewish Museum as a repeated affirmation of erasure and amnesia is rather short-sighted, as if there was no difference between the void as an impossible figuration of past destruction (Libeskind) and its equation with what managed to remain or reconstitute itself of Jewish culture, etc.—leaving aside until

Chapter 4 possible philosophical objections to the void's ontological status. Libeskind's work, and its insistent figures, is actually a pointed critique levelled at a culture that periodically attempts to domesticate intractable events like the Holocaust. For Libeskind, the Fall of the Berlin Wall was the outcome of a political decision whose deeper roots can be traced back to 'the destruction unleashed by the Second World War and particularly by the Holocaust'.[129] One of his projects, 'Traces of the Unborn', explicitly emphasized 'the need to resist the erasure of history' and 'to respond to history', as well as the urge 'to open the future: that is, to delineate the invisible on the basis of the visible' (*SE* 195). The architect's task is consequently to delve into and uncover the invisible in order to bring it into the realm of the material and the perceptual, as well as to peer behind ideological iron curtains and smokescreens.

Libeskind's early architectural projects informed his conviction that memory must remain alive because the past and its lessons can become 'an opportunity pregnant with new relations and urban experiences' (*SE* 196). One such project is 'Mourning', Libeskind's entry for a competition to design a housing estate on the site of the former Sachsenhausen concentration camp, which deliberately disregarded the competition's brief and instead proposed a memorial to the victims of the death camp since the latter '[could] not be hidden or detached from the site that formed its historical context and infrastructure', and thus made the site inappropriate for a housing estate (*SE* 90). Against the historians who wanted to reconstruct the decayed buildings in order to preserve history, which would have required vast sums of money and would have eventually produced 'a mockery, a kitsch, a misunderstanding of history', the architect advocated that the former SS buildings be left to disintegrate over time (*SE* 90). Accordingly, Libeskind's proposal kept the triangle that connected the axis of the camp's administrative headquarters to the crematorium and to the commandant's villa in order to generate an altered relationship for the site, devising 'a configuration of buildings with specific uses' which he called the 'Hope Incision' ('T' 51). The project to keep the foundations of the buildings which were to be flooded and create a 'sunken archaeological zone' (*SE* 91) is etched in its very title, in which the crossed-out 'u' of 'mourning' graphically reflects the transformation of a site of death into a new day (morning).

These few contextual considerations have been made in order to dispel Mathes's extraordinary notion that the representation of Jews as 'lack' shows Libeskind's own 'lack of experience of contemporary Germany'

and ignorance that—to repeat her own reiterated mantra—'the nostalgic fetishisation of Jews as "lost" and Jewish culture as ruin has been a defining characteristic of postwar Germany'.[130] A former graduate of Humboldt University, Mathes informs us at the end of her essay that, two years before the completion of the museum, Libeskind was awarded an honorary doctorate from her very *Alma Mater* for his design of the Jewish Museum. In his acceptance speech, suggestively entitled 'Beyond the Wall', the Polish-American architect emphasized the necessity to transgress 'the wall and the straight line in his architecture', without mentioning the Berlin Wall, which, Mathes argues, would have perturbed his audience, a claim that can be yet again factually contradicted by Libeskind's pronouncements against the swift cancellation of the Wall's history in public consciousness.

And yet her qualms about Libeskind's problematic insistence on (the representation of) absence and loss will need further consideration, when we look in greater detail at Derrida's 'Response to Daniel Libeskind' in Chapter 4. For the moment, let us finally mention her allegation, made about Libeskind's Humboldt University speech, that 'his language remained vague, more like a string of associations and metaphors than a lecture', for instance when he declared that architecture 'is and remains the ethical, the true, the good and the beautiful'.[131] Assuming that Libeskind meant what is usually understood by 'the true, the good and the beautiful', one should at least point out that the museum's aesthetic layout goes against classical symmetry of structure or 'beautiful' principles, and celebrates asymmetry in the new building's sharp angles and zigzagging lines. In its stark juxtaposition to the Baroque façade of the Kollegienhaus, to which it is connected by underground passages *invisible* on the surface, the Berlin Jewish Museum makes a statement about the nature of history's dialogue between the past and the present.

4   A New Concept: The Experiential Museum

Notwithstanding the high pitch of Mathes's entrenched criticism, the impression of nostalgia that she detected especially in Libeskind's Jewish Museum has been picked up by other critics such as Andreas Huyssen, Amy Sodaro and Florian Rohdenburg, and needs addressing. Recalling Jeffrey Olick's view that memorial museums emerge from a particular orientation toward the past, which he called a 'politics of regret', Amy Sodaro highlights the new direction or 'politics of nostalgia' taken by the Jewish Museum. Defined as 'a screen upon which present-day Germany

can project an idealized image of its past in the hope that this image will redeem the present and shape the future', Libeskind's project could threaten 'to erase not only the difficult past that it only obliquely addresses but also some of the present tensions around German national identity and multiculturalism'.[132] With its mixed rejection of and resemblance to other memorial museums, its conflict between innovation and conventionality (see Chapter 4), it can evoke confusedly contradictory feelings in the visitor and casts doubt about 'the very possibility of self-reflexive national memory in an age in which we speak of the demise of the nation-state' that 'remains at the heart of our geopolitical constellation and our collective memory and identity'.[133]

Sodaro also calls our attention to other social institutions which are taking on museological forms and properties; somewhat ironically, museums come to increasingly resemble shopping centres and theme parks in their tendency to showcase their exhibits or the past with purely utilitarian and entertainment purposes:

> The museification of many of our social institutions reflects the privileged place that museums have in contemporary society: museums are a—or the— key institution through which we understand our past and present identities. They are considered to be trustworthy houses of 'authenticity' and 'history' and as such they are among the most prominent institutions for education about and preservation of the past.[134]

Interestingly, Libeskind also designed the Westside Shopping and Leisure Centre in Bern, and some of the angles of the shopping mall bear some affinity to the geometry of the Jewish Museum's voids. In speaking of museums unabashedly in terms of 'public discourse', 'public activity' and 'public attraction', Libeskind's sincerity is potentially disturbing: 'Perhaps it is the case today, in a secular world, museums like sporting events, are the places where people are mirrored in artifacts which testify to their existence' (*JMB 16*).[135] Sodaro explains—without considering the special case of museums being made increasingly available online via 'tasters' in virtual tours—that since contemporary museums have to compete willy-nilly against a wide range of educational media and technologies that can often be accessed from the comfort of one's own home, they have to come up with features that can persuade people to go and see them. Thus, they have to be 'geared toward a society that is increasingly looking for "emphatic experiences [and] instant illumination"'.[136] Using the telling example of

the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, to which we will return, Sodaro shows how these 'experiential museums' concentrate more 'on teaching and creating an experience for the visitor than they [… do] on the more traditional museological functions of collecting and displaying'.[137]

An experiential museum is not built to tell a story but rather as a call on the museum-goers to give up a conventionally pre-scripted passive role and, instead, conduct their visit in a more active, affective way by becoming 'role-playing characters'; experiential museums are a sort of participatory playground where human interaction is fostered around nodal points. According to Sandra H. Dudley, since museums are traditionally mostly 'don't-touch places' that do not encourage or allow visitors to enlist other senses than sight and thus offer a limited experience, people 'might involuntarily add some sensory dimensions further to the visual, automatically suffusing' their 'sight experience' in an attempt to 'actively and consciously' increase their sensory engagement with the objects, paintings or photographs, imagining for instance the 'ghosts' of people associated with the objects in the museum.[138] Hence the increasing necessity for museums, whether they are labelled 'experiential', 'memory',[139] 'narrative'[140] or simply 'new',[141] to invite their audience to participate in reimagining 'representation'; such museums no longer aspire 'to any totalizing synthesis, but to a mode of representation that has so far been the domain of art, film and literature'.[142] For Silke Arnold-de Simine, they encourage visitors' empathy and ultimately affective identification with individual sufferers and victims, albeit in a prescribed fashion: '[t]he stated aim might be to disturb the visitors into a state of active responsibility, yet as a site of moral and national instruction the openness of this "text" is limited, not least by interpellating a predetermined moral subject'.[143]

For such a 'test case' as the Holocaust, where the inadequacy of cognition in the face of victims' experiences is also at stake, as we saw previously, such a redeployment of the museological function was *de rigueur*. Apart from the Jewish Museum in Berlin, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem come to mind as examples of such a 'narrative museum'.[144] By far the most visited museum in the American capital, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum was designed to make the tale of the whole truth gradually unfold, beginning with the exhibition of fragments from survivors' filmed testimonies. With collections of more than 12,750 artefacts, 49 million pages of archival documents, 80,000 historical photographs, 200,000 registered survivors, 1000 hours of archival footage, 84,000 library items, and 9000 oral history

testimonies, the museum contains a hexagonal gallery called the Hall of Remembrance, where visitors can memorialize the event in complete silence by lighting candles. Upon entering, the visitor is given the 'passport' of a victim, a document which will accompany him/her in their journey through a reconstructed Ghetto in Poland, a forest in Lithuania; then, after being transported in an authentic railway car, the visitor will be made to feel like a 'prisoner' in an Auschwitz barrack. The emotional impact on the visitor will resemble that of 'novels, plays or motion pictures'.[145] The sense of an 'experience'—of being etymologically 'put to the test' (Latin: *experiri*, from Greek *peras*: limit; related to *periculum*: danger) and made to cross a dangerous limit—lies at the core of the museum, 'built to remember and educate about past atrocity, violence, or trauma'[146] so that the visitor leaves as a different person from the one who entered. The two main materials used by James Ingo Freed, glass and steel, carry a message that a classical museum built of stone and mortar could not: glass panels create visual effects via refraction. Names of places that have lost their Jewish population partially or entirely are carved alphabetically in straight lines on the glass walls of a corridor, while the first names of victims (more discreet than inscriptions on a gravestone) are engraved into the glass wall of another. Likened by Liliane Weissberg to 'smoke from chimneys', these names seemed 'to dance in air'. In her view, the layout of the museum 'alludes not only to the architectural models of the ghetto and concentration camp, but also to the refraction in which we are now forced to view the historical events'.[147]

The Tower of Faces (also known as the Tower of Life), a 54-foot-high, 16-foot-by-28-foot sky-lit space, was designed to hold on permanent display the 1500 photographs of the people of Eišiškės (Lithuania) pictured in various secular activities. It can be entered only by crossing over the translucent glass bridge on the third and fourth floors. The photographs of the former villagers, used to mediate the narrative of victimization, are laminated over aluminium sheets. They were reassembled by a Jewish survivor of Eišiškės, Yaffa Eliach,[148] who managed to hide during the Nazi occupation in 1941, but lost her mother and brother in 1944 when they were killed by the Polish Home Army on their return to their village.

In *Memory, Photography, and the Holocaust,* Andrea Liss provides an accurate, sensitive reading of the layout:

> The recurring glass bridge allowing entrance into the broken prism of lives and destruction suggests a slow unfolding and a tender yet unswerving

approach to the events. If the small photographic semblances of persons on the identity cards buffer the museum visitor from the horrific while they also allow the accompanying text to do its narrative work, the photographs measuring one to three feet in height that line the Tower of Faces not only become performative bridges to representation but also pervade the hauntingly articulated space.[149]

In addition to this, destroyed communities appear as if suggested synecdochically in an installation of a mountain of shoes that belonged to the victims of the Majdanek concentration camp in Poland. In a stimulating account of the Holocaust Museum, Weissberg begins her analysis of the meanings of this pile of shoes with the words of Miles Lerman, national campaign chairman for the museum, who recalled the transfer of artefacts from Poland in one of his fund-raising letters:

I was asked to pose for a photograph with one of these items—a child's shoe. Let me tell you, when this little shoe was handed to me, I froze. Bear in mind that I am a former partisan. I was hardened in battle and I deal with this Holocaust story almost on a daily basis. But when I held in my hand that shoe—the shoe of a little girl who could have been my own granddaughter—it just devastated me.[150]

The identity of a pair of shoes, as Weissberg reveals, was ironically the example that Martin Heidegger, sadly remembered for his ambivalence towards National Socialism, used in a memorable essay on the distinctive singularity of the artwork. Drafted between 1935 and 1937, and reworked for publication in 1950 and again in 1960, 'The Origin of the Work of Art' focuses on a painting by Vincent van Gogh depicting a pair of peasant shoes in order to assert the unique authenticity of the artwork. Musing on the significance of this apparently humble 'equipment', Heidegger concluded lyrically: 'On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls. In the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field'.[151] The shoes prompted a speculation about the occupation of its owner (a peasant woman), the anxiety of earning one's daily bread, therefore a whole truthful dimension ('equipmental being') that would have remained undiscovered, had one simply looked at them as 'empty, unused shoes'.[152] In his 1968 essay 'The Still Life as a Personal Object: A Note on Heidegger and Van Gogh', the respected art critic Meyer Schapiro

took issue with Heidegger's 'fanciful' reconstruction, arguing that it had missed the artist's presence (and misattributed those shoes, which were van Gogh's) and equating the wooden clogs with a study of physiognomy, since they replaced the portrait of a face. As Weissberg comments, '[i]f Schapiro described the shoes as a form of portrait painting, these faces lost their features, they become unrecognizable'.[153]

The curators of the Holocaust Museum did not opt to display one single pair of shoes standing for the many, but a whole mound of them that 'speak less about the sufferings of their bearers, than of their lives cut short by suffering and death'.[154] Individuality—and the impossibility of 'restitution'[155]—is turned into an unknown, 'faceless mass. The pile of shoes revises van Gogh's painting as an installation that resembles conceptual art'.[156] For Weissberg, 'the installation of a mountain of shoes translates into the experience of the vastness of a crime; it is a peculiar form of the sublime'.[157] It re-enacts the principle according to which individuals were deprived and despoiled in the most extreme and radical fashion, first of their possessions, then of their dignity, and finally of their own lives. Despite the inevitable aestheticization of the experience, 'what is on display is not the horrific real, but artifactual remnants mandated to bring the viewer to a place of difficult approach, a place of fleeting, overwhelming, and yet resistant empathy'.[158] Besides, as Liss further explains, as long as the visitor has retained a link with the person pictured on the identity card whose history s/he keeps in his/her hands, 'that shard of humanity has … merged with the repetitive identities that become more indistinguishable as the eye follows the massive groupings of shoes from the foreground to the elevated background of the stylized heap'.[159]

The permanent exhibition at Yad Vashem, Israel's national memorial for the Nazi genocide, understandably houses the largest collection of Holocaust art in the world, featuring thousands of photographs and personal belongings of victims, especially of the Jews who actively resisted their Nazi tormentors during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Established in 1953, Yad Vashem has become a symbol for the state created in 1948 out of postwar necessity, alongside the religious symbol of the Wailing Wall where foreign officials hosted by Israel are expected to pay their respects. In the past, until the ascending was made easier recently, to reach Yad Vashem, the visitor had to climb up the steep slope of Mount of Remembrance in a supreme effort that mobilized both body and mind, a painful ascent suggestive of the ordeal endured by Jews on their journey to Hell. Likewise, nowadays, visitors who enter the Children's Memorial

section at Yad Vashem 'must descend between walls of Jerusalem stone into a tunnel, which leads into an underground cavern', experiencing changes in light, temperature, and physical orientation which prepare them to pass from reality into 'the sacred space of memorialization'.[160]

'Between the Lines',[161] Daniel Libeskind's entry for the competition to build the Jewish Museum, mentioned the necessity to rethink 'ethical duty', requiring that the museum should surpass the viewer's passive participation. In his exchange with Jacques Derrida, Libeskind related the jury's surprise at seeing the project written on musical notepaper. The members of the jury, all lovers of nineteenth-century German music, felt compelled to enter into a discussion on the relationship 'of the five straight lines of the staff, the notes, how one might play it', and whether the support was a statement or a motif (*RM* 112). Thus, the museum was open to different interpretations from the very moment of its inception on paper. By the time it was built, it had generated so much interest and curiosity that visitors started crowding in even before the space was fully populated with exhibits. According to Elke Heckner, '[Libeskind's] interactive conception of space has a visceral impact on visitors, and it is thus inseparable from the ethical dimension of his aesthetics, which poses the question of how to relate to the absent other', a relation that 'ought to be informed by a dialectic of absence and presence, a dialectic that is structured by "the destruction of the community and by its real yet also virtual presence"'.[162] The museum starts with a journey along three 'streets', each having a singular destination: the Garden, the Holocaust Tower and the Stair of Continuity ('BLOS' 26), each confronting visitors in turn with loss, confusion, horror and endurance. A captivating account of her spatial experience inside the Jewish Museum was given by the actress and film director Jody Foster, who felt that she was being put on a train and shipped away to a camp. Her impressions were based on the long corridors, reminiscent of train stations, and on the fact that when being let into the Holocaust Tower, five people at a time, she could hear Berlin beyond without being able to see it, as if in a train.[163]

The aim of such 'orchestrated' mental journeys inside experiential museums is precisely to move and transpose the visitor into another reality. In the words of Florian Rohdenburg, a former researcher at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies in Washington, DC, who has done archival research for both Yad Vashem and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, 'Holocaust memorials may bother people, but that is what they should do. The more confrontation and the less comfort you feel when you visit the memorial, the better a service it renders'.[164]

5   The History of the Berlin Jewish Museum

During the Second World War, the capital of the Third Reich became the official symbol of a destructive, totalitarian regime, and its relentless bombing by the Allies was the hefty tribute it was made to pay for its sombre role in history: in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee the *Endlösung*, or 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question', was secretly formulated on 20 January 1942; in Berlin, the November 1938 pogroms, then the massive war deportations and liquidations had taken a most heavy toll on the Jewish community. On 13 August 1961, the 'Wall of Shame' or 'Anti-Fascist Protective Wall' (depending on which side of the political divide one stood) was erected to split Berlin in two, cutting off West Berlin from East Berlin and surrounding East Germany in a more brutal way than the postwar dismantling of the once-powerful Prussian city into four Sectors had achieved. In Libeskind's concise historical formula, '[t]he modern world is inseparable from the name Berlin' (*HJMB* 15). It is appropriate to invoke here Maurice Blanchot's poignant evocation of Berlin's fate as a site of segregation:

> Berlin is not only Berlin, but also the symbol of the division of the world, and even more: a 'point in the universe', the place where reflection on the both necessary and impossible unity imposes itself on each and every one who lives there, and who, while living there, has not only the experience of a domicile, but also that of the absence of a domicile. This is not all. Berlin is not only a symbol, but a real city in which human dramas unknown to other big cities are performed: here, division is a name for tearing apart. This is not all. Berlin presents, in unusual terms, the problem of opposition between two cultures within the same cultural context, of two languages without inner relation inside the same language, and thus challenges the assumption of intellectual security and the possibility of communication normally granted to those who live together by virtue of sharing the same language and historical past.[165]

The Wall made visible this tear through the historical fabric of a once-united city and constructed 'a sociological reality constituted by two absolutely different cities'.[166] Thus, after its Fall in November 1989, Berlin, which soon became (alongside Bonn, the former seat of a demoted West Germany) the capital of reunified Germany, was home to its lost, torn-apart memory that included also the Jews who had lived there before the War. It is in such a fraught historico-political, symbolically charged context that building the nation's emblematic Jewish Museum was carried out.

The history of the Berlin Jewish Museum goes back to its first incarnation, ominously opened just one week before Hitler's installation as chancellor in January 1933. It was accommodated in the Jewish district Scheunenviertel, in the Oranienburger Straße complex, close to the Synagogue and the Jewish community centre and library, and served for five years, mounting several important exhibitions, including of works by the Berlin Secessionists led by the German-Jewish artist Max Liebermann. After the Nuremberg laws of September 1935 defined Jews as 'un-German', segregation and ostracization were more vigorously introduced and only Jewish artists and visitors were allowed into the museum. By the time the Nazis had accomplished their goal of economically and culturally isolating the Jewish community, excluding them from shared public spaces and forcing them into internal exile, the Museum underwent the fate that the Final Solution was to decree for the Jewish people four years later: its annihilation in the November 1938 pogroms. The museum was plundered during the infamous *Kristallnacht* and its manager, Franz Landsberger, arrested and sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp before he eventually managed to leave Germany.

The Nazis damaged beyond repair the Oranienburger Straße Synagogue complex, which had to be demolished in 1958. Two years later, Heinz Galinski, head of West Berlin's Jewish community, openly declared that the city was under obligation to build a Jewish Museum in order to replace the old one. Two years after the inauguration of the new museum in the Kollegienhaus on Lindenstrasse in 1969, the first exhibition, dedicated to Jewish life ('Contribution and Fate: 300 Years of the Jewish Community in Berlin, 1671–1971'), was organized on its premises. Four years later, the Berlin Senate established a Jewish 'department' within the Berlin Museum. Although planners' original intention was to add a wing to an already existing museum, in 1988 the Senate approved financing for a 'Jewish Museum Department' which was to become an autonomous building. In June 1989 the competition for a 'Jewish Department' expansion for the Berlin Museum closed with Libeskind as one of 12 foreigners among the 177 entrants. His project, entitled 'Between the Lines', was declared the winner despite the fact that it seemed well-nigh unbuildable.[167] The construction of the addition to the Berlin Museum started in 1992 and lasted seven years, during which it underwent a series of name changes, from the Extension (*Erweiterungsbau*) of the Berlin Museum with the Jewish Department,

to the Extension of the Berlin Museum with the Jewish Museum, the Jewish Department in the Stadtmuseum, the Jewish Museum in the Stadtmuseum, and finally the Jewish Museum Berlin. In 1999, having aroused enormous curiosity and interest, it started to be visited before the artefacts were placed inside, three years later.

Libeskind was very much aware of the heavy symbolism of the city's past, as can be seen in the following extract:

> Both the memory and the history of the city are so substantial that even visitors who hardly know Berlin of the 1920s or 1890s attempt to see through the vacancy of the sites to understand what that history might have looked like. (*HJMB* 15)

Libeskind's purposeful desire to build such a project was motivated by the specificity of Berlin history and culture: 'Berlin, as the center of the destruction of European Jews, was the center of both devastation and transformation' (*HJMB* 15). The architect's intention was to get to 'the crossroads of history', since the Extension was located at the intersection of Wilhelmstraße, Friedrichstraße and Lindenstraße, an area once inhabited by many Jews. Its aim was, in Libeskind's words, 'to reconnect the trace of history to Berlin and Berlin to its own eradicated memory which should not be camouflaged, disowned or forgotten'; such a memory had to be 'reopened' and made 'visible' in a city whose history had to be made known, yet also connected to a positive future 'by transforming the urban field into an open and hope-oriented matrix'.[168]

In her study on witnessing, Kelly Oliver makes a distinction between dominance ('to be empowered' or 'to be recognized'), or to be visible, and marginality ('to be disempowered', 'misrecognized' or 'not recognized'), that is to be rendered invisible.[169] Libeskind's purpose was to make Jewish people visible in Berlin; thus, if one follows Oliver, similarly to other faculties of apprehending, vision is affected by social energies as much as by other forms of energy (like the mechanical or photic energy), which is why theorists speak about a 'politics of vision or the visibility or invisibility of the oppressed'.[170] The Jews had to be made visible again and brought back into the light, and Libeskind saw to it that their past invisibility in the sombre years after Hitler's rise to power and throughout the War would be offset in the Museum's conception, as was clearly stated by the director of the Jewish Museum, Michael Blumenthal: 'the chief aim of the museum will be to bring a sense of the richness of Jewish cultural life

in Germany before the Holocaust'.[171] In a published interview, the former deputy director of the Jewish Museum in Berlin, Tom Freudenheim, explained that, contrary to most museums, the Berlin Jewish Museum started from a narrative it wished to tell, for which it then sought appropriate exhibits:

> About half of the building will be a permanent exhibition, its narrative story. We have written a story and are in the process now of figuring out how to tell that story. Most museums start with material they have and then figure out what the story is that they can tell about the material they have. We are not starting out with objects, we're starting out with a story. Our narrative has been generally laid out. We look at that story and say, how do we tell that story in the context of a museum? What are the artifacts that we need in order to tell that story? … And, what part of the story can't be told through artifacts, but may have to be described in some other way—audio, video, models, reproductions, photographs?[172]

The story that Libeskind built, the conflictual intersection of two peoples, is suggested by the Museum's very structure, a Baroque wing (the Kollegienhaus), signifying the stately 'Aryan' element, from which visitors descend into the Extension, a twisted zigzagging set of passages standing for the chequered patterns of Jewish history. Attitudes towards this clashing mixture of the classical heritage with the avant-gardist Extension varied from overtly positive responses, like James Young's and Andreas Huyssen's (see *infra*), to hostile reactions, by visual art critics like Bettina Mathes (discussed previously) and Peter Chametzky, or historian-journalist Rick Atkinson. Whereas Atkinson simply dubbed the museum a 'monstrosity',[173] in an essay ominously entitled 'Not What We Expected: The Jewish Museum Berlin in Practice', Chametzky registered his unease with the project's conceptual name, which operated similarly to 'a prosthesis, a functional, mechanical, "added-on" device' used to suggest 'the visible sign of bodily damage, attached to the still intact, proportional, 1735 classical German Baroque Kollegienhaus'.[174] Chametzsky aired his deep concern with the fact that the intended (and, for some, actual) effect of nausea which the tourist was made to feel when crossing the slanted surface of the E.T.A. Hoffmann Garden of Exile 'would consciously or unconsciously associate a "Jewish" experience with infirmity and sickness', an otherwise overused 'anti-Semitic trope inscribed into the JMB design and somatically into the visitor experience'. This was felt as a sharp contrast to the image of 'health' that

Norman Foster's contemporaneous renovation of the Reichstag building was proposing (a glass dome built to symbolize the reunification of Germany).[175] As I will show in the presentation of the Garden of Exile, Libeskind's purpose was radically different from what Chametzsky presumed: the effect of nausea was meant to convey to the visitor a glimpse of what Jews had felt when their lives were in such precarious balance. The feelings of disorientation and displacement that the building attempts to instil belong to what Bart Van der Straeten named 'compelling memory', which is part of the 'historically preservative function': increasingly narrowing corridors, dead ends that function 'as an active memory in everyday Berlin consciousness'.[176]

Poised as we are now on the threshold of memory and history, and after so many contextual configurations, we are about to step at last into Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum and confront the ethical vision behind its aesthetic design. For that purpose, we shall be accompanied part of the way by a special guide, Emmanuel Levinas, whose idea of ethics may prove fruitful in our attempt to unlock the secrets of Libeskind's architectural space.

NOTES

1. Neil Leach, 'Introduction', in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), xiii.

2. See Peter L. Laurence, 'Modern (or Contemporary) Architecture circa 1959', in *A Critical History of Contemporary Architecture: 1960–2010*, ed. Elie G. Haddad and David Rifkind (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 1.

3. See Tanja Schult, *A Hero's Many Faces: Raoul Wallenberg in Contemporary Monuments* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 15–16.

4. Mary McLeod, 'Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism', in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1998), 683. The essay appeared initially in *Assemblage* 8 (February 1989).

5. See Schult, *A Hero's Many Faces,* 16.

6. McLeod, 'Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era', in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. Hays, 686.

7. Laurence, 'Modern (or Contemporary) Architecture circa 1959', in *A Critical History of Contemporary Architecture: 1960–2010*, ed. Haddad and Rifkind, 16.

8. Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, intro. Vincent Scully (London: Architectural Press, 1977 [1966]).

9. David Rifkind, 'Post-Modernism: Critique and Reaction', in *Critical History of Contemporary Architecture: 1960–2010*, ed. Haddad and Rifkind, 32.

10. Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, intro. Peter Eisenman, trans. Diane Ghirardo and Joan Ockman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982 [1966]).

11. This is Rifkind's apt description in his 'Post-Modernism: Critique and Reaction', in *Critical History of Contemporary Architecture: 1960–2010*, ed. Haddad and Rifkind, 38.

12. Charles Jencks, *The Language of Postmodern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977). Further polemic contributions will include *Critical Modernism—Where is Post-Modernism Going?* (2007), which argues that postmodernism is a critical reaction to modernism from within modernism itself, and *The Story of Post-Modernism, Five Decades of the Ironic, Iconic and Critical in Architecture* (2011), a summary of the history of the movement since its inception in the 1960s.

13. Jean-François Lyotard, 'Note on the Meaning of "Post-"', in *The Postmodern Explained to Children: Correspondence 1982–1985*, trans. Don Barry et al., trans. and ed. Julian Pefanis and Morgan Thomas (London: Turnaround, 1992), 89.

14. Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity—An Incomplete Project', trans. Seyla Ben-Habib, in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. and intro. Hal Foster (London: Pluto Press, 1985 [1983]), 3. In this well-known polemic against postmodern thinkers, Habermas classified the new generation into 'young conservatives', who 'claim as their own the revelations of a decentered subjectivity, emancipated from the imperatives of work and usefulness' (a line from Bataille via Foucault to Derrida), 'old conservatives', who 'do not allow themselves to be contaminated by cultural modernism', and 'neoconservatives' who 'welcome the development of modern science as long as this goes beyond its sphere to carry forward technical progress, capital growth and rational administration' (14).

15. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 2.

16. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 62.

17. See Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. and intro Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 2001 [1971]), 143. See also, in the same volume, '… Poetically Man Dwells …', 225 (211–227).

18. Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Existence, Space & Architecture* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

19. See Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991 [1979]), 23.

20. Christian Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling: On the Way to Figurative Architecture* (New York: Electa, 1985), 48.

21. Juhani Pallasmaa, 'An Architecture of the Seven Senses', in *Architecture and Urbanism*: Special Issue 'Questions of Perception, Phenomenology of Architecture', ed. Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa and Alberto Pérez-Gómez (San Francisco: William Stout Publishers), July 1994, 35.

22. Pallasmaa, 'An Architecture of the Seven Senses', in *Architecture and Urbanism*, ed. Holl, Pallasmaa and Pérez-Gómez, 35.

23. See Pallasmaa, 'An Architecture of the Seven Senses', in *Architecture and Urbanism*, ed. Holl, Pallasmaa and Pérez-Gómez, 35.

24. Steven Holl, 'Questions of Perception—Phenomenology of Architecture', in *Architecture and Urbanism*, ed. Holl, Pallasmaa and Pérez-Gómez, 40.

25. Bernard Tschumi, 'Parc de la Villette', in *Deconstruction: Omnibus Volume*, ed. Andreas Papadakis, Catherine Cooke and Andrew Benjamin (London: Academy Editions, 1989), 180.

26. Douglas Tallack, 'Architecture and Deconstruction', *Paragraph* 19.1 (1996), 70.

27. Tallack, 'Architecture and Deconstruction', 70.

28. Academy Editions later published several reviews, in addition to a concise introduction to deconstruction featuring two essays by Christopher Norris and Andrew Benjamin. For Benjamin, who identified Hiromi Fuji's Ushimado Art Center (Japan), Frank Gehry's Winton Guest House (USA), Bernard Tschumi's Parc

de la Villette and Daniel Libeskind's City Edge project for Berlin as deconstructivist projects, the most visible sign of deconstruction in architects' work is the 'centrality of dwelling'. See Andrew Benjamin, 'Deconstruction in Art/The Art of Deconstruction', in *What Is Deconstruction?*, ed. Christopher Norris and Andrew Benjamin (London: Academy Editions, 1988), 40.

29. Philip Johnson, in 'Museum of Art, New York: Deconstructivist Architecture', in *Architecture Theory since 1968,* ed. Hays, 677. Compare with Jacques Derrida's 'schematic and preliminary reflections on the word "deconstruction"', in 'Letter to a Japanese Friend' (trans. David Wood and Andrew Benjamin, in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume II*), emphasizing 'what deconstruction is not, or rather *ought* not to be' in determining how it could be translated (1).

30. Hal Foster, 'Postmodernism: A Preface', in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. Hal Foster (London: Pluto, 1985), xii.

31. See Tallack, 'Architecture and Deconstruction', 71–72.

32. McLeod, 'Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era', in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. Hays, 686.

33. See McLeod, 'Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era', in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. Hays, 686.

34. McLeod, 'Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era', in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. Hays, 686.

35. McLeod, 'Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era', in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. Hays, 690.

36. See Tallack, 'Architecture and Deconstruction', 75, who quotes from Wigley in *Deconstructivist Architecture*, ed. Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1988), 18–19: '[Deconstructivist architecture] carries out the kind of subversion usually regarded as possible only in the realms distanced from the reality of built form. The projects are radical precisely because they do not play in the sanctuaries of drawing, or theory, or sculpture. They inhabit the realm of building. Some have been built, some will be built, and others will never be built—but each is buildable, each aims at building'.

37. McLeod, 'Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era', in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. Hays, 694.

38. Jacques Derrida, 'Architecture Where Desire Can Live', interview with Eva Meyer (1986), in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*: *An Anthology of Architectural Theory, 1965–1995*, ed. Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton University Press, 1996), 146.

39. McLeod, 'Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era', in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. Hays, 691.

40. Peter Eisenman, 'The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End', *Perspecta* 21 (1984): 154–172; reprinted in *Eisenman Inside Out* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 152–168.

41. Although Eisenman confessed his debt to a 1984 article by Franco Rella published in *Casabella*. See Elie G. Haddad, 'Deconstruction: The Project of Radical Self-Criticism', in *A Critical History of Contemporary Architecture: 1960–2010*, ed. Haddad and Rifkind, 73, 88 n. 17.

42. Haddad, 'Deconstruction: The Project of Radical Self-Criticism', in *A Critical History of Contemporary Architecture: 1960–2010*, ed. Haddad and Rifkind, 73.

43. See Jacques Derrida, *Les Arts de l'espace: Écrits et interventions sur l'architecture*, ed. Ginette Michaud and Joana Masó (Paris: La Différence, 2015). A first, incomplete listing was established by Francesco Vitale in 'Jacques Derrida and the Politics of Architecture', *Serbian Architecture Journal* 2 (2010), 216.

44. Jacques Derrida, 'Fifty-Two Aphorisms for a Foreword', trans. Andrew Benjamin, in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume II*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 117–126.

45. Jacques Derrida, Peter Eisenman, 'Talking about Writing', *Anyone* 1.0 (March–May 1993), 18–21.

46. Mark Wigley, 'Jacques Derrida: Invitation to a Discussion', *Columbia Documents of Architecture and Theory* 1 (1992): 7–22.

47. Jacques Derrida *et al.*, 'The Berlin City Forum', *Architectural Design* 62.11–12 (1992): 46–53.

48. For more details, see Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1997).

49. Mark Wigley, 'The Translation of Architecture, the Production of Babel', in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. Hays, 670. See

also Mark Wigley, 'Postmortem Architecture: The Taste of Derrida', *Perspecta: The Yale Architectural Journal* 23 (1987): 156–172.

50. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans., intro. and Additional Notes by Alan Bass (London and New York: Routledge, 1978), 4–5.

51. Wigley, 'The Translation of Architecture, the Production of Babel', 671.

52. Jacques Derrida, 'Point de folie—maintenant l'architecture', in Bernard Tschumi, 'La case vide. La Villette', *AA Files* 12 (1986): 65–75, with parallel English version.

53. See Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman, *Choral Work* (London: AA Publications, 1988), and *Chora L Works: Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman*, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leeser (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997).

54. Peter Eisenman with Iman Ansari, 'Eisenman's Evolution: Architecture, Syntax, and New Subjectivity', *Arch Daily*, at http://www.archdaily.com/429925/eisenman-s-evolution-architecture-syntax-and-new-subjectivity (accessed 19 March 2016).

55. For a thorough analysis of Derrida's essay concerned with the ethics of space, see Laurent Milesi, 'SÉANCE TENANTE: Deconstruction in (the) Place of Ethics Now', *parallax* 21.1: 'Deconstruction—Space—Ethics', ed. Ivan Callus, Stefan Herbrechter and Laurent Milesi (2015): 6–25.

56. See Robin Evans, *The Projective Cast: Architecture and Its Three Geometries* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 84.

57. See Jacques Derrida, '*Khōra*', trans. Ian Mc Leod, in *On the Name*, ed. Thomas Dutoit, trans. David Wood *et al.* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 87–127, especially 97: 'The effacement of the article should for the moment suspend the determination'. An earlier version, 'Chôra', was published in *Poikilia. Études offertes à Jean Pierre Vernant* (Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1987), 265–296, and appears as 'Chora', trans. Ian McCloud, in *CLW* 15–32 (French version: 190–207).

58. Derrida's 'Letter' was republished in *CLW* 161–165 and as an 'Appendix' in Peter Eisenman, *Written into the Void: Selected Writings 1990–2004*, intro. Jeffrey Kipnis (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 160–168. I shall return to

some of these issues in 'Derrida's Response to the Berlin Jewish Museum', in Chapter 4.

59. Peter Eisenman, 'Post/El Cards: A Reply to Jacques Derrida', *Assemblage* 12 (August 1990): 14–17. Peter Eisenman's response was also republished in *CLW* 187–9 and in his *Written into the Void*, 1–5.

60. Constantinos v. Proimos, 'Architecture: A Self-Referential Sign or a Way of Thought? Peter Eisenman's Encounter with Jacques Derrida', *SAJAH* 24.1 (2009), 112.

61. Proimos, 'Architecture', 112–113.

62. In his 'Letter', Derrida had discussed materiality in relation to invisibility, ruin and destruction of the past, and Peter Eisenman replied, using 'syntax' to connect language with architecture: 'The textuality of glass in architecture is different from the textuality of *g/as,* the letters *g,* /, a, s. Modes of translation from one language to another, from one syntax to another, can do things with the word *g/ass* that architecture cannot. For that matter, the hinge between Derridean thought and architecture is in neither glass nor ash (gash or ass may be better). … One may have started there. Yet that *there,* which is not the there of my architecture, is difficult because it is dominated by what is already there in architecture: another tradition of sign and signified. Your idea of glass is eminently utilitarian and transparent; whereas there is no transparency in your *g/as,* perhaps only *verre* and no truth, no *(-)itas.* Wordplay that produces both opacity and transparency in language has no easy equivalent in architecture.' (Eisenman, 'Post/El Cards', 16.) Interestingly, in his 1986 encomium 'Why Peter Eisenman Writes Such Good Books' (*CLW* 95–101), written after Eisenman had devised the name for their project, *Choral Work*, and giving an account of it, Derrida had praised the architect for his way of playing with words and titles (104–105).

63. Eisenman, 'Post/El Cards', 17.

64. Peter Brunette and David Wills, *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts. Art, Media, Architecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 27.

65. Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 5.

66. Andrew Benjamin, *Architectural Philosophy* (London and New Brunswick, NJ: The Athlone Press, 2000), 186.

67. Benjamin, *Architectural Philosophy*, 184.
68. Benjamin, *Architectural Philosophy*, 183, 185.
69. Benjamin, *Architectural Philosophy*, 192.
70. See Benjamin, *Architectural Philosophy*, 197.
71. See Benjamin, *Architectural Philosophy*, 194, 197.
72. Benjamin, *Architectural Philosophy*, 200.
73. See James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 4–5.
74. Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 5.
75. Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 1.
76. James E. Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 191.
77. Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 12. Young's emphasis.
78. Schult, *A Hero's Many Faces*, 20.
79. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics,* trans. and ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976), 100.
80. Schult, *A Hero's Many Faces*, 20.
81. Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 176.
82. James E. Young, 'Nazi Aesthetics in Historical Context', in *After Representation? The Holocaust, Literature, and Culture*, ed. R. Clifton Spargo and Robert M. Ehrenreich (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 95.
83. Neil Leach, *The Anaesthetics of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1999), 29.
84. See Young, 'Nazi Aesthetics in Historical Context', in *After Representation?*, ed. Spargo and Ehrenreich, 94.
85. Neil Leach, 'Erasing the Traces: the "Denazification" of Post-Revolutionary Berlin and Bucharest', in *The Hieroglyphics of Space: Reading and Experiencing the Modern Metropolis*, ed. Neil Leach (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 82.
86. Young, 'Nazi Aesthetics in Historical Context', 94.
87. Markus Urban, 'Memorialization of Perpetrator Sites in Bavaria', in *Memorialization in Germany since 1945*, ed. Bill Niven and Chloe Paver (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 103.

88. Jürgen Habermas, 'A Kind of Settlement of Damages (Apologetic Tendencies)', trans. Jeremy Leaman, *New German Critique* 44: Special Issue on the *Historikerstreit* (Spring–Summer 1988), 25.

89. Habermas, 'A Kind of Settlement of Damages', 26.

90. See the *Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln* website, at http://www.kollwitz.de/module/werkliste/Details.aspx?wid=350&lid=10&head=Tour+-+War&ln=e (accessed 19 February 2016). For a fuller account, see Caroline Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Contemporary Germany and France* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 115–120.

91. According to Konrad Jarausch, in an interview with Andreas Hillgruber, Helmut Kohl identified his generation with this formula, thereby exonerating it from any responsibility for Hitler's crimes against humanity in spite of still living with the shame of Auschwitz. Furthermore, Kohl's references to 'peaceful German self-determination' beyond Polish frontiers at that time and to Central Europe 'as including the cities Krakau, Weimar, and Dresden sounded suspiciously like refugee revanchism'. (Jarausch, 'Removing the Nazi Stain? The Quarrel of the German Historians', *German Studies Review* 11.2 [1988], 289.)

92. Schult, *A Hero's Many Faces*, 16.

93. Schult, *A Hero's Many Faces*, 16.

94. See the *Jochen Gerz Public Space* website, at http://www.jochengerz.eu/html/main.html?res_ident=5a9df42460494a34beea361e835953d8&art_ident=e796072e25c4df21a6a3a262857e6d3f (accessed 19 February 2016). See also Marc Callaghan, 'Seeing the Invisible: Representing What Cannot Be Represented', downloaded from https://www.inter-disciplinary.net/at-the-interface/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/callaghanfthpaper.pdf (accessed 19 February 2016), and the chapter 'Memory Against Itself in Germany Today: Jochen Gerz's Countermonuments', in Young's *At Memory's Edge*, especially 140–144. Jochen and Esther Gerz's first *Gegen-Denkmal*, Harburg's 'Monument Against Fascism, War, and Violence—and for Peace and Human Rights' (1986), a 'vanishing monument' 'in mocking homage to national forebears who planned the Holocaust as a self-consuming set of events', is discussed in Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 28–36 (31).

95. See http://www.stolpersteine.eu/en/home/ and, for an example, the Osnabrück *Projekt Stolpersteine* website, at http://stolpersteine.osnabrueck.de/ (both accessed 19 February 2016).

96. Richard Crownshaw, *The Afterlife of Holocaust Memory in Contemporary Literature and Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 185 (chapter on 'Countermonumental Memory', 182–204). See also Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 120–51 (whose equivalent term is 'antiredemptory' or 'antiredemptive'), and *The Texture of Memory*, 27–48 ('The Countermonument: Memory against Itself in Germany').

97. Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 32. It is worth observing that a comparable parallel has been drawn between France's postwar memorialisation effort and the circumvention of culpability in relation to its troubled wartime politics; see Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory*, 32–38 ('Monumental History').

98. On this notion, see Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), a sociology-informed study which charts the concept from Halbwachs's '*mémoire collective*' (3–16).

99. Bettina Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts, Jewish Voids: Remembering the Holocaust in Post-Wall Germany', *Third Text* 26.2 (2012), 165.

100. Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts', 165.

101. Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts', 167.

102. Among these authors are: Nelly Sachs, Hermann Broch, Thomas Mann, Stefan Zweig, Moses Mendelssohn, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, August Bebel, Alfred Döblin, Theodor Adorno, Hannah Arendt, Albert Einstein, Heinrich Mann, Erich Maria Remarque, Walter Benjamin, Magnus Hirschfeld, Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, H. G. Wells, André Gide, Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka, Robert Musil, Bertold Brecht, and Heinrich Heine.

103. Irit Dekel, *Mediation at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin* (London: Palgrave, 2013), 57.

104. Peter Eisenman, 'Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe', in *Materials on the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*, ed. Foundation for the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (Berlin, 2005), 12.

105. For a presentation of the project in the making, see Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 168–169, who observes that 'Individuals are asked to interpret a field that moves and changes in relation to the human body, rather than be told how to mourn for the past through a centrally placed sculptural form atop a pedestal' (168). See also the official website of the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, at http://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/en/home.html (accessed 20 February 2016).

106. Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 32.

107. See Brigitte Sion, 'Affective Memory, Ineffective Functionality: Experiencing Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe', in *Memorialization in Germany since 1945*, ed. Bill Niven and Chloe Paver (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 243.

108. Dekel, *Mediation at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin*, 57.

109. Dekel, *Mediation at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin*, 57, 144, 145.

110. Dekel, *Mediation at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin*, 63, 57, 63.

111. Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 197.

112. Charlotte Knoblauch quoted in Karyn Ball, *Disciplining the Holocaust* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), 88.

113. Ball, *Disciplining the Holocaust*, 88.

114. Johan Åhr, 'Memory and Mourning in Berlin: On Peter Eisenman's *Holocaust-Mahnmal* (2005)', *Modern Judaism* 28.3 (October 2008), 297.

115. Åhr, 'Memory and Mourning in Berlin', 297, 298.

116. Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts', 166; quoted from Peter Eisenman, 'Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe', Berlin, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/germans/memorial/eisenman.html.

117. Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts', 166, 167.

118. Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts', 167.

119. See Marco Belpoliti, in Primo Levi, *The Voice of Memory: Interviews, 1961–1987*, ed. Marco Belpoliti and Robert Gordon (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), xix.

120. Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), especially 40, 47, 78–79. See also Helmut Schmitz, 'Historicism, Sentimentality and the Problem of Empathy: Uwe Timm's *Am Beispiel meines Bruders* in the Context of Recent Representations of German Suffering', in *A Nation of Victims? Representations of German Wartime Suffering from 1945 to the Present*, ed. Helmut Schmitz (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), 201.

121. The relationship between Freud's notion of incorporation and the failure to mourn was first explored in Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, trans. Nicholas Rand, Foreword Jacques Derrida (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

122. As a caveat, I should report at this point that the analogy between visitors' and deportees' sense of disorientation in space, quoted by Mathes from the Memorial website mentioned above, can no longer be found verbatim on the 'Project text' there, although it seemingly lives on in scant web traces, associated specifically with the name 'Auschwitz'.

123. Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts', 168.

124. LaCapra, *History and Reading: Tocqueville, Foucault, French Studies* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2000), 67.

125. Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts', 167.

126. Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts', 169.

127. Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts', 173.

128. Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts', 173.

129. Daniel Libeskind, 'Resisting the Erasure of History', Interview with Anne Wagner, in *Architecture and Revolution*, ed. Neil Leach (London: Routledge, 1999), 131.

130. Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts', 173; cp. with 167, quoted *supra*.

131. Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts', 174.

132. Amy Sodaro, 'Memory, History, and Nostalgia in Berlin's Jewish Museum', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 26 (2013), 79.

133. Sodaro, 'Memory, History, and Nostalgia in Berlin's Jewish Museum', 79.

134. Sodaro, 'Memory, History, and Nostalgia in Berlin's Jewish Museum', 79.

135. Also quoted in Sodaro, 'Memory, History, and Nostalgia in Berlin's Jewish Museum', 79.

136. Sodaro, 'Memory, History, and Nostalgia in Berlin's Jewish Museum', 80; quoting from Andreas Huyssen in *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

137. Sodaro, 'Memory, History, and Nostalgia in Berlin's Jewish Museum', 80.

138. Sandra H. Dudley, 'Museum Materialities: Objects, Sense and Feeling', in *Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations*, ed. Sandra H. Dudley (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 11, 9.

139. Silke Arnold-de Simine, 'Memory Museum and Museum Text: Intermediality in Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum and W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*', *Theory, Culture and Society* 29.1 (2012), 17.

140. The concept of 'narrative museums' is explained by Stephanie Shosh Rotem in relation to the artefacts they exhibit. In these museums, 'the display of the artifacts has lost its centrality to the display of narrative'. Their 'artifacts 'have no inherent value but are displayed as a means to enhance, recreate and demonstrate the story unfolded in the exhibition'. (Stephanie Shosh Rotem, *Constructing Memory: Architectural Narratives of Holocaust Museums* [Bern: Peter Lang, 2013], 14).

141. See Kylie Message, *New Museums and the Making of Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2006).

142. Arnold-de Simine, 'Memory Museum and Museum Text', 17.

143. Arnold-de Simine, 'Memory Museum and Museum Text', 18.

144. Katrin Pieper, *Die Musealisierung des Holocaust. Das Jüdische Museum Berlin und das US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. Ein Vergleich* (Köln: Böhlau, 2006), 28.

145. Jeshajahu Weinberg and Rina Elieli, *The Holocaust Museum in Washington* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1995), 17.

146. Sodaro, 'Memory, History, and Nostalgia in Berlin's Jewish Museum', 80.

147. Liliane Weissberg, 'In Plain Sight', in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Barbie Zelizer (London: The Athlone Press, 2001), 19.

148. Former Breuklundian Professor of Judaic Studies at Brooklyn College, Yaffa Eliach is the author of *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*, to which I will return in Chapter 4.

149. Andrea Liss, *Trespassing through Shadows: Memory, Photography, and the Holocaust* (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 35.

150. Miles Lerman, quoted in Weissberg, 'In Plain Sight', in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Zelizer, 22.

151. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 33.

152. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 32, 33.

153. Weissberg, 'In Plain Sight', in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Zelizer, 23. Contrasting Van Gogh's *Peasant Shoes* favourably with Andy Warhol's *Diamond Dust Shoes*, Jameson famously observed about the latter, pop art version: 'Here, however, we have a random collection of dead objects hanging together on the canvas like so many turnips, as shorn of their earlier life world as the pile of shoes left over from Auschwitz...'; see Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 8.

154. Weissberg, 'In Plain Sight', in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Zelizer, 23.

155. See Jacques Derrida's famous analysis of this gesture, in both Heidegger and Schapiro, in 'Restitutions of the Truth in Pointing', in *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 255–382.

156. Weissberg, 'In Plain Sight', in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Zelizer, 23.

157. Weissberg, 'In Plain Sight', in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Zelizer, 21.

158. Liss, *Trespassing through Shadows*, 78.

159. Liss, *Trespassing through Shadows*, 78.

160. Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich, *Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2014), 18.

161. Originally published in *Assemblage* 12 (1990): 18–57. Several iterations are included in Libeskind's various publications, but the text that will be mainly used throughout this study is the one that appeared in *The Space of Encounter*. Finally, apart from the

project 'Between the Lines', Libeskind's entry for the Jewish Museum in the national contest, a speech with the same title was also uttered at the inauguration of the museum in 1999, here referred to as 'BLOS'.

162. Elke Heckner, 'Whose Trauma Is It? Identification and Secondary Witnessing in the Age of Postmemory', in *Visualising the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory*, ed. David Bathrick, Brad Prayer and Michael D. Richardson (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2008), 64; quoting from Libeskind ('T' 44).

163. Mark Seal, 'For Better N Wurst: Jody Foster's Berlin', *American Way* (15 September 2005): 51–56.

164. Elizabeth Svoboda, 'Never Forget, Never Again', *Science and Spirit* 17.5 (September–October 2006), 45.

165. Maurice Blanchot, 'Berlin', *MLA* 109.3, German Issue (April 1994), 346.

166. Blanchot, 'Berlin', 352.

167. This synopsis on this short history of the Berlin Jewish Museum is based on the section 'The Jewish Museum and the Berlin Museum' in Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 155–161. For a fuller account of the complex historical, political and ideological climate and context of its genesis, see Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory*, 120–140; followed by a similar reconstruction for Eisenman's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (140–164) and the Sachsenhausen project (164–199).

168. Daniel Libeskind, *Erweiterung des Berlin Museums mit Abteilung Jüdisches Museum. Extension to the Berlin Museum with Jewish Museum Department* (Berlin: Ernst and Sohn, 1992), 67; quoted in Andrew Benjamin, *Present Hope: Philosophy, Architecture, Judaism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 113.

169. See Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 11.

170. Oliver, *Witnessing*, 14.

171. Roger Cohen, 'Fresh Perspectives on Past and Present; Berlin', *The New York Times* 14 March 1999, 1, at http://www.nytimes.com/1999/03/14/travel/fresh-perspectives-on-past-and-present-berlin.html (accessed 7 December 2015).

172. Tom Freudenheim and Editors of PAJ, 'Berlin's New Jewish Museum: An Interview with Tom Freudenheim', *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 22.2 (May 2000), 40.

173. Rick Atkinson, 'The Berlin Squall; For the Jewish Museum, a Stormy Evolution', *The Washington Post* 26 November 1994, at https://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-920912.html (accessed 9 December 2015).

174. Peter Chametzky, 'Not What We Expected: The Jewish Museum Berlin in Practice', *Museum and Society* 6.3 (November 2008), 225.

175. Chametzky, 'Not What We Expected', 225.

176. Bart Van der Straeten, 'The Uncanny and the Architecture of Deconstruction', *Image and Narrative: Online Magazine of the Visual Narrative* 5 (2003), at http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/uncanny/uncanny.htm (accessed 24 February 2016).

Ethics as Optics: Libeskind's Jewish Museum

In a lecture on Bauhaus delivered in Weimar in 1998, Daniel Libeskind compared the work of memory with 'a light we forgot to turn off at night' which 'reminds us the next day by its very own faintness of the forgotten events of the night' (*SE* 21). He also expressed his belief that '*the ethic is indeed an optic* since it makes visible our own relation to and responsibility for history' (*SE* 21; my italics). It is probably to Bauhaus that Libeskind owed his interest in optics, through which he connected visual perception to memory. Optics had become important for this movement since 1923, when László Moholy-Nagy joined Walter Gropius's School as professor and overseer of the metal shop. His famous kinetic sculpture, *Light-Space Modulator* (1922–30), was an abstract experiment in visual aesthetics and the law of optics.[1]

As Sandra H. Dudley had pointed out, after scholars like Douglas Crimp[2] and Svetlana Alpers,[3] museums are 'ocularcentric, a way of seeing in their own right …, an extreme version of the broader dominance of the visual in the world'.[4] While the Berlin Jewish Museum clearly fits in this tradition, what singles it out is Libeskind's alignment of optics with an ethics, an association uncannily reminiscent of a similar perspective in Emmanuel Levinas which I will use as a guiding formula in my navigation of the Extension's architectural space. To my knowledge, nobody has related Levinas's equation between ethics and optics to the way the visitor is invited to 'see' things and space/things in space in Libeskind's museum and to the architect's own interpretation of his entire work. This approach was dictated to me by my conviction that a Levinasian

dimension permeates Libeskind's theoretical writings. As shown briefly in Chapter 2, responsibility founded in the non-reciprocal relation to the Other (*Autrui*), who takes precedence over 'I', is essential to Levinas's philosophy, an imperative which became an even greater urgency 'after Auschwitz'.[5] Ethics is what allowed Levinas to go beyond the constraints of phenomenology in order to articulate the possibility of hope, a conjunction which can help shed light on the Polish-American architect's wish to embody a dimension of hope in his museum. Aware that, after the Shoah, art had to propose a different ethics of representation, Libeskind describes architecture in terms of the visible/invisible: architecture 'affects everyone; it is centrally positioned, so consequently it is a part of film, language, the visual and the not visual world. The visible art of architecture makes us aware of that which is not visible' (*HJMB* 22). In his description of the museum, Libeskind also resorted to the adjective 'visible', which lies at the core of Levinasian philosophy. In *Breaking Ground*, he spoke again of 'vision' while discussing how the story of a survivor from Yaffa Eliach's *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*, to which I will return later, inspired him to build the Holocaust Tower. Convinced that architecture is 'public memory', he conceived his museum as the embodiment of a memorial ethics based on bringing the invisible into visibility: 'it is a thing in the city, it is a space, it is a light, in this sense, I believe that a literal concrete form is important, as one is unable to know a memorial which is invisible' (*HJMB* 33). According to Libeskind, the Shoah led 'to quite a different vision of what history was and might yet be' (*SE* 202). His Extension is not about 'creating more space and more square meters'; rather it 'stands for a new relationship' between 'the depth' of the Baroque history (the Kollegienhaus, which the Extension abuts) and the history of contemporary Berlin. Such a relationship is grounded in what Libeskind named 'vision', a vision that had to take into account that the two histories were hard to reconcile and '[piece] together into a whole' (*HJMB* 19), and that stylistic integration or 'assimilation' should be resisted at all costs.

1   FROM PHENOMENOLOGY TO ETHICS: LEVINAS'S 'VISION'

As pointed out in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas's attempt was not to construct an ethics but to find its sense. To live 'otherwise than being' meant for Levinas to live as 'an ethical creature', or, as Michael Fagenblat put it, 'to bear witness … to the undeclinable goodness of an exposure to the

other that precedes self-identity and thus testifies, despite oneself, to the glory of the Good'.[6]

Levinas dedicated *Otherwise than Being* to the memory of the 6 million victims of the Holocaust, and to the six members of his family whom he had lost. Levinas's major philosophy was written in the wake of the question of whether one can still philosophize within the memory of Auschwitz, or, to quote Blanchot's reference to Levinas's dedication from *Otherwise than Being*, whether it is still possible to write after 'those who have said, oftentimes in notes buried near the crematoria: know what has happened, don't forget, and at the same time you won't be able to'.[7] For Blanchot this assertion traverses Levinas's philosophy in its totality, even if it is said 'without saying', prevailing 'beyond and before all obligation'.[8] Indeed, the Holocaust informs Levinas's 'first philosophy'[9] without ever becoming its explicit content, yet it dictates much of his ethics. His theory of subjectivity comes not from self-knowledge but rather from a perpetual passivity that is rooted in 'an attempt to recover the subject-positionality of the historical victim'.[10]

Michael Bernard-Donals made a comprehensive analysis of the two dedications, which mark 'in palimpsest, the relation between naming, post-Holocaust memory, and ethics'[11] that provides the bedrock for the philosopher's work. Placed at the top of the page in French and translated into English in the American edition, the first dedication reads as follows: 'To the memory of those who were closest among the six million assassinated by the National Socialists, and of the millions on millions of all confessions and all nations, victims of the same hatred of the other man, the same anti-Semitism'.[12] Similarly to the French edition, the dedication second from the bottom of the page remained in Hebrew; beginning with the word for the imperative to remember, *lezkor* (*l'zkor*), it reads in part: 'To the memory of the spirit of my father, Yehiel, son of Avraham Halevi, my mother Devorah, daughter of Moshe', and named his two brothers and his wife's mother and father. The ending was the abbreviation found on many tombstones in Jewish cemeteries: 'May their souls be bound up in the bond of eternal life'.[13] Bernard-Donals differentiates between the two distinct traditions that Levinas's two dedications represent, which echo 'two distinct memories, two attempts to remember and to speak memory': one European and secular, which resorts to the consecrated terminology used about the Holocaust ('six million', 'hatred', 'National Socialists', 'anti-Semitism'), and the other Jewish and non-political, appealing to 'the *heimish*, a manner of speaking that is as intimate as a blessing in a synagogue'.[14]

For Bernard-Donals, the forceful juxtaposition of two languages and two traditions that do not fit neatly together indicates 'the immemorial'. This desire to inscribe the immemorial in the tension between these dedications can be appreciated in the light of Levinas mentioning, in an interview with Richard Kearney, that in his writings he always differentiated between 'philosophical and confessional texts' as they belong to two different 'methods of exegesis' and use 'separate languages'.[15]

A brief note on the way Levinas's Judaism was regarded by scholars should be added at this stage. After the Second World War, with the help of a mysterious teacher nicknamed 'Monsieur Chouchani' but whose identity has remained unknown, Levinas devoted himself to the study of the Talmudic tradition. According to Anya Topolski, he separated 'the notion of Judaism from that of a "religion"' and claimed that 'the Judaic introduce[d] the idea of hope into Western European thought'.[16] Whereas Paul Ricoeur[17] and Salomon Malka went even further than Blanchot's assertion that one can always infer the presence of the Holocaust in Levinas's work, and suggested that Levinas injected Judaism into philosophy,[18] others like Samuel Moyn denied this altogether.[19] Michael Fagenblat's alternative claim was that Levinas's thought could not be looked at in a way that separated Judaism from philosophy; although it is 'constructed out of non-Jewish theological and philosophical sources, … this in no way compromises its Judaic character'.[20] In addition, '[w]hat Levinas provides, rather, is a philosophy of Judaism without *and* or *between*'.[21]

Richard J. Bernstein put forward the idea that 'Levinas's entire philosophic project can best be understood as an *ethical* response to evil—and to the problem of evil which we must confront after the end of theodicy',[22] and divided Levinas's work into 'three moments of the phenomenology of evil: evil as excess; evil as intention; and the hatred or horror of evil'.[23] The first category refers to the evil that cannot be adequately *comprehended*, synthetized or integrated into a framework of reason, because it is 'a malignant sublime'. Regarding the intentionality of evil, Bernstein held the view that the transcendence of evil would transform the *first* metaphysical question that Leibniz and Heidegger asked from 'why is there something rather than nothing?' into 'why is there evil rather than good?', a movement which 'provides a glimpse of what is beyond Being, beyond ontology',[24] and an opening towards ethics. For the third category, 'evil as the hatred or horror of evil', Bernstein revisited Levinas's 'Transcendence and Evil' where the French philosopher confessed: 'Evil strikes me in my horror of evil, and thus reveals—or is already—my association with the

Good. The excess of evil by which it is a surplus in the world is also our impossibility of accepting it'.[25] For Bernstein, such reflections prompt 'an ethical response to evil',[26] the epitome of which was Auschwitz, 'the paradigm of that transcendent evil that ruptures all categories of knowledge and understanding, evil as non-integrable excess'.[27]

In the last section of *Difficult Freedom*, 'Signature', Levinas presented his own biography as a 'disparate inventory' 'dominated by the presentiment and the memory of the Nazi horror'.[28] Several philosophers, including Michael L. Morgan, emphasized that at times Levinas discussed Nazism and Auschwitz in particular 'as part of or characteristic of a larger phenomenon', one involving other twentieth-century horrors that were perpetrated before, during and after the Final Solution.[29] 'Useless Suffering', Levinas's most sustained reflection on the Holocaust, defined Auschwitz as the cancellation of the metaphysical justification of suffering through theodicy, and argued that it is the 'unjustifiable character of suffering in the other' or the 'pain of the other' that brought the self as a responsible being into existence.[30] The 'end of theodicy' signalled a condition in which any attempt at comprehending and explaining suffering, evil and genocide simply failed. For the French philosopher of Lithuanian Jewish ancestry, the Holocaust revealed the weak foundations of Western thought, whose inability to conceive difference legitimated the Nazis' radical anti-Semitism. Theodicies place evils within structures that allow us to work through pain in order to preserve or restore the possibility of divine justice. If we take Levinas's belief that Auschwitz meant the end of theodicy—or, in one of the most heart-rending scenes in Wiesel's *Night*, in response to the question '"For God's sake, where is God?"', that God is 'hanging here from this gallows'[31]—we might think that his vision of the future is of a barred horizon; ideally, theodicy should allow for a reconciliation with past evils and guard us against future evil. But as he explicitly argued in a 1987 interview with Hans-Joachim Lenger, the atrocities of the concentration camps inaugurated a new *Götterdämmerung* as the critique of religion formulated by Nietzsche was to be found in the horrors of extermination. To think of a beneficent or protective God offering humanity a happy end is no longer tenable: 'Nietzsche's God, the God who is dead is the one who committed suicide at Auschwitz'. Despite this, as Stéphane Mosès notes, '[r]ecognizing "the God who appears in the face of the other", this is the true protest against Auschwitz'.[32] In turning to ethics, Levinas expressed a philosophical concern shared by many of his contemporaries: the forms of evil that appeared in the twentieth century made demands that modern

consciousness could not fathom.[33] The 'ethical response' was the only adequate response to unprecedented horror, whereby 'I' recognizes his/her 'supreme obligation', his/her 'responsibility for the useless and unjustifiable suffering of others' as well as his/her 'responsibility to respond to the evil inflicted upon … fellow human beings'.[34]

With ethics, Levinas took further the project of phenomenology, grounded more on perception than critical reflection. Recalling critics' disgruntled view that Levinas's ethics operates on a metadivision between the categories of the Other (where Levinas himself located ethics, Judaism and revelation) and the Same (where reason, history and ontology belonged), Fagenblat adds: 'Where Levinas sees ethics as the blind spot of philosophy, a point at which philosophy cannot see itself seeing the world, these philosophers contend that his version of ethics actually blinds philosophy by imposing the sense of an exteriority invisible to the light of consciousness and reason'.[35]

In *Totality and Infinity*—but also in *Difficult Freedom*, written in search of the relation between ethics and politics—Levinas associated vision with truth. In his serviceable Reader's Guide to *Totality and Infinity*, William Large notes that 'truth' is 'linked to desire' since, when one seeks 'truth as movement outwards towards the other', truth does not belong to cognition anymore: 'To seek truth, first of all, would not be to know the world, but to desire the other who transcends me'.[36] In Levinas's ethics, the light of truth is what brings ethics to completion. The ethical response to the Other provides the ultimate perspective for addressing all other philosophical questions; ethics is first philosophy in its phenomenological context.

However, a proper investigation of Levinas's 'vision' should begin with the 'Preface' to *Totality and Infinity*, a book that pursued the question of ethics in the light of war and violence. It is in this context that Levinas introduced 'vision', in conjunction with what Brian Schroeder called 'the decidedly nonphilosophical phenomenon of prophetic eschatology, which ruptures the totality and results in a meontological reversal of the traditionally construed relation between being and ethics'.[37] Attempting to understand eschatological vision not as 'a transcendence'[38] but as breaking with totality, yet still remaining anchored in infinity, Levinas asserted that 'the experience of morality does not proceed from this vision', but 'it *consummates*' it. It is in this context that he concluded with the famous formula: '*ethics is an optics.* But it is a "vision" without image, bereft of the synoptic and totalizing objectifying virtues of vision, a relationship or an intentionality of a wholly different type'.[39]

The assertion 'ethics is an optics' is rather unusual in view of Levinas's whole construction of ethics, which comes across as an acoustics rather than ocularcentrism[40] since it always involves the Other's *call*. A philosopher who was likewise preoccupied with Levinas's assertion, Hagi Kenaan, also pointed out in *The Ethics of Visuality: Levinas and the Contemporary Gaze* that, in spite of originating from a phenomenological tradition that placed the visual in a central position, Levinas remained 'indifferent to the richness and hidden depths of the visual', often conveying 'a kind of hostility, suspicion, or at least a profound ambivalence concerning the realm that appears to the eye'.[41] Kenaan, who sees in Levinas 'a philosopher of tensions',[42] reflects that the philosopher's understanding of the ethical relationship is based on a double vision: 'oriented on the one hand, toward what appears to the eye', and on the other hand, a vision that does not involve perception since it is 'without image': 'this seeing finds in it the infinitely far'.[43]

Another mention of ethics as optics in *Totality and Infinity* occurs soon after, in the context of a discussion about the philosophical need to recognize and describe intentionality, which is a cornerstone of Levinas's philosophy: 'If … ethical relations are to lead transcendence to its term, this is because the essential of ethics is in its *transcendent intention*, and because not every transcendent intention has the noesis-noema structure. *Already of itself ethics is an "optics"*'.[44] This fuller statement sheds indirect light on the very ending of *Totality and Infinity*, about '[t]the "vision" of the face': 'Transcendence is not an optics, but the first ethical gesture'.[45]

At the risk of singling out a rather isolated consideration in Levinas's works, left largely unexplored by the scholarly community with the notable exception of Hagi Kenaan, I will say that Levinas opposed the conception of the 'pure light' of self-present intelligibility[46] and refuted the idea that we perceptually see the face of the Other. Nevertheless, he did not exclude vision when one contemplates the hidden or the absent. Discovering the hidden is a difficult task, and this is precisely what makes ethics a problematic undertaking in its own right. The act of welcoming the other, an act of generosity and responsibility, takes place in light of the conception of the Other whose face may or may not be visible and which becomes a literal as well as a nonliteral representation, because, in Edith Wyschogrod's words, 'the face in its very upsurge breaks into a world that is seen and understood but manifests itself otherwise than as idea or image'.[47] The face of the other stands before the self in its visuality rather than in its visibility. According to Kenaan, the face was for

Levinas in *Totality and Infinity* 'a testimony' and the philosopher's turn to it denoted 'a kind of experience that fractures the totality ideal guiding Western philosophical thought' because the face was the expression of 'the living presence of an infinite dimension that cannot be conveyed through a reflective language aspiring to totality'.[48]

Levinas's insistence on 'driving out darkness' was resolved with the help of light; for him, 'vision in the light' was an '*apeiron*, maintaining oneself before this semblance of nothingness which is the void and approaching objects as though at their origin, out of nothingness'.[49] Large's commentary on *Totality and Infinity* allows us to make one more distinction: Levinas's argument that the Other's face is not a visible thing means that '[t]he visible space of representation and objectivity occurs after the ethical relation has taken place, and rather than representation determining ethics, it is determined by it. It is not vision that makes language possible, but the other way around, as language is the condition for vision'.[50] Therefore, there is a relation between speaking and seeing ('vision'), and *Totality and Infinity* aims at discovering this relation, showing that 'representation and objectivity are in fact dependent on the social relation to the other that is not a visibility but an ethical one, where the face speaks to me ("its revelation is speech"[51]), and I respond, without first of all knowing or comprehending them'.[52] But seeing someone is different from speaking: '[t]he eye', says Levinas, 'does not shine; it speaks'.[53] When talking about speaking, we enter a relation different from the one of vision, as Large makes clear, since 'the former is ethical and not cognitive' and '[t]o respond to the other ethically is to reply to their voice and not to how or what they appear as'.[54] If in Christology, *Logos* (Λόγος, meaning 'word', 'discourse' or 'reason'), was simply Christ, the son of God, in Aristotle's *Ars Rhetorica*, *Logos* referred to speech itself and was part of a triad including also *Ethos* (ἦθος, with the sense of persuasion through convincing listeners of the speaker's morality) and *Pathos* (πάθος, involving persuasion at the level of emotions). Levinas understood *Logos* and *Ethos* phenomenologically; since *Logos* originated in God as divine light, ethics involved seeing phenomena in the true light, whose ultimate referent was God.

In Ancient Greece, *theoria* (θεωρία) was the word for 'contemplation' or 'speculation', either with the eyes or with the mind. Derived from *theorein* (θεωρεῖν: to consider, speculate, look at) and *theoros* (θεωρός: spectator), themselves from *thea* (θέα: view) and *horan* (ὁρᾶν: to see), it referred to a divine event and has also been linked to the Greek word for 'god': *theos* (θεός).[55] *Theoria* informed Levinas's *Difficult Freedom*, where

he developed the divine dimension of both witnessing and seeing, from which the face-to-face relationship derived, opening up the possibility of ethics: '*Ethics is an optics of the Divine.* Henceforth, no relation with God is direct or immediate. The Divine can be manifested only through my neighbour'.[56] Vision appears thus in its relation to the *visage* of the neighbour, of the Other, and this face has ethical implications.

In his reflections on the ethical import of Levinas's views on death, otherness, and time, Nader El-Bizri notes that '[b]eing situated in the sight of the other, in a face-to-face relation, the subject is not simply a self-posited autonomous existent, but rather appears as being inherently responsive cum responsible towards *otherness.* The ethical as well as transcendent essence of this relationship grants a situational meaningfulness to the utterance: "God"'.[57] Commenting on the issue of responsibility in the ethical relation, he further adds that '[t]he self is responsible cum responsive to the manner the other (*l'autre*) relates to others (*autrui*); hence, it actively judges by discerning differential relations in concreteness that distinguish the tormented from the tormentor'.[58] Indeed, Levinas's suggested trajectory towards responsibility is that reason itself must begin from the challenge of exteriority and not from a passivity that would conflate victims and perpetrators.

For Levinas, since any death is premature, the one who survives has a responsibility towards the dead, precisely because of his late arrival to 'a rendezvous with the other; namely, a lateness that cannot be made up, given that it belongs to the subject's privation of virility or mastery in the face of the un-measurable *altérité* in death'.[59] In particular, the survivor is in the position of resisting history, which results also from 'the impossible perspective of an interiority standing to be lost in history',[60] an impossibility that the philosopher names 'memory', which overturns historical time; the interiority refuses to obey the historical fate that orders it to become 'nothing but the past' or 'a pure loss figuring in an alien accounting system'.[61] In spite of the impossibility of testimonial discourse, the need and, as we have seen in Chapter 2, the duty to remember and mourn are part of the Levinasian ethics that is aimed at revealing the truth about the unjust deaths. Moreover, Man witnesses ethical commandments in their true light as coming directly from God. Epistemological access to God is one of the cornerstones of Levinas's ethics. If this ethics is envisaged as spiritual optics, then it is the lens through which we can perceive God (the transcendent). God creates the face of the concrete other whose face therefore becomes illuminated by divine light; such an illumination makes possible

seeing the absolutely Other (the divine).[62] Elsewhere Levinas also mentions that '[t]he Torah is given in the Light of a face' and this very act is an 'epiphany of the other person', which places the one who sees the other in an ethical relation; it is, as the French philosopher puts it, '*ipso facto* my responsibility toward him: seeing the other is already an obligation toward him'.[63] A similar conviction is reiterated in 'Meaning and Sense', where, according to Kenaan, Levinas makes it clear that the Other's face also creates a place for the affirmation and validation of the self'[64]:

> The epiphany of the absolutely other is a face, in which the other calls on me and signifies an order to me through his nudity, his denuding. His presence is a summons to answer. The I does not become aware of this necessity to answer, as though it were an obligation or a duty about which it would have come to a decision; it is in its very position wholly responsibility … To be an I means then not to be able to escape responsibility.[65]

'Obligation' is synonymous with 'responsibility', which originates from the Latin *respondere*: to promise something in return for something else. In return for his spared life, the witness promises to keep alive the memory of those who died. The onus is on the witness (who is visible) to bring the light of truth when testifying about the invisible, those who cannot speak or be seen. In Judaism, to witness is a demand of love coming from God, as Levinas explained in *Difficult Freedom*: 'the eminent role of the *mitzvah* in Judaism signifies not a moral formalism, but the living presence of divine love that is eternally renewed'.[66] For Levinas, 'I' has a duty towards others that exceeds self-interest; this is what he calls 'election',[67] which forms the core of ethical subjectivity.

Hagi Kenaan referred only to two of the occurrences of 'ethics as optics' in *Totality and Infinity* and did not investigate its meanings in *Difficult Freedom*. Nor did he relate Levinas's '[e]thics as optics' to *Akedát Yitzḥák*. Already briefly discussed in Chapter 2, *Akedah*, or God's command to Abraham that he offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, is a key narrative and a key concept with infinite theological reverberations, being part of the Oral Law (Talmud, Midrash), Kabbalah (*Sefer ha-Zohar*, or Book of Splendour) and the works of all medieval rabbinic hermeneutists of the Biblical text (Rashi, Nahmanides, Maimonides). My contention is that 'ethics is optics' is reminiscent of the Biblical line that opens *Akedah*, or Isaac's 'Binding' in the Hebrew Bible, the Pentateuchal narrative *Hineni* (Here am I) in Genesis 22:1–19, and that it is also related to

other Biblical occurrences that speak about the visual encounter between Abraham and the Divine Other (Genesis 5–7, 13–17).[68] The passage in Genesis 22:1, 'This is what He did with Abraham, as it is written "God tested Abraham"', is commented in Talmud.[69] At the same time, *Sefer ha-zohar*, the thirteenth-century book on Jewish mysticism written mostly in Aramaic, and Kabbalah connect Genesis 22.1 with Psalm 11.5: 'The Lord tries the righteous'. Throughout Jewish history, but especially after the Second World War, the *Akedah* became the superlative example of self-sacrifice in obedience to God's will, a theme on which the Jewish prisoners at Auschwitz ring numerous changes, amid their forsaken entreaties, in Elie Wiesel's *Night*. These texts are an entire hermeneutic symphony of Jewish martyrdom that represent the infrastructure of Levinas's works. For the Jewish philosopher, to 'speak memory' meant to bear witness, and as a witness, the one who uttered the word 'I' opened him/herself up to another: 'The word "I" means in effect *here I am*, answering for everything and everyone'.[70] Thus, the individual is bound to see, to bear witness, and ultimately to speak of what s/he has seen. By assuming the responsibility of making him/herself heard, by saying 'here I am', the witness does nothing but make him/herself visible, accepting the risk of ethics as optics.

These lengthy preliminaries on Levinas's ethical vision can be conceived as the visitor's slow descent down the stairs that lead to the three axes of the Jewish Museum proper.

2   'SEEING LIGHT': LIBESKIND'S VISION OF ARCHITECTURAL SPACE

The Berlin Jewish Museum can be seen as a site of endless negotiation between architecture, history, philosophy and other arts, whose points of intersection will vary according to how the building is experienced. If architecture is dominated by the combination of the visual with the spatial, for Daniel Libeskind environment is more specifically connected to light, which 'becomes tangible only when it lands on something solid—a body or a building—when it crawls, darts, engraves its presence on a wall' (*BG* 54). Moreover, light can take any colour and shape but eventually it is symbolically the shape of hope, a key dimension in the museum's conception: 'this building gives permanence to the figure of hope dressed in the guise of every visitor's response'. The Berlin Jewish Museum is open to many readings and routes, even sideways, 'like the pages of the *Talmud*,

where the margins are often as important as what is being commented on' ('BLOS' 28). The Polish-American architect was impressed by Yaffa Eliach's *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*,[71] a collection of Holocaust survivors' tales that draw from European literary tradition and many Jewish sources: Kabbalah, Midrash, the Bible. In one of the tales, Elaine, a survivor, who later lived in Brooklyn, explained how the vision of a white line of sky glimpsed through the slats of the boxcar kept her alive during her two horrible years in the Stutthof concentration camp, after she was transported from Auschwitz in a group of around 20,000 Jews (*BG* 55). Libeskind returned to this story in an interview entitled 'The End of Space' as well as in a lecture held in Berlin in 1997 in relation to the 'vision' which one needs to have in order to survive. The woman had held onto that white line which she had seen on the horizon, a line that later on, while in Brooklyn, years after the war, she realised must have been the trail of an airplane. In the architect's view, what mattered was that the 'line really was there' and not its origin: 'It's to hold on, let's say, to that white line. It's the mystery of survival' (*SE* 70). It was Libeskind's belief that, 'in Stütthof,[72] in 1944, that singular vision had a significance which was surely obscure and enigmatic and yet it had a real transformation of memory and communication of an experience' (*SE* 204). Indeed, for the survivor, the sky epitomized life itself, as it has somehow done from time immemorial. Going back to 'the *dawn* of discursive reason', architect Alberto Pérez-Gómez reminds us that, already in Plato's *Timaeus*, the absolute truth and goodness (*agathon*), like the sun itself, 'had to be "experienced" as the "lightning" that makes it possible for the things of our world to be what they are',[73] an idea which somehow travelled all the way to Heidegger, for whom 'all unveiling requires an antecedent illumination'.[74]

The museum invites its visitors to understand that there is nothing behind what they can 'see' as long as that seeing involves disclosing, divulging, uncovering. This is more a phenomenological than a deconstructionist programme, contrary to what many claim, unquestioningly associating Libeskind's work with the deconstruction of past edifices.[75] The Jewish Museum testifies to a certain extent also to Husserl's and later Maurice Merleau-Ponty's conviction that one should not seek beyond phenomena. To understand Libeskind's museum, one has to adopt a holistic approach since his architecture may be envisaged as a continuum of partial experiences that need piecing together into a totality. His poetics of memory takes the form of different strategies of remembrance based on what is 'in sight'. Thus, the visitor becomes a secondary witness to the objects and

events he sees; nevertheless this form of witnessing does not involve passivity, but rather taking on the responsibility of an act of perception that pervades all other senses and emotions.

For Libeskind, light is 'the measure' of mathematics, physics and eventually eternity: 'Stand here and remember what you can. What you remember is in light, the rest is in darkness, isn't it? The past fades to dark, and the future is unknown, just stars' (*BG* 56). His entire work yearns for light and is nurtured by it; it exposes light, yet it never discloses it homogenously because such homogeneity could limit the experience of place. Above all, beyond the play between light and darkness essential to architecture, Libeskind's work promises a phenomenological light not only in relation to the visible part of the museum but also to its overall meaning and structure. As will be seen in the section below on '"Syntax" of the Jewish Museum', even through the gloomy, enveloping darkness encountered by visitors in the Holocaust Tower, a faint light can be seen from above. Although Libeskind said that he had set himself the task 'to remember architecture, to construct an experimental being which could remember it' (*C* 41), for Robin Evans, the Polish-American architect realized the futility of attempting to counter architecture's irretrievable loss of its original significance through repetition and endless reminiscence, and instead chose to cut out 'the aspects of architecture that are brimful of meaning—its all too vivid meaning as a social, economic and political process of construction—[to allow] for the construction of lines in the sky'. Like Elaine in the cattle-truck, Libeskind invokes a principle of transcendence and translates it into a new architecture.[76]

3   A Counter-Memorial from the Realm of the Para-Architectural

The 'Extension of the Berlin Museum with the Jewish Department', as it was initially called, was to house the city's small collection of Jewish artefacts and its conception was 'absolutely opposed' to a memorial, as revealed by Libeskind in his interview published in the *Newsletter* of the Architecture School at Columbia and reproduced in full by Derrida in 'Letter to Peter Eisenman' (see Chapter 3 and *infra*). Later on, in the photo essay by Hélène Binet, the architect admitted that there are dimensions of memory built into the museum, yet those made it 'a space for the encounter of history: a building and not a memorial' (*HJMB* 32). Yet, since in Berlin in particular Jewish history and culture were eradicated

through what, in *The Drowned and the Saved*, Primo Levi called 'the war on memory', rebuilding the severed connections involved recourse to a form of traumatic memory. The Berlin Jewish Museum becomes a mirror in which Man contemplates history and his deeds during the Second World War, and offers a model for probing below the surface into the 'immemorial'. Possibly aware of Adorno's view that anyone who adopts a neutral stance towards the Holocaust takes up the Nazis' position, Libeskind endeavoured to find the most appropriate space for excavating the truth of history:

> What was needed, as I saw it, was a building that … could take us all, Jews and non-Jews alike, to the crossroads of history, and show us that when the Jews were exiled from Berlin, at that moment, Berlin was exiled from its past, its present, and—until this tragic relationship is resolved—its future. (*BG* 83)[77]

Since the Museum was explicitly not conceived as a memorial, Libeskind made no use of any horror-inspiring visuals. There are no pictures of the skeleton-like figures from Auschwitz behind iron gates, no representations of the gas chambers and the crematoria, no piles of hair, shoes or other such accumulations that once belonged to the 6 million. Nevertheless, in spite of the museum not displaying any images or traces of the mass extermination, the annihilation of European Jews and their culture is 'part of the museum architecture in the form of the Voids'.[78] That the Jewish Museum is not a memorial that advocates deferential commemoration or passive contemplation, everyone agrees; it is a museum that asks questions, a feature otherwise shared by all of Libeskind's buildings. As he stated in an interview with the Felix Nussbaum Museum in Osnabrück, instead of offering answers, his work generates further interrogations, 'which is a Jewish tradition in discussion', a form of healing 'also related to the Jewish requirement—a mitzvah—to do a good deed without expecting payment'.[79] Richard Crownshaw, invoked in Chapter 3, categorized Libeskind's architecture as 'counter-monumental', an opinion shared by Katharyne Mitchell: 'Exactly how memory takes shape is unimportant beside the fundamental, core issue of remembrance itself. In this mission, it is a type of "counter-monument" to the nameless, soul-less buildings of global corporate architecture, many of which are rapidly filling in the other "voids" of Berlin'.[80] For Crownshaw, Libeskind's voids are a paradigm of what I defined earlier as trauma architecture, 'an architecture ruptured

by loss', and this loss can be found in the voids that force the museum's visitors to act as 'vicarious witnesses to what was beyond witnessing when it occurred'.[81] According to Arnold-de Simine, Libeskind's architecture refuses to work 'as a blank and neutral canvas' because of the way in which it encourages visitors to have both an emotional and a visceral response to it, a reaction which 'goes beyond a ritualistic response'.[82]

For Paul Williams, 'the coalescing' of a museum and of a memorial expresses an increasing desire to add both a moral framework to the narration of past events and more in-depth contextual explanations to commemorative acts'.[83] As I have shown in my short retrospective on the history of the Berlin Jewish Museum, neither Libeskind nor the planners of the museum encouraged visitors to experience it as a Holocaust memorial. Regardless, its high symbolism and the philosophy behind its written project have led many commentators to see it as the embodiment of both but also as a counter-memorial and a counter-museum that exposes a crisis in commemorative practices.[84]

'Between the Lines', the title for Libeskind's project that was in the making for almost 12 years, operates along 'two lines of thinking, organization and relationship' ('BL' 23), and may harbour an allusion to 'reading between the lines', implying that the reader needs to look for a less immediate or literally inferable meaning. Such a reading has its origin in Biblical exegesis, in the 'two alternative strategies for generating meaning and locating authority' that accompanied the Holy Scripture: the interlinear gloss, 'an outgrowth of the biblical text [that locates] authority in the autonomous reader', versus the marginal gloss, 'a record of patristic opinion [that locates] authority in Church tradition'.[85] Reading the Berlin Jewish Museum 'between the lines', at the intersection of its axes, would therefore invite a more personal, interpretive experience, detached from a more received construction and understanding of museal space. It would involve the necessity to see beyond its given, immediate architectural fabric and look for a deeper significance that has to do with what Libeskind called the 'para-architectural', which displays 'literature, music, and history not as metaphors, but rather as organizational structures'.[86]

Libeskind exceeded the remit of an architect, extending his experiments to the realm of other arts as well as philosophy. Relying on this sort of intermedial analogy, Kurt Forster had pointed out that the Jewish Museum is the quintessence of Paul Klee's enigmatic sketches of Berlin in *Destruction and Hope* (1916), Jakob G. Tscernikow's studies of multiple fold and intercalated shapes in his *Foundations of Modern Architecture*

(1930) and Paul Celan's poem 'Gespräch im Gerbig' (1959).[87] The first analogy in particular is significant in the light of Libeskind's project to build a museum which 'is also an emblematic reading of the city itself'.[88] Arnold-de Simine sees this reading as escaping the space that one normally would expect in architecture, an interpretation that led the architect to distil 'a cultural map from the cityscape of Berlin by drawing lines between former residences of its composers, writers and poets, connecting Jews as well as non-Jews'[89] in a matrix. This matrix also contains three axes intersecting underneath the museum, shaping a broken, dismantled Star of David poignantly suggestive of the frailty of the Jewish people.[90] For Terry Smith, the Star of David is:

> absolutely appropriate in a Jewish Museum in Berlin—the symbol of Jewishness, used by both Jewish communities throughout history and the Nazis to identify those they held to be Jewish, is registered as shattered, emblematizing the Nazi's prodigious but ultimately failed attempt to eradicate Jews from the world as they saw it. The implication here is that fragments, however ruined, can be reconnected, and a broken culture restored, however slowly and painfully.[91]

The Star of David is therefore a figure of mediation 'between the lines' of German/Aryan and Jewish cultures, victimizers and victimized, within a matrix which also connects the two lines in the museum's design.

4   A GENESIS OF LIBESKIND'S STRUCTURES[92]

Shaping a building into a Star of David matrix, a figure in Kabbalah astrology, had already provided the conceptual structure for another of Libeskind's projects before the Berlin Jewish Museum. 'DarknessFireVoice' (1997), his unsuccessful entry in the competition for a synagogue in Dresden two years before the Jewish Museum contest, had proposed a Star of David Artefact which the architect would have 'subtly incorporated into the historical fabric of the city and facing the old town' (*SE* 60).

In a stimulating essay, Fehmi Dogan and Nancy J. Nersessian showed how manipulations of the diagrammatic representation of the Star of David allowed Libeskind to combine apparently incongruent concepts, 'to create a semantically rich and challenging conceptual basis and translate that basis into the spatial configuration for the building'.[93] Dogan and Nersessian suggested that the Star 'appears to designate the building

itself' and might even 'indicate the footprint of the building'.[94] They ana-
lysed Libeskind's various drawings before the final project of the Jewish
Museum and revealed that in other sequences 'Libeskind used the Star as
a connecting element among places, including his Jewish Museum': one
drawing 'plotted a star over and beyond the Berlin Wall' that connected,
among others, the Berlin Museum, Erich Mendelsohn's Metal Workers'
Union Building, Libeskind's own City Edge Project, Oranienstrasse, and
Mehringplatz.[95] The names of Schinkel, Celan, Ossietzky, and Hoffman
were included in the drawing that also comprised an axis (entitled the
'Jewish Cultural Intermarriage') over the Star that advocated the integra-
tion between Jews and non-Jews.[96] The drawings of the distorted Star of
David gradually changed into the zigzag structure which represents the
whole layout of the Museum and stands for both the city's historical rela-
tionship between Jews and Germans[97] and the invisibility of Jewish culture
in present-day Berlin.

Another predominant structural figure of the Jewish Museum, the zig-
zag, was previously used by Libeskind in 'Line of Fire' (1988), a project
intersecting lines, angles and refracting words (right angles, rite angles,
write angles; the read line, the red line) for an Exhibition Installation
in Geneva in 1998, which presented 'an inscription of architecture that
does not consume or demolish' (*SE* 83). Dogan and Nersessian's con-
clusion was that the final series of the star diagram epitomised 'the path
to resolution' that was created when the two symbols, star and zigzag,
began to appear synchronously until the moment when they converged
'towards a unified representation, thus enabling a coalescence of the two
themes'.[98] The recurrent rhythmic sequences in the final star diagram
manipulations led to the spatial breakthrough that lies at the core of the
design of the Jewish Museum, consisting in 'the appearance of voids
along a broken line passing through the zigzag configuration', which
was formed from two unfolded lines of the original star.[99] In its planning
stage the zigzag seems to have become the main theme of the Jewish
Museum, a place where one could not walk properly, and it gave birth
to the void, 'a rectangular prismatic configuration along the zigzag'.[100]
Hélène Lipstadt revealed that Libeskind's initial proposal for the build-
ing 'was intentionally out of kilter in every respect. Not only was the
plan that of a jagged "lightening [*sic*] strike"; not only does a series
of inaccessible basement-to-roof voided spaces make continuous move-
ment impossible; but even the walls and elevator shafts were initially
intended to slope away from plumb'.[101] This is fairly illustrative of what

most of Libeskind's critics saw as the unconstructibility of his projects.[102] The design had to be changed and adapted accordingly in order to be built.

According to James E. Young, as early as 1978, the architect had manipulated form, and had pushed out or pulled in walls in order to articulate 'absences, voids and silences' in his search 'to sever the connection altogether between form and function', whose aim was to prove that 'form could be much more than merely functional—by being much less'.[103] Later on, in a series entitled 'Chamber Works: Meditations on a Theme from Heraclitus', Libeskind created a complex of lines that circumscribed spaces to the point of seeming 'to evaporate' and leaving space for a 'gradual collapse of the structure back into the elemental line, thin and drawn out, more space than ink, which is almost gone'.[104] Libeskind partly invalidates Young's contention, confessing that the idea of the voids came to him when he first visited the Jewish Cemetery in Weißensee, Berlin, a desolate structure which seemed to him built for the future of a community which hardly had any future:

> What struck me when I visited the cemetery was its emptiness. The tomb-stones were huge granite slabs, stretching for many meters long and high. There was no one left to visit. There was almost no evidence of Hebrew letters or symbols. …
>
> The emptiness that I witnessed at the cemetery actually confirmed my idea of the 'void' as an architectural device. (*HJMB* 37)[105]

Cesary Wąs wrote a provocative analysis of Libeskind's early designs in which he tackled the opacity of *Chamber Works*, made up of two sets of 14 drawings that initially resisted attempts at interpreting them.[106] Wąs's conclusion was that, although those drawings have their own (inscrutable) meaning, the latter has a history of its own, connected with Husserl's reflections on geometry, stretching across transcendentalism and historicism.[107] Wąs is not the only scholar who, having worked on these drawings, experienced mixed feelings of frustration and admiration; one need only look at Kurt Forster's attempt to read them as cases of 'anamorphosis', suggestions for a plane turning first around a horizontal axis, and then around a vertical one (see Forster in *CW* 10). Forster does not associate anamorphosis with a symbol of death in Libeskind's work.[108] The architect's lines were thought not to 'aim toward unity', but rather to suggest fragmentation (*CW* 92). When trying to make sense of 'the set of each

series progressing picture by picture from an oriented field to a horizontal and vertical line respectively', Jeffrey Kipnis aired his own incomprehension, a feeling which disappeared once he met Libeskind face to face and started to work with him:

> Whenever I detected what I thought might be a key to unlock their mystery-chamber music, the tracks of a cloud chamber, the philosophy of Heraclitus, arcane numerology, kabala, Duchamp, chess, Rorschach, formal analysis— I was quickly thwarted. The gratings and grids, notational elements, zigs, zags, and curlicues all wandered adrift; they made no sense, followed no logic of seriality or process, obeyed no law, honored no esoteric structure, constructed no space, added up to nothing, depicted nothing, meant nothing … I launched this brief chronicle of our relationship to see if I could reconstruct just when and why *Chamberwork* erupted into my consciousness with such force. I realize, now, however, that I will never identify that moment. The drawings must have insinuated themselves into me that first madding day and started reorganizing my thought, my very being, without my ever sensing their covert operation. (Kipnis in *SE* 10)

Above all, Libeskind's lines are, here again, abstractions that suggest the hope that stayed behind 'the common past of Libeskind, his nation, the people who survived the extermination (as his parents), and of the lines that act without geometry (just as geometry, since the time of Descartes, can act without lines)'.[109]

Attempting to explain the increasing abstraction of Libeskind's early work, Wąs grounded his analysis on Andrew Whiteside's 'The Veil of Production: Daniel Libeskind and the Translations of Process', which explored the relation between hermeneutics and heuristics. In the reconstruction of Libeskind's design process, he also took into account that under the influence of Peter Eisenman, 'a precursor of posthumanism in architecture', Libeskind's 'Three Lessons in Architecture' for the 1985 Venice Biennale displayed 'the historical variability of values, methods and objectives of this field'[110] and mixed 'languages', a process by which, for instance, musical suggestions can become apparent in a drawing. The transposition of ideas, contents or figures into the language of forms, 'produced like Esperanto', was followed by the invention of grammar and syntax. Such 'a new language did not seek to establish meanings, but postponed them even further than the natural language'.[111] Wąs agreed with Whiteside, who described Libeskind's work as 'heavily invested in non-logical procedures which resist the totalizing forces of reason'.[112]

Seen from this perspective, Libeskind's project is 'a *summa* of the architect's former efforts and interventions',[113] whose fourfold structure was explained in 'Between the Lines' (and developed further in *Countersign*):

> The first is the invisible and irrationally connected star which shines with absent light of individual address. The second one is the cutoff of Act 2 of *Moses and Aaron,* which culminates with the not-musical fulfilment of the word. The third is the ever-present dimension of the deported or missing Berliners; the fourth aspect is Walter Benjamin's urban apocalypse along the *One Way Street* … . ('BL' 26–27)

Libeskind further explained each aspect: the first was an attempt to revive the connection between 'workers, writers, composers, artists, scientists, and poets', belonging both to the Jewish tradition and German culture; such a link was plotted as 'an irrational matrix that would yield reference to the emblematics of a compressed and distorted star'. The second was meant as an architectural completion of Arnold Schönberg's unfinished opera, which ends with Moses uttering 'Oh word, thou word', interpreted by Libeskind as 'addressing the absence of the word'. Libeskind was struck by Schönberg's biography: he was a Jew who worked as a professor of music close to where the Jewish Museum is nowadays. Forced to leave in spite of being a famous composer, he wrote *Moses and Aaron* in exile. Whereas Aaron speaks for the people, as possessor of their truths, Moses cannot 'endure the absence of the Word' (*HJMB* 24). After the conversation between the two is broken off, there is a call for the Word, yet this call is directed quite spectacularly: 'The voice is alone with the orchestra playing one single note—sixty or seventy instruments play one single note and then they stop. And the voice calls out; it does not sing; on the contrary, it literally calls out for the Word and for the truth of the absent Word' (*HJMB* 24). The third aspect invoked by Libeskind resided in the architect's interest in the names of those deported from Berlin during the fateful years of the Holocaust. He found them in the *Gedenkbuch*, a massive 'memorial book' made up of two volumes exclusively containing 'lists of names, dates of birth, dates of deportation, and presumed places where the victims were murdered' ('BL' 26) which the Bonn authorities sent him on request. The fourth aspect was 'incorporated into the continuous sequence of sixty sections along the zigzag', each of which corresponds to one of the 'Stations of the Star' from Benjamin's text on Berlin and modernity, *One-Way Street* ('BL' 26, 'T' 57).

Libeskind's explanations earned him an entry on the museum in Edward Dimendberg's *A New History of German Literature*, discussing Libeskind's design as a text and the architect as an author. Here the voids of the Jewish Museum were linked to the ones created by the Berlin Wall and by the history of the city. Dimendberg analysed the references that Libeskind himself provided in 'Between the Lines': Schönberg's *Moses and Aaron* with its Judaic silence when attempting to represent God, Walter Benjamin's *Einbahnstraße* and the *Gedenkbuch*.[114]

Having in mind Libeskind's explanations on the abstractness of his project, Dogan and Nersessian argued that 'the rhythm of the series and the idea of the voids conceptually merge both the missing Jewish artefacts and culture in Berlin and the wandering themes of Schöenberg's [*sic*] opera *Moses and Aaron* and Benjamin's *One-Way Street*', a collection of aphorisms and observations on a variety of subjects that were explored in another series of Libeskind's drawings for the Jewish Museum focused on history.[115]

Anthony Vidler recognized in the Jewish Museum the 'so-called "mystical" experience' understood by Benjamin, 'the collective memory of the past that weighs so strongly on the present and controls in ways unknown our imagination of the future'.[116] Indeed, the Museum invites its visitors to remember and combine significations that jostle our consciousness into reflecting on what Vidler called 'Libeskind's ellipses, his wandering paths and warped spaces without perspective and ending blindly', which can only be seen as so many tests of our ability 'to endure the vertigo experience of the labyrinths that make up our modernity'.[117] In the 'Afterword' to *The Space of Encounter*, Vidler comes back to the 'implied architectural rereading of Benjamin' in the Jewish Museum. In his opinion, 'the half-sunken enclosure offers many potential connections to the Berlin of Benjamin's "childhood" and maturity', as 'the profound effort that Benjamin himself made to reread the city and its artifacts in a way that was not trapped within a sterile neo-Kantian formalism of Hegelian historicism' (Vidler in *SE* 240). Similarly to Benjamin, who 'preferred to lose his way in the city, experience it as an absentmindedness, stumbling along without the help of the Ariadne's thread provided by the modern guidebook', Libeskind created a museum that proposes an 'unrecognizable exterior' and 'unmappable spaces of the interior', which correspond to what Vidler, in agreement with Benjamin, called Kafka's 'ellipse', 'a kind of vertigo machine, drawing together worlds that could in no way be commensurate either on the level of reality or dream and yet, through the

very fact of their contemporaneity in Kafka's imagination, were rendered joint and immutably modern' (Vidler in *SE* 240).

A text that has received comparatively less attention from architecture scholars, yet is quite important in establishing the genesis of Libeskind's structures for the Jewish Museum, is 'The Pilgrimage of Absolute Architecture',[118] included in *Countersign*, where he expresses his belief that practising architecture today implies being aware, knowingly or unknowingly, that 'architecture has entered its end', not to say that it is 'finished' but that it 'has entered an end condition' (*C* 38). While Libeskind acknowledges Derrida's 'difference' at the basis of his project, he also goes back to the 'source' of modern architecture with Vitruvius and Alberti, for whom 'a good architect must first make a machine to do architecture', a conception that operated as an incentive for Libeskind: 'I thought that if I'm going to be a good architect I must follow the tradition to its end' (*C* 39). Using as a source of inspiration the 'memory machine' built by Renaissance architect Giulio Camillo, Libeskind designed a machine first by making a gear with which, by means of a chisel, he dug a 'Vitruvian, Albertian humanistic wheel of fortune suitable for the diagonally crucified humanist of Raphael and Leonardo …. The square intersecting with the circle' (*C* 40). Once the wheel was set in motion, he needed a barrow, which is when the memory project kicked in: 'I tried to make a wheelbarrow—I had to remember how to make it' (*C* 42). If the first machine ('The Reading Machine') was made of wood, the next machine ('The Memory Machine') was connected to remembering, implementing how, as a 'historical programme', 'architecture and its sight have been filtered through what can still be remembered':

> The first machine with the books is already here in this machine inside the wood. I should say that the sound is very important because the sound of equipment was creaking; this [second] machine clicks like a puppet theatre [inspired by *Don Quixote*]. You can use it, manipulate it, pull the strings. I guess it's a little puppet of memory—a theatre of architecture, rather than the architecture of a theatre. (*C* 41; insertions mine)

'The first machine creaks, the second one clicks, and this one ['The Writing Machine'] whirls rapidly.' The 'lubricant' or 'fuel' for the latter is the world of books: 'To lubricate such a big industrial piece of writing one would need all the texts in the whole world, so I translated the books into forty-nine times four languages because seven words times four

surfaces' (*C* 43). Then, this third machine also had to be housed: 'Then came the problem of the housing unit—an architectural problem. This is an entry for an urban design competition' (*C* 43). We can read quite clearly Libeskind's intention to participate in a competition with his complex architectural machine, and we see in its drawing the structure of pillars, in exactly the same number, from the Garden of Exile. Therefore, if there is indeed 'a calculator which is to prognosticate the written destiny of architecture' (*C* 45), and if architecture is, as Libeskind contends, 'a symbol which, in the process of consciousness, leaves a trail of hieroglyphs in space and time', then, before the Jewish Museum was built in an urban space, this earlier, complex machine which Libeskind included in 'a kind of reflective order which disrupts the forty-nine time four sides',[119] was to be in part the matrix and destiny of the museum to come, whose complex genesis was set in motion by such a 'memory machine'.

Later on, in his design of the Felix Nussbaum Haus (1996, completed in 1998), Libeskind used the structure of the Extension and a vocabulary reminiscent of the Axis of the Holocaust. Similarly to the Jewish Museum, the Nussbaum Haus (called the 'Museum without Exit' at proposal stage) could be entered only through the classical building of the Osnabrück History Museum. And like the Axis of the Holocaust, which ends in the Holocaust Tower, the dark and narrow 'Hallway of Unpainted Pictures' echoes Nussbaum's fate[120] and leads directly to the former headquarters of the Gestapo.

Some of the above calculations and parts of architectural machinery have prepared us for our next section, which will attempt to parse the Jewish Museum in order to reconstruct its absent 'syntax', or how it is put together in a fragmented space, decomposing the various complex constituents of an architectural grammar and language whose new rules have to be learnt.

Interlude: Choreography Between the Lines

After the Jewish Museum opened as an empty space in 1999, it soon became a site for architectural tours, with over 350,000 visitors stepping inside its vacant structure before its reopening as a themed museum in 2001. Many of these expressed their conviction that the building should have remained unfilled. For them, the structure seemed, as Sodaro put it, 'to be a Holocaust memorial that could perhaps even supplant the need for' other memorials (like the Memorial of the Murdered Jews of Europe)

or the redevelopment of the Topography of Terror site of the former Nazi administrative buildings which were being planned at the time, 'or at the very least complement them'.[121]

One major creative response to Libeskind's museum is choreographer Sasha Waltz's remarkable happening, notorious for its unique interplay of image, body and space. Sasha Waltz brought her dancers into the empty space, where for four weeks they worked to establish a 'dialogue' between choreography and architecture by creating a promenade performance through the museum. Waltz herself led the audience through the axes and voids, transforming these into a corporeal arrangement filled with dancers, and ending the journey at the very point where it had begun. For Dorita Hannah, '[t]he performance posited a new way of approaching the museum as a place of exchange where the built form and the bodies moving within it take precedence over objects on display'.[122] To approach the museum from this perspective, which turned the visitor into an active participant in the show, was possible precisely because Libeskind's architecture, assimilated by Hannah to a 'dance of cacophonous geometries', was both an architect's and musician's work, or, in other words, the work of 'one who understands the dynamic possibilities of performative spatial gesture'.[123]

If the fractured space of Libeskind's museum relies on vision, Sasha Waltz's show is an orchestration of vision in motion. Moving bodies recreate mentally (seeing and thinking) and emotionally (feeling) what Libeskind's architecture achieved. Waltz's projective dynamics impacts on the spectators' visual consciousness, building up an internal representation as well as exploiting the fact that what they see changes as they move. Hannah included Waltz's choreography into a form of 'creative memory' with the role of 'transfixing and transforming the object of architecture': 'Along with architectural tours, an empty building inhabited by artists and performers presenting ephemeral exhibits and fleeting events, suggests a more radical and appropriate option to a museum housing permanent collections'.[124] Among the most effective images is a dancer, with arms and legs strapped, who moves over a prone body in the goods lift. Another man lies naked on the bare floor of the Memory Void, his gesticulations reverberating through the concrete cavity. Women stretch in transparent cubes of organza that look like self-distorting showcases. Piles of naked bodies writhing on the ground fluidly break up and reassemble in a dance of death suggestive of the piles of inert bodies destined for the crematoria at regular intervals.

If Libeskind's project was tensed between presence and absence, Waltz played out this dialectic via flesh and sound. A woman dressed in dark colours and high heels takes a stiff step out of a narrow opening in the wall; bodies bustle about frantically, in and out of sight, against a noisy background in which one can make out stern, Gestapo-like questions, with politer inflections (among the most discernible: 'Stay here, please', 'Your name, please?') The 'guests' finally disappear only to return to the place where the performance began. Waltz's final vision is not one of hope: through a large window in the corridor, one can see 'a diorama of moving bodies, trapped and unsmiling behind the glass, like so many specimens in a jar'.[125] There are no words in Sasha Waltz's contemporary dance; yet, according to Helen A. Fielding, such a choreographed syntax 'nevertheless overlaps and intertwines with language in the ways it is taken up by the corporeal schema as the possibilities of movement and structures of action that allow us to engage with the world'.[126]

5   'Syntax' of the Jewish Museum

The modern architectural elements of the Libeskind building comprise the zinc façade, the Garden of Exile, the three Axes of the German-Jewish relationship, and the Voids. Together, these form a visual and spatial language, full of history and symbolism, and based on patterns of disruption, dissociation, fragmentation and disarticulation. The rules of Libeskind's reinvented space guide the visitor 'between the lines' of German and Jewish histories, along 'two lines of thinking, organization and relationship: One is a straight line, but broken into many fragments; the other is a tortuous line, but continuing indefinitely'. ('BL' 23)—or in David Farrell Krell's reformulation: 'one of them straight but fragmented and voided, the other a zigzag …'.[127]

Libeskind described his whole Extension as something that incorporates within the space of architecture what 'cannot be described in words or texts, but now belongs to the city and to the museum' ('BLOS' 24). Using Vidler's notion of the 'architectural uncanny' to denote a 'psychoanalytic and aesthetic response to the real shock of the modern',[128] Young remarked that the Jewish Museum's architecture exemplified an anti-redemptive 'memorial uncanny', 'that memory of historical events which never domesticates such events', through the articulation of zones earmarked as 'voids', a structure meant to evoke the memory of a culture that has been destroyed.[129] The confrontation with 'the withdrawn

exteriors and disturbing interiors of the Jewish Museum' was for Vidler a phenomenological experiment in which 'both Heidegger and Sartre would find themselves, if not exactly "at home" …, certainly in bodily and mental crisis, with any trite classical homologies between the body and the building upset by unstable axes, walls and skins torn, ripped and dangerously slashed, rooms empty of content and with uncertain or no exits or entrances'.[130] This uncanny feeling was also the starting point for Eric Kligerman's suggestive parallel between Libeskind's voids in the Jewish Museum and Celan's silences in poetry. For Kligerman, 'Libeskind spatially refigures the same concept of the uncanny that appears through-out Celan's poetics' because the museum provokes a rupture of viewing for the visitor who thus cannot locate himself anymore in the series of 'slashed windows and slanted, narrow, and serpentine halls', as well as the disruptive voids, that break up 'both representational and temporal continuity along the museum's horizontal axis'.[131] A similar feeling can be experienced when reading Celan's poetry, which Kligerman associates with 'the *dislocation* of perception'[132] that was also characteristic of Libeskind's museum. Kligerman replaces Freud's *Unheimlich* with 'the holocaustal uncanny', used to continually shatter 'our position as subjects by undermining our vision and orientation in the artwork'.[133]

As will be seen in more detail in the next and final section, dealing with Derrida's disappointment with the conception of the voids, Libeskind's strategy relies on the tension between absence and presence in order to signify the clash between two ways of thinking, ending up with the Holocaust—a demarcation that was to be echoed by the political division of the city until soon after the competition for the Berlin Jewish Museum.

Structurally speaking, the Kollegienhaus remains untouched on the outside, its harmonious rules and proportions unaffected by the extension that Libeskind added on. In this way, as Young has pointed out, 'the stolid Baroque façade of the Berlin Museum itself is … recontextualized in its new setting adjacent the Jewish Museum', hence the 'connection between the Berlin Museum and Jewish Museum Extension remains subterranean, a remembered nexus that is also no longer visible in the landscape, but buried in memory'.[134] Libeskind made no clearly separate entrance (such as a connecting bridge) to the new building but a stairway through a void of exposed concrete seamlessly leads down to the sunken level of the modern annex.

Before visitors commence their walk along the three Axes proper, the Rafael Roth Learning Center, located laterally, provides them with a

historical and archival database. Its location at the beginning rather than at the end of the museum suggests that 'learning and discovery should take place immediately and at several junctures. Learning is not an end point but a dialogic process, continuous and open-ended'.[135] The resource centre combines three sections: Stories, Things and Faces. Among the stories, 'Longing for Zion', 'Images of Jews', 'Rural Jewish Cooking', 'Eastern European Jews in Germany', 'Transit to America', 'Jews in Breisach' and 'Exile in Shanghai' offer information about prejudice against and defamation of the Jews, as well as the exile into which they were forced in order to escape persecution. Several stories concentrate on Jewish personalities, such as: Heinrich Heine, the German-Jewish poet who was ostracized and humiliated despite his conversion to Christianity and who was refused recognition in German literature well into the twentieth century; Else Ury, author of a famous book series for children, *Nesthäkchen*, who was murdered at Auschwitz; Albert Einstein, often described as a 'Jewish saint' in spite of calling himself a 'religious non-believer'; and Heinz Schumann, a jazz player who used to perform illegally in Berlin bars, was arrested, then survived his deportation to Auschwitz. Possibly the most powerful story, 'Liberation' relates how German inhabitants were forced by British soldiers to confront the crimes committed at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and assume at least in part responsibility for the Nazi Regime's horrible doings.

5.1   *The Three Axes of the Berlin Jewish Museum*

The basement is divided into the three Axes, also known as the 'roads' or 'streets', which make up the three facets of the history of German Jews. The first and longest, significantly named the Axis of Continuity, leads to the main staircase (Sackler Staircase),[136] which goes back up and gives access to the permanent exhibition space, 'Two Millennia of German Jewish History', conceived as the continuation of Berlin's history. It also intersects the two other axes that symbolize the Jews' emigration (the Axis of Exile) and extermination (the Axis of the Holocaust) respectively, the two major, irreconcilable events that ruptured the continuous fabric of Jewish culture in Germany (Fig. 4.1).

These two axes are somewhat analogous to the divided structure of Saul Friedländer's magisterial work on *Nazi Germany and the Jews*: a first volume on *The Years of Persecution* (during which Jews could still escape) followed by one on death (*The Years of Extermination*). Once inside the

Fig. 4.1   The Intersection of the Three Axes, Courtesy of the Jewish Museum, Berlin

space delimited by the intersections of the three Axes, one can see only two at any one time: from the Axis of Exile the 'saved' continued their lives on the Axis of Continuity, yet those who managed to emigrate left relatives and loved ones behind on the Axis of the Holocaust; from the Axis of the Holocaust the few children sent on special transports to other countries and the camp survivors continued their lives on the Axis of Continuity; the Axes of Exile and of the Holocaust trace an X of crossed destinies.

The Axis of Exile leads out into the Garden of Exile, initially named after the author and composer E.T.A. Hoffmann, which one can enter after pushing open a heavy door. The Axis of the Holocaust becomes increasingly narrower and darker, and takes the visitor to a dead end: the Holocaust Tower (*SE* 28).

5.2   *Exhibits*

This initial approach to the museum's inner syntax cannot be complete without a few remarks on the exhibits inside the museum. The presentation on the Axis of Exile consists of snapshots of individual lives represented by artefacts, sometimes accompanied by commentaries about their respective donors or lenders, that the visitor can see in slanted vitrines recessed into the walls. An inscription informs us that between 1933 and 1941, about 280,000 German Jews emigrated to the USA, Palestine, Great Britain, South America, Africa and China (mainly Shanghai). Photos illustrating anti-Semitism, taken by Werner Fritz[137] in 1935 in small urban and rural places from Westphalia and Lower Saxony, accompany the story of the Jews' exile. Through these selective exhibits, the collective memory of a people is reduced to an aleatory assortment of heterogeneous, individual possessions (suitcases filled with the few keepsakes that the Jews were allowed to take into exile or managed to salvage), with the names of cities where exiled Jews found a home displayed on both sides. Each object tells a tragic story: Moshe Wolff's camera was used to photograph his parents when his family left Hamburg in 1938; the Jacobson family's silverware comprised the only valuables which they were allowed on their passage to Cuba in 1939; doctor Edith Weber's syringe represents a memory of her service in the Jewish Hospital in Berlin until she emigrated to Palestine in 1935; the wedding rings of Margarete and William Sachs are the only mementos of her marriage to her late husband which she could take on her way to Stockholm (and almost the only piece of jewellery which Jews were permitted to keep). An informative note explains

how Jews emigrating from Germany to save their lives were stripped of any property they had acquired during their lifetime.[138] On the left side, different photographs of German Jews between 1934 and 1939 heading for Chile, the USA, Palestine, South Africa and Shanghai, travelling documents (*Ausweise*), suitcases filled with 'objects of memory', sum up various family histories.

Evocatively surrounded by smoked black glass, the 19 showcases on the Axis of the Holocaust display objects that silently testify to their owners' absence and aim to convey to the visitor a sense of irredeemable loss. Here again, selectivity[139] and representability are perhaps the best terms to describe these mementos, 'selected' just as their departed possessors were when sent to the camps, then to the gas chambers; representative insofar as they stand synecdochically for the 6 million and as reminders in lieu of the presence of those unrelated people and families whose stories they encapsulate. The letter is the most represented item exhibited in the *vitrines*: there are letters from Hans-Peter Messerschmidt about the daily routine at Auschwitz III (Monowitz); one from Lotte Kahn, who died with her family at Auschwitz; two letters written by Steffi Messerschmidt (later murdered) from the Gurs internment camp in the South of France; a letter that Philipp Kozover wrote on arrival in Theresienstadt, happy that his family was safe.[140] To these should be added two other types of written documents, such as the card Hermann Lissauer received from a former classmate in exile in Rotterdam at the time but who was later deported to the Łódź ghetto, whereupon his subsequent fate is unknown; and some pages from Ruth Zwilsky's notebook, in which she wrote down the dates and the contents of the packages she would send to her brother Sally and other relatives in Theresienstadt. Perhaps the most moving item is a letter from Ruth Prager, written to her daughter and son, saved in a children's transport to Sweden in 1939. Ruth's health condition had prevented her from leaving Germany until 1942, by which time it was too late for the couple to emigrate; Ruth and her husband were then sent to Łódź, where they died in 1943. The fragment translated from her letter that appears on the window glass reads:

> My dear children, I don't know what to tell you because my heart is so full and words are so small and say so little. I had always hoped that we would be united but we're probably at a fateful juncture just now. We're packing for our trip and awaiting our future … Think of us and pray for a reunion. Your loving mother.[141]

The 'fateful juncture', which provides the title for the accompanying note, echoes Libeskind's structure based on the intersection (junction as well as 'juncture') of the axes, in particular the fateful intersection of the Axis of the Holocaust with the Axis of Continuity: some died and some went on living, as in Ruth's and her children's case. Yet the survivors on the Axis of Continuity have the duty to testify on behalf of those who disappeared in Hitler's inferno, and the donation to this part of the museum of Ruth's moving letter by her son, one of its addressees, ensured that her memory would live on.

Photos are also an important dimension of the Axis of the Holocaust as they tell different stories from before deportations: that of a Berlin Jewish teacher, Fritz Wachsner, who was dismissed from a public school by the Nazis, went on teaching in a Jewish school and eventually was deported to Riga where he died with his wife; and those of several students of the Jewish Middle School which was closed in June 1942, only a few days after the photos were taken. The majority of the happy students in the picture died but Harry Klindermann survived and told their story. Two photos capture the interior of houses inhabited by Jews and testify to contrasted realities in time: whereas the first shows the Mündens' festively decorated dining table in Hamburg,[142] the other is a snapshot of the rooms of the Jacobsohn family store[143] taken from a neighbouring apartment. The rooms' interior is not what matters; what is striking is the Swastika flags hung in the windows of the already deserted store. They are the ominous sign of what might eventually lie in store for the Mündens as well, here captured in a fleeting moment of relative happiness.

Two examples of Holocaust art are also on display: Friedrich Taussig's[144] painting of Theresienstadt, and the 1930 self-portrait of Alice Haarburger, who was deported to the Riga ghetto in 1941 and shot by an SS officer in 1942.

Apart from letters, photos and art, the Axis of the Holocaust also contains miscellaneous objects that belonged to the deceased or the survivors: a blanket, one of the few objects in the possession of doctor Leo Scheuer in his hiding place, the house of a former patient; a spoon that belonged to Käthe Domke, who survived Theresienstadt; a marble statue that once adorned the Berlin house of the Zimmts; Julius Coppel's small handbag and item of jewellery; a brush made in the workshop of Otto Weidt, another Auschwitz victim; even a Singer sewing machine that once belonged to a Berlin tailor and subsequent Auschwitz victim, Paul Gutermann. Each object displayed in this section is a *memento mori* and

represents a disappeared body, the frailty of humanity and civilization as well as the need for recollection. The few photos impart a sense of the ordeals undergone by those who were excluded forever, a sharing based on the meticulous roll-call of the individual names of the victims or their relatives and of their former occupations, which become, as Costello remarked, a form of bearing witness to their lives: 'The juxtaposition of the lives and the deaths forces the visitor [to] dialogue with two realities to make layers of meaning and acknowledge both what was and what was extinguished'.[145] Facing all the items in the dark showcases on the right, the left wall of the Axis of the Holocaust displays in big bold letters the Germanized names or spelling of ghettos, concentration and death camps: Lodz, Riga, Minsk, Chelmo, Belzec, Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, Lublin, Majdanek, Treblinka, Sobibor, Bergen-Belsen, Flossenbürg, Mauthausen, Ravensbrück, Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald. As in all museums dealing with the Shoah, there is a compulsive insistence on numbers in the inscriptions on the Axis of the Holocaust to recall the magnitude of the Jews' extermination, the 6 million out of whom almost 200,000 were German Jews.

The permanent exhibition on the upper level that prolongs the Axis of Continuity offers a historical retrospective of Jews in Germany, starting with the first medieval settlements along the Rhine in Speyer, Worms and Mainz, continuing with the Baroque period, focused on the lives of Jews in court and based on the diary of a Hamburg business woman, Glikl bas Judah Leib, as well as featuring the achievements of Enlightenment Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1750–1800). The presentation on the nineteenth century, defined as the Age of Emancipation of the Jews, is followed by an evocation of twentieth-century Berlin, which Jewish merchants, entrepreneurs, scientists and artists contributed to raising to the status of a European metropolis. The exhibition reveals that in spite of their ungenerous treatment before and during the First World War, Jewish soldiers living in Germany had fought bravely for their country. A whole section on National Socialism then displays Jews' struggle against mounting discrimination and persecution that resulted in their setting up their own schools and social welfare for their community. While the sample stories from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries function as individual memories, 'The Escape: 1933–1941' records the collective fate and escape of 276,000 German Jews from Nazi Germany. The exhibition also highlights two major trials about the murder of European Jews: the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial (1963–65), a turning point in the public consciousness

and debates about Nazi atrocities, and the more controversial Majdanek trial in Düsseldorf (1975–81), a protracted affair resulting in acquittals and mild sentences that exposed the inadequacy of the legal framework. The gruesome 'Majdanek Trial Portraits', painted 20 years after the trial began, were proof of the enduring reverberations of the court proceedings in the media and the arts. After the war, 250,000 survivors located in Displaced Persons' camps sought to emigrate. A new beginning for Berlin Jews is suggested by an installation displaying photographs of people who grew up in Germany reporting on their childhood and youth after 1945, which brings the exhibition tour to a close.

5.3   Libeskind's Voids

If the Axes are the main arteries through the museum's space, with their intersections serving as symbolic fateful crossroads, the 'void' is the museum's 'structural rib, its main axis, a central bearing wall that bears only its own absence', slicing through 'a twisting and jagged lightening [*sic*] bolt of a building'.[146] As mentioned before, the void is meant to bring the invisible into visibility, or, to paraphrase the architect, to let the invisible be experienced by the public, and it translates the erasure of history into surrogate symbolic presence. It can therefore be interpreted as a 'funeral hologram' of the Jewish culture that the Nazis destroyed, the invisible made visible by inscribing lack in a physical location once populated by a strong Jewish presence. Libeskind saw this structural void as both organizing the museum and external to it; each cavity is 90 feet high (23.5 meters) from the lower level to the third floor, an empty cavernous space hollowed out by concrete walls that contain no artefacts and are bereft of any artificial lighting. The museum guidebook *Highlights from the Jewish Museum Berlin* mentions that 'the aesthetic form of the Voids is echoed by the sound installation Gallery of the Missing (2001)', designed by Via Lewandowsky, which makes accessible as audio recordings fragments of works begun before the Holocaust but never completed or destroyed (*HJMB* 171). As the note inside the museum informs us, its three black glass sculptures 'explore the theme of emptiness … and question what the destruction of Jewish culture means for the museum's collections and exhibitions'. Or in Young's description: '[t]he interior of the building is … interrupted by smaller, individual structures, shells housing the voids running throughout the structure, each painted graphite-black'.[147]

Roger Cohen called the voids 'shattering evocations of the terror and disorientation that set in when the assumptions on which whole lives have been based are undone by an unimaginable barbarity'.[148] Indeed, with their syntactic irregularities and discontinuities as well as what they seem to suggest elliptically, a non-recoverable deletion or an indefinite embedding, the voids were for Libeskind 'that which can never be exhibited when it comes to the Jewish Berlin history. Humanity reduced to ashes' (*HJMB* 30). Creating space 'around what is not visible' and running 'centrally through the contemporary culture of Berlin', the voids were intended to materialize the lost Jewish element to the public within a collection 'which is reducible to archival material, since the physicality of it has disappeared' (Libeskind, quoted in 'LPE' 12). In this way, as Roger Cohen suggests, '[t]he vertiginous pinnacles and voids of Jewish life in Germany and of Berlin itself are captured'.[149]

Designed to express the inexpressible, Libeskind's voids can be connected to Lyotard's sublime attempt to put forward the unpresentable in presentation itself, seen before.[150] In 'Representation, Presentation, Unpresentable' Lyotard further defined the unpresentable as 'what is the object of an Idea, and for which one cannot show (present) an example, a case, even a symbol. The universe is unpresentable, so is humanity, the end of history, the instant, space, the good, etc.'.[151] Nevertheless, for Libeskind, what is important is 'how one deals with ruins and with history' in a constructive way rather than allowing them to disappear, let alone in a city like Berlin, whose utter devastation at the end of the War, more than most other sites of destruction, still looms in the visitor's imaginary unconscious and attempts to reconstruct its former glory (*HJMB* 14). In this regard, Andrew Benjamin interpreted the void as 'a productive absence' because it 'holds the presence of absence' and forces the visitors of the museum to negotiate with the building itself and 'confront' the void.[152] Angled into a building coated by a thin zinc layer on the exterior which has already turned a shimmering blue through oxidation, the voids are covered by an irregular matrix of long, narrow windows that seem oriented in no particular direction, but in fact follow a map of pre-war Berlin:[153] turret-like windows cut at 35-degree angles across the ground-line (which is actually below street level); parallel windows similarly angled at the upper-floor windows.[154] Through them, as Young aptly analyses, 'our view of Berlin itself is skewed, its skyline broken into disorienting slices of sky and buildings'.[155] Or, as Libeskind himself informs us, these windows are inscribed in a 'completely different logic of openness' which

is neither related to 'an elevation that an architect could plan', nor to the one generated by 'a system of geometric compositions', but to 'the openness of what remains of those glimpses across the terrain-glimpses, views, and glances that are sometimes very accidental, yet are the disciplined longitude-latitude lines belonging to a projection of addresses traversing the addressee' (*HJMB* 67). Darragh O'Brien observed that Libeskind's voids alternate two features: they appear to subjectively invite the visitor 'into the experience of the victim' on those levels where they are 'discovered as an interior space' and to propose an '*objective* distance of history, a place where the presence of the void enables us to consider the infinite implications of the holocaust', to which we are irrevocably bound through time.[156]

Locating the presencing of absence and the unpresentable may, and in fact should, in itself pose problems, let alone since the 'void' is used both to describe the straight-cut line that bisects the entire structure and any one of its separate manifestations, accessible or inaccessible. Libeskind himself has sketched numerous evocations of this structural void but the two following elaborations are the clearest and most helpful:

> The void is the one element of continuity throughout the complex form of the building … and runs the entire length of the building, over 150 meters. It is a straight line whose impenetrability forms the central axis. The void is traversed by bridges which connect the various parts of the museum to each other. The scheme is really seven independent buildings which are seemingly unified into one building because they are all related in the same way to the bridges. ('T' 57)
>
> The void is divided into five separate parts. The first two voids, at the front of the building, are the deepest ones and can be entered from the underground Jewish collection. It is there that visitors first encounter the nothingness of the space of Berlin. … The two voids in the middle are completely impenetrable; no one can enter them. They can be seen from small vertical windows in the bridges, the bridges which literally and architecturally connect the museum gallery spaces. At the end of the museum lies the fifth and final void, which is entered through the temporary galleries. This final void is a dramatic space that refers most specifically to Schönberg.
>
> The straight line of the void orients the visitor. It is concrete on the inside and graphite on the outside as it cuts through the exhibition walls. ('T' 57)

With Libeskind's elucidations on the five separate parts of the void in mind, nevertheless it is also worth quoting at some length James Young's

own explanations, following Libeskind's first description (which he also extracts, except for the crucial final sentence), since it reiterates many of the features of Libeskind's second, fuller account while indicating a different number of voids: six (between the 'seven independent buildings'?) instead of Libeskind's five—a calculation found more often not only in numerous scholarly studies but also on the website and in the guidebook of the Berlin Jewish Museum itself:

> In fact a total of six voids cut through the museum on both horizontal and vertical planes. Of these six voids, the first two are accessible to visitors entering from the sacred and religious exhibition spaces. According to the architect's specifications, nothing is to be mounted on the walls of these first two voids, which may contain only free-standing vitrines or pedestals.
>
> The third and fourth voids cut through the building at angles that traverse several floors, but these are otherwise inaccessible. Occasionally, a window opens into these voids, and they may be viewed from some thirty bridges cutting through them at different angles; but otherwise, they are to remain sealed off and so completely 'unusable space' jutting throughout the structure and outside it. The fifth and sixth voids run vertically the height of the building. Of these, the fifth void mirrors the geometry of the sixth void, an external space enclosed by a tower: this is the Holocaust void, a negative space created by the Holocaust, an architectural model for absence.[157]

The moot point here, in order to try and settle this crux, is the final explanation, whether the 'external space' of Holocaust Tower ('Holocaust void')—the mirroring geometry or *mise en abyme* of (model for) absence also referred to by Libeskind as the 'voided void' (see *infra*)—is to be factored into the number of those voids that are effectively traversed by the 'central axis'.

5.4   *The Garden of Exile*

The heavy glass door of the E. T. A. Hoffmann Garden of Exile, which has to be pushed hard to merit entry, brings to mind a similar metaphor in reverse by Elie Wiesel, when he was the first chair for the council of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, to hint at the opposite tragic outcome: 'I would bring the viewer closer to the gate but not inside, because he can't go inside, but that's close enough'.[158] Libeskind integrates a natural enclosure into his architectural complex, bringing the visitors near an apparent exit, enough to breathe the fresh air outside but

still fenced off within the perimeter of the museum. They may think that they have gained access to the 'real outside'; however, they have reached only the floor slanting at a twelve-degree angle of the Garden of Exile, defined by the architect himself as 'a shipwreck of history', whose aim is 'to completely disorient' (*HJMB* 41), just as the exile had to find his/her bearings in a new land. Outside, Libeskind's own note warning of the slight nausea which the tilted columns might induce, reads: 'One feels a little bit sick walking through it. But it is accurate, because that is what perfect order feels like when you leave the history of Berlin' (Fig. 4.2).

The Garden of Exile bears a striking resemblance to Eisenman's Holocaust Memorial and has even been called its 'sublime cousin'.[159] It is made up of 49 concrete pillars, over 20 feet high, out of which olive willows grow.[160] According to Åhr, the number of columns was chosen by Libeskind to suggest the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948 and '[t]he crowning forty-ninth column (filled with earth from Jerusalem)' to signify 'Germany on the one hand, the spectre of discrimination and

Fig. 4.2   The Garden of Exile, Courtesy of the Jewish Museum, Berlin

exodus on the other'.[161] In the Garden of Exile, visitors are led to think that they will feel some relief and finally reach hope after escaping from the labyrinth, but instead they still find themselves boxed in and are forced to return inside the confined space of the museum.

5.5   *The Memory Void: 'Fallen Leaves'*

The Memory Void is the only voided space that can be entered, by taking a short corridor off to the left, half-way up the Sackler Staircase, echoing with admonitory clanging noises. Wedged into a dead end, this awe-inspiring space is occupied by Menashe Kadishman's installation titled *Shalechet* (Fallen Leaves), which stages the fragility and unreliability of human memory. The permanent installation consists of over 10,000 open-mouthed faces coarsely cut from heavy, circular iron plates covering the floor, on which visitors have to walk gingerly in a receding, darkening dramatic space reverberating with the infernal rattle of these metal sheets against one another. Impersonal (with cut-out eyes, nose and mouth) and frozen into horrifying expressions, these faces clash into one another as people are invited to trample them underfoot. According to Lisa A. Costello, they 'evoke those who remain unnamed',[162] representing artefacts of death that could belong to any victim of violence in general, as the initial description explained:

> Menashe Kadishman's installation Shalechet is first a memorial to the Holocaust. But he reaches beyond this and dedicates it to all innocent victims of violence and war. He requests that visitors walk upon the work. The title Fallen Leaves raises suggestions both of negative predestination and of hope for new life in the upcoming spring.[163]

In Chapter 2, I invoked Bernard-Donals's *Forgetful Memory* and his coinage of the phrase 'voids of memory' for the marks that an event had left on the memories of both those who took part in it and those who did not, an event called 'knowledge's other'.[164] In stepping on these innumerable faces, we are both 'in memory of' all the trampled others and obliviously crush them underfoot yet again. 'Fallen Leaves' can be seen also as a project on the face in a quasi-Levinasian sense. In an essay drawing a comparison between Levinas's *visage* and graffiti images with painted faces created by Klone, a Tel Aviv-based street artist, Hagi Kenaan attempted an analogy between the Levinasian face and the facing of images 'which

is not one that would be natural to readers of Levinas'.[165] For Kenaan, Klone's images are 'strange images' because their engagement with the face stands for 'the uncontainable presence of Otherness, to an unbridgeable distance, an outside, that is always there, at the heart of the concrete world we share'.[166] Menashe Kadishman's face is certainly a 'strange' face: it has mouth, nose and eyes *in absentia*. It is not a metaphor, it is a 'trace', and trampling it creates for the visitor a moment and experience of facing which in Robert Eaglestone's interpretation of the Levinasian trace is 'the moment of ethics': 'The trace, beyond its material, inaugurates the same ethical relation to the other in the past as the face does to the actually present other … The trace is to the absent other of the past what the face is to an other person actually here in present'.[167] Kadishman's face testifies to the same Other, the one who has become an outside, 'submerged', the 'complete witness', who has 'touched bottom', as Primo Levi would say; faces no longer as the noble *visage* but as the *Figuren* or *Muselmänner*. Kenaan sees images as 'extrovertly visual' and argues that their essence is not that they are 'in our field of vision' but that they always show 'themselves in a manner that is, already, intricately tied to the condition of being viewed. 'Being an image', Kenaan continues, 'is being turned—a turning toward the eye'. In viewing an image, we go beyond 'what the eye has framed' as 'we encounter that which addresses or turns toward us as viewers'.[168]

Transposing Kenaan's thoughts to Menashe Kadishman's installation of faces, we may start viewing these opened, contorted mouths as 'immemorial' traces of a multitudinous scream calling us not to forget. Suggestive of inflicted violence, they remind us that, in *Totality and Infinity*, the wish to destroy the other is similar to the desire to destroy him/her as a face,[169] as Large explains. The mouths opening like a wound, the noses and the eyes of those faces, some bigger, indicating adults' suffering, some smaller, signifying children's expressions, may even break with the passing of time, as museum-goers keep stepping on them; yet they remain present, reminding us that we are accomplices and perpetrators. To quote from Large, '[t]he presence of the other's face is the permanent commandment against murder. To experience the other as a face is to experience the impossibility of killing'.[170] When visitors step on them, they ruin the face. Yet the memory of the Other cannot be destroyed and it forces us to remember and 'try and see'.[171] Such a project on ruins also brings to mind Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind*, incidentally written in conjunction with an exhibition on blind self-portraits which he had been asked to curate at the Louvre:

> Ruin is that which happens to the image from the moment of the first gaze. Ruin is the self-portrait, this face looked at in the face as the memory of itself, what *remains* or *returns* as a specter from the moment one first looks at oneself and a figuration is eclipsed. The figure, the face, then sees its visibility being eaten away; it loses its integrity without disintegrating.[172]

Cast away on the immemorial floor of the void, but not dispersed as bodies and ashes, the 'Fallen Leaves' are perhaps the most searing illustration of an experiential space in the Jewish Museum. Stepping on these anonymous, pain-stricken faces, we also symbolically step on history and memory: visitors assume the active role of compromised perpetrators of violence when they agree to tread on the 'fallen leaves' that shift uncomfortably beneath their feet, producing, Saindon goes as far as to suggest, 'reverberating metal-on-metal sound reminiscent of forced labor camps'[173]—or even, we might venture, of the locking of metal doors behind gas chambers.

5.6   *The Holocaust Tower*

The Holocaust Tower, a 24-metre-tall empty concrete silo, was defined by Libeskind as a 'Voided Void' (*HJMB* 29). It is the epitome of a European nightmare that started with 'the pogroms and the anti-Semitic edicts which did not only begin in 1933' but rather 'became obvious, irrefutable, and unfortunately irreversible in 1933', went on with 'the burning of books and cultural artifacts', and ended with 'the burning of human beings', all of which gave Libeskind the feeling of 'the nothingness of the nothing' (*HJMB* 30). The Holocaust Tower functions as 'a memorial within the museum', according to the explanations given in the museum guide edited by its curators (*HJMB* 143), in spite of Libeskind's own insistence on demarcating his museum as a whole—meant to impart a vision of hope—from a memorial monument. Although it is connected by an underground passageway inside the museum, its parallelepipedic, closed structure, 'empty and forbidding, neither heated nor cooled' (*BG* 56), stands out as lonely and detached from the outside. As pointed out by David Ellison, the space of the Tower, even more than the other voids, is 'acoustically and climatically distinct from the rest of the building',[174] and is devoid of any aesthetic claims. For Rolf Schneider, '[i]t is as it is: huge, narrow, cut off, final, bare. There is no aesthetic equivalent for holocaust. There is nothing aesthetic about this enclosed space. It is the holocaust itself',[175] a description that Ellison interpreted in terms of Adorno's

prohibition on representation in the aftermaths of Auschwitz but in which one can also see the Tower's essential intractability.

Libeskind admitted that the significance of the woman's vision of that white line on the sky in Eliach's *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*, recalled above, was 'obscure and enigmatic, and yet it had such a transforming power' that he decided to integrate it into the design of The Holocaust Tower (*BG* 56). In the final words of 'Trauma', '[a]s visitors traverse the museum, they will see that white line in the window, the illumination of the void—the white line of hope along the visitor's route' ('T' 58). While he conceived it as 'a place that has to be experienced as an end, which will forever remain a dead end. For they will not return' ('BLOS' 27),[176] at the same time, therefore, it could not remain completely dark. Piercing through the ceiling, and 'angled so acutely' that it is barely visible in dark weather conditions, a streak of light emanates from a thin slit, 'which is then reflected on the concrete walls and floor of the Void' (*BG* 56). For the visitor who is able to discern that faint band of light, the perception becomes disjunctive; commenting on 'a sense of disequilibrium and groundlessness … that defies phenomenological explication' as well as on the unsettling physiological experience. Parr observes that '[t]he void … is not entirely dark although its emptiness produces a sense of darkness; the light emitted from above cools the space as it lingers against the concrete and yet panic produces bursts of heat'.[177]

Once inside this symbolized antechamber of death, whose sense of hopelessness is mitigated by the filtering light, the visitor comes face-to-face with him/herself in sheer emptiness. Such an anagnoristic moment of self-revelation resonates with Halbwachs's 'contemplative memory', 'one of the rare moments when we succeed in isolating ourselves completely, since our memories … are indeed *our* memories'.[178] Visitors are warned by a sign outside the Tower to enter individually and allow the heavy steel door to shut behind them. The lack of any heating or cooling system is what Costello rightly identified as a metaphorical reference to 'the absence of such luxuries in ghettoes and concentration camps',[179] although it is precisely one that exposes the incommensurability of situations that we analysed in Chapter 2, the hollowing out of absence itself in this 'Voided Void'. To recall and adapt the words of the former Holocaust researcher quoted before, the more confrontation and the less comfort visitors feel when they enter the Holocaust Tower, the more it helps them to comprehend and experience what happened. Some visitors have feelings of claustrophobia (despite the rather vast emptiness inside) and despair or the

sensation of suffocation, with chills sent down their spine by the oblique confrontation with the horrors of deportation and extermination; others just keep silent. One gets a glimpse of the Jews' martyrdom while standing in the dank chiaroscuro, being barely able to see in a spatial enclosure where time too seems to have frozen. When people emerge from the Holocaust Tower, their eyes need to readjust to the light of the outside world, albeit still that of the Museum. Since this experience of induced photophobia is a form of symbolic blindness, Derrida's view of blindness in relation to the precariousness of witnessing in *Memoirs of the Blind* is worth recalling:

> Turning into martyrdom, and thus into witnessing, blindness is often the price to pay for anyone who must finally open some eyes, his own or another's, in order to recover a natural sight or gain access to a spiritual light. The paradox stems from the fact that the blind man thus becomes the best witness, a chosen witness. In fact, a witness, as such, is always blind. Witnessing substitutes narrative for perception. The witness cannot see, show, and speak at the same time …. No authentification can show in the present what the most reliable of witnesses sees, or rather, has seen and now keeps in memory—provided that he has not been borne away by fire. (And as for the witnesses of Auschwitz, like those of all extermination camps, there is here an abominable resource for all 'revisionist' denials.)[180]

When leaving the gloomy confines of the Holocaust Tower, the visitor is made to feel like a witness who will be a different person once s/he is able to see again. For Derrida, the blind person is a witness because, by being blind, s/he has access to the truth of a spiritual, divine light—and in Libeskind's quasi-mystical ethical vision, 'Light is divine' (*BG* 88). The French philosopher also calls the blind man 'an archivist of visibility' and gives examples of '*forms* of the conversion between blindness and the supplement of clairvoyance', showing that 'the blind man can always become a seer or visionary'.[181] Visitors of the Holocaust Tower may have been blind inside (or momentarily blinded when they exited), yet they were given access to a spiritual light. They were blind(ed) to vision because they saw light in darkness, which can be a way of reading between the lines of Libeskind's poignant evocation: 'Berliners understood the building, deep in their hearts. They stood in the Holocaust Tower, silently, many with tears in their eyes. They studied the staircase, and knew why it dead-ended at a blank white wall' (*BG* 150). Once outside, visitors with tears in their eyes will forever keep in mind the Shoah's obscenity glimpsed in

obscurity, the sensation of emptiness they experienced inside, behind the closed heavy metal door.

My visit has followed a more 'structural' route than the linear, if fragmented trajectory that is implicitly proposed by the Museum's overall layout, with its emphasis on continuity and hope, and that most visitors are likely to adopt. However one chooses to travel through history, time and space, one has to retrace one's steps along both Axes of Exile and the Holocaust as if they were dead ends or Benjaminian 'one-way streets', and throughout the Museum as a whole once one has visited the permanent collection, from its beginning on the top floor down to the first floor. One has somehow to re-experience the building's architectural space in reverse 'back and again', as a relived memory or film in fast flashback, as if this 'time machine' added another dimension of working-through.

On their way out, back to the 'real world', visitors may wish to make a final stop in the courtyard, covered by a glass roof designed by Libeskind, whose construction was started five years after the museum's completion, i.e. three years after it was opened, and lasted from February 2006 into 2007. The glass structure was conceived as a *sukkah* or 'thatched booth' in Hebrew, a ceremonial space where meals are taken during *Sukkot*[182]—it has a restaurant-cum-coffee shop (Café Schmus)—whose purpose was also to provide access to a garden which, with 'its fountains, arbors, and groves of sycamore and black locust', is nothing more than a 'miniature version of the "Gan Eden", the Garden of Eden' (*HJMB* 151).

6   Derrida's Response to the Jewish Museum

Libeskind's former teacher, Peter Eisenman, designed buildings that were characterized by the pursuit of a purely formal aesthetics, resulting in occasionally unworkable buildings which were indifferent to site, divorced from daily life, and which antagonized their users. Commenting more positively on the inscription of incompletion and futurity in Eisenman's architecture—'which would resist the possibility that the building would allow for an explanation of its activity in dialectical terms either as a synthesis announcing completion or as an aporia awaiting completion'—Andrew Benjamin saw the incomplete in Eisenman's 'liberated' forms as bringing 'a productive negativity resisting its own negation'.[183] However, it was especially with this presence of negativity that Derrida took issue in his 'Letter to Peter Eisenman', dated 12 October 1989, written as an apology for being prevented from attending in person the

conference on 'Postmodernism and Beyond: Architecture as the Critical Art of Contemporary Culture' at the University of California, Irvine. It was read to the participants by J. Hillis Miller, at Derrida's request. In this letter, the French philosopher voices his scepticism at the conception of memory that an emphasis on 'ruin' and 'destruction' might entail, at 'what would again bring [period] architecture … back to the ruin, to the experience of "its own" ruin' 'if all architecture is finished, if therefore it carries within itself the traces of its future destruction, the already past future, future perfect, of its ruin, according to methods that are each time original, if it is haunted … by the spectral silhouette of this ruin …' ('LPE' 11). Against the notion of great architecture bearing in itself the traces of its own destructibility, Derrida sees Eisenman's (and Libeskind's) implicit understanding of memory as a (Benjaminian) 'mourning in affirmation' conducive to a more fragile future.

In this section, I will return to the last part of Derrida's missive, which targets more specifically Libeskind's implementation of negativity in the Jewish Museum. To illustrate his misgivings, Derrida quotes a large portion from an interview with Libeskind published in the *Newsletter* of the Columbia School of Architecture, which in turn will be excerpted here. In this interview, the architect stated that, in spite of the pervasive sense of Jewish culture as loss, he had conceived his museum not as destruction, but as hope for all Berliners and citizens present, future and past 'to transcend [in this particular form] passive involvement and become participation' ('LPE' 12). Libeskind's reconciliatory agenda and 'attempt to give a voice to a common fate' shows especially through his oxymoronic couplings: 'to the contradictions of the ordered and disordered, the chosen and the not chosen, the vocal and the silent'. In that sense, the architect continues:

> the particular urban condition of Lindenstrasse, of this area of the city, becomes the spiritual site, the nexus, where Berlin's precarious destiny is mirrored. It is fractured and displaced, but also transformed and transgressed. The past fatality of the German Jewish cultural relation to Berlin is enacted now in the realm of the invisible. It is this invisibility which I have tried to bring to visibility. So the new extension is conceived as an emblem, where the invisible, the void, makes itself apparent as such. (Libeskind, quoted in 'LPE' 12)

Libeskind then briefly refutes that his transformative work in the Jewish Museum is a 'collage', 'collision', and, more debatably perhaps, a 'dialectic' (to bring invisibility into visibility), and emphasizes instead the performative organization 'around a void, around what is not visible. And what

is not visible is the collection of this Jewish Museum, which is reducible to archival material, since the physicality of it has disappeared'. The problem of Jewish culture at the core of the Museum is seen as

> the problem of an avant-garde of humanity, an avant-garde that has been incinerated in its own history, in the Holocaust. … The Jewish history of Berlin is not separable from the history of modernity, from the destiny of this incineration of history; they are bound together. But bound not through any obvious forms, but rather through a *negativity*; through an *absence of meaning* and an *absence* of artifacts. *Absence*, therefore, serves as a way of binding in depth, and in a totally different manner, the shared hopes of people. (Libeskind, quoted in 'LPE' 12; emphases mine)

Although mainly directed at what he thinks retrospectively has been a misunderstanding of deconstruction by Eisenman, Derrida's criticism singles out similarly insistent keywords in Libeskind's own discourse: 'Once again void, absence, negativity, in Libeskind as in you', with which he concludes the 'Letter' (before adding two postscripts for Eisenstein's attention only).

Derrida's angles of approach (whose complexity can only be economically summed up here), in particular his joint targeting of Eisenman and Libeskind, beg the question of the latter's own allegiance, or at least relation, to deconstructivism, let alone deconstruction (regardless of the joint invitation, with Eisenman and other self-declared deconstructivists, at the 1988 MoMA exhibition on 'Deconstructivist Architecture'), for which we need to reconstruct a context before engaging with the subsequent direct confrontations and exchanges with Derrida. In contrast to Eisenman's work, traces of such a proximity, including in Libeskind's own idiom and 'theoretical' writings, are few and far between, and when they occur, as in the earlier text 'Nouvelles Impressions d'Architecture',[184] they do so unhelpfully and in a rather opaque manner, whose playfulness only could be associated with (a glib view of) deconstruction:

> … 'it is time' to dis-articulate (architecture's) thought. …
> The de-construction of de-construction yields:
> 'aren't you at least equal to Russia Cement?' (*SE* 139)

While still in his formative years, Libeskind had distanced himself from 'the dictates of Purist and orthodox architecture'[185] as well as from Chomskyan linguistics, strongly promoted by Peter Eisenman. As Antonello Marotta

acknowledges in his biography, Libeskind became increasingly drawn to avant-garde movements such as Expressionism, Russian Constructivism, De Chirico's Metaphysical Art and Surrealism and any current situated 'outside the academic circuits, developing Vasilij Kandinskij's themes of line and surface, the division of space from the Russian Constructivist Konstantin Melnikov's visionary architecture, and the conceptual sculptures of the Dadaist Marcel Duchamp, to arrive at Robert Smithson's territorial signs and Richard Serra's Land Art'.[186] In his 1987 'Open Letter to Architectural Educators and Students of Architecture', Libeskind addressed the futility of 'tediously applying gold leaf onto a pinnacle of a tower' … with rotten foundations, assuring his public that before such a 'delicate task' has been completed, 'the entire edifice will collapse, destroying both the work and the worker'. For Libeskind, architecture as it was taught and practised by his contemporaries was 'but a grammatical fiction' (*SE* 20). Libeskind's conceptual thinking became close to that of Robert Venturi, a 'postmodern architect' associated with a group (the 'Grays') who had opposed the 'New York Five' (the 'Whites': Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, Charles Gwathmey, John Hejduk and Richard Meier),[187] and who had become famous for his book *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966), which strongly promoted ambiguity to prevail over unity and precision, and contradiction and redundancy to replace coherence and simplicity. '[O]ften ungrammatical or, rather, devoid of an inherent structuring grammar', in Marotta's words—unlike the emphasis on syntax and language of the Five—Venturi's treatise had investigated a process to which Libeskind belonged, conceptually rather than formally, which led to a 'breaking down' of 'the continuity relations between planes and levels'.[188]

Such a subversive programme is at odds with the tenets of deconstructivism as these are formulated by Jeffrey Kipnis in 'Twisting the Separatrix', included in *Chora L Work*s:

> Do not destroy; maintain, renew, and reinscribe. Do battle with the very meaning of architectural meaning without proposing a new order. Don't engage in reversing values aimed at an uninhabitable, unusable, asymbolic, and meaningless architecture. Rather, destabilize meaning. To destabilize meaning does not imply progression toward any new and stable end, and thus it cannot mean to end meaning nor change meaning. (*CLW* 137)

While the 'quasi-theological' nature of these commandments, more *don'ts* than *do's*, might not be strictly agreeable to Derrida (and his insistence

on demarcating deconstruction from so-called 'negative theology'), the manifesto's emphasis on questioning the meaning of architecture rather than insisting on destruction, negativity and absence traces a fault line that allows us to see why, against these axiomatic principles, Eisenman and Libeskind are aligned in Derrida's 'Letter'. Leaving aside the phenomenological issues with Libeskind's architectural representations of 'voids' (as dialectic or not), to which we shall briefly return, we see here a common lack of the affirmation with which deconstruction is so ethically concerned.[189]

As I showed in the section above on 'The Genesis of Libeskind's Structures', the concept of the void had exerted an enduring fascination on Libeskind, as it will on the museum's visitors and critics. For Constantinos Proimos, Libeskind's recourse to spatializing voids in order to make tangible (though not always accessibly) absence and loss detracted 'from the undecidable and immaterial character of both absence and the void, making them master signifiers of the Holocaust'. Thus, Libeskind converted them into 'sites with fixed meanings, easy to consume and therefore easy to forget'.[190] Others like Chametzky, already encountered in Chapter 3, who typically saw Libeskind's museum as 'disconcerting, deconstructivist', objected to its 'parsimoniously and irregularly pierced walls, skewed floors, and zigzag circulation', as well as to the disorientation and destabilization effect of its empty areas on the visitor and the unoccupied voids incorporated into the fractured Star of David.[191] Coming to Libeskind's rescue, Hilde Heinen defended Libeskind's implementation of the void against Derrida on two counts: 'the building altogether is deliberately intended to be ambiguous, i.e. not subject to a single interpretation'; 'the voids of the building have an overdetermined character that escape simple definitions'.[192] Nevertheless, both Libeskind and Heinen failed to address the gist of Derrida's objections, which originated neither in 'the ambiguity of the building' nor in 'its capacity to defy simple definitions', but rather in the architect's 'tendency to make the void and absence stand for what they are not and, thus, compromise their disturbing effects'.[193] In Huyssen's apt and concise verdict, 'Libeskind's building may ultimately not avoid the reproach of aestheticising or monumentalising the void architecturally'.[194]

After the letter to Eisenman, Derrida interacted more directly with the architect in his 'Response to Daniel Libeskind: On "Between the Lines"', which was followed by a discussion between them and other members of the audience (including Kipnis), all later published in *Radix-Matrix*.[195] Both Derrida's 'Response' and the ensuing debate may have played their

own minor part in sealing the French philosopher's break with the world of architects that seemed to be announced 'between the lines' of his 'Letter to Peter Eisenman'.

Derrida begins his 'Response' by invoking Heidegger's 'Language is the house of being',[196] mischievously pretending not to be sure who its author is ('I think it was a philosopher'). Although the pretext for this opening gambit was his not infrequent disclaimer about speaking (in) the other's language—'one of the things I have to face now is to speak English, to improvise in English, and I do not feel at home at all. That is my first experience of *das Unheimliche:* improvising, after Daniel Libeskind, in English' (*RM* 110)[197]—more crucially, its implications will be that the French philosopher acknowledges not feeling 'at home' with the architect, that the house of language inhabited by architects is not the same as the one of the philosophers.

For Heidegger, being human, traditionally conceived by metaphysics as an 'animal endowed with speech' (*zoon logon ekhon*), meant dwelling. Feeling 'unhomely' (*unheimlich*) or uncanny means not feeling at home with oneself or a feeling of estrangement and alienation (*Entfremdung*)[198]; it meant the negation of familiarity, comfort and security, which thrust *Dasein* into a confrontation with nothingness (*Nichtigkeit*). Derrida's reference therefore can also be interpreted to anticipate his unease with Libeskind's voids, associated exclusively with an 'unhomely' absence and negativity.

Despite this inaugural note of confessed unhomeliness, Derrida chose to structure his further opening remarks as he usually did with most of his interlocutors, by strategically using their very language as a kind of 'sound box' for his own discourse: 'My remarks will look like a sort of wandering, an erring, and a zigzagging' (*RM* 110)—recommending, in a sort of pointed by-the-way', a 'wonderful book entitled *Zigzag*' by Jean-Claude Lebensztein, like Libeskind 'a young Polish Jew [who] lost his family in the War'.

After many such 'zigzags' or detours—on how to respond to somebody who created a participatory 'architecture of response'; asking about Libeskind's 'experience of competitions', or 'the space for all the experiments with nonarchitectural possibilities'; evocations of Kafka's complaint about the destruction of the Prague ghetto; his own lecture on Celan in front of the Berlin Wall—Derrida comes to his first major point: the issue of 'reunification', political (the Berlin Wall came down soon after the competition for the Jewish Museum was adjudicated) and cultural (the

German-Jewish connection or, in Derrida's own word, '*psyche*'). Invoking Gershom Scholem congratulating Buber and Rosenzweig on translating the Bible into German, Derrida recalled that Scholem, the founder of the academic study of Kabbalah, felt that it was a gift that came too late, as 'there had never been anything like a German Jewishness or a Jewish Germanness'; that such a relation was 'a myth' or 'a legend', or, for Derrida, that 'this couple (German-Jewish) never existed—now less than ever'. Derrida wondered about the status of Libeskind's 'gift', 'the gift of a ghost, a ghostly gift' (*RM* 111), to West Germany, to free Berlin, and, after the Fall of the Wall, to a reunified Germany.

It is worth recalling here Bettina Mathes arguing against a similar insistence on absence, void and loss in Libeskind's discourse, that 'representing nothing still means to represent something, as Derrida pointed out in his response to Libeskind and Eisenman's architecture'.[199] While I would strongly challenge her view that 'to conceive of the effects of the Holocaust as "void" … liberate[s] the culture that perpetrated the genocide from dealing with the aftermath of this crime', her earlier claim that 'Germany … is pervaded by visible and invisible remnants of a once vibrant presence of Jewish culture',[200] accurate as it may well be, misses the blindspot that Derrida rightly senses in Libeskind's motivation: not so much the denial of a (cultural, social, economic) permanence but rather the rushed affirmation of a *relation 'between'*. It is hardly necessary to evoke the propagandist opposition between a self-proclaimed superior Aryan race and those variously stereotyped as 'greedy bankers', 'legalistic pedants', 'lecherous males' and 'seductive, destructive females' or 'germs' and 'parasites'[201]—or in Horkheimer and Adorno's words, castigating their fellow countrymen's rampant anti-Semitism, 'the embodiment of the negative principle'[202]—to doubt the possibility of a true relation, not only 'after Auschwitz', but even before. To revert to Lyotard's philosophical language and assertion that there was not even the possibility of a 'differend between the SS and the Jews': how can there be a restored common idiom and a linkage after such mesmerizing pronouncements as, for instance, '[t]oday I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord'?[203]

> The linkage between the SS phrase and the deportee's phrase is undiscoverable because these phrases do not arise from a single genre of discourse. There are no stakes held in common by one and the other. In exterminating

the Jews, Nazism eliminated a phrase regimen where the mark is on the addressee *(Listen, Israel)* and where identifying the addressor (the Lord) or the sense (what God Wants to say) is a dishonorable and dangerous presumption.[204]

If, as we saw, 'after Auschwitz' meant for Adorno, Lyotard and others the irreparable breakdown of Hegelian speculative dialectics, or, at the very least, the necessity to be suspicious of its synthesizing moves, the void's symbolic translation of invisibility (negation) into visibility (affirmation) is in itself worth interrogating beyond Libeskind's defence that it is 'a new type of organization which is organized around a center which is not, around what is not visible'.[205] Murdered *en masse*, Lyotard's '*jews*' became both 'absent' and 'more present than present', an undeniable 'fact' since 'the jews' often evoked, for instance by Kafka in his texts, are already those '[f]orgetting souls, like all souls, but to whom the Forgotten never ceases to return to claim its due'.[206] In transcending Jewish culture as loss through the healing, restorative project of a cultural mediation ('Between the Lines'), Libeskind's voids, their presencing of the negative as well as their relation to the void as 'central axis' or 'structural rib' (Young; see *supra*), even the so-called 'voided void', are exposed to a logic that is *de facto* contaminated by a dialectical process.

At stake here is also the issue of election or 'exemplarity', a word that seems laudatory enough—and on which Derrida insists throughout both the Response and the Discussion: about Berlin as an exemplary city and symbol of division (*RM* 111), the Jewish Museum as 'exemplary of the avant-garde architecture today' and an 'exemplary' experiment 'in terms of politics and history', a rather insistent compliment reiterated one last time towards the end, in spite of acknowledging that he does so 'out of my incompetence' (*RM* 114, 115).[207] Derrida, however, also sums up as 'the logic of exemplarity' the views of the German Jewish philosopher Hermann Cohen, 'a neo-Kantian, a socialist, and a German Nationalist', who had expressed his fervent belief in an alliance between Germans and Jews as an 'absolute privilege', and brings it to bear on Libeskind's own discourse:

> Sometimes, therefore, I am a little anxious about the language of exemplarity. When you said that Jewish culture was the avantgarde, you immediately afterward said that, of course, you were speaking metaphorically or metonymically for it is not as an empirical group that we can use Jewish culture

as an example. My anxiety has something to do with this exemplarist logic, and this could well lead me to the question of the void. (*RM* 111)

Derrida's pointed use of 'exemplarity' is not innocent, so soon after a famous passage in *Archive Fever* commenting on Yerushalmi's confident assertion 'Only in Israel and nowhere else is the injunction to remember felt as a religious imperative to an entire people',[208] from *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, wondering '[h]ow can one not tremble before this sentence?':

> the question of exemplarity … here situates the place of all violences. Because if it is just to remember the future and the injunction to remember, namely the archontic injunction to guard and to gather the archive, it is no less just to remember the others, the other others in oneself, and that the other peoples could say the same thing—in another way.[209]

Such contextual reflections add more ballast to Derrida's unease about the inherent self-contradictions and dialectical tensions in Libeskind's void as 'totally invested with history, meaningfulness, and experience' in its purposeful presencing of absence, and its relation to *chora*, 'place itself, place as a nonanthropological, nontheological possibility for this void to take place' (*RM* 111). In Libeskind's museum, the void is not only paradoxically 'affirmed' in a representation of the unrepresentable, replenished as 'the embodiment of absence' ('BL' 28),[210] but it thus also becomes exemplary of a misreading of the contrary 'logic of the *chora*' for Derrida:

> This void which has to be made visible is not simply any void. It is a void that is historically determined or circumscribed; and it is not, for example, the indeterminate place in which everything takes place.
>   …
> The logic of the *chora*, then, is a challenge to the logic of exemplarity—the human, theological space in which the void is determined—not to speak of the possibilities for philosophy and dialectics to recuperate and to reinscribe the logic of the void, the logic of the absence of presence, and to reconstitute a discourse that is not proportionate precisely to the events of which your museum is keeping the archive. (*RM* 111)

In 'A Letter to Peter Eisenman', one of Derrida's main issues had already been the conflation of the 'void' with an insufficiently 'detheologized

and deontologized' interpretation of *chora*: '(*chora* is neither the void, as you suggest sometimes, nor absence, nor invisibility, nor certainly the contrary from which there are, and this is what interests me, a large number of consequences)' ('LPE' 8). Derrida reiterated the same qualms in his 'Response to Daniel Libeskind' in more straightforward terms:

> Each time Peter Eisenman mentioned absence in the void, it was a determined ontological void. I referred to the Platonic *chora*—in Greek this means 'place'—and in Plato's *Timaeus* there is a place that is neither divine nor human, neither intelligible nor sensible, a place that precedes history and the inscription of Forms; and it challenges every dialectic between what is and what is not, between what is sensible and what is becoming. (*RM* 111)

In the subsequent 'Discussion', Libeskind tried to demarcate himself from Eisenman's conception of the void as *chora*—'I do not think I share with Peter this notion of the void, which is basically Platonic, which does deal with the Greek notion of the void'—although his rather cryptic reply that his notion of the void was 'much closer to the avant-garde', which he connected to Moses, failed to address Derrida's issue of how his void was equally invested with an ontological meaning (*RM* 113).

In a third, final attempt that brings the exchange to a 'conclusion'—in response to Libeskind's argument that '[the void] is the one part of the building that is constituted by the intersection of everything that is known and appears in the central arena of the building. For somebody looking at the collection, it appears as something which is deferred. It is not something that is designed deliberately. It is already there'.—Derrida highlights a point glimpsed above in this chapter's section on the '"Syntax" of the Jewish Museum': that there are inevitably 'two kinds of voids' in Libeskind's work:

> One is the general spacing of the structure in discontinuity. The other is this very determinedly sealed space which nobody can experience or enter into. These two voids are not of the same quality. One needs the other to be determined, in order to relate to history, to memory, to what is kept as a nameable or nameless secret. There is some sealed memory, kept as a crypt or as an unconscious, which is encrypted here. The sealed memory is not exactly the general void and the emptiness of the structure. (*RM* 115)

Although the dialogue seems to have moved away from teasing out the void's relation to *chora*, there is still a difference between representable, countable, 'historical' inscriptions and the structure's 'general spacing' on which Derrida, in his 'question on this structure and the general structures' (*RM* 112), rightly insists and which for him, unlike Libeskind, would still entail the residual trace of an ontological dimension.

Libeskind conceived his voids as representing the Jewish Berlin history that 'has been reduced to ashes' (*HJMB* 71). Though the exchange between them never explicitly brought up this motif, it is worth noting that here again the architect's figuration of historico-cultural ashes harbours a residual ontology, unlike Derrida's more *chora*-inspired, poetic meditation on the self-effacing 'remainder' or 'trace' of 'cinders'.

In the 'Letter', Derrida admits that the difference between philosophical ideas and their translation into architectural projects is that the latter are material: 'It is true that for me it was easier, in a certain way. I did not have anything to "do" with it and would not have been able to do anything with it …' ('LPE' 8).[211] But in this 'to do', one may also wish to hear the call of what 'poetry' is (from Greek *poein*: to make, fabricate), and, as with Heidegger, such a call may help 'build' a more creative experience into the critical. Libeskind built the spaces inside the Museum as 'open narratives' that 'seek to provide the museum-goer with new insights into the collection, and in particular, the relation and significance of the Jewish Department to the Museum as a whole', a remark which James Young related to its attempt 'to estrange [the collection] from viewers' preconceptions' through its fractured, angular spaces.[212] Such a layout links 'the all-too-familiar ritual objects and historical chronologies' to the uncanny and invites the visitors to perform their own operations of defamiliarization.[213]

Daniel Libeskind also held the view that a good museum 'continues to operate in the minds of its visitors after its closing hours. It continues to be an image which can be filled with dreams, analyses, and thoughts'; such a haunting is a 'breathing room' that gives us time and opportunity 'to speculate and to think of new ways of being' (*HJMB* 17). Taking the architect's cues, I will now set out on my own experiential journey through the Berlin Jewish Museum in a virtual literary Extension of my own.

Notes

1. See Brett M. van Hoesen, 'Weimar Revisions of Germany's Colonial Past', in *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and the Modern Memory*, ed. Volker M. Langbehn (New York: Routledge, 2010), 204.
2. Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993).
3. Svetlana Alpers, 'The Museum as a Way of Seeing', in *Exhibiting Cultures: the Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 25–32.
4. Sandra H. Dudley, 'Museum Materialities: Objects, Sense and Feeling', in *Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations*, ed. Sandra H. Dudley (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 8.
5. See Maurice Blanchot, '"Do Not Forget"', *The Blanchot Reader*, trans. and ed. Michael Holland (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 245–246. Without following my particular line of argument, Richard Crownshaw also observes that 'theories of Holocaust memory, in their claims to an ethics of otherness, can be characterised as Levinasian'. (Richard Crownshaw, *The Afterlife of Holocaust Memory in Contemporary Literature and Culture* [London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010], 239).
6. Michael Fagenblat, *A Covenant of Creatures: Levinas's New Creation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 197.
7. Maurice Blanchot, 'Our Clandestine Companion', in *Emmanuel Levinas: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, ed. Claire Katz and Lara Trout, vol. 1: *Levinas, Phenomenology and His Critics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 65.
8. Blanchot, 'Our Clandestine Companion', 66.
9. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Ethics as First Philosophy', trans. Seán Hand and Michael Temple, in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 75–87. See also *Ethics as First Philosophy: The Significance of Emmanuel Levinas for Literature, Philosophy and Religion*, ed. and intro. Adriaan T. Peperzak (New York and London: Routledge, 1995).
10. R. Clifton Spargo, *Vigilant Memory: Emmanuel Levinas, the Holocaust, and the Unjust Death* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 138.

11. Michael Bernard-Donals, *Forgetful Memory: Representation and Remembrance in the Wake of the Holocaust* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009), 19.
12. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), V.
13. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, V, trans. Bernard-Donals in *Forgetful Memory*, 19.
14. Bernard-Donals, *Forgetful Memory*, 20.
15. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Ethics of the Infinite', in *Debates in Continental Philosophy: Conversations with Contemporary Thinkers*, ed. Richard Kearney (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 70.
16. Anya Topolski, *Arendt, Levinas and a Politics of Relationality* (London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 189.
17. According to Fagenblat, Ricoeur believed that Levinas 'was concealing his Judaism in his philosophical cloak' (*A Covenant of Creatures*, 2).
18. Adding up the entries from the Bible in one of Levinas's major texts, Malka concludes: 'There are no quotations from the Bible—except one or two maybe—in *Totality and Infinity*. It's Plato. It's Descartes. And when he reads in Plato that the idea of the Good is beyond Being, he is thinking of the unpronounceable Name, and he makes a kind of short-circuit that is never named as such. That the Unsayable and the Good of Plato are superimposed at a point that itself cannot be named, is something that I sense to be very deeply buried, something profoundly dissimulated and always said indirectly'. (Salomon Malka, *Emmanuel Levinas: His Life and Legacy*, trans. Michael Kigel and Sonja M. Embree [Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2006], 196.)
19. Samuel Moyn, *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas between Revelation and Ethics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).
20. See Fagenblat, *A Covenant of Creatures*, 14.
21. Fagenblat, *A Covenant of Creatures*, 14.
22. Richard J. Bernstein, 'Evil and the Temptation of Theodicy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, ed. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 253.

23. Bernstein, 'Evil and the Temptation of Theodicy', 260.
24. Bernstein, 'Evil and the Temptation of Theodicy', 260.
25. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Transcendence and Evil', in *Collected Philosophical Papers,* trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1987), 161.
26. Bernstein, 'Evil and the Temptation of Theodicy', 262.
27. Bernstein, 'Evil and the Temptation of Theodicy', 266.
28. Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. Seám Hand (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 291.
29. See Michael L. Morgan, *Discovering Levinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1.
30. See Emmanuel Levinas, 'Useless Suffering' (1982), in *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other,* trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 98 and 99.
31. This scene is recounted in the Foreword by François Mauriac; see Elie Wiesel, *Night*, trans. Marion Wiesel (London: Penguin, 2006), xx. For issues of theodicy and forms of religious response needed after Auschwitz, see for example Zachary Braiterman's suggestively titled *(God) after Auschwitz: Tradition and Change in Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).
32. Levinas, quoted in Stéphane Mosès, 'Emmanuel Levinas: Ethics as Primary Meaning', trans. Gabriel Motzkin, in *Emmanuel Levinas: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, ed. Claire Katz and Lara Trout, vol. 1: *Levinas, Phenomenology and His Critics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 335. In *Heidegger, Art and Politics: The Fiction of the Political*, trans. Chris Turner (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe makes a similar statement: 'God in fact died at Auschwitz—the God of the Judaeo-Christian West at least'. (37); see also 39–40, n. 4.
33. See Susan Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 239, 291.
34. Bernstein, 'Evil and the Temptation of Theodicy', 266–267.
35. Fagenblat, *A Covenant of Creatures*, 3.
36. William Large, *Levinas' 'Totality and Infinity'* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 33.

37. Brian Schroeder, 'The Listening Eye: Nietzsche and Levinas', in *Emmanuel Levinas. Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, ed. Claire Katz and Lara Trout, vol. 2: *Levinas and the History of Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 274. For a clarification on critical meontology and Emmanuel Levinas, see also Martin Kavka, 'The Meontological Conundrum: Emmanuel Levinas and Emil Fackenheim on the Athens–Jerusalem Conflict', in *Jewish Messianism and the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 18–41.

38. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 191.

39. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 23, second italics mine.

40. I am grateful to my friend and Levinas scholar Cristian Ciocan for alerting me to this point.

41. Hagi Kenaan, *The Ethics of Visuality: Levinas and the Contemporary Gaze*, trans. Batya Stein (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2013), xx.

42. 'The Other is what is present and revealed … through a tension between the visible and the invisible, the phenomenal and the transcendent, the conceptual and what cannot be conceptualized…'. (Kenaan, *The Ethics of Visuality*, 10–11.)

43. Kenaan, *The Ethics of Visuality*, 13.

44. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 29, second italics mine. Further on, Levinas will more specifically say: 'Ethics is the spiritual optics' (78).

45. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 174.

46. For this point, see Levinas, 'Ethics of the Infinite', 71.

47. Edith Wyschogrod, 'Language and Alterity in the Thought of Levinas', in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, ed. Critchley and Bernasconi, 195. For other excellent developments on the face, but also 'effacement' and the face to face, see John Llewelyn, *Emmanuel Levinas: The Genealogy of Ethics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), especially 57–71, 121–122, 176–177.

48. Kenaan, *The Ethics of Visuality*, 25.

49. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 190–191.

50. Large, *Levinas' 'Totality and Infinity'*, 81.

51. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 193.

52.   Large, *Levinas' 'Totality and Infinity'*, 81.
53.   Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.
54.   Large, *Levinas' 'Totality and Infinity'*, 34.
55.   For a detailed discussion on whether *theoria* is linked to *thea* or to *theos*, see Rodolphe Gasché, *The Honour of Thinking: Critique, Theory, Philosophy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 147–210.
56.   Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 159, italics mine.
57.   Nader El-Bizri, 'Uneasy Interrogations: Following Levinas', *Studia Phænomenologica* 6 (2006), 304.
58.   El-Bizri, 'Uneasy Interrogations', 315.
59.   El-Bizri, 'Uneasy Interrogations', 295.
60.   Spargo, *Vigilant Memory*, 44.
61.   Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 56.
62.   See Drew M. Dalton, '*Vaccination of the Infinite:* Levinas' Metaphysical Desire and the Call of the Other', *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 11.3 (2011), 25.
63.   Emmanuel Levinas, *Nine Talmudic Readings*, trans. Annette Aronowicz (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 47.
64.   Kenaan, *The Ethics of Visuality*, 80.
65.   Emmanuel Levinas, 'Meaning and Sense', in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1987), 91.
66.   Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 191.
67.   See Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 245.
68.   See Silviu Lupaşcu, *L'imaginaire religieux au carrefour des espaces sacrés* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007), 36 and 229.
69.   See *Ein Yaakov. Aggadoth du Talmud de Babylone*, trans. Arlette Elkaim-Sartre (Paris: Verdier, 1982), 1065–1067; *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, ed. Isaiah Tishby, vol. 3 (Oxford and London: The Littman Library and Oxford University Press, 1991), 1484–1487. I am grateful to Silviu Lupaşcu for indicating these titles to me.
70.   Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 114.
71.   Yaffa Eliach, *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust: The First Original Hasidic Tales in a Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).
72.   The Stutthof concentration camp, based in the small Polish town of Sztutowo, east of Gdańsk, is spelt incorrectly as 'Stütthof'

in *SE*. By some strange coincidence, it was the first camp outside Germany to be opened in 1939 and the last liberated by the Allies in 1945. Around 100,000 people were incarcerated there, out of whom more than 85,000 died.

73. Alberto Pérez-Gómez, 'The Space of Architecture', in *Architecture and Urbanism*, ed. Holl, Pallasmaa and Pérez-Gómez, 11.

74. Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans., intro. and lexicon Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982), 283.

75. See for example Mark C. Taylor's chapter 'Not Architecture', in *Nots* (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 122–165; and 159 for a passing parallel with Derrida's *khora*. Taylor's notion echoes Peter Eisenman's pronouncement about Libeskind in his introduction to *Chamber Works: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus*, intro. Peter Eisenman *et al.* (London: Architectural Association, 1983), 6–8, where 'not-architecture' refers to Libeskind's 'unhooking' of the sign from its object and meaning in his drawings as writings.

76. Robin Evans, 'In Front of Lines that Leave Nothing Behind', in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1988), 489.

77. Commenting on the museum as a space of encounter whose figures, like history, are not neutral, Libeskind added: 'Neutral architecture is perhaps appropriate for non-events'. ('BLOS' 28).

78. Silke Arnold-de Simine, 'Memory Museum and Museum Text: Intermediality in Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum and W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*', *Theory, Culture and Society* 29. 1 (2012), 25.

79. Layla Dawson, 'Daniel Libeskind, Master of Memorials, on the Healing Power of Architecture', *Architectural Review* 227.1359 (May 2010): 32–33. One could compare with Moishe the Beadle teaching young Elie Wiesel that 'every question possessed a power that was lost in the answer … Man comes closer to God through the questions he asks Him' (Wiesel, *Night*, 4). I will return to the question of architectural memorial as healing in my Epilogue.

80. Katharyne Mitchell, 'Progress Report: Monuments, Memorials, and the Politics of Memory', *Urban Geography* 24.5 (2003), 455.

81. Crownshaw, *The Afterlife of Holocaust Memory*, 186.

82. Arnold-de Simine, 'Memory Museum and Museum Text', 21.
83. Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 8.
84. See Arnold-de Simine, 'Memory Museum and Museum Text', 21.
85. Devorah Schoenfeld, *Isaac on Jewish and Christian Altars: Polemic and Exegesis in Rashi and the Glossa Ordinaria*, 1st ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 12.
86. Daniel Libeskind, L. Wieseltier and S. Nuland, *Monument and Memory: The Columbia Seminar on Art in Society, September 27, 2002* (New York: Columbia University, 2003), 25.
87. Kurt Forster, 'Monstrum Mirabile et Audax'; quoted in Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 166.
88. Libeskind, quoted by Arnold-de Simine, in 'Memory Museum and Museum Text', 22.
89. Arnold-de Simine, 'Memory Museum and Museum Text', 23.
90. The *Magen David* (the 'shield of David' in Hebrew), or as it is more commonly known, the Star of David, was used as a 'talisman against evil powers—not only for Jews, but for Christians and Muslims as well'. In 1354 Emperor Charles IV allowed Jews to have their own flag and the Star of David was chosen as an emblem. It was then adopted two centuries later as a seal and synagogue decoration, thus gradually becoming a symbol of Jewish identity. The Nazi decree of September 1941 forced Jews from Germany and the occupied countries to wear a yellow Star of David on their garments. In 1949 the Star became part of the symbol of Jewish identity and Judaism, and a sign of continuity, good luck, honour, redemption, survival and Zionism. (Information compiled from *HJMB*, 137).
91. Terry Smith, 'Daniel among the Philosophers', *Architectural Theory Review* 10.1 (2005), 114.
92. Apart from the museum guidebook, already referenced, general, factual information used in this and the following chapters can be found on the official *Jewish Museum Berlin* website, at http://www.jmberlin.de/main/EN/homepage-EN.php (accessed 27 February 2016).
93. Fehmi Dogan and Nancy J. Nersessian, 'Conceptual Diagrams in Creative Architectural Practice: The Case of Daniel Libeskind's

Jewish Museum', *Architectural Research Quarterly* 16.1 (March 2012), 16.

94. Dogan and Nersessian, 'Conceptual Diagrams in Creative Architectural Practice', 18.

95. Dogan and Nersessian, 'Conceptual Diagrams in Creative Architectural Practice', 20.

96. See Dogan and Nersessian, 'Conceptual Diagrams in Creative Architectural Practice', 20.

97. In two of the initial drawings, the two lines of the zigzag structure were called Jewish and German.

98. Dogan and Nersessian, 'Conceptual Diagrams in Creative Architectural Practice', 21.

99. See Dogan and Nersessian, 'Conceptual Diagrams in Creative Architectural Practice', 21, 22.

100. Dogan and Nersessian, 'Conceptual Diagrams in Creative Architectural Practice', 22.

101. Hélène Lipstadt, 'Can "Art Professions" be Bourdieuean Fields of Cultural Production? The Case of the Architecture Competition', *Cultural Studies* 17.3–17. 4 (2003), 414.

102. Libeskind's first competition was in 1987, when he won first prize with his 'City Edge' design, which was never built. The project was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1988, an exhibition briefly discussed in Chapter 3.

103. Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 165–166.

104. Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 166.

105. See also 'T', 43–44.

106. Cezary Wąs, 'Practicing Theory: Concepts of Early Works of Daniel Libeskind as References for Real Architecture', in *Quart* 2.36 (2015), 103. Wąs authored the monograph *Architektura a dekonstrukcja: Przypadek Petera Eisenmana i Bernarda Tschumiego* (Wrocław: Instytut Historii Szutki, 2015).

107. Wąs, 'Practicing Theory', 105–106.

108. This now standard association was famously developed by Jacques Lacan in his interpretation of the *vanitas* represented in Hans Holbein's painting *The Ambassadors*; see *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, *Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York and London: Norton, 1981), 79–90 ('Anamorphosis').

109. Wąs, 'Practicing Theory', 106.

110.   Wąs, 'Practicing Theory', 112.
111.   Wąs, 'Practicing Theory', 113.
112.   Whiteside, quoted in Was, 'Practicing Theory', 114.
113.   Was, 'Practicing Theory', 115.
114.   Edward Dimendberg, '1989, November 9: The Breach in the Berlin Wall Initiates a New Architecture of Commemoration', in *A New History of German Literature*, ed. David E. Wellbery and Judith Ryan (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 952–999.
115.   Dogan and Nersessian, 'Conceptual Diagrams in Creative Architectural Practice', 22 and 27, n. 35.
116.   Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (London and Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 240.
117.   Vidler, *Warped Space*, 240.
118.   This is the introduction to the 'Three Lesson in Architecture' (on 'Reading', 'Remembering' and 'Writing') mentioned above. For another study of those enigmatic machines, see Ersi Ioannidou, 'Humanist Machines: Daniel Libeskind's "Three Lessons in Architecture"', in *The Humanities in Architectural Design: A Contemporary and Historical Perspective*, ed. Soumyen Bandyopadhyay *et al.* (London: Routledge, 2010), 81–90.
119.   The 49 pillars stood for 1948, plus one, as will be seen in the following section; four is also the number of dimensions an architect works with.
120.   When Hitler came to power, Felix Nussbaum was a scholar in Rome, from where he travelled to Belgium via Switzerland and France in order to avoid returning to Germany. Arrested in Belgium and sent to the Saint-Cyprien camp in the South of France, then managing one more time to escape the Nazis, he hid with his wife in Brussels until July 1944. After being denounced, they were arrested and deported to Auschwitz, where they both perished. The permanent collection of the Jewish Museum from the upper floor exhibits his 1942 'Loneliness'. The pale shades of grey and brown convey a gloomy atmosphere 'of menace and death', in a setting of truncated trees and a narrow boarded alley-way which suggests that there is no possibility of escape. A 'face-less, puppet-like figure' with a megaphone is chasing behind a naked, gaunt, shaven figure with an ashen complexion which

'points to the upper part of his body in the characteristic gesture of a martyr': 'Nussbaum is nearly unique among artists for his striking examination of his plight as one of the persecuted'. His most well-known painting is his 1943 'Self-Portrait with a Jewish Passport', featuring 'his hopelessness in a scene that remains puzzling in many ways and evokes a feeling of oppression' (*HJMB* 116).

121. Sodaro, 'Memory, History, and Nostalgia in Berlin's Jewish Museum', 85.

122. Dorita Hannah, 'Jewish Museum of Berlin: Dancing between the Lines', *IDEA Journal: Interior Design Educators Association* (2006), 27.

123. Hannah, 'Jewish Museum of Berlin', 34.

124. Hannah, 'Jewish Museum of Berlin', 40.

125. Hannah, 'Jewish Museum of Berlin', 38.

126. Helen A. Fielding, 'Filming Dance: Embodied Syntax in Sasha Waltz's *S*', *Paragraph* 38.11 (2015), 69.

127. '"I Made It on the Verge": A Letter from David Farrell Krell', in Daniel Libeskind, 'Between the Lines: Extension to the Berlin Museum, with the Jewish Museum', *Assemblage* 12 (1990), 57.

128. Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 9.

129. See Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 154–155.

130. Vidler, *Warped Space*, 238.

131. Eric Kligerman, 'Ghostly Demarcations: Translating Paul Celan's Poetics into Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin', *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 80.1 (2005), 29.

132. Kligerman, 'Ghostly Demarcations', 29.

133. Kligerman, 'Ghostly Demarcations', 33.

134. Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 174.

135. Lisa A. Costello, 'Performative Memory: Form and Content in the Jewish Museum Berlin', *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* 9.4 (November 2013), 14.

136. The staircase was named after Mortimer Sackler, a generous donor (*HJMB* 156).

137. Werner Fritz was the co-owner of the Albert Rosenhain chain of gift and leather goods stores in Berlin, who emigrated to the Netherlands, then fled to Switzerland in 1943.

138. They were permitted to take abroad only personal 'old property' for which they could demonstrate ownership prior to 1933, or if acquired afterwards, only replacements for pieces of clothing and linen that were no longer usable and objects acquired for the trip (necessary furnishings and equipment). The valuables could only be the emigrant's wedding ring and that of the deceased spouse, watches, used silverware on condition that there were only two four-piece sets per person and silver items weighing no more than 40 grams each and 200 grams per person.

139. Quoting S. M. Pearce, Dudley emphasizes that '[t]he issue of *selection* is also key to what museums do' (Dudley, 'Museum Materialities', 8).

140. Philipp Kozover's son Uri was three months old when they all died in Auschwitz.

141. Letter donated by Stefan Prager, Ruth's son.

142. Only two members of the family survived; the rest were exterminated in Treblinka.

143. The Jacobsohns' failed attempt to emigrate was followed by their deportation to Łódź, where they were murdered.

144. She worked under the pseudonym of Bedrich Fritta.

145. Costello, 'Performative Memory', 15.

146. Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 165.

147. Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 175.

148. Roger Cohen, 'Fresh Perspectives on Past and Present; Berlin', *New York Times* 14 March 1999, 1, at http://www.nytimes.com/1999/03/14/travel/fresh-perspectives-on-past-and-present-berlin.html (accessed 27 February 2016).

149. Cohen, 'Fresh Perspectives on Past and Present; Berlin', 1.

150. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Foreword Fredric Jameson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 81. See also Pamela Sue Anderson's definition of 'sublime' in *The Lyotard Dictionary*, ed. Stuart Sin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 217–219.

151. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), 126.

152. Andrew Benjamin, *Present Hope: Philosophy, Architecture, Judaism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 116.

153. See the 'Jewish Museum' note on the *Berlin.de* site, at http://www.berlin.de/en/attractions-and-sights/3560999-3104052-jewish-museum.en.html (accessed 27 February 2016).

154. See Young, A*t Memory's Edge*, 164.

155. Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 174.

156. Darragh O'Brien, 'Absolute Zero—Revealing the Void', *IDEA* (Interior Designer/Interior Architecture Educators Association) (2003), 101.

157. Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 175.

158. Quoted in Carla Hall, 'Celebrating the Will to Remember', *Washington Post* 29 April 1987, 1.

159. Johan Åhr, 'Memory and Mourning in Berlin: On Peter Eisenman's *Holocaust-Mahnmal* (2005)', *Modern Judaism* 28.3 (October 2008), 298.

160. The audio-guide mentions Russian silverberries instead. The olive is important in Judaism; it is one of the seven species (alongside wheat, barley, wine, figs, pomegranates and dates) of the Promised Land. See also *HJMB* 136.

161. Åhr, 'Memory and Mourning in Berlin', 298.

162. Costello, 'Performative Memory', 9.

163. Description of the installation found by Saindon on his first visit to the Jewish Museum, in February 2005; quoted in Brent Allen Saindon, 'A Doubled Heterotopia: Shifting Spatial and Visual Symbolism in the Jewish Museum Berlin's Development', *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 98.1 (February 2012), 37. The description was slightly changed later on.

164. Bernard-Donals, *Forgetful Memory*, 167.

165. Hagi Kenaan, 'Facing Images *after Levinas*', *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 16.1 (2011), 145.

166. Kenaan, 'Facing Images *after Levinas*', 151.

167. Robert Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 285 (ch. 10 on 'Cinders of Philosophy, Philosophy of Cinders: Derrida and the Trace of the Holocaust', 279–299).

168. Kenaan, 'Facing Images *after Levinas*', 157.

169. Large, *Levinas' 'Totality and Infinity'*, 83.

170. Large, *Levinas' 'Totality and Infinity'*, 83.

171. This is Charlotte Delbo's famous formula and injunction, 'Try to look. Just try and see', in *Auschwitz and After*, 2nd edn,

trans. Rosette Lamont, intro. Lawrence L. Langer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 84, 85, 86. Delbo's deliberately fragmented account from her perspective as a Resistance prisoner in Auschwitz focuses less on her individual ordeal as such than on her sharing of the collective fate of 230 women bound by a commonality of language, geographical origins and political sympathies. For an excellent analysis of the relation between Delbo's book and Levinas's notion of the face, see Nathan Bracher, 'Humanisme, Violence et Métaphysique: La thématique du visage chez Charlotte Delbo', in *Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literatures* 45.4 (1991): 255–272.

172. Jacques Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 68.

173. Saindon, 'A Doubled Heterotopia', 39–40.

174. David A. Ellison, 'The Spoiler's Art: Embarrassed Space as Memorialization', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 110.1 (Winter 2011), 91.

175. Rolf Schneider, quoted in Ellison, 'The Spoiler's Art', 91.

176. The last sentence is uncannily evocative of the title of the first part in Delbo's trilogy *Auschwitz and After*: *None of Us Will Return*.

177. Adrian Parr, *Deleuze and Memorial Culture: Desire, Singular Memory and the Politics of Trauma* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 157.

178. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* ed., trans., and intro. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 49.

179. Costello, 'Performative Memory', 15.

180. Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 102–103.

181. Derrida, M*emoirs of the Blind*, 94.

182. Also known as the 'Feast of the Tabernacles', it is named after the huts the Israelites lived in as they wandered the desert after escaping slavery in Egypt on their way to the Promised Land.

183. Andrew Benjamin, *Architectural Philosophy* (London and New Brunswick, NJ: The Athlone Press, 2000), 68.

184. 'Nouvelles Impressions d'Architecture' was published initially in *AA Files* 6 (May 1984): 3–13.

185. Antonello Marotta, *Daniel Libeskind*, pref. Antonino Saggio (Roma: Edilstampa, 2007), 14.

186. Marotta, *Daniel Libeskind*, 15.

187. The famous controversial 'Five on Five', signed by Robert Stem, Jaquelin Robertson, Charles Moore, Allan Greenberg and Romaldo Giurgola, appeared in *Architectural Forum*, cxxxvii (May 1973): 46–57.

188. See Marotta, *Daniel Libeskind*, 16.

189. For Derrida's view of deconstruction as affirmation rather than being assimilable to negative theology, see for example *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, ed. with a Commentary by John D. Caputo (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), *passim*; and 'Letter to a Japanese Friend' and 'How to Avoid Speaking: Denials', in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume II*, ed. Kamuf and Rottenberg, 1–6, 143–185.

190. Constantinos V. Proimos, 'Architecture: A Self-Referential Sign or a Way of Thought? Peter Eisenman's Encounter with Jacques Derrida', *SAJAH* 24.1 (2009): 116–117.

191. Chametzky, 'Not What We Expected', 220.

192. Hilde Heinen, *Architecture and Modernity: A Critique* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 207–208; quoted in Proimos, 'Architecture', 117.

193. Proimos, 'Architecture', 117.

194. Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 69.

195. Derrida's 'Response' was first published in *Research in Phenomenology* 22.1 (1992): 88–94.

196. Martin Heidegger, 'What Are Poets For?', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. and intro Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 2001 [1971]), 129.

197. Compare with *Monolingualism of the Other; or, the Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 1: 'I am monolingual. My monolingualism dwells,

and I call it my dwelling; it feels like one to me, and I remain in it and inhabit it. It inhabits me'.

198. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1966), §§ 40–43, 172–196.
199. Bettina Mathes, 'Teutonic Shifts, Jewish Voids: Remembering the Holocaust in Post-Wall Germany', *Third Text* 26.2 (2012): 174–175.
200. Mathes, 'Tectonic Shifts, Jewish Voids', 173.
201. See Doris L. Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*, 2nd edn (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 38.
202. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, 'Elements of Anti-Semitism: The Limits of Enlightenment', in *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* trans. John Gumming (New York: Continuum, 1995), 168.
203. Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, quoted in Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 43. Richard Kearney mentions that 'Himmler and his Nazi acolytes endorsed such an ominous apophasis of the monstrous when they spoke of the Holocaust as a sublime and sacred glory that could never be written, spoken or represented …. The order to exterminate the Jews, Himmler maintained, partakes of an "unspeakable sacred order"'. (Richard Kearney, *Evil, Monstrosity and the Sublime: Interpreting Otherness* [London and New York: Routledge, 2003], 89).
204. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 106.
205. Libeskind, quoted in 'LPE' 12.
206. Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, trans. Andreas Michel and Mark S. Roberts (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 39, 3.
207. In his project with Eisenman, Derrida had also denied his competence in architectural syntax, a recurrent topic in their exchanges: 'I am totally unable to do what would be analogous to grammar and syntax in architecture. … No this drawing obeys the rules, which are called the grammar and syntax in architecture'. (Derrida, in *CLW* 110).

208. Yerushalmi, quoted in Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 76.

209. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 77.

210. Cp. with Eisenman's enduring insistence in 'Written into the Void' (MS from 1997), which ultimately distinguishes 'writing [as/in] architecture' or 'architectural writing' from Derrida's *écriture*: 'Writing in architecture … begins with the void as a potential fullness' (Peter Eisenman, *Written into the Void: Selected Writings 1990–2004*, intro. Jeffrey Kipnis [New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2007], 83–84, 85).

211. The crude practicalities of having to tailor the explanation of a project to politicians, bureaucrats and engineers, all impervious to subtle ontological and aesthetic distinctions, and convince them that it is worth financing, are evoked at length in the 'Discussion' (*RM* especially 114).

212. Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 175; the first two quoted fragments are Libeskind's.

213. Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 175.

Extension to Libeskind's Jewish Museum

On my first visit to the Berlin Jewish Museum in August 2011, after walking along the zigzags and through the voids, I felt the need 'to link' and, like the Museum's so many physical bridges, to re-establish connections between the fragmented realities that had been displayed in front of my eyes. When exiting from the Holocaust Tower, thinking of Derrida's '[d]eep down, deep down inside, the eye would be destined not to see but to weep', I experienced what the French philosopher called 'the *truth* of the eyes, whose ultimate destination they would thereby reveal'.[1] Thus, the tears that veiled my sight also unveiled what is proper to the eye.

The first linkage I could make, as a visitor coming from Romania, was to the speech by Paul Celan—who had lived in my country for several years before being sent to a work camp in Transnistria—when he was awarded the Bremen Prize in 1958, a linkage naturally triggered off when I crossed an inner courtyard of the building simply named the 'Paul Celan Courtyard', designed by the poet's wife Gisèle Celan-Lestrange.[2] Celan's speech had emphasized the indestructible *nexus* of language beyond the tragedy of destruction named 'Auschwitz':

> Only one thing remained reachable, close and secure amid all losses: language. Yes, language. In spite of everything, it remained secure against loss. But it had to go through its own lack of answers, through terrifying silence, through the thousand darknesses of murderous speech. It went through. It gave me no words for what was happening, but went through it. Went through and could resurface, 'enriched' by it all.[3]

Two years later, on receiving the Georg Büchner Prize, the poet made another famous public speech in Darmstadt, where he used the metaphor of the meridian to describe the connecting force of language as circular homecoming: 'I find something as immaterial as language, yet earthly, terrestrial, in the shape of a circle which via both poles, rejoins itself and on the way serenely crosses even the tropics: I find … a *meridian*'.[4]

In 'Ghostly Demarcations', Eric Kligerman recalled Celan's emphasis, in the Bremen Address, on the German language's need to pass through a 'terrifying silence' after that 'event without answer'[5] of the Holocaust, a verdict that was reiterated in 'The Meridian', where the poet undertook 'a journey inside language, making detours and ending with what he calls "eine Art Heimkehr"', a 'homecoming' full of 'silent eruptions'.[6] Kligerman's contention that Celan transformed 'historical silence into the structural tears of the poem through what is known as the *Atemwende*, or breathturn'[7] is confirmed by the translator of Celan's prose, the American poet Rosmarie Waldrop, who mentions that before becoming the title of a volume of poetry, the word *Atemwende* appeared in 'The Meridian' as a 'crucial' name designating that language was for Celan a breathing that allowed him to go on living. In Celan's later poetry *Atemwende*, the constant alternation of inhaling and exhaling which allows us 'to practise the encounter with both air and its absence',[8] becomes what Kligerman called 'the disruption of art, where poetry for an instant sets itself free from mimesis'.[9] These 'silent eruptions' bring to mind the 'immemorial'; together with 'The Meridian' or 'Death Fugue', they were considered by Kearney to provide possible *poetic* remedies to what he suspiciously rejected as nihilism in a (Lyotardian) *politics* of the immemorial (see Chapter 2). Celan's work persevered into 'speaking "on behalf of the other … perhaps an altogether other"'; it stands for the 'speechless witnesses in "desperate conversation" with those no longer occupying our time and speech—but in conversation nonetheless', hence their tonal interruptions and 'fragmentary voices' that, in spite of defying 'standard narrative continuity', continue to 'narrate nonetheless'.[10]

Sara Horowitz stressed that 'the motif of the lost (or muted) language' informed the works of Jakov Lind, Jean Améry and Celan, whose self-conscious anxiety with his native language, also the language of his oppressors, 'approximates the exile that marked his life'.[11] In relying on archaisms, the poet's language 'aspires to an uninterrupted link with a much earlier German one that precedes the Reich by several centuries, thus neatly dissociating itself from Nazi-Deutsch'.[12] Celan's insertion of

transliterated Hebrew words into his later work was meant to convey to a German readership the exclusion from which he had suffered during the Nazi era. Horowitz suggested that the poet returned German to Germans (the circular 'homecoming' of language referred to above) through a difficult poetry offering 'its readers neither oblivion nor absolution from a guilty past', because in spite of eschewing Nazi neologisms, Celan kept the *univers concentrationnaire* as 'the nucleus of his works'.[13]

Kligerman also emphasized how Celan's language repeatedly asserts the poet's search for the place where trauma started (his lost home); using this language 'to orient himself in relation to where he was and where he is going, the poetic terrain disorients the reader who accompanies Celan into the poem'. Celan's wandering in order to find his linguistic bearings encounters 'poetic voids' that disorient the reader and lead him to 'the topography of the uncanny'.[14]

In what follows, I will prolong Libeskind's experiment—or extend his Extension—in order to carry out the task of linking that Lyotard called for. Guided by the everlasting imprint of the museum's distorted Star of David and fragmented structure on my memory, I will now imagine a *literary space*[15] and map it onto Libeskind's architectural syntax. I will tentatively put together a creative and performative project in which imagination, individual and collective memory act in synergy, a project in which I will fully assume a wholly subjective role in the difficult task of bearing witness. Populating anew Libeskind's axes and voids, the texts I have chosen will all, frontally or tangentially, ask the following question: how is the relation between memory and ethics enacted in literature? My recollection of the museum will testify to the lasting echo of indelible emotions and traces that the museum left in me, turning my experiential narrative into an unmediated and 'authentic' self-confession aimed at shoring up the mind against the failures and failings of memory. Aware of the double necessity to link and glimpse beyond the darkness of its most negative element (the Holocaust Tower), I will use these texts as 'peepholes' through which Libeskind's composite space will be reimagined as a Literary Extension. More than exhibits in a museum displayed to the collective eye, literary texts thrive on the uniqueness of the encounter between two subjectivities (text and reader), and in this the second section will therefore unapologetically focus on the way I as a reader perceive and approach these 'selected', individual works.

As I navigate this maze of subjectively (but also dialogically) interconnected texts, affinity and affect will be the essential features in this

performative rendering which in places will be stylistically distinct from (and more heterogeneous than) the previous chapters. Nevertheless, as Kelly Oliver reminds us, '[t]he performance makes visible the subject's dependence on its other, but once seen this dependence must also be interpreted'.[16] My subjectivity will filter (through) my own 'vision' on traumatic memory but also, in consonance with Oliver's approach, it will open up the prospect of calling for 'the subjectivity of those othered within dominant culture as more than another version of the familiar or something wholly alien and alienating'.[17]

As Kevin Hart suggests, '[i]f there is "writing of disaster" directly to do with the Shoah, it is in those texts known as the "scrolls of Auschwitz", and the testimonies of survivors such as Jean Améry, Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel and the script of *Shoah*'.[18] In this context, Hart advised the readers of Blanchot's book against seeing in it 'a convergence of the Outside and the Shoah but rather a diagnosis of the intellectual's responsibility to think disaster'.[19] This is also the spirit in which my subjective inclusion of texts (including a well-known fragment on the Holocaust from *The Writing of the Disaster*) should be understood and which motivated it. Still for Kelly Oliver, '[t]he responsibility inherent in subjectivity has the double sense of the condition of possibility of response, response-ability, on the one hand, and the ethical obligation to respond and to enable response-ability from others born out of that founding possibility, on the other'.[20] In other words, subjectivity implies an act of witnessing that calls forth and enables responsibility. But responsibility is also double-sided: it exposes 'the ability to respond, response-ability' and, from an ethical point of view, it forces 'subjects to respond by virtue of their very subjectivity itself'.[21]

At this point, the reader may legitimately ask: since I have never seen the horrors of Auschwitz except in films and documentaries, since I have not even met or interviewed anybody who returned from a concentration camp, how can I remotely claim to be even an indirect witness whose personal trajectory and reimagining of the museum's space is worth recounting? Leaving aside for the moment the undecidably fictional dimension that attends to any (even 'autobiographical') testimonial act according to Jacques Derrida,[22] my bearing witness will be guided by whatever emotional relevance I sensed from (and between) the selected texts, assuming responsibility for my decisions from a perspective similar to Levinas's 'ethics is optics'. Accordingly, in the course of this virtual literary excursus, I have justifiably turned away from enlisting literature that deals explicitly and directly with the Holocaust, save on two legitimate

occasions. Thus, with the strategic exception of Elie Wiesel for the Axis of the Holocaust (supplemented by Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger's 'Poem' for the Holocaust Tower), I will intentionally leave aside the various subcategories of the Holocaust novel in particular as they are defined by Efraim Sicher: survivors' fiction (Aharon Appelfeld, Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel), the Jewish American post-Holocaust novel (Saul Bellow, Cynthia Ozick), historical Holocaust novels (Thomas Keneally, William Styron, D. M. Thomas), second-generation Holocaust fiction (David Grossman, Art Spiegelman) and postmodernist Holocaust fiction (Martin Amis, Don DeLillo).[23] I chose not to engage with such texts as it seemed inappropriate to discuss (and indeed 'appropriate') direct responses to the Holocaust in this sort of creative enterprise, for reasons laid out in Chapter 2. To use LaCapra's words, 'certain statements or even entire orientations may seem appropriate for someone in a given subject-position but not in others. (It would, for example, be ridiculous if I tried to assume the voice of Elie Wiesel or of Saul Friedländer. There is a sense in which I have no right to these voices. …)'.[24]

I start therefore, in purely subjective, experiential fashion, with a snapshot from my first visit to the Berlin Jewish Museum in August 2011 with my husband and two children. In the first main room of the permanent exhibition, the visitors are greeted unexpectedly by a big pomegranate tree,[25] which they are invited to adorn with their wishes or 'hopes' written on pieces of pomegranate-shaped, pink paper. While my children were happily hanging theirs, I experienced a completely different feeling: although I knew that Libeskind's message was to underscore hope, I could not forget the gloomy Holocaust Tower that had spoken to me of doomsday and impending death. To imagine apocalypses is perhaps too overwhelming and to a certain extent alienating for visitors. Thus, even though I also knew that the museum had not been conceived as a memorial, I felt trapped in a sort of 'dark tourism' which coloured my experience of the rest of the itinerary, despite its emphasis on continuity, with 'the impulse to preserve and educate about past violence so that the present and future can learn from past mistakes', the 'impulse to preserve and remember'.[26] In the essay to which I have already repeatedly referred, Amy Sodaro highlighted the paradox at the core of the Jewish Museum:

> In straddling the architectural and philosophical realms of memorial and museum, the Jewish Museum presents something of a paradox and contradiction. The building is considered by many to be a very powerful Holocaust

memorial, yet part of it—the exhibition—is explicitly not a memorial and strives to be not a Holocaust museum, but a very typical history or heritage museum.[27]

In my turn, I was beset by conflicting feelings caused by the discrepancy between the focus on representing continuity in the permanent exhibition and the sombre staging of the voids that had confronted me with their undialectizable emptiness.

Even on my second visit in February 2016, while I was revising the final draft of this book, I still could not sense the affirmation of hope after traversing Libeskind's voids; I saw their eschatological meaning, that post-Auschwitz and, more generally, twentieth-century evil marking the end of a theodicy that Levinas and other thinkers had believed in. Blanchot's *désastre* (etymologically *dés* + *astre*), or falling of/from the 'aster', appeared to me in full light in this mangled Star of David, as will be confirmed by my selection in the fourth void and, later on, in the final Interlude, from Emil Cioran's prose. But even though my 'ethical optics' will not end up on a vision of hope but rather on the enclosed space of the Holocaust Tower poignantly occupied by Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger's 'Poem', this does not imply negating the possibility of 'seeing-through' or beyond. It simply accounts for the fact that, whereas the Axis of Continuity is the longest, most insistent narrative throughout the Jewish Museum, it failed to register in my literary consciousness and will therefore be left 'unrepresented', populated only by a sketchy evocation of its creator's trajectory.

1   THE AXIS OF CONTINUITY: DANIEL LIBESKIND

During the Second World War, **Daniel Libeskind**'s parents had fled eastwards from their respective locations before being arrested at the borders of the former Soviet Union. His father was shipped off to a labour camp on the Volga while his mother spent time in the Siberian gulags near Novosibirsk. When Stalin agreed with the Polish government in exile to allow Polish Jews to leave, they finally met in Kirghizia (nowadays Kyrgyzstan), and one year after the end of the war, young Daniel was born in Łódź.

As Libeskind emphasized in a 2003 press conference for the 'Counterpoint' exhibition,[28] he grew up without the normal presence of uncles and aunts, with the exception of his father's sister, the only relative who apart from his father survived the Holocaust in a family of 11 siblings. All in all, 82 members were killed on both his father's and

mother's sides.[29] When he was 11 years old, he and his family emigrated to Israel, where he attended a music school, then to New York two years later. He switched to architecture in the USA, where he studied at the Cooper Union School under the guidance of Peter Eisenman. When he was awarded the German Architectural Prize in 1999, Libeskind revealed that he had moved to Berlin with his family, two suitcases, and a belief in building that was derived from 'the cultivation of naiveté, the feeling that one should remain a beginner worthy of entering the "cloud of the unknown"' (*SE* 74). He continued the project for ten years 'across the vicissitudes' of 'six governments, five name changes, four museum directors, three window companies, two sides of a wall, one unification, and zero regret' (*SE* 74).

In the opening speech 'Between the Lines', Libeskind recorded his unwavering commitment to building 'a museum that would portray in an uncompromising way the Jewish dimension of Berlin's history throughout the generations' (*SE* 24). The official opening initially scheduled for 11 September 2001 was delayed by two days because of the terrorist attack against the Twin Towers in New York, in some sort of gruesomely ironic twist of premonitory history which seemed to have made him fated to redesign Ground Zero a few years later. By 2004, Libeskind had been moving 14 times in 35 years with his wife and children: 'There are many worlds in my head, and I bring all of them to the projects I work on' (*BG* 7).

In a 1999 interview, Libeskind related a personal anecdote, although he confessed that he did not know what to make of it. While he was building the Berlin Jewish Museum, his father came on a visit. Knowing how much his father had suffered during the Second World War, Libeskind feared that it would be too upsetting to take him on a tour of all those places where many Jews used to live before they were sent to their deaths. However, his father's reaction was quite unexpectedly positive and he told his son that he saw this walk as a message that history had delivered to him: he, the Jew, was still alive, treading on the ground under which the Nazis were buried.[30] Continuity and hope …

2   THE AXIS OF EXILE

Set up in a time defined by Blanchot in *The Infinite Conversation* as lacking, 'without event, without project, without possibility, an unstable perpetuity … in which we are arrested and incapable of permanence, a time

neither abiding nor granting the simplicity of a dwelling place',[31] this axis is populated by the life stories of those exiles or 'self-exiled' who chose architecture, philosophy or literature as the most authentic experiences for their sense of alienation. While Daniel Libeskind and Emmanuel Levinas featured extensively in Chapters 3 and 4 for their contributions to their respective art and discipline, they will return here as 'bio notes', showcased alongside other short life stories to replace the exhibits in the original vitrines of the Berlin Jewish Museum. This display of lives in miniature, filtered through key events and symbolically charged scenes and conjunctions of circumstances, will take us through Celan, Derrida, Blanchot, all oblique 'word witnesses' to the Jewish tragedy, concluding with Kafka, whose anticipatory vision will also inform my reimagining of the Garden of Exile.

Born as Paul Antschel in Cernăuți (Czernowitz) in 1920 into a German-speaking Jewish family who offered him a secular education while obeying Jewish traditions, **Paul Celan** travelled to the University of Tours to study medicine, then returned to Romania to study literature and Romance languages. In spring 1940 the Soviet Union sent an ultimatum to the Romanian government demanding the immediate handing over of Bessarabia and North Bucovina, with which Romania had no choice but to comply. In 1941, Romanian troops occupied Cernăuți and the German Einsatzgruppe D set the city's Great Synagogue on fire. Since the SS did not trust their Romanian allies to do a thorough enough job, they themselves resorted to the drastic solution of energetically liquidating the Jews ('Energisch durchgreifen, die Juden liquidieren').[32] After the murder of around 3000 Jews, the relocation of most Jews to Transnistria started. The mayor of Cernăuți, Traian Popovici, decided to keep slightly above 16,000 Jews in the ghetto that was set up in his city, the Antschel family being among those who remained there.[33] While doing forced labour on construction sites, Celan wrote poetry and translated Shakespeare's *Sonnets.* In June 1942, when new arrests and deportations began, the poet found a hideout with the help of his friend Ruth Lackner; however, upon returning home, he learned that his parents had been deported to an internment camp in Transnistria where they later perished: his father likely from typhus; his mother shot. The poet himself was imprisoned in an *Arbeitslager*—and narrowly escaped execution, by crossing over a dividing line between the precarious election of slave labour and selection for death—until his liberation in February 1944, when the Red Army forced Romanians to abandon the camps. One year later, he left the anti-Semitic

Soviet Union for Bucharest, where he spent two years, and after the Communists seized power in Romania he fled to Vienna.

In 1970, Celan committed suicide in Paris,[34] a desperate act which academic legend claims was the result of his inability to come to terms with Heidegger's silence about the Holocaust. This melodramatic version was given elusive support by Maurice Blanchot's letter to Catherine David, titled 'Penser l'apocalypse':

> Heidegger's irreparable fault lies in his silence concerning the Final Solution. This silence, or his refusal, when confronted by Paul Celan, to ask forgiveness for the unforgivable, was a denial that plunged Celan into despair and made him ill, for Celan knew that the Shoah was the revelation of the essence of the West. And he recognized that it was necessary to preserve this memory in common, even if it entailed the loss of any sense of peace, in order to safeguard the possibility for relationship with the other.[35]

The relationship between Heidegger and Celan, as documented by James K. Lyon, was actually more intricate than Blanchot's wording might lead us to believe. Celan, an enthusiast of *Being and Time*, and Heidegger, an admirer of Celan's poetry, met twice, at Freiburg University, where Celan gave a public lecture, and at Heidegger's Todtnauberg hut. One interesting detail in Celan's diary, discovered by Charles Bambach, is the draft of a 'devastating letter' addressed to Heidegger but never sent, which was written before their meeting on 24 July 1967. In this letter Celan made the following accusation, which he worded in terms suggestive of Heidegger's own recurrent problematic: 'you, through your comportment (*Haltung*) decidedly undermine the earnest will to responsibility in both the realms of the poetical (*Dichterische*) and, if I dare presume, the thinkerly (*Denkerische*)'.[36] Unfortunately the content of the rest of the letter and the reason why it was never dispatched to the former Rector of Freiburg University, and Celan's refusal after his public reading at Freiburg to have his photograph taken with Heidegger,[37] are not explored further by Bambach. The next day Celan visited Heidegger in Todtnauberg.

A crucial detail omitted from Blanchot's account is the fact that Celan visited Heidegger while on a 'leave of absence from confinement in a psychiatric clinic', and that he was to return to the clinic immediately afterwards.[38] Bambach characterizes Celan's encounter with Heidegger as 'anything but an insignificant academic formality for Celan' and the results of that longed-for meeting as 'a painful breech of silence' during a long

journey by car and an abortive '*Wanderung* on the moors of Todtnauberg' due to adverse weather conditions.[39]

Celan's 'Todtnauberg' poem, dated 1 August 1967, does not bring further clarification on what was said or rather not said during the *tête-à-tête*. According to Lyon, Celan most likely confronted Heidegger on the subject of his political past, but the latter failed to provide him with a satisfying answer. Nevertheless, Lyon discards the aspect of Blanchot's version that suggests Celan's condemnation of, or hostility towards, Heidegger. According to him, '[l]ater attempts to portray this as a failed encounter and an enormous disappointment for Celan are based on considerations that arose more than a week after the visit. … Temporarily, at least, the meeting with Heidegger had had an undeniable salutary effect on his mental state, which no one could have predicted and which most critics afterward have ignored'.[40] Following Blanchot's skewed rendering, many critics rushed to decipher 'Todtnauberg' in a manner comically summarized by Derrida as the following 'narrative': 'Celan-came,- H.-did-not-ask-the-Jews-for-forgiveness-in-the-name-of-the-Germans,- Celan-who-was-waiting-for-a-word-of-forgiveness,-a-"pardon!",-a-request-forgiveness-left-disappointed-and-he-made-a-poem-of-it-he-recorded-it-in-one of-his-poems'.[41] The view that 'Todtnauberg' registers the poet's disillusion is similarly offered by Kearney, who adds that, while not going as far as Adorno in 'declaring a moratorium on poetry after Auschwitz', Celan returned from the philosopher's mountain retreat persuaded more than ever that 'no poetics of dwelling can be divorced from an ethics of responsibility'.[42] In this delicate context, we must recall Bambach's apt formulation that '[f]or Heidegger, the foreigner, the stranger, the Jew, the Asiatic … all come to represent a threat to the homeland, constituting an "uncanny" (*unheimlich*) other who undermines the rooted dwelling of the homeland (*Heimat*)'.[43]

If any sense is to be elicited from 'Todtnauberg', according to Derrida, one needs to link 'its signature as poem' to 'the hope for words [*paroles*], for a word (*Wort*) that comes in the heart, that comes from the heart, of a thinking being'.[44] Derrida connects this hope to the gift and ultimately:

> to the element of forgiveness, of a forgiveness asked for or a forgiveness granted, both at the same time no doubt, the moment it says the poetic experience both as appeal for acknowledgment (in the sense of consciousness, of the acknowledgment that recognizes and admits or the acknowledgment that gives thanks, acknowledgment as gratitude), the poetic experience

as gift and forgiveness hoped for, asked for, granted, for the other, in the name of the other ….[45]

Shortly after his return to the psychiatric clinic in Paris, Celan's mental state deteriorated more dramatically as he sought relief by exploring alternative treatment without medication. Still according to Lyon, 'the irreconcilable conflict he had struggled with for years—his attraction to Heidegger's thought and his repulsion at the thinker's activities in the Third Reich—not only resurfaced, but the tormenting ambivalence that marked much of his thinking in the last years of his life in general also radically altered his perception of what had happened in Freiburg and Todtnauberg'.[46]

The paradoxical affinity between Celan and Heidegger—a dialogue between poet and thinker which Lukacher characterized as an 'enigmatic neighbourhood'[47]—can best be gauged by implicitly comparing the poet's 'silent eruptions' with the philosopher's understanding of the role of silence in poetry: 'language is grounded in silence. Silence is the most sheltered measure-holding. It *holds* the measure, in that it first sets up measures'.[48] This ominous presence of silence, in its poetic applications as much as its political implications, will come to haunt us increasingly as we proceed along the virtual axes of our Extension.

Born in French Algeria in 1930, **Jacques Derrida** encountered racism early in different anti-communitarian guises (anti-Arab, anti-Semitic, anti-Italian, anti-Spanish), and for him school soon became 'hell'.[49] After the defeat of the French Army by the Germans in the *Blitzkrieg* (1939–40), in spite of the fact that Algeria was not under German occupation, officially sanctioned anti-Semitism reared its ugly face, first with the law of 3 October 1940 that forbade Jews from practising a certain number of jobs, especially in public service, then, four days later, with the abolition of the 1870 Crémieux Decree that had given French citizenship to about 35,000 Jews in Algeria.[50] Although he would later relish his self-presentation as a Franco-Maghrebin, in spite of the 'disorder of identity' it came with,[51] Derrida's account of the viciousness with which fellow schoolmates voiced their hostility, reproduced in Benoît Peeters's biography, speaks for itself:

As for the word *Jew*, I do not believe I heard it first in my family …. I believe I heard it at school in El Biar, already charged with what, in Latin, one would call an insult [*injure*], *injuria*, in English, *injury*, both an insult, a wound, and an injustice …. Before understanding any of it, I received this word like a blow, a denunciation, a de-legitimation prior to any legality.[52]

A further law passed on 30 September 1941 established a *numerus clausus* of 14 per cent for Jewish children in primary and secondary education, which resulted in the exclusion of both Derrida's brother René and his sister Janine. It was made harsher the following year when the percentage of Jews admitted into French-led schools was halved by administrators overzealously implementing the Vichy government's anti-Semitic quota, and Derrida was in turn expelled from the Ben Aknoun high school, a moment he describes as 'one of the earthquakes' in his life. Instead of attending the Lycée Maïmonide, run by the Jewish teachers who had been made redundant, Derrida played truant and dreamt of becoming a football player.[53] The rest of his personal trajectory had a happier *dénouement*: France may have lost a soccer talent but gained one of the most innovative philosophers of all times …

In response to a question by Richard Rand on the relevance of the Holocaust to deconstruction—after referring to Lyotard's opinion that the latter cannot address or even identify the question of 'Auschwitz'— Derrida remarked that '[t]he thought of the incineration … of the holocaust, of cinders, runs through all my texts'.[54] Robert Eaglestone specifically related deconstruction to '[a] philosophy of cinders', not in the sense that Derrida's works provide new insight into the Holocaust, regardless of how obliquely some of his texts reflect (on) it, but rather as a way of thinking and responding in a post-Holocaust world: 'Cinders are what is left of the events of the past and so are that with which we make history'.[55] For Eaglestone, with all its ashes, spirits, stalking revenants as well as ghosts which are 'both present and absent, a presence that marks an absence',[56] deconstruction originates in the cinders of the Holocaust, even though, in its preoccupation with justice and the singularity of the event, it never grapples with the exemplarity of the Holocaust per se. Thus, 'both these demands—justice which is unrepresentable "as the experience of absolute alterity"—and the singularity of the Holocaust are brought together in the figure of the cinder'.[57] Derrida's poetic evocations of these peculiar remains called 'cinders' will spring back to life in the third void.

After studying French, Italian, and English at Trinity College, Dublin, **Samuel Beckett** taught at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, where he remained after the outbreak of the war in 1939, preferring, in his own words, 'France at war to Ireland at peace'.[58] After 1940 he joined the French Resistance, working as a courier and risking his life to the point of almost getting caught by the Gestapo. In his *Reading* Godot, Lois Gordon records Beckett's 'swift decision to resist the German evil actively, rather

than accept it passively', when Hitler's troops occupied Paris, and relates his choice to Vladimir's suggestion to Estragon about helping Pozzo.[59] Indeed, Vladimir's tirade (from which Gordon quotes only an extract) is revealing in its entirety and can be used as a key to decode Beckett's involvement with the *Résistance*:

> Let us not waste our time in idle discourse! (*Pause. Vehemently.*) Let us do something, while we have the chance! It is not everyday that we are needed. Others would meet the case equally well, if not better. To all mankind they were addressed, those cries for help still ringing in our ears! But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us represent worthily for once the foul brood to which a cruel fate consigned us![60]

Those cries that Vladimir and Estragon heard in their ears, Blanchot's 'countless cry',[61] needed to be conveyed ('Let us represent …') by a writer who had vicariously lived through such a 'cruel fate'. Hugh Kenner suggested that much of Beckett's work represents a veiled allegory about Vichy France, an interpretation that finds some corroboration in Knowlson's claim in his authoritative biography that Beckett was personally affected by the Nazi atrocities. This is also confirmed by Ackerley and Gontarski's *Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett*, which mentions the loss of his close friend Alfred Péron, who had recruited Beckett into the Resistance in 1941 and later perished in the Mauthausen concentration camp.[62] Beckett was awarded the Croix de Guerre and the Médaille de la Résistance for his involvement against German occupation.

Considered to be 'one of the most challenging and influential literary and philosophical figures in the whole twentieth century', **Maurice Blanchot** wrote impressively wide-ranging literary-critical essays, described by Leslie Hill as 'some of the most perceptive and penetrating essays of the last fifty years': texts on Kafka, Sade, Hölderlin, Mallarmé, Rilke, Bataille, Beckett, Heidegger, Levinas, that 'make him one of the most distinct and cogent commentators of contemporary philosophical and literary culture'.[63] He studied philosophy at the University of Strasbourg, where he met Emmanuel Levinas, his elder by nearly two years, who had just emigrated from his native Lithuania. Levinas's wife and daughter avoided deportation thanks to Maurice Blanchot, who helped them to flee to a monastery. Soon after graduation, Blanchot embarked on a career as a political journalist in Paris, working for an eclectic mix of newspapers, among which the conservative daily *Le Journal des débats* (1932–40), where he

'displayed an abiding interest in the question of the relationship between force and law',[64] the anti-German daily *Le Rempart* (April–August 1933), Paul Lévy's anti-Nazi polemical weekly *Aux écoutes* (1934–37), *Combat* (February 1936–December 1937) of Catholic nationalist persuasion, and the satirical right-wing weekly *L'Insurgé* (January–October 1937).

In *Le Journal des débats* Blanchot wrote highly polemical articles against the French government's support of the internationalism of the League of Nations, an organization which he deemed 'motivated more by wishful thinking than by proper understanding of political realities, and blinded to unpalatable truths by its obstinate belief in abstract and fanciful internationalist conventions which it had neither the means nor the will to defend'.[65] During his stint for *Le Rempart*, he insisted vehemently on 'the ever increasing threat to peace' posed by Hitler's rise to power[66] and by National Socialism, which was nothing but 'a perverted nationalism' based on a 'mystical apotheosis of the nation', promoting manipulative and demagogic initiatives such as 'the barbarous persecution of the Jews'.[67] As early as 1935, Blanchot had described Hitler as 'the representative of an unacceptable political doctrine',[68] and later on he became a fierce adversary of the fascist, anti-Semitic novelist and journalist Robert Brasillach, the main leader of the pro-Nazi collaborationists.

If we take on trust Blanchot's short prose text *The Instant of My Death* as a truly autobiographical record,[69] we learn that in June 1944 he was to be executed by a Nazi firing squad, an uncanny experience of rising from the nearly dead mirrored by a symptomatic tension between first-person and third-person singular, when the protagonist's life is miraculously spared mere seconds before the gunshot: 'I know, I imagine that this unanalysable feeling changed what there remained for him of existence. As if the death outside of him could only henceforth collide with the death in him. "I am alive. No, you are dead"'.[70] The belated narrative of this wartime episode forced readers to cast a retrospective glance at Blanchot's insistence on loss, disappearance and death,[71] and, alongside Derrida's analyses in *Demeure*, will provide valuable context and insight into a brief examination of his alleged anti-Semitism.

Whether as literary critics or historians (and sometimes as polemicists with an academic axe to grind), several scholars, including Jeffrey Mehlman, Steven Ungar, Richard Wolin and Philippe Mesnard, have investigated, with different degrees of rigour and success, the temptations of fascistic discourse for intellectuals and thinkers in 1930s France and beyond.[72] In his tendentious *Legacies of Anti-Semitism in France*, which

was instrumental in sparking the American turn against 'French Theory' in the second half of the 1980s, Jeffrey Mehlman was among the first to expose Blanchot's 1930s journalism as an apologia for anti-Semitism.[73] Here I wish to dwell on Steven Ungar's findings against Blanchot in his review of the 'scandals' of the 'after effect surrounding Vichy and Heidegger' as an example of critical excess conflating the literary and the biographical, a poetics with a politics.[74]

Ungar's first target was *The Writing of the Disaster*, which he analysed via Lawrence Langer's examination of Charlotte Delbo's divided feelings, between her own self speaking to Langer about the camps' atrocities and her former self as an inmate at Auschwitz. Ungar then extrapolated this sense of an inner split to Blanchot's *Death Sentence*, where the narrator is construed as speaking 'about the removal he felt from wartime experiences that motivated an account of events he felt compelled to make',[75] a hasty gesture which both amalgamates the narrator with 'Maurice Blanchot' and implicitly assumes that *Death Sentence* can be read as a disguised auto-biography. Obviously unaware of *The Instant of My Death*, published while his own book was in production, Ungar scavenged through *Holocaust Testimonies* for Langer's use of *The Writing of the Disaster* in dealing with his interviewees' anguished memories. While, for Langer, Blanchot's notion of the 'impossible real' was merely a theoretical framework, Ungar concluded that Blanchot himself was caught 'between two incommensu-rable selves divided by and in knowledge of the disaster'.[76]

The second series of allegations centred on a side issue derived from the 'Heidegger affair'.[77] Ungar saw Blanchot's contribution to the issue of *Le Nouvel Observateur* on 'Heidegger et la pensée nazie' as the indi-rect expression of a guilt about having written on the German thinker (although Blanchot was 'neither a philosopher by profession nor a former student, friend or colleague of Heidegger')[78] in *The Infinite Conversation* and in a collection commemorating Heidegger's seventieth birthday in 1959 (later incorporated into *Awaiting Oblivion*). In his letter for *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Blanchot described Heidegger's postwar silence as 'inadequate', even 'scandalous', and had expressed his disapproval of some of Heidegger's texts which he had discovered after the war. Blanchot's conclusion was that 'the Holocaust placed responsibility on "each one of us"', which Ungar interpreted as formulating the personal assumption of a collective responsibility.[79]

As Leslie Hill has documented, most of Ungar's charges against Blanchot were derived from four articles published in *Combat*, out of which two

bore 'crudely polemical references to the reckless impatience … of those Jewish émigrés', referred to 'as unbridled Jews', who in 1936 wanted 'to declare immediate war on Hitler, irrespective of the chances of success or the human cost of such a policy'.[80] Ethan Kleinberg reveals that Léon Blum was the politician whom Blanchot had in his sights, adding that the latter's nationalism 'was a reaction to his work (and friendship) with Emmanuel Levinas, influenced by Heidegger's work', and 'exacerbated by the crisis of modernity', which made more unstable the philosophical ground (such as the primacy of the subject) on which this generation's political choices were made. For Kleinberg, '[m]istaking cause for effect, he fled from the other, which he perceived (correctly) as a threat to the self, and turned instead toward the ultimate controlling subject, the nation'.[81]

More recently, and with a more dispassionate tone, Jean-Luc Nancy revisited these accusations in the light of a private letter sent by Blanchot in response to an open-minded invitation to discuss his political past.[82] Without ignoring the anti-Semitism that several scholars attributed to Blanchot, Nancy cautioned against a hasty analysis of the term since Blanchot had taken an explicit stance against it, albeit in relation to Jewish intellectuals rather than the whole community.[83] Nancy's slim volume reproduces Blanchot's 'Letter to Roger Laporte', dated 22 December 1984, in which he differentiated between the two main 'clans' at *Le Journal des débats*: one represented by André Chaumeix, master of the Academy and supporter of the extreme right, whose signature everyone needed in order to get published, and the other by the director and his team, whose politics was 'a moderate patriotism and a liberalism inherited from the great ancestors'.[84]

Building upon Ungar's work from a more historical perspective, and cautioning against hasty, partisan characterizations of Blanchot's critics as 'polemical', such as Leslie Hills's, Sandrine Sanos's recent study is illustrative of the interpretive tensions between the two camps and what the larger critical stakes are: 'the inseparable relationship between aesthetics and politics, culture and ideology, that obsessed so many 1930s writers and critics, and that has yet to be fully historicized'.[85]

Let me briefly return to *The Instant of My Death* and Derrida's reflections, in *Demeure*, on the status of the witness as *terstis*[86] and the disappearance of borders between tenses. For Derrida, Blanchot's *récit* was the promise of 'a narrative or a testimony—signed by someone who tells us in many ways and according to every possible tense: *I will be* dead, or *I will* be dead in an instant, or an instant ago *I was* going to be dead'.[87]

The role which Blanchot's life is assigned on my Axis of Exile is linked to what Derrida called 'an *unbelievable* tense',[88] a temporal warping which also frames *The Writing of the Disaster,* when in an instant imminent death can be reversed: 'Dying is speaking absolutely, the incessant imminence whereby life lasts, desiring. The imminence of what has always already come to pass'.[89] This impossible, fictional tense resembles the future perfect (*futur antérieur*) of traumatic temporality or unconscious *Nachträglichkeit*, seen before—and here called an 'anterior *later*' with reference to the text's epilogue.[90] It rightfully interrupts the Axis of Exile, on the threshold between Past and Future, Future and Present, because it records a disaster that has already taken place and yet has not come. To testify to such a truly unbelievable event can only take the form of what is called 'fiction'; or, to quote Derrida once again:

> [This unbelievable tense] seems to deport what has always, from all time, already taken place toward the coming of the to-come. Indeed one must say *unbelievable,* for insofar as all testimony essentially appeals to a certain system of belief, to faith without proof, to the act of faith summoned by a kind of transcendental oath, well, faith in a temporal order, in a certain common-sense ordering of time, is what guarantees the everyday concept, especially the juridical concept and the dominant concept of attestation in European culture, that in which literature has been established, thus confirming or disturbing the very order that conveys it.[91]

Born into a German-speaking Jewish family in Prague in 1883, **Franz Kafka** grew up in a predominantly Czech and increasingly anti-Semitic culture. The author of *The Trial* did not write much on Jewish heritage, although several critics—such as Harold Bloom—have emphasized the Jewish elements in Kafka's creation, the anguished self-reflections on his work and life as a Jew. For Pavel Eisner, Kafka's translator, *Der Process* represented the embodiment of the 'triple dimension of Jewish existence in Prague … his protagonist Josef K. is (symbolically) arrested by a German (Rabensteiner), a Czech (Kullich) and a Jew (Kaminer). He stands for the "guiltless guilt" that imbues the Jew in the modern world, although there is no evidence that he himself is a Jew'.[92] Kafka's work repeatedly uses what Friedländer called 'a central element', 'the existence of an unidentified source of threat and ill omen'; for instance, in *The Trial* neither Joseph K. nor the people around him ever 'get the slightest glimpse of the higher authority that rules over the courts, issues the arrest warrant, and dictates the outcome of the "judicial" process'.[93]

Kafka died well before the Second World War; yet, according to Primo Levi, who translated *The Trial* into Italian, the enigmatic parables in the novel anticipated symbolically much of what Levi went through at Auschwitz.[94]

Libeskind's connection to Kafka is related by the architect, who was impressed by 'An Imperial Message', part of a longer story titled 'The Great Wall of China', in which a dying emperor calls for a herald to deliver an urgent message to a humble subject who is far from the castle. Winning the project for the Berlin Jewish Museum, Libeskind saw himself as the humble subject, and the West Berlin Senate as Kafka's emperor (*BG* 78–79).

3   THE GARDEN OF EXILE: FRANZ KAFKA

Stepping out of the Axis of Exile and about to enter the Garden of Exile, we shall stay awhile in front of its heavy glass door, hesitant or perhaps reluctant, even unable to push it. Through the transparent pane, we can partially discern what is inside the enclosed garden cut off from the 'real world' outside the museum space by a wall. An invisible guardian stands watch at the door for us and, just like Kafka's gate, this door is open. But a man waits indefinitely for the Law; he seems not to have permission to enter. Still hesitant, we wonder whether and when we will be allowed to step into this radiant space; we face an imaginary doorkeeper who says that we can enter but not 'at the moment'. We try 'to peer through the gateway into the interior',[95] frozen interminably in front of the Law. The doorkeeper cautions ironically:

> If you are so drawn to it, just try to go in despite my veto. But take note: I am powerful. And I am only the least of the doorkeepers. From hall to hall there is one doorkeeper after another, each more powerful than the last. The third doorkeeper is already so terrible that even I cannot bear to look at him.[96]

The man is getting increasingly older. Because his eyes are not good anymore, his vision is unclear, unlike the all-powerful image of the Law. Everything he sees is blurred. The man's anguished silence becomes immemorial; we can only hope that it will metamorphose into speech as time passes. Yet we are still waiting, patiently, passively, shrinking in front of the door, anxiously scrutinizing the guardian of the Law:

The doorkeeper has to bend low toward him, for the difference in height between them has altered much to the man's disadvantage. 'What do you want to know now?' asks the doorkeeper; 'you are insatiable.' 'Everyone strives to reach the Law,' says the man, 'so how does it happen that for all these many years no one but myself has ever begged for admittance?' The doorkeeper recognizes that the man has reached his end, and, to let his failing senses catch the words, roars in his ear: 'No one else could ever be admitted here, since this gate was made only for you. I am now going to shut it.'[97]

Kafka's parable enlightens us on the relation between the Judaic and the universal idea of 'election'. In Judaism, God is the one who elects the people of the Law. The *Mitzvah* (which refers to precepts and commandments by God) makes the Jews keep and preserve the Law. In an essay on the notion of election in Levinas's philosophy, Raphael Zagury-Orly linked the Law to opening towards Truth: 'Judaic election and consequently the particularism which arises from this election, is by no means an affirmation of truth. It is rather a persistent and incessant repetition of being subjugated to a Law. This subjugation marks the constant projection, or transcending outside of itself of the Judaic identity'.[98] Besides, '[t]he Law is always and already that which maintains itself removed from all or any form of concrete realization'.[99] Kafka's protagonist who stands at the door is a subject exposed to that which he cannot and does not see. His waiting for the door to open and the failure of his vision are endowed with ethical significance. Looking deeper into the Levinasian implications of this scene, we can say that 'before' the (gate or door of the) Law 'marks the eruption of the other and the election of the subject'.[100] The allegorical Man who stands before the Law stands for the Levinasian subject who 'was always and already both called and not called', therefore 'elected as responding to that which cannot be grasped in the circumference or the economy of a calling'.[101] Being elected, the Man finds himself unable to respond to the call, which is ultimately the meaning of Levinas's call from and response to the Other.

Kafka's parable can also illustrate Man's defeat by the world that he has accepted: '[b]y seeking access to the law the "man from the country" empties his life of meaning'. The only moment of illumination comes to the Man at death's door, when he glimpses the 'radiance that streams inextinguishably from the gateway of the law'. Rolleston takes this aphoristic image to mean that 'one must generate one's own (creative) light in order to "dissolve" the world and become at one with the spiritual. If

one accepts the world's categories, … one will never see the spiritual light, even though it shines all the time, "inextinguishably"'.[102]

In his eponymous essay on Kafka's enigmatic short story, Derrida interrogated the nature of this imperative waiting before the law as a parable for the suspension of interpretation: 'Is not what holds us in check before the law … also what paralyzes and detains us when confronted with a story …?'[103] At the entrance to the Garden of Exile, as in Kafka's story, the door is not shut; it is 'open as usual'. Rather it is the law of election that remains inaccessible to us as we stand on the threshold, in some sort of antechamber or limbo, before stepping into the promised garden. Disjunction: we cannot open the door because it *is* open.

In another reflection on law, on its foundational violence and how it is to be distinguished from justice(-to-come), commenting on Walter Benjamin's 'Critique of Violence' (1921), Derrida writes that the law inaugurated with violence is 'still nonexisting, a law still ahead, still having to and yet to come [*une loi encore devant et devant venir*]'. Here the French *devant*: before/ in front of, but also owing, having to, registers the double bind of a prior obligation yet to come, when the establishment of the law 'remains suspended in the void or over the abyss, suspended by a pure performative act that would not have to answer to or before anyone'.[104] Stepping and stopping on the threshold, we touch an 'extraordinary paradox: the inaccessible transcendence of the law [*loi*], before which and prior to which "man" stands fast'.[105] We feel the violence 'that may offend the sense of justice', yet its time, which is neither properly past nor future, but rather a 'future *ante*rior', accounts for and justifies our standing in front of the door.

Although the doorkeeper can be made to stand for the externalization of an inner subjugated consciousness, therefore incommensurate with the radical disjunction between an 'I' and a 'he' in Lyotard's formulaic representation of 'Auschwitz', we symbolically feel a similar sense of impenetrable obligation on this threshold of history and fate: the one who stands before the door cannot comprehend the decree that orders that s/he should die and the only possibility of escape is in exile. Kafka leaves us at the door, where divine election is reversed into hellish selection, and we retreat, about to face the First Void.

4   VOIDS

Andrew Benjamin recalls that Libeskind's voids are inscribed into a structure that forces both the visitor to fill its gaps and (in accordance with Libeskind's instructions) the curator to negotiate with them when setting

up permanent or temporary exhibitions.[106] I therefore in turn have to confront these structural interstices and, although some remain invisible and out of reach—but are not all voids structurally ungraspable and their crossing an intangible act?—invest them with my own literary 'curation'.

4.1   FIRST VOID, or the Void of Nothingness: Samuel Beckett

In *Very Little … Almost Nothing,* Simon Critchley asks '[w]ho speaks in the work of Samuel Beckett?' and answers as follows: 'It is not the "I" of the author or a controlling consciousness, but rather the "Not I" of the insomniac narrative voice that opens like a void in the experience of literature, *as* that experience towards which literature approaches …'.[107] Quoting (slightly inaccurately) from *The Unnamable*, Critchley further states that 'Beckett's work leaves us "open to the void"'.[108]

Much of Beckett's work can be read as an implacable transposition of the emptiness and finitude of a post-Auschwitz world. Both his plays and novels provide allegorical tableaux of an abyssal, existential vacuity which made Adorno recognize in his art 'the only fitting reaction to the situation of the concentration camps—a situation he never calls by name, as if it were subject to an image ban'.[109] The French version of *Murphy* (1947) was dedicated to Alfred Péron, yet the most impressive tribute to the memory of his Jewish friend remains *Waiting for Godot*,[110] which contains scenes which have been likened to the surreal absurdity that tinged the horror of the Holocaust. Near the opening of the play, in an exchange that seems as immemorial as it is timeless, Estragon replies to Vladimir's question that he was beaten, a seemingly routine occurrence that causes forgetting:

> VLADIMIR: And they didn't beat you?
> ESTRAGON: Beat me? Certainly they beat me.
> VLADIMIR: The same lot as usual?
> ESTRAGON: The same? I don't know.
> VLADIMIR: When I think of it … all these years … but for me … where would you be … *(Decisively.)* You'd be nothing more than a little heap of bones at the present minute, no doubt about it.[111]

As early as 1973, Hugh Kenner ventured the idea that the world of *Waiting for Godot* resembles occupied France, where Beckett had lived during the war. According to Kenner, 'much waiting must have gone on', many appointments kept by Resistance operatives 'not knowing whom they

were to meet, with men who did not show up'. Vladimir and Estragon are 'over-conspicuous strangers' who do nothing but wait for a rendezvous, 'put off by perhaps unreliable messengers, and making do with quotidian ignorance in the principal working convention of the Resistance'.[112] For the American critic, Pozzo resembles 'a Gestapo official clumsily disguised',[113] a view shared by the play's earliest reviewers, who saw him as 'a *capo* in a concentration camp' beating his victim with a whip, treating him 'as something worse than an animal, bellowing commands, cracking his whip, demanding total obedience, yet still charmed by hearing him recite'.[114] Although here Kenner refrains from interpreting *Waiting for Godot* as a veiled allegory about Vichy France—'Not that modern history, nor the Occupation, is the "key" to the play, its solution'[115]—the play was apparently pronounced to be, in a 1986 essay, 'very nearly a fable of the occupation': 'In the play three people are led over the same story again and again, under spotlights. The Gestapo grillers reputedly made much use of such lights … [Seeing] a Beckett play, reading a Beckett text, no one thinks, "The Occupation!" The "power of the text to claw" … arises from his way of unhooking it from historical particulars, leaving something as vivid as a bad dream, as oppressive, as inescapable'.[116] In his biography of the Irish writer, Knowlson added further factual proofs corroborating the reading of *Waiting for Godot* as a faintly disguised translation of the Jews' plight and struggle for survival during the war, such as one of the tramps being originally called Lévy or allusions to Beckett's wartime hideout in Roussillon. As Beckett's work and style became more and more abstract and pared down, the reference to a Jew *qua* Jew was removed, possibly in order to impart to the play a more universal, human dimension.[117]

Norman Berlin's first impressions after seeing the New York production of *Waiting for Godot* in 1956, when he realized that '[s]omething new was happening in theatre, yet something deceptively simple',[118] also confirm this sombre historical vein, which was perhaps more apparent (as well as present in people's minds) so soon after the worldwide cataclysm of the Second World War. Leaving the theatre hall 'in a kind of daze', on his way home, Berlin asked himself legitimate questions:

> How could I not—as part of a post-Holocaust audience—… think of all the homeless tramps, the uprooted wanderers, the dispossessed, when I saw the wretched Lucky carrying a bag and walking so slowly, head down, across a desolate landscape? That image was reinforced, surely, by the loudness and corpulence of Pozzo, a master standing for that master race forever

persecuting victims. In that context, how could ill-fitting boots—in fact, the very idea of boots, piles of boots—not recall Nazi concentration camps, where so much waiting was done?[119]

During the years before Beckett wrote his play, the extent of the Nazi atrocities began trickling into public consciousness through the release of gruesome film footage about Belsen, Dachau and Auschwitz. Two accounts of life in the camp where Alfred Péron had been a prisoner were published by fellow inmate and Resistance leader Georges Loustaunau-Lacau, which Beckett would have read 'with a mixture of compulsion and horror' since, as Knowlson surmises, '[h]e knew that, if arrested, he would have been in that same camp, subject to the same daily brutalities. And he knew that he would never have survived such an ordeal'.[120] Could Alfred Péron be the one referred to as 'the other' in a conversation between Estragon and Vladimir?

> ESTRAGON: The best thing would be to kill me, like the other.
> VLADIMIR: What other? (*Pause.*) What other?
> ESTRAGON: Like billions of others.[121]

The time of Clov and Hamm, like the time of Vladimir and Estragon, is a time of impending disaster. Adorno considered *Endgame* to be the epitome of what art should be after Auschwitz through the characters' certainty that 'there really is not so much to be feared any more', a reaction to a practice 'whose first sample was given in the concentration camps'.[122] In *Damned to Fame*, Knowlson identified 'the message of the play' as 'one of unrelieved despair at the hopelessness and futility of life'.[123] In one of his frequent turnings of the telescope on the auditorium, then 'on the without', Clov returns the finding that all is 'zero', '[c]orpsed',[124] a nihilistic vision that is fittingly representative of Beckett's final view of life's journey, in a December 1989 interview, as worth 'precious little'.[125]

Commenting on the significance of Beckett's *Endgame* for Adorno's conception of post-Auschwitz aesthetics, Gene Ray remarks that, '[f]or Adorno, this method of evoking without invoking, consistent with the traditional Jewish ban on images and for him exemplified in the postwar period by Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, would be central to his theorization of an "after-Auschwitz" ethic of representation'. For Ray, just as postwar philosophy had to forego the solace of speculative recuperations in a positive dialectic, art had likewise to abdicate aesthetic pleasure and

'change itself into a negative art of refusal', opting for '"negative presentations"—indirect, oblique, or sublime …'.[126] 'Auschwitz' is radically unassimilable into another's subjective experience and Beckett's 'cut-outs' can be experienced as discreet attempts to keep within the limits of an appropriate ethics of representation: 'In the act of omission, what is left out survives as something that is avoided, the way consonance survives in atonal harmony'.[127]

Since, by Beckett's own admission at the end of his life, there is 'precious little' to experience, this void, dedicated to him, has been placed under the aegis of Nothingness. By 'Nothingness', I mean neither specifically 'nihilism' (Adorno), nor Critchley's slight inflection of it—'by steadfastly refusing to mean something, Beckett's work refuses nihilism and gives an indication of the transformative ethical and political practice from which it abstains'[128]—but rather the ironically omnipresent sense of a meontological emptiness throughout Beckett's 'texts for nothing', to the point that 'Nothing is more real than nothing'.[129] One need only think of the pairing of Watt (Mr) Knott or else of the stock phrase rewritten in the stunning one-liner opening *Murphy*: 'The sun shone, having no alternative, on the nothing new'.[130]

This Void of Nothingness is therefore populated by self-divided Beckettian figures or 'not-I's' whose form of amnesia is that they would rather forget because they cannot remember, even if, like Krapp, they rewind the reel of their life's distant memories until '[*t*]*he tape runs on in silence*' at the very end of this one-man, one-act play.[131] Estragon periodically needs reminding about the imminent appointment he and Vladimir have with Godot, even though it is assumed to be a life-defining event, and their earlier exchanges are punctuated by either 'Gogo' or 'Didi' exclaiming 'Nothing to be done'[132] or other such variations. In Andrew Kennedy's view, Krapp's spoken text 'eliminates all dialogue, just as his existential situation terminates a relationship', turning him into a split soliloquist who 'displays at least two voices and rhythms'.[133]

My Void of Nothingness resounds with these fragmented characters' metaphysical anguish at the absurd human condition, at the inexorable decline of once 'happy lives' and aspirations gone sour, and it will be shrouded by the minimalist darkness which in so many Beckett plays stages vacuity and sparseness. This void is gaping like the mouth from *Not I*, first performed in 1972 at the Lincoln Center in New York, which is displayed mid-stage and, surrounded by total darkness, utters snatches of inconsequential words broken up by suspension points—'suspended',

as in the ironic undertones of deportation in Clov's 'I see … a multitude … in transports … of joy'.[134] But instead of an old woman's voice delivering a rapid stream of jumbled words, my void will echo with derelicts' 'cracked voices' (Krapp) squeaking out meaningless mumbo jumbo. Who speaks in this void? The bedridden (Malone, Mr Kelly), chairbound (Hamm), ashbinned (Nagg, Nell), half-buried (Winnie) castaways and cripples (Clov), stripped of their belongings; the 'master persecutors' (Pozzo, Hamm) and mindless perpetrators who, like Malone, can impassively wonder: 'How many have I killed, hitting them on the head or setting fire to them? Off-hand I can only think of four, all unknowns, I never knew anyone'.[135] All those who have made self-annihilation their permanent abode, those entrapped in servile dependency as ersatz for free, fulfilling relationships, those oblivious to the world and others, who suffer from unimaginable angst yet are shielded by a passivity which acts as a carapace of self-defence against emotions and a numbing of desires; all these yearn for a terminal 'solitude, emptiness, nothingness, meaninglessness, silence', which are, in Stanley Cavell's words, not their '*givens*' but 'their goal, their new heroic undertaking'.[136] Once we have penetrated into this void, only God could deliver us from its nothingness. But God, like Godot, has absconded and, Lucky tells us, metes out justice randomly:

> Given the existence … of a personal God … outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown … and suffers … with those who for reasons unknown are plunged in torment …[137]

'[W]ith his divine apathy, his speechlessness (aphasia), and his lack of the capacity for terror or amazement (athambia)', the God of whom Lucky speaks is a God 'who does not communicate with us, cannot feel for us, and condemns us for reasons unknown'.[138] After all, he may have died at Auschwitz, as Levinas and others claimed, but if he did not and if somehow he presided over the catastrophe, 'God is a witness that cannot be sworn'.[139]

Yet we plod on regardless, leaving behind all these anonymized voices and without looking back. The void opens onto *Texts for Nothing*, a sort of 'entrapment within an enclosed space, where movement *away* is dangerous to the self (being opposed by early objects), and *stasis* is encasing'.[140] We shuffle uneasily further on. Fragments from *Worstward Ho*, Beckett's penultimate, most complex irreducible prose piece voicing reiterated

failures—to such an extent that he admitted defeat when he attempts to translate it into French—now seep into our anaesthetized consciousness:

> Say a body. Where none. No mind. Where none. That at least. A place. Where none. For the body. To be in. Move in. Out of. Back into. No. No out. No back. Only in. Stay in. On in. Still. All of old. Nothing else ever. Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.[141]

We forget so much (events, our lives and loves) that we eventually forget language and how to speak; in this realm of 'failing better', morphology and syntax crumble to dust into darkness as language undergoes a sort of *Götterdämmerung* without issue:

> Less. Less seen. Less seeing. Less seen and seeing when with words than when not. When somehow than when nohow. Stare by words dimmed. Shades dimmed. Voice dimmed. Dim dimmed. All there as when no words. As when nohow. Only all dimmed. Till blank again. No words again. Nohow again. Then all undimmed. Stare undimmed. That words had dimmed.[142]

Beckett pushes language to its limits and breaking point, until it borders on madness and on what Laura Salisbury called 'aphasic disintegrations', caused by 'the aphasic symptom' that brings language and subjectivity to confrontation 'with the constitutive force of their outside'.[143] For Ann Banfield, Beckett's madness consists of thematic and linguistic 'reduplication ad infinitum'[144] with the aim of rehashing '"nothing new" by making radically apparent its repetitive nature in carrying these processes to absurd lengths'.[145] Another critic assimilates Beckett's view of art with 'probing the unintelligible, the unpredictable, the no-thingness of experience' that point to 'the extremity of human suffering, the depths to which we are capable of descending'.[146] Beckett grinds language to the point of depletion and 'exhaustion'; or, as Hélène Cixous comments on Deleuze's famous study of Beckett's language and stagecraft: 'Beckett [is] in the role of the exhauster of the exhausting, that is to say, of the inexhaustible, and more precisely the Exhauster … of all the inexhaustibles, *one* after *the other*'.[147]

Out of this void-as-mouth that voices and dims, I emerge feeling almost depleted, gasping for air.

But even if I can't go on, I will go on.[148] The curtain drops on the first void.

4.2   SECOND VOID: Paul Celan

Cut open, another void takes the form of a poem. I started this chapter on Celan's hopeful view that poetic language could still provide a link after Auschwitz. According to Fagenblat, poetry 'is language as pure address and response, language negating its own predicative substance, a Saying without a Said'.[149] Fagenblat invokes Celan's address in 'The Meridian', where the writer mentions that poetry is said to take 'creaturely paths' towards an 'encounter' between 'this "wholly Other" and an "other" which is not far removed, which is very near'[150]; he also refers to Celan's delicate formula, 'I cannot see any basic difference between a handshake and a poem', quoted by Levinas, who commented on it as follows: 'A singular de-substantiation of the *I*! To make oneself completely into a sign, perhaps that is it. Enough of those glorious imitations of a creator!'[151] *Pace* Adorno, poetry can perhaps still be regarded as quintessentially a form of working-through, in the hope of reaching back to the realm of culture and civilization.

In this void, the linking of hands in the handshake will serve as a symbolic act to help us relate Celan's poetry to Holocaust memory. Here we follow a path already traced by Alain Suied, for whom Celan's poetry seeks 'to embody a destroyed heritage' and is a way of greeting the Other, that Other 'whom occidental discourse had wanted to colonize or convert or gas depending on the century and the urgencies of the absurd search for a scapegoat'. For Suied, Celan underlined 'the necessity of the Word in human relations, the truth of sharing in a world that chose schizophrenia and the demonization of the Similar'.[152] Celan saw that the Word is circumcised in the body of language, the only dimension of humanity that sustained the poet through life after the Shoah.

We tread on this path across the void, going all the way 'TO ONE WHO STOOD BEFORE THE DOOR'. Related to Kafka's, which guarded the entry into the Garden of Exile, this door can be associated with the Judaic Law, as Derrida shows in 'Shibboleth: For Paul Celan',[153] in particular with the tradition of circumcision, an event linked to a precise date in the life of the male child: the eighth day after birth. The seven sections of Derrida's 'Shibboleth' correspond to the days of the week, thus suggesting 'that his own appointment with the topic of circumcision will itself have been deferred to a time and place just beyond the threshold of his text'.[154]

TO ONE WHO STOOD BEFORE THE DOOR, one
evening:
to him
I opened my word—: toward the
misbegotten I saw him trot, toward
the halfshorn,
the
brother born in the
mercenary's dung-caked boot, the one
with the bloody
Godmember,
the
chittering manikin.[155]

Derrida remarked that Celan uses the word 'circumcise' in the imperative,
which cannot be interpreted only as a gesture of reflexivity because it has
an addressee, a rabbinic *Mohel* who is an 'other', 'asked not only to act on
its behalf, on behalf of the *speaking* word, but on behalf of another who
never speaks for itself or in its own cause in the poem'.[156] Levine related
this Mohel, for whom the word must be circumcised, to the other from
Celan's 'Meridian' speech, in which, apart from admitting that the poem
'speaks only on its own, its very own behalf', he added that it also speaks
'*on behalf of the other*, who knows, perhaps, of an *altogether other*'.[157]

Two kinds of memory intersect in the poem: the collective memory
which the word carries 'toward the misbegotten', 'the brother born in
the mercenary's dung-caked boot', and the individual memory which
opens the word and offers it for circumcision to the Rabbi. We do not
know which word, once circumcised, is to be opened like a door to the
other. Yet we may assume that it is one of the speaker's own, for the
poem begins: 'TO ONE WHO STOOD BEFORE THE DOOR, one/
evening:/to him/I opened *my word*'. Be that as it may, Celan's 'circum-
cised word' suggested to Derrida 'the *double* edge of a *shibboleth*', election
or selection:

The mark of a covenant or alliance, it also *intervened,* it interdicts, it signifies
the sentence of exclusion, of discrimination, indeed, of extermination. One
may, thanks to the *shibboleth,* recognize and be recognized by one's own,
for better and for worse, in the partition of partaking, according to these
two senses of the word *partage: on the one hand* [*d'une part*], for the sake of
the partaking and for the ring of the covenant, but also, *on the other hand*

[*d'autre part*], on the other side of partaking, that of exclusion, for the purpose of denying the other, of denying him passage or life.[158]

The name 'Rabbi Löw' belonging to the circumciser appointed by Celan ('Rabbi, I gnashed, Rabbi/Löw') is associated in Jewish tradition with a creative practice based on a certain performance of the Divine Name. Invoking this practice, Celan's poem no doubt draws attention to its own creation. Yet, if this is 'a poem about poetry, about its own singular performance, it is poetry no longer viewed as *poesis*—that is, as a making or fashioning'.[159] Derrida associates the 'circumcised word', related to a ritual sign of election 'written on the body', with the diacritical difference between *shibboleth* and *sibboleth*[160]—a rite of passage which decreed over bodily life and death—whose unpronounceability Levine further equates with *shem ha-Meforash*, the unpronounceable Divine Name in Hebrew. Hence, according to Levine, 'it is less a matter of consciously performed speech acts than of unconscious *actes manqués*—which is why the *Mohel* asked to perform a circumcision of the Word in Celan's poem is none other than Rabbi Löw, legendary creator of the Golem'.[161]

Celan ruminates on the practice of circumcision, which is exercised on the linguistic material at the poet's fingertips. The 'circumcised word' is to be used by the witness (the living) who has an empty heart and almost cannot write (he has 'cripple-fingers'), but would still perform his duty as a Jew and write in memory of the dead:

> Nothing in the heart,
> for this one
> spread the two
> cripple-fingers in the
> hallowing sentence.
> This one.
> ....
> Slam also the evening door shut, Rabbi.
> ....
> Fling the morning door open, Ra-[162]

The poet's two final injunctions to the Rabbi are separated by dots which may stand for the silence of the unnarratable, the unrepresentable as well as the 'immemorial', what cannot be narrated yet took place during the Shoah whenever the door closed on death. The door can be reopened after the disaster, but the narration is altered. Yet language ('the circumcised

word'), as Celan made clear in his 'Meridian' speech, links the closure to an opening, even though the latter is interrupted: Ra-. This may be the middle ground Richard Kearney invoked in his *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, recalled earlier in this chapter in the brief discussion of Celan's 'silent eruptions'.[163] In Derrida's reading, 'if what the door [*porte*] says is the word [*parole*]', then the commands mean that the poet 'asks him for the morning word, the Oriental word, the poem of the origin—once the word [*mot*] has been circumcised'.[164] Between the two worlds denoted by the two violent actions ('slam', 'fling'), the systole and diastole of life and death, the first-person narrative fractures and the 'open' command that brings the poem to a close breaks off at the final caesura, before the last syllable could be uttered ('Ra-').

Levine's reading highlights one more facet in relation to the uttering and incompletion of the name: since the act of naming is of vital significance in the Jewish ritual of circumcision, sealing his legitimate entry into the community, 'what is in question in Celan's poem is precisely the status of poets and Jews—of poets as Jews', and therefore 'it is not surprising that the act of naming should be suspended at the very moment when the circumciser is himself cut and the poem and its speaking are, in their turn, abruptly cut off'.[165]

'Ra-' and all the other cut words, marks and lines of the poem record a botched speech act and mark the eruption of the 'misbegotten' 'manikin' identified above as the golem. A Hebrew word (*gōlem*) occurring only once in the Bible (Psalm 139:16) and meaning 'unshaped form', 'raw material' or 'clay', it refers to the unfinished human being (Adam) before God's eyes and has been associated through various legends with the name of Rabbi Löw.[166] 'Misbegotten' is a rendering of Celan's *Kielkropf*, a nonce word that mangles the German for 'larynx' (*Kehlkopf*, from *Kehle*: throat) and 'links the twittering of the golemic manikin to the squeaking of Kafka's tubercular larynx'.[167] An admirer of Kafka—he translated four short stories into Romanian while in Bucharest between 1945 and 1947, and researched the author between 1951 and 1952 while preparing his never finished *diplôme d'études supérieures* in Paris—Celan had a dense onomastic lineage in common with the German-Czech writer.

Various commentators have been drawn to the translinguistic ornithological vein in Kafka's family, from Czech *kavka*: jackdaw to the paronomasia on German *Amsel*: blackbird (therefore of the same large family) in his Hebrew name Amschel,[168] which can then be further related to Celan's own original name Antschel, before he anagrammatized it into

Celan. 'Ra-' catches in the throat, a theme that the collection *Glottal Stop*, which includes 'Frankfurt, September' and its mention of 'Die Simili-Dohle' ('Simili-jackdaw'), will harp on.[169] Birds of a feather sounding alike: 'TO ONE WHO STOOD BEFORE THE DOOR' incorporates or, as it were, 'swallows' whole the title of one of Kafka's most emblematic short prose texts.

A later Celan poem, 'Largo', will feature a pair of blackbirds (*Amselpaar*) and 'Amsel' also returns as the name of the Jew in Günter Grass's *Dog Years*, which chronicles the love-hate relationship between a Jew and a Nazi during the war. Paul Auster's sensitive reading of the poem in relation to Grass's 'historical novel' will be allowed to resonate as we prepare to step outside this second void:

> Toward the end of the poem, the presence of 'our whitely drifting/companions up there' is a reference to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust: the smoke of the bodies burned in crematoria. From early poems such as 'Todesfuge' … to later poems such as 'Largo', the Jewish dead in Celan's work inhabit the air, are the very substance we are condemned to breathe: souls turned into smoke, into dust, into nothing at all.[170]

Perhaps more than any other poetry, Celan's poetry 'bears (testamentary and testimonial) witness'; it is an act of responsibility that fully engages his singular poetic signature, no more so than in the self-consuming 'signing off' of 'Aschenglorie' ('Ash-Glory'):

> No one
> bears witness for the
> witness.[171]

4.3   THIRD VOID: Jacques Derrida

From the wound of circumcision to language and the body, the annulus of a sacred alliance,[172] this third literary void opens onto a world of circuitous confessions. Quoting Saint Augustine, its resident claims that he is '… "the end of Judaism"', immediately adding: 'of a certain Judaism'.[173] The last and the least of the Jews (*le dernier des Juifs*).[174] His lifelong friend and fellow Algerian Jew Hélène Cixous meditated on 'the self-doubts of being Jew, of being stripped of one's identity and thus being "naked as a worm" …: "Suis-je juif?" (… "*Fus-je juif*? … *Aurai-je été juif*?), to be or not to be a Jew in any tense, that is the question',[175] and described

Derrida as a marrano, a secret Jew, 'one of those Jews without even knowing it; and without knowledge, Jew without having it, without being it, a Jew whose ancestors are gone, cut off, as little Jewish as possible, the disinheritor, guardian of the book he doesn't know how to read'.[176]

Who else can be the occupant of this void but Jacques Derrida, 'a little black and very Arab Jew who understood nothing about'[177] his expulsion from the Lycée in 1942, when the anti-Semite law sent all the Jewish pupils home from school? And what does '*le dernier des Juifs*' exactly mean? In *The Jewish Derrida*, Gideon Ofrat glossed it with reference to one of Derrida's interviews on the topic of his Judaism with Elizabeth Weber,[178] where the French philosopher explained his (arguably tongue-in-cheek) self-description 'I am the last Jew' as meaning that he was a 'bad Jew', while 'the end of Judaism' was taken to signify both 'the death of Judaism, but also its only chance of survival'.[179] Or, to quote Derrida's words at the third conference organized by Villanova University:

> When I say, 'I'm the last of the Jews', it means, as you know, that there will be no Judaism after me; so I'm the best one, and I'm the exemplary Jew. At the same time, [I am] the worst, the last one, really. Both. That's exactly what I think. I'm being as non-Jewish as possible, as atheistic as possible, so everything I say can be interpreted as the best tradition of Judaism and at the same time an absolute betrayal.[180]

To further tease out the meaning of 'the end of Judaism', Ofrat refers to Derrida's quotations from Jabès included in *Writing and Difference*: '[a]ddressing themselves to me, my blood brothers said: "You are not Jewish. You do not come to the synagogue." "You are Jewish for the others and so little Jewish for us."'[181] Such assertions, Ofrat writes, could have been an overall motto to his own study, whose main question was: '[H]ow does Jacques Derrida—a French intellectual with nothing Jewish in his external appearance, a man who neither observes religious precepts nor worships at the synagogue nor has his sons circumcised, and so on—affirm his "other" Judaism as it persistently emerges from his numerous writings, casting a giant shadow over his thought in form and content?'[182]

Derrida spent his childhood and adolescence in such a highly 'Frenchifying' environment that, in his own account, 'the inspiration of Jewish culture seemed to succumb to an *asphyxia*: a state of apparent death, a ceasing of respiration, a fainting fit, a cessation of the pulse'.[183] Claiming that he had very little knowledge of Hebrew and Jewish history

and culture, the grown-up Derrida 'shifted to the metaphorical, rhetorical, allegorical dimension of Judaism'.[184] Ofrat returned to one of their private discussions, when Derrida confessed: 'I regularly express the concepts of Judaism in an oblique way'.[185] Indeed, in an oblique way, the Arab Jew, Franco-Maghrebin philosopher wondered whether there is any 'point going round in circles', in confessing with the purpose of begging for the other's pardon. He kept on waiting for this forgiveness to come, for the truth to be revealed:

> indeed I am waiting for it as absolute unicity, basically the only event from now on, no point going round in circles, so long as the other has not won back that advance I shall not be able to avow anything and if avowal cannot consist in declaring, making known, informing, telling the truth, which one can always do, indeed, without confessing anything, without making truth, the other must not learn anything that he was not already in a position to know for avowal as such to begin.[186]

Derrida turned circumcision into *circumfession*, in addressing himself to the witness he was seeking to find 'around a trope or an ellipsis that we pretend to organize'; this is why in this void, Derrida tells us once again, 'for years I have been going round in circles', or beating about the burning bush, 'trying to take as a witness not to see myself being seen but to re-member myself around a single event'.[187] In Richard Kearney's view, Derrida's acceptance of 'the mark of circumcision on his flesh' was 'something that ultimately needed to be confessed rather than denied'.[188]

My third void therefore looks like a library on the theme of circumcision and resembles Derrida's 'lofty space' in his attic, which he called his 'sublime hideout' (*mon sublime*),[189] filled with all manner of documents enumerated in 'Circumfession': 'iconography, notes, learned ones and naive ones, dream narratives or philosophical dissertations, applied transcription of encyclopedic, sociological, historical, psychoanalytical treatises …' on circumcision and excision. A "sublime" untapped archive whose raison d'être is to remember and testify 'to my circumcision alone, the circumcision of me, the unique one, that I know perfectly well took place … but I always suspect myself of having cultivated, because I am circumcised, *ergo* cultivated, a fantastical affabulation'.[190]

Derrida's bibliovoid is cut vertically in what seems an attempt to reach up to the sky. Underneath is a crypt which houses texts shedding an oblique light on the catastrophe of the Holocaust. They are incisions,

circumcisions, circumfessions: *Shibboleth: For Paul Celan* (orig. 1986), *Cinders* (*Feu la cendre*, 1987), *Memoirs of the Blind* (1990), *Athens, Still Remains* (2009), all seem to attest to the discreet insistence of remain(der)s, ruins and ashes. Derrida's work associates 'the image of the ruin—piles of stones, rubble, remnants of a collapsed house—with the concept of abyss, but equally, as early as 1967, with the metaphor of the shattered Tablets of the Covenant, as image of poetry'.[191] '*Il y a là cendre*',[192] those 'five obsessional words' that Laurent Milesi has identified through several of Derrida's texts written before *Cinders*, from *Dissemination* onwards and via *The Post Card*, stage 'the self-effacement of an inessential remainder which, to use another of Derrida's ambidextrous constructions …, only arrives by effacing itself, only manages to efface itself)'.[193] '*Il y a là cendre*' seems to suggest, as Herman Rapaport also remarked, that 'cinders and ashes mark our human condition as that which exists against the horizon of "une incinération", of a burn-all in which can be detected the echo of a distant screaming, an echo which has itself scattered like ash, has blown all too lightly on the wind'.[194]

As we saw earlier, and to use again Ofrat's words here, the spirit of the Holocaust 'hovers over' Derrida's writings. The examples selected by Ofrat include 'the refugees who seek hospitality in his various books; the ghosts that frequent his thoughts; and above all, the verdict of "extermination" that awaits all redemptive metaphysical light',[195] motifs which all connect his philosophy to the trauma of the twentieth century. As early as *Glas*, Derrida had defined the disclosure of a primordial natural religion as the holocaust of a pure originary sun: 'Pure and without form, this light burns all (*brûle-tout*). It burns in the all-burning that it is, leaving of itself nothing, nothing at all, no trace, no mark, no sign of its passing. Pure and all-consuming'.[196] From Hegel to the Holocaust, which marked the end of speculative dialectics for many philosophers, we have come full circle (rather than gone round in circles), and history, to reverse the aphorism by Hegel's famous successor, has repeated itself but as tragedy.

No matter how poetic and insubstantial at times, the tone of Derrida's encounters with the Holocaust remains ethical, 'recalling what was and what will be'.[197] Words like 'circumcision', 'Shibboleth', 'ash', rest forever in this imagined crypt just as they are incised into Derrida's works. Or, as Dorota Glowacka put it, Celan's 'Ashes. Ashes, ashes', echoed in Derrida's 'cinder words and phrases ("the other's singularity is incinerated, deported from its unique place")', just like 'Celan's choice of the word "concentration" [*Konzentration*] to name the "gathered multiplicity of the dates in

the anniversary", are "terrible word[s] for memory", which Derrida nevertheless keeps repeating'.[198]

4.4   *FOURTH VOID: Maurice Blanchot*

In this void, physically out of the visitor's sight, like Derrida's crypt, sits a fragment from a singular work by Maurice Blanchot. In Kevin Hart's experience of reading *The Writing of the Disaster,* 'we find ourselves faced with elliptic ponderings about desire and disaster (each word derives from Latin, the one from *de sidere* and the other from *dis + astro,* so both allude to stars)'.[199] Blanchot's 'atomized' text is an appropriate talisman into a place of 'sideration', where there is no future, no history, no memory, no vision save that of devastation. No ray of light reaches into this void but for the eternal glow of consuming fire and brimstone. We can see nothing and there is nothing to be seen; this is an invisibility at the end of being and history. Blanchot's apocalypse will be allowed to deliver its shattering truth in a silence only illuminated by history's absolute all-burning that leaves nothing in its wake but its own ashes:

◆ *The unknown name, alien to naming:*
   The holocaust, the absolute event of history—which is a date in history—that utter-burn where all history took fire, where the movement of Meaning was swallowed up, when the gift, which knows nothing of forgiving or of consent, shattered without giving place to anything that can be affirmed, that can be denied-gift of very passivity, gift of what cannot be given. How can thought be made the keeper of the holocaust where all was lost, including guardian thought?
   In the mortal intensity, the fleeing silence of the countless cry.[200]

4.5   *MEMORY VOID: Remembering 'Sam' through Hélène Cixous*

On our way out of Derrida's crypt—since Blanchot's evocation, for all its finality, will have been but a transient 'literary space'—'We shout: Silence! Then not silence!'[201]

I am now stepping cautiously, cagily, into the Memory Void, whose cold floor is still covered with Menashe Kadishman's 'Fallen Leaves', but where a desolate tree with precious few leaves now also stands in the middle. It is not the pomegranate tree of hope that greeted us in the permanent exhibition. With Hélène Cixous's *Zero's Neighbour* in hand,

I return to the exhausting, depleted chatter of *Waiting for Godot*, 'in the vicinity of zero'.[202]

'Hush! Us? [*Chut! Chute?*] No silence'.[203]

As we experienced in Chapter 4, when trampling on Kadishman's metal-on-metal faces, the sound of our footsteps is 'reminiscent of forced labor camps'[204] and may even bring to mind the gas chamber door viciously locking tight behind the damned inmates. Echo's bones.

In my dark memory void, Vladimir's and Estragon's faces are indiscernible, dissolved in the shadows of the crushed faces they contemplate. They listen:

> ESTRAGON: All the dead voices.
> VLADIMIR: They make a noise like wings.
> ESTRAGON: Like leaves.
> VLADIMIR: Like sand.
> ESTRAGON: Like leaves.
>   *Silence.*[205]

In this silence of the immemorial, the faces 'whisper', 'rustle', 'murmur':

> ESTRAGON: They talk about their lives.
> VLADIMIR: To have lived is not enough for them.
> ESTRAGON: They have to talk about it.
> VLADIMIR: To be dead is not enough for them.[206]

They evoke those who remain unnamed, since they are actually artefacts of death. They are ashes, bones' echo.

> ESTRAGON: They make a noise like feathers.
> VLADIMIR: Like leaves.
> ESTRAGON: Like ashes.
> VLADIMIR: Like leaves.
>   *Long silence.*
>   …
>   *Silence.*[207]

In my dark memory void, Vladimir's and Estragon's faces are indiscernible, dissolved in the shadows of the fallen leaves of the tree they contemplate. It seems that they are not sure whether they were here the day before because the tree is no longer barren or with precious few

('*four or five*') leaves but covered with them. Vladimir insists it is not the same tree:

> VLADIMIR: But yesterday evening it was all black and bare. And now it's covered with leaves.
> ESTRAGON: Leaves?
> VLADIMIR: In a single night.
> ESTRAGON: It must be Spring.
> VLADIMIR: But in a single night![208]

In this umpteenth void (since '[t]here is no lack of void'[209]) full of empty skulls, silence is the oxymoron of a loud noise. Like the 'precious little' Cixous loved him for,[210] him who was not too communicative: 'He wants to see nobody'. He agreed to meet her but they needed to remain in complete darkness, without seeing each other's faces.[211]

Silence.

Sam writes his way towards zero. He steps on the faces. He steps on the leaves. Lots of them.

> VLADIMIR: Where are all these corpses from?
> ESTRAGON: These skeletons.
>   …
> VLADIMIR: A charnel-house! A charnel-house![212]

'In the vicinity of zero there is an infinity of neighbours. If you place yourself between –0.02 and 0.00002, you have a lot of people, the mathematician says'.[213] Divide and multiply: the more you fraction towards zero, the greater the number. Perhaps up to 10,000 gaping faces.

> – Let there be Zero's Neighbour. … If Mr Beckett is Zero's neighbour, who is Zero? But Beckett may well be Zero. Zero's neighbour comes and pays him a visit. Zero's Neighbour tends towards Zero, he never gets there. There always remains a little something, 'precious little'. A little something is no mean (no)thing, it is a little nothing, it is never nothing, one gets nearer, the Neighbour goes to Zero's, the null set. The Neighbour in the vicinity or his Voice.[214]

'[I]n the end, it's the end, the ending end, it's the silence, a few gurgles on the silence, the real silence' (*The Unnamable*).[215]

Silence.

5   THE AXIS OF THE HOLOCAUST: ELIE WIESEL

Last 'street', the wartime version of Cormac McCarthy's *Road*: the Axis of the Holocaust will be entered in silence, just as the Final Solution was tacitly decided, as Saul Friedländer describes: 'Then comes the decision, in silence; the setting in motion of the machine of destruction, in silence; the end, in silence … That's all. Sinister hints, horrifying in what is left unsaid, what is left to the imagination'.[216]

Before stepping towards the Tower that will mark its dead end, we ask ourselves one more time, together with Blanchot in 'Writing Committed to Silence' (dedicated to Edmond Jabès): 'Should we forget? Should we remember? Remember what? That which we cannot name—the Shoah, the Extermination, the Genocide':

> You cannot liberate yourself from remembering if you hold it in forgetting. Beyond remembering there is still Memory. Forgetting does not erase the impossibility of forgetting. Perhaps everything begins with forgetting, but forgetting ruins the beginning, reminding us that forgetting only refers to the forgetting that torments us by refusing the absence that is irresponsibility.[217]

Blanchot's certainty that, irrespective of the discontinuities in the process of remembering, memory must prevail almost echoes survivors' aim in life after Auschwitz: to remember, even at the cost of an irremediable loss of innocence, as Elie Wiesel confessed in *Night*. A memorable incantation from Wiesel's gruesome account will therefore lead us to the Holocaust Tower, the ultimate expression of disaster and most solitary space in the museum:

> NEVER SHALL I FORGET that night, the first night in camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed.
> Never shall I forget that smoke.
> Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky.
> Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith forever.
> Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to ashes.
> Never shall I forget these things, even were I condemned to live as long as God Himself.
> Never.[218]

THE HOLOCAUST TOWER: *Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger*

After walking along the Axis of the Holocaust with haunting scenes from Wiesel's *Night*, we finally reach the Holocaust Tower. Here in this last 'voided void', this closed, empty and cold space, there is only the austerity of poetic simplicity which no critical commentary can hope to do justice to—leaving poetry to what it is 'for': in Jacques Derrida's words, to be learnt 'by heart', '*a memoria*'.[219] It is a fragment from 'Poem', by Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, preceded by a sketch of her wasted life. The poem is discreet, ephemeral, excised, like its creator's life.

Born in 1924 in Czernowitz (Cernăuți), Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger was Paul Celan's cousin. Precious little is known of her biography. With the exception of her poetry notebook, composed between 1939 and 1942, miraculously saved from the camp and later published.[220] Pearl Fichman dedicated a chapter to her; Julius Scherzer, who was the brother of Selma's good friend Bertha Scherzer, included her in his memoirs, and Francesca Paolino wrote a study on her tragic life.[221] Selma was a young woman who wrote poetry and was in love with Leiser Fichman when she was first interned in the ghetto in October 1941, then deported with her mother and stepfather to Transnistria in June the following year. In the Michailowka labour camp, where they arrived after an exhausting march, the Germans and Ukrainians used to starve and terrorize prisoners. Selma's puny body and pristine soul could not take it anymore: 'I can't take any more: I'm giving up now'—she addressed her last letter with kisses and encouragements ('Be strong') to her friend Renée Abramovici-Michaeli.

After spending three years in a labour camp, Leiser Fichman embarked on a clandestine immigrant vessel bound for Israel, the *Mefkure*, in 1944. The *Mefkure* never reached its destination but sank in the Black Sea, and Leiser died without knowing that Selma had died of typhus in December 1942. However, Selma's notebook of poems had reached him and he managed to send it over to Else Schächter-Keren, Selma's friend in Czernowitz, for safekeeping. Else passed the poems to another friend, Renée Abramovici-Michaeli, who took the notebook to Israel in 1948. During her short life, Selma composed 52 poems and translated another five from Yiddish, French and Romanian; her poems have been defined as a 'guide to sensuous, joyous and devastating first love, to the souring beauty of the Bukovina landscape and to the shadows of nationalist hatreds that stalked her and her poetry until they strangled both'.[222] In 1968, Celan paid a tribute to his cousin's work, allowing his 'Todesfuge'

to be anthologized by a German press on condition that her 'Poem' be published alongside.[223]

Reading about Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger's broken destiny, we have learnt what absolute renunciation means. We have lost everything here, including any feeble hope of hope itself. From here on, no analysis can be presumptuous enough to follow or 'link' from her poem, which ends on 'No', her protest against the realization that her life was being nipped in the bud. Memorial ethics obligates us to read the fragment in solitary silence, a catastrophic silence that testifies to the existence—and denial—of the Other.

Before we read the poem, let us briefly take our minds back to Adorno's dictum 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric',[224] and not forget that here is poetry written in the camp itself. This poem is like the smouldering ashes that bear witness to a fire that once was. Or in Walter Smerling and Alexander Koch's words in *Art from the Holocaust*, 'it is precisely the immediate, complex identity of the works that disturbs us and concurrently renders us speechless'.[225]

> I want to live
>
> I want to live.
> I want to laugh and give comfort,
> Fight battles, love and hate,
> Hold heaven in my hand,
> Be free to breathe and shout:
> I don't want to die. No!
> No.[226]

Notes

1. Jacques Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 126.
2. Also named *Kristallsplitter* (Crystal Fragments), it alludes to Germany's infamous 1938 pogrom, *Kristallnacht*, in which the former Jewish Museum from Berlin was plundered. Laid out in 1992, the courtyard consists of a white, grey and black floor of stones with jagged cuts that mimic the glass shards of broken windows on 'Crystal Night', a reference to Celan's 1952 poem

'Kristall'. (Information retrieved from Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich, *Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation* [New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2014], 44.)

3. Paul Celan, 'Speech on the Occasion of Receiving the Literature Prize of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen', in *Collected Prose*, trans. Rosmarie Waldrop (New York: Routledge, 2003), 34.

4. Celan, 'The Meridian', in *Collected Prose*, 55. In an interview with Layla Dawson, Libeskind defined architecture as 'a language' that is in close relation to history, storytelling and humanity in general. Moreover, many of Libeskind's early projects were structured as a form of writing or discourse on writing. Some of his sculptures were out of books and often coated the models in texts, linking architecture to language and writing. (Layla Dawson, 'Daniel Libeskind, Master of Memorials, on the Healing Power of Architecture', *Architectural Review* 227.1359 [May 2010]: 32–33).

5. Celan's terse formula was echoed by Maurice Blanchot in *Le dernier à parler* (Saint Clément de Rivière: Fata Morgana, 1984), 45.

6. Eric Kligerman, 'Ghostly Demarcations: Translating Paul Celan's Poetics into Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin', *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 80.1 (2005), 36.

7. Kligerman, 'Ghostly Demarcations', 37.

8. Rosmarie Waldrop, 'Introduction', in Celan, *Collected Prose*, ix.

9. Kligerman, 'Ghostly Demarcations', 38.

10. Richard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 189.

11. Sara Horowitz, *Voicing the Void: Muteness and Memory in Holocaust Fiction* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 30.

12. Horowitz, *Voicing the Void*, 173.

13. Horowitz, *Voicing the Void*, 173.

14. Kligerman, 'Ghostly Demarcations', 37.

15. The reference is of course to Maurice Blanchot's *The Space of Literature*, trans. and intro. Ann Smock (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

16. Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 75–76.

17. Oliver, *Witnessing*, 15.

18. Kevin Hart, '"The *Absolute* Event of History": The Shoah and the Outside', *Word and Text: A Journal of Literary Studies and Linguistics* 5.1–2 (2015), 186. The phrase 'scrolls of Auschwitz' was the title, translated from Hebrew, of a 1985 monograph by Ber[nard] Mark.

19. Hart, '"The *Absolute* Event of History"', 187.

20. Oliver, *Witnessing*, 15.

21. Oliver, *Witnessing*, 91.

22. See Jacques Derrida, *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg, in Maurice Blanchot, *The Instant of My Death*; Jacques Derrida, *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

23. See Efraim Sicher, *The Holocaust Novel* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005).

24. Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 46.

25. The audio-guide explains that this tree plays a significant role in the Torah and classical mythology. While in ancient times, the pomegranate was a symbol of the country's prosperity in the Temple of Jerusalem, on New Year's Eve the Jewish people wish one another 'A Sweet New Year' and as many good deeds in the new year as the number of seeds in the fruit. Still according to the audio-guide, the pomegranate was adopted as a symbol of the Jewish Museum: the red logo on the ticket the visitor buys combines the pomegranate's round form with the zigzag from the museum.

26. Amy Sodaro, 'Memory, History, and Nostalgia in Berlin's Jewish Museum', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 26 (2013), 80. Her notion of 'dark tourism' is borrowed from Lennon and Foley's *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (2000).

27. Sodaro, 'Memory, History, and Nostalgia in Berlin's Jewish Museum', 87.

28. This excerpt from Libeskind's interview is part of the video collection in the Rafael Roth Learning Centre, Berlin Jewish Museum.

29. Information retrieved from the Rafael Roth Learning Centre, Berlin Jewish Museum.

30. Excerpt from '*Gedankengebäude. Die Vision des Architeckten*: Daniel Libeskind, Building of Ideas', interview with Peter Paul Kubitz, 1999, audio recording, Rafael Roth Learning Centre collection, Berlin Jewish Museum.
31. Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. and Foreword Susan Hanson (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 44.
32. Pierre Joris, 'Introduction', in Paul Celan, *Breathturn into Timestead: The Collected Later Poetry. A Bilingual Edition*, trans., commentary Pierre Joris (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), xxxiii.
33. See Dennis Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally: Ion Antonescu and His Regime, Romania 1940–44* (Houndmills and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 156, whose account is based on *Evreii din România între anii 1940–1944*, ed. Ion Şerbănescu, vol. 3, doc. 356 (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1997), 21–22. According to the Radio Romania International website, Popovici's 'position and the action he took with respect to the Jewish issue did not pass unnoticed and compelled the recognition they deserved. Twenty-three years after his death, in 1969, the Yad Vashem Institute … organized a ceremony in memory of Popovici, posthumously designating him as "Righteous among the Nations"' (Radio Romania International archive at http://old.rri.ro/arh-art.shtml?lang=1&sec=170&art=309535 [accessed 5 February 2016]).
34. These details from Celan's life were compiled from *Paul Celan*, ed. Pierre Joris (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005).
35. Maurice Blanchot, 'Thinking the Apocalypse: A Letter from Maurice Blanchot to Catherine David', trans. Paula Wissing, *Critical Inquiry* 15.2 (Winter 1989), 479. (A different translation appears in Maurice Blanchot, *Political Writings, 1953–1993*, trans. and intro. Zaker Paul [New York: Fordham University Press, 2010], 123.) Originally dated 10 November 1987, this letter appeared in the special edition of *Le Nouvel Observateur* (22–28 January) mentioned previously, published in response to the impact of Víctor Farías's *Heidegger et le nazisme* (Paris: Verdier, 1987). The special issue on 'Heidegger and Nazism' from *Critical Inquiry* gathered several English translations of texts from *Le*

Nouvel Observateur, among which Gadamer's, Habermas's, Derrida's, Lacoue-Labarthe's, Levinas's and Blanchot's.

36. Celan quoted by Charles Bambach in *Thinking the Poetic Measure of Justice: Hölderlin-Heidegger-Celan*, e-pub ed. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2013), 30. See also Paul Celan, *Microlithen sinds, Steinchen* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2005), 129.

37. See Bambach, *Thinking the Poetic Measure of Justice*, 30.

38. James K. Lyon, *Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger: An Unresolved Conversation, 1951–1970* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 160. Jean-Luc Nancy presented his own point of view on the encounter between the German philosopher and Celan in a 'radio essay' (Un essai radiophonique de Jean-Luc Nancy, 17 July 2011, at http://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/atelier-de-creation-radiophonique-10-11/la-rencontre [accessed 20 February 2016], available in English ['The Encounter', 2013], downloadable from the *Soundwalk Collective* website, http://soundwalkcollective.com/index.php?/la-rencontre/ [accessed 20 February 2016] and in German ['Die Begegnung', 2014], downloadable from the *Deutschlandradio Kultur* website: http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/lyrik-sommer-die-begegnung.1022.de.html?dram:article_id=285482, [accessed 20 February 2016]).

39. Bambach, *Thinking the Poetic Measure of Justice*, 30.

40. Lyon, *Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger,* 169–170.

41. Jacques Derrida, 'To Forgive: The Unforgivable and the Imprescriptible', trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg, in *Questioning God*, ed. John D. Caputo, Mark Dooley, and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 36. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Bernard Böchenstein, George Steiner, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Ned Lukacher, to name only a few, have also interpreted Heidegger's silence and Celan's disappointment.

42. Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Modernity: Toward a Hermeneutic Imagination* (Amherst and New York: Humanity Books, 1999), 167.

43. Bambach, *Thinking the Poetic Measure of Justice*, 32.

44. Derrida quoting from Celan's poem, in 'To Forgive: The Unforgivable and the Imprescriptible', trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg,

in *Questioning God*, ed. John D. Caputo, Mark Dooley, and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 37.

45. Derrida, 'To Forgive', 37.
46. Lyon, *Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger,* 173–174.
47. See Ned Lukacher, 'Writing on Ashes: Heidegger *Fort* Derri*da*', *Diacritics* 19.3–19.4 (1989), 146. Lukacher also mentions 'Das Nichts', found among Celan's papers after his suicide, and published in the posthumous collection *Zeitgehöft*, as another reflection on his meeting with the German philosopher. On a similar note, for Lyotard, '"Celan" is neither the beginning nor the end of Heidegger; it is his lack: what is missing in him, what he misses, and whose lack he is lacking.' (Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, trans. Andreas Michel and Mark S. Roberts, Foreword David Carroll [Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1988], 94).
48. Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 359.
49. Benoît Peeters, *Derrida: A Biography*, trans. Andrew Brown (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 14.
50. See Peeters, *Derrida*, 17.
51. See Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, the Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 14, 16, 17, 29.
52. Derrida quoted in Peeters, *Derrida*, 17.
53. The image of a wild adolescent Derrida is best captured in his impersonation of an ape-like Tarzan, reproduced and briefly discussed in Jacques Derrida and Safaa Fathy, *Tourner les mots. Au bord d'un film* (Paris: Galilée/Arte Editions, 2000), 112 (photo no. 13). See also Laurent Milesi, 'Saint-Je Derrida', *Oxford Literary Review* 29: 'Derridanimals', ed. Neil Badmington (2008), especially 65–66.
54. Jacques Derrida, 'Canons and Metonymies: An Interview with Jacques Derrida', trans. Richard Rand and Amy Wygant, in *Logomachia: The Conflict of the Faculties*, ed. Richard Rand (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 211. The closest equivalent to Rand's translation of Lyotard's original statement can be found in *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, 76.

55. Robert Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 293. For a previous study of the respectful distance at which Derrida's writings engage with the Holocaust, see David Michael Levin, 'Cinders, Traces, Shadows on the Page: The Holocaust in Derrida's Writing', in *Postmodernism and the Holocaust*, ed. Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1998), 265–286—a valuable collection of earlier interventions strangely unacknowledged by Eaglestone, who refers to their other co-edited volume on *Martin Heidegger and the Holocaust.*

56. Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 287. In his careful analysis of Heidegger's 'avoidance' (of speech, responsibility), Derrida's *Of Spirit* begins: 'I shall speak of ghost [*revenant*], of flame, and of ashes'. (Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby [Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987], 1).

57. Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 292; the quoted excerpt is from Jacques Derrida's 'Force of Law: The "Mystical Foundation of Authority"', trans. Mary Quaintance, in *Acts of Religion*, ed. and intro. Gil Anidjar (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 257, which mentions the *unpresentability* of justice rather.

58. Samuel Beckett, 'An Interview (1956)' [Israel Shenker in *New York Times*], in *Samuel Beckett: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Lawrence Graver and Raymond Federman (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 161.

59. Lois Gordon, *Reading* Godot (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 43.

60. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (London: Faber, 1969), 79.

61. Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. and pref. Ann Smock, new ed. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 47.

62. James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), 380–381 (also discussed *infra*), and *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett: A Reader's Guide to His Works, Life, and Thought*, ed. C. J. Ackerley and S.E. Gontarsky (New York: Grove, 2004), 431–432. Beckett owed his narrow escape to a telegram sent by Péron's wife.

63. Leslie Hill, 'Introduction', in *Maurice Blanchot: The Demand of Writing*, ed. Carolyn Bailey Gill (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 1, 2.

64. Leslie Hill, *Blanchot: Extreme Contemporary* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 22.

65. Hill, *Blanchot*, 24.

66. See Hill, *Blanchot*, 31.

67. Blanchot quoted in Hill, *Blanchot*, 31–32.

68. Blanchot quoted in Hill, *Blanchot*, 31.

69. There is no definitive proof that the text relates an attestable fact. In his biography of Maurice Blanchot, Bident mentions that 50 years after the event, Blanchot returned to his past; yet this distance 'preserves the literary speech from any autobiographical reductibility'. (Christophe Bident, *Maurice Blanchot: Partenaire invisible* [Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1998], 581–582; my translation). In his sustained commentary, Derrida relates Blanchot's enigmatic *récit* to a letter he received from Blanchot himself on 20 July 1994, which reads: 'Fifty years ago, I knew the happiness of nearly being shot to death'. However, according to Derrida, such a sentence 'does not belong to what we call literature. It testifies, as I am testifying here, in a space supposedly unrelated to fiction in general and the institution of literature in particular' (Derrida, *Demeure*, 52).

70. Blanchot, *The Instant of My Death*, in Blanchot, *The Instant of My Death*; Derrida, *Demeure*, 9.

71. Apart from *The Writing of the Disaster* and *Death Sentence*, also discussed below, see, for instance, 'Literature and the Right to Death' (1949), in *The Work of Fire*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 300–344; 'The Disappearance of Literature' and 'The Search for Point Zero' (1953), in *The Book to Come*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 195–201, 202–209.

72. Richard Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism from Nietzsche to Postmodernism* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004). A reputed muckraker of intellectual deception, Wolin targeted Bataille and Blanchot but also Gadamer, Jung and the more recent *Historikerstreit* on the Germanic side. Not unlike Ungar's monograph, Philippe Mesnard's *Maurice Blanchot—Le sujet de*

l'engagement (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996), focusing on Blanchot's interwar politics, deals with the obsessional haunting of a duplicitous (literary, political) identity.

73. See Jeffrey Mehlman, *Legacies of Anti-Semitism in France* (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1983). Notwithstanding declaring its intent to be 'explanatory rather than accusatory' (3), Mehlman's work self-proclaimedly hinges on 'Hitler's liquidation of anti-Semitism as a tenable option for a French intellectual' (3 [*sic*]). With three other chapters on Lacan, Giraudoux and Gide, his study makes a series of hasty claims against Blanchot, such as accusing him of agreeing to work with Pierre Drieu la Rochelle in 1942 in order to restore the *Nouvelle Revue Française* to the status it used to have before the war, an allegation which Blanchot himself countered in a letter dated 26 November 1979, reproduced in Mehlman's original 1980 article 'Blanchot at *Combat*: Of Literature and Terror' (here ch. 1, 6–22) and reprinted in translation in *Legacies of Anti-Semitism*, 117, n. 45.

74. Steven Ungar, *Scandal and Aftereffect: Blanchot and France since 1930* (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 138.

75. Ungar, *Scandal and Aftereffect*, 26.

76. Ungar, *Scandal and Aftereffect*, 27.

77. For a thorough contemporary presentation, see Thomas G. Pavel, 'The Heidegger Affair', *MLN* 103.4: 'French Issue' (September 1988): 887–901, and *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1993).

78. Ungar, *Scandal and Aftereffect*, 62.

79. Ungar, *Scandal and Aftereffect*, 64, and Maurice Blanchot, 'Thinking the Apocalypse: A Letter from Maurice Blanchot to Catherine David', trans. Paula Wissing, *Critical Inquiry* 15.2 (Winter 1989), 478. Blanchot's contemporaneous '"Do Not Forget"' (orig. May 1988) has a heading on 'Heidegger's Unforgivable Silence' (Maurice Blanchot, '"Do Not Forget"', trans. Michael Holland, in Maurice Blanchot, *The Blanchot Reader*, ed. Michael Holland [Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995], 246).

80. See Hill, *Blanchot*, 37.

81. See Ethan Kleinberg, *Generation Existential*: *Heidegger's Philosophy in France, 1927–1961* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 211–212.

82. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Maurice Blanchot. Passion politique* (Paris: Galilée, 2011), especially 16–17. See also David Uhrig, 'Blanchot, du "non-conformisme" au maréchalisme', *Lignes* 1.43 (2014): 122–139, and Michael Surya, *L'autre Blanchot: L'écriture de jour, l'écriture de nuit* (Paris: Gallimard, 2015).

83. See Nancy's note 1, in *Maurice Blanchot*, 33–34.

84. See 'Lettre de Maurice Blanchot à Roger Laporte du 22 décembre 1984', in Nancy, *Maurice Blanchot*, 57; my translation.

85. Sandrine Sanos, *The Aesthetics of Hate: Far-Right Intellectuals, Antisemitism, and Gender in 1930s France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 119. Her allusion is to Leslie Hill's '"Not In Our Name": Blanchot, Politics, the Neuter', *Paragraph* 30.3: 'Blanchot's Epoch', ed. Leslie Hill and Michael Holland (2007): 141–159.

86. In the context of the equation between *terstis* (third party) and witness, the oscillation between first- and third-person pronouns in Blanchot's text, seen previously, is worth recalling and may be aligned with the 'reduction' of the Jew to a third person, decreed about by the Nazi as if *in absentia*, in Lyotard's formalization of 'Auschwitz' (*The Differend*: *Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988], 100). In '"Do Not Forget"', Blanchot had likewise reminded his readers of the radical difference between the I/You and the I/(s)he relations: 'Martin Buber taught us the excellence of the relation of the I to the Other, revealing to us, through stirring us emotionally (but also by appealing to our reason) the richness and the beauty of the *tu* form. The relation from I to You as *tu* is a privileged one; it differs essentially from the relation from I to That [*Cela*]' (245–246). For another, longer discussion of the *testis* or *terstis*, see Jacques Derrida, 'Poetics and Politics of Witnessing', in *Sovereignties in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*, ed. Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 73–74.

87. Derrida, *Demeure*, 45.

88. Derrida, *Demeure*, 49.

89. Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, 41. This fragment corresponds to 'The imminence of what has always already taken place', glossed by Derrida in *Demeure*, 49.

90. Derrida, *Demeure*, 98.

91. Derrida, *Demeure*, 49.

92. Pavel Eisner's point is summarized by Livia Rothkirchen in *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press; Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), 23.

93. Saul Friedländer, *Franz Kafka: The Poet of Shame and Guilt* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 113.

94. See Primo Levi, *The Mirror Maker*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), 106–107.

95. Franz Kafka, 'Before the Law', trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, in *The Complete Stories*, Foreword John Updike (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 22.

96. Kafka, 'Before the Law', 22.

97. Kafka, 'Before the Law', 23.

98. Raphael Zagury-Orly, 'On Election: Levinas and the Question of Ethics as First Philosophy', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 20.3 (2012): 356.

99. Zagury-Orly, 'On Election', 356.

100. Zagury-Orly, 'On Election', 359.

101. Zagury-Orly, 'On Election', 361.

102. James Rolleston, 'Introduction: Kafka Begins', in *A Companion to the Works of Franz Kafka*, ed. James Rolleston (Woodbridge: Camden House, 2002), 9.

103. Jacques Derrida, 'Before the Law', in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 196.

104. Derrida, 'Force of Law', 270. Let us recall that this second part of 'Force of Law', on Benjamin's 'Zur Kritik der Gewalt', was given as an inaugural address at a conference on 'Nazism and the Final Solution. Probing the Limits of Representation'.

105. Derrida, 'Force of Law', 270.

106. See Andrew Benjamin, *Present Hope: Philosophy, Architecture, Judaism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 117.

107. Simon Critchley, *Very Little … Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 206.

108. Critchley, *Very Little … Almost Nothing*, 206; Samuel Beckett, *The Beckett Trilogy: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable* (London: Picador, 1979), 377. The exact quotation is 'Open on the void, open on the nothing'.
109. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (London and New York: Routledge, 2004 [1973]), 380, in the section on 'Nihilism'.
110. *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. Ackerley and Gontarsky, 432.
111. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, 9. Ellipses in the original.
112. Hugh Kenner, *A Reader's Guide to Samuel Beckett* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), 30.
113. Kenner, *A Reader's Guide to Samuel Beckett*, 30.
114. Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, 380, 381.
115. Kenner, *A Reader's Guide to Samuel Beckett*, 30.
116. Hugh Kenner quoted in Jeet Heer, *Sweet Lechery: Reviews, Essays and Profiles* (Erin, ON: The Porcupine's Quill, 2014), 91. Unfortunately I have not been able to track down the original, unreferenced essay and its quotation, which is strangely emended to refer to Beckett's one-act *Play* (1962–63) in another version of Heer's chapter, found at http://thewalrus.ca/shoah-business/ (accessed 13 February 2016).
117. These details were echoed and amplified more recently in a collection of essays edited by French theatre scholar Pierre Temkine, written in the wake of his 2004 thesis and published in a German translation. The central claim is that the absurdist vein of *Waiting for Godot* could not be divorced from a specific wartime context, which he dated precisely to Spring 1943. Temkine's conclusion was that the two main characters were old Jews waiting for a Resistance smuggler, the elusive Godot, to take them across to freedom and safety. See Pierre Temkine et al., *Warten auf Godot: Das Absurde und die Geschichte*, ed. Pierre Temkine, trans. Tim Trzaskalik (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2008).
118. Norman Berlin, 'The Tragic Pleasure of *Waiting for Godot*', in *Beckett at 80/Beckett in Context*, ed. Enoch Brater (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 46.
119. Berlin, 'The Tragic Pleasure of *Waiting for Godot*', in *Beckett at 80/Beckett in Context*, ed. Brater, 46, 49.

120. Knowlson, *Damned to Fame,* 381.
121. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, 62.
122. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 362. In Simon Critchley's words, Adorno's 'overwhelming concern is how one responds to the fact of Auschwitz and his initially perplexing conviction is that Beckett's *Endgame* gives the only appropriate reaction to the situation of the death camps' (Critchley, *Very Little … Almost Nothing*, xxii).
123. Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, 458.
124. Samuel Beckett, *Endgame*, in *The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), 106.
125. Reported in Hélène Cixous, *Zero's Neighbour: Sam Beckett*, trans. with additional notes by Laurent Milesi (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 4.
126. Gene Ray, *Terror and the Sublime in Art and Critical Theory from Auschwitz to Hiroshima to September 11* (New York and Houndmills: Palgrave, 2005), 22.
127. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Trying to Understand *Endgame*', in *Notes to Literature*, *Volume 1*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 248.
128. Critchley, *Very Little … Almost Nothing*, xxii.
129. Beckett, *Malone Dies*, in *The Beckett Trilogy*, 177.
130. Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* (London: Picador, 1973), 5.
131. Samuel Beckett, *Krapp's Last Tape*, in *The Complete Dramatic Works*, 223.
132. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, 9, 11 (twice), 21.
133. Kennedy, 'Krapp's Dialogue of Selves', in *Beckett at 80/Beckett in Context*, ed. Brater, 106.
134. Samuel Beckett, *Endgame*, in *The Complete Dramatic Works*, 106. Ellipses in the original.
135. Beckett, *Malone Dies*, in *The Beckett Trilogy*, 217.
136. Stanley Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 156.
137. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, 42. Ellipses in the original.
138. See Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd*, 3rd ed., New Foreword by Martin Esslin (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 56. Esslin's comment is a gloss on Lucky's famous ramblings on 'God quaquaquaqua ... who from the heights of divine apathia

divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown' (Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, 42–43).

139.   Beckett, *Watt*, ed. C. J. Ackerley (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 4.

140.   John Robert Keller, *Samuel Beckett and the Primacy of Love* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 190.

141.   Samuel Beckett, 'Worstward Ho', in *Nohow On* (London: John Calder, 1989), 101.

142.   Beckett, 'Worstward Ho', in *Nohow On*, 123.

143.   Laura Salisbury, '"What Is the Word": Beckett's Aphasic Modernism', *Journal of Beckett Studies* 17.1–17.2 (2008), 118.

144.   Ann Banfield, 'Beckett's Tattered Syntax', *Representations* 84 (Autumn 2003), 6.

145.   Banfield, 'Beckett's Tattered Syntax', 15.

146.   David D. Green, 'Literature without Presence: Beckett, Rorty, Derrida', *Paragraph* 19.2 (1996), 84 and 95.

147.   Cixous, *Zero's Neighbour*, 27. See Gilles Deleuze, 'The Exhausted', in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 152–174.

148.   Cp. with 'I can't go on in any case. But I must go on. So I'll go on. Air, air, I'll seek air …' and its umpteen variations until the finale in *The Unnamable* (*The Beckett Trilogy*, 362, 382), and 'I couldn't any more, I couldn't go on'. In *Texts for Nothing* 1, in *The Complete Short Prose 1929–1989*, ed., intro. and Notes S. E. Gontarski (New York: Grove Press, 1995), 100.

149.   Fagenblat, *A Covenant of Creatures*, 109. The difference between the saying (*le dire*) and the said (*le dit*), between that responsibility prior to identification and what thematizes it in an essentializing language, is also at the core of Levinasian ethics; see, for instance, *Otherwise than Being*, especially much of ch. 2 (23–59), published originally under the title 'Le Dire et le Dit' in *Le Nouveau Commerce* (Spring, 1971).

150.   Celan, 'The Meridian', in *Collected Prose*, 39, 36, 37 respectively.

151.   Fagenblat, *A Covenant of Creatures*, 109.

152.   Alain Suied, 'Paul Celan: Poet of the Shoah', *New Literary History* 30.1: 'Poetry and Poetics' Special Issue (Winter 1999), 218.

153. Derrida, 'Shibboleth: For Paul Celan', in *Sovereignties in Question*, 57.

154. Michael G. Levine, *A Weak Messianic Power: Figures of a Time to Come in Benjamin, Derrida, and Celan* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 64.

155. Paul Celan, 'TO ONE WHO STOOD BEFORE THE DOOR', quoted in Michael G Levine, 'Spectral Gatherings: Derrida, Celan, and the Covenant of the Word', *Diacritics* 38.1–38.2 (2008), 68. The article was republished in *A Weak Messianic Power* but Celan's poem was not reproduced in its entirety. Levine's translation was based on *Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan*, trans. John Felstiner (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 170–171, and on Jacques Derrida's 'Shibboleth: For Paul Celan', in *Sovereignties in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*, ed. Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 61, 62, 63, 65.

156. Levine, *A Weak Messianic Power*, 73.

157. Celan, 'The Meridian', in *Collected Prose*, 48.

158. Derrida, 'Shibboleth', 63. The theme of the Jews' belief in God (election) on the threshold of death (selection) is discussed in John Llewelyn, 'sELection', in *Postmodernism and the Holocaust*, ed. Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1998), 189–204.

159. Levine, *A Weak Messianic Power*, 80.

160. Derrida, 'Shibboleth', 59.

161. Levine, *A Weak Messianic Power*, 82.

162. Celan, 'TO ONE WHO STOOD BEFORE THE DOOR', quoted in Levine, 'Spectral Gatherings', 68.

163. See Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 189.

164. Derrida, 'Shibboleth', 58.

165. Levine, *A Weak Messianic Power*, 71.

166. One such legend most closely associated with Rabbi Löw (or Loeb) refers to the fashioning of a golem (through the rabbi's use of the divine name for life's creation) who did all manner of work for his master during the week. The evening before Sabbath, when everyone was required to stop working and rest, Rabbi Löw used to turn his golem back into clay 'by taking away the name of God (or, in another version, by removing the letter *aleph* from the word *emeth* [truth] written on its forehead,

thereby spelling its death in the word *meth*, meaning death)'. Once, when he forgot to remove the *shem* [name], the golem 'ran amuck, shaking houses, and threatening to destroy everything' during the service in the synagogue. Rabbi Löw was summoned, 'rushed at the raging golem and tore away the *shem*, whereupon the golem crumbled into dust'. See Levine, A *Weak Messianic Power*, 82–83, 84–86.

167. Levine, *A Weak Messianic Power*, 93. The Kafkaesque vein is corroborated by Kafka's own belief in this legendary creature, which had given rise to countless tales in the semi-mystical atmosphere of Prague's Jewish ghetto. See, for instance, Isaac Bashevis Singer's 1962 short story 'A Friend of Kafka', in *A Friend of Kafka and Other Stories* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972), 14.

168. In December 1911, Kafka wrote in his diary: 'In Hebrew my name is Amschel, like my mother's maternal grandfather …'. See Franz Kafka, *The Diaries, 1910–1923* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 152.

169. See Paul Celan, *Glottal Stop: 101 Poems*, trans. Nikolai Popov and Heather McHugh (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 124. For the ornithonymic motif, see Levine, *A Weak Messianic Power*, 85–86, 94–95, as well as, for instance, Derek Hillard, 'Birdsongs: Celan and Kafka', *Colloquia Germanica* 40.3-4 (2007), 303–305, Werner Hamacher, *Premises: Essays on Philosophy and Literature from Kant to Celan*, trans. Peter Fenves (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 310–312, Marc Shell, *Stutter* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2005), 135, and Vivian Liska, *When Kafka Says We: Uncommon Communities in German-Jewish Literature* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 187.

170. Paul Auster, *Collected Prose* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), 558.

171. Derrida, 'Poetics and Politics of Witnessing', 67, for his excerpt from Celan's poem (also quoted repeatedly elsewhere in the collection), and especially 91, about the injunction not to replace the true witness at Auschwitz and the poem bearing witness to this impossibility. See also 67–68: 'This poem also remains untranslatable to the extent that it may refer to events to which the German language will have been a privileged witness, namely,

the Shoah, which some call by the proper name (and metonymic name—an immense problem that I leave hanging here) of "Auschwitz". The German language of this poem will have been present at everything that was capable of destroying by fire and reducing to "ash" … existences of innumerable number—innumerably.' About its first, 'double and divided word', Derrida further notes: 'Ash, this is also the name of what annihilates or threatens to destroy even the possibility of bearing witness to annihilation. Ash is the figure of annihilation without remainder, without memory …' (68).

172. Derrida, 'Shibboleth', 2.
173. Jacques Derrida, 'Circumfession', in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 122.
174. Jacques Derrida, 'Circumfession', in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 36. Cp. with Derrida, 'Circumfession', in Bennington and Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, 190: 'the last of the Jews', a partial translation echoed by Ofrat. See Gideon Ofrat, *The Jewish Derrida*, trans. Peretz Kidron (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 9.
175. Laurent Milesi, 'Portraits of H. C. as J. D. and Back', *New Literary History* 37.1 (2006), 57, which threads together several texts by Cixous on Derrida.
176. Hélène Cixous, *Portrait of Jacques Derrida as a Young Jewish Saint*, trans. Beverley Bie Brahic (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 86. On Derrida's marranism, see also Laurent Milesi, 'Jacques Derrida in Secret(s)', in *Secrets, Mysteries, Silences*. ed. Ruth Evans, Terence Hughes and Georges Letissier (Nantes: Publications CERCI-CRINI, 2005), especially 119–121.
177. Derrida, 'Circumfession', in Bennington and Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, 58.
178. Elizabeth Weber, *Questions au judaïsme* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1996).
179. Ofrat, *The Jewish Derrida*, 9.
180. Jacques Derrida, in '*Confessions* and "Circumfession": A Roundtable Discussion with Jacques Derrida', moderated by

Richard Kearney, in *Augustine and Postmodernism: Confessions and Circumfession,* ed. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 37.

181. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans., intro. and additional notes Alan Bass (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 91.

182. Ofrat, *The Jewish Derrida*, 31.

183. Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other*, 53.

184. Derrida quoted in Ofrat, *The Jewish Derrida*, 17.

185. Conversation in Paris between Derrida and Ofrat, 17 May 1996 (See Ofrat, *The Jewish Derrida*, 10).

186. Derrida, 'Circumfession', in Bennington and Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, 56.

187. Derrida, 'Circumfession', in Bennington and Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, 59.

188. Richard Kearney, 'Returning to God after God: Levinas, Derrida, Ricoeur', *Research in Phenomenology* 39 (2009), 169.

189. The reference is to the scene shot in Derrida's attic in Safaa Fathy, *D'Ailleurs, Derrida*, First Run/Icarus Films, 1999 [DVD, 2008].

190. Derrida and Bennington, 'Circumfession', 59–60.

191. Ofrat, *The Jewish Derrida*, 81.

192. Jacques Derrida, *Cinders*, trans., ed. and intro. Ned Lukacher (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 39.

193. Laurent Milesi, 'Breaching Ethics: Performing Deconstruction', keynote address at the International Conference on '*Ethos/Pathos/Logos*', University of Ploieşti, October 2012. For a more detailed account of this leitmotif, see also Laurent Milesi, 'Thinking (Through) the Desert (la pensée du désert) with(in) Jacques Derrida', in *The Politics of Deconstruction: Jacques Derrida and the Other of Philosophy*, ed. Martin McQuillan (London and Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2007), especially 174.

194. Herman Rapaport, 'Forecastings of Apocalypse: Ashbery, Derrida, Blanchot', in *Literature as Philosophy, Philosophy as Literature*, ed. Donald G. Marshall (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1987), 318.

195. Ofrat, *The Jewish Derrida*, 152.
196. Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavey, jr, and Richard Rand (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986 [1974]), 238.
197. Rapaport, 'Forecastings of Apocalypse', 318.
198. Dorota Glowacka, 'A Date, a Place, a Name: Jacques Derrida's Holocaust Translations', *The New Centennial Review* 7.2 (2007), 124.
199. Hart, '"The *Absolute* Event of History": The Shoah and the Outside', 170.
200. Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, 47. Much of this searingly moving passage also occurs, in Michael Holland's translation, in '"Do Not Forget"', 248.
201. Cixous, *Zero's Neighbour*, 11.
202. Cixous, *Zero's Neighbour*, 7, 8, 9.
203. Cixous, *Zero's Neighbour*, 11.
204. Brent Allen Saindon, in 'A Doubled Heterotopia: Shifting Spatial and Visual Symbolism in the Jewish Museum Berlin's Development', *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 98.1 (February 2012), 39–40.
205. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, 62.
206. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, 63.
207. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, 63.
208. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, 57, 66.
209. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, 66.
210. Cixous, *Zero's Neighbour*, xiv ('Author's Note').
211. Cixous, *Zero's Neighbour*, 18. Cixous adds that she will relate her encounter with Beckett in the dark 'not here, one of these days'.
212. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, 64. Compare with 'this year I shall not hear them howling over their charnels' in *Malone Dies* (*The Beckett Trilogy*, 215).
213. Cixous, *Zero's Neighbour*, 9.
214. Cixous, *Zero's Neighbour*, 9.
215. Beckett, *The Beckett Trilogy*, 376.
216. Saul Friedländer, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 80–81.
217. Blanchot, *Political Writings, 1953–1993*, 171, 172. Cp. with Lyotard's at times paradoxical politics of memory in *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, especially 26, discussed in Chapter 2.

218. Elie Wiesel, *Night*, trans. Marion Wiesel (London: Penguin, 2006), 34.

219. See Jacques Derrida, '*Che cos'è la poesia?*', in *Points … Interviews 1974–1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf *et al.* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), *passim*, especially 291 about the heart and memory, '*in two words,* so as not to forget'.

220. Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, *Harvest of Blossoms: Poems from a Life Cut Short*, ed. Irene Silverblatt and Helene Silverblatt, trans. Jerry Glenn and Florian Birkmayer with Irene Silverblatt and Helene Silverblatt (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008). Information on her life was retrieved from the Editor's Introduction to the book and from the Yad Vashem site, at http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/spots_of_light/selma_meerbaum_eisinger.asp (accessed 4 March 2016). The album of poems was first published in 1976 by Hersch Segal, Selma's teacher from Cernowitz.

221. See Francesca Paolino, *Una vita: Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger (1924–1942)* (Trento: Edizioni del Faro, 2013).

222. 'Editor's Introduction', in Meerbaum-Eisinger, *Harvest of Blossoms*, xii.

223. 'Editor's Introduction', in Meerbaum-Eisinger, *Harvest of Blossoms,* xx.

224. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Cultural Criticism and Society', in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1983 [1955]), 34, 70 and 73.

225. Walter Smerling, Chairman of the Foundation for Art and Culture, and Alexander Koch, President of the Foundation of the German Historical Museum, wrote the Introduction, entitled 'That which Remains', to the trilingual edition (German, Hebrew, English) of *Art from the Holocaust: 100 Works from the Yad Vashem Collection*, ed. Eliad Moreh-Rosenberg and Walter Smerling (Cologne: Wienand, Stiftung für Kunst und Kultur e.V. Bonn, 2016), 10. A huge compendium comprising 369 pages of original works and testimonies from the Holocaust, *Art from the Holocaust*, is the catalogue of the Berlin Deutsches Historisches Museum exhibition that ran from 26 January–3 April 2016, organized in collaboration with the Foundation for Art and Culture. The 100 artworks were on loan from Yad

Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre in Jerusalem, and could be seen for the first time in Germany, at https://www.dhm.de/en/ausstellungen/art-from-the-holocaust.html (accessed 4 March 2016). The volume includes Selma Merbaum-Eisinger's biography (317) and Arnorld Daghani (Korn)'s painting entitled *Pietà (The Death of Selma Merbaum-Eisinger)* illustrating the moment when Selma's body is lowered from its bunk (139).

226. This extract from 'Poem' was translated from Ada Brodsky's Hebrew by Lisa Katz and published in *Art from the Holocaust*, 77.

Epilogue: Ground Zero—From the Holocaust Tower to the Twin Towers

On 11 September 2001, watching the news of the terrorist attack against the World Trade Center, dumbfounded like so many millions of viewers, I was struck by the apocalyptic spectacle, which reminded me of Emil Cioran's invocation of 'smoke and dust as after a great cataclysm'.[1] On what became universally known henceforth as '9/11', New York City, 'enveloped in the smoke, dust, and debris …, experienced the real trauma of a real skyscraper catastrophe'.[2]

The dust from the collapsed Twin Towers was to acquire innumerable meanings in the months to follow. In Marita Sturken's view, this dust 'was initially a shocking substance' for Americans, 'something otherworldly, unexpected, uncanny, yet also strangely familiar. Some of it contained recognizable scraps—papers, remnants of the ordinary business of life before that day, now transformed. Balance sheets from financial firms, previously objects of mundane business transactions, were transformed into historical objects, materials of poignancy and loss'.[3] If in the first few days after 9/11, the urgency was to find survivors among the rubble, when confronted with the blunt fact that there was no more life to save, the families of the disappeared then realized that there were no bodies to bury either. In the absence of victims' remains, the dust became 'some kind of corporeal presence to mediate the absence of a loved one'.[4] Marita Sturken writes that, in October 2001, 'Mayor Giuliani set up a procedure through which each of the families of the dead received an urn of the dust from the site for a memorial ceremony. This dust … was gathered into 55-gallon drums, blessed by a chaplain at Ground Zero, and given a police escort to

One Police Plaza. There, officials scooped the dust into bags, which they held in gloved hands. Each family was then given a five-inch urn of dust with "9-11-01" engraved on it, wrapped in a blue velvet bag'.[5] The ritual formula from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer burial service, 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust'—itself derived from Genesis 3:19: 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return'—had seldom been put to such a morbid, literal application.

One of the collateral impacts of 9/11 was that the inauguration of the Berlin Jewish Museum, scheduled for that very day, had to be postponed. The risk of other possible terrorist attacks spreading to Europe was deemed too high and, as a safety precaution, the Museum, a long-awaited, already famous symbol and landmark, was opened to the public two days later.

In an attempt to understand what is specific about the 9/11 tragedy, Karl Goodkin states that the terrorist attacks 'forced us to focus on bereavement and the associated sense of loss, or grief, as they occur on a much larger scale'.[6] Goodkin's analysis establishes the link between personal feelings of loss and the collective experience of grief in order to approach the phenomenon and full impact of mass bereavement on such an occasion. Whereas bereavement is said to refer to 'the actual life event of learning that someone close to you has died', the response of grief 'is the specific form of distress we suffer during the process of adapting to the occurrence of bereavement'[7]—which can be aligned with the conception of mourning both in Freudian psychoanalysis and trauma studies, and the necessity to come to terms with it through a process of 'memorialization'.

On a cloudless morning, two aeroplanes crashed, one after the other, into the twin-towered World Trade Center that used to dominate the Manhattan skyline, killing 2602 people inside the Towers, the 87 passengers who were on board Flight 11 and the 60 passengers on Flight 175. Owing to the sheer scale of human destruction and the event's unprecedented, exceptional character, 9/11 soon became a date endowed with 'symbolic enormity': the targeting of the emblematic building of New York City's economic power and the attack on the integrity of the USA were among the attributes that turned that day's nightmarish scenario into a 'construction' that 'seeks to overshadow perhaps all recent international traumas and certainly all other US traumas and sites of shock'.[8]

Responding to a series of questions on the subject of 9/11 and global terrorism, Habermas explained that he did not see 'the monstrous act

itself' of destroying the symbols of American pride as something new because of 'the action of the suicide hijackers who transformed the fully fuelled airplanes together with their hostages into living weapons, or even the unbearable number of victims and the dramatic extent of the devastation', but rather because of 'the symbolic force of the targets struck': the collapse of the tallest buildings in Manhattan meant the destruction of 'an icon in the household imagery of the American nation'.[9] Meant as a powerful symbolic attack on Western democracy, spreading destruction and division, 9/11 ironically brought together side by side for the first time the two antithetical visions of philosophy represented by Derrida and Habermas, deconstruction's systematic critique of reason versus a defence of rationality, modernity and the legacy of the Enlightenment. Although, as Borradori recounts, they were scheduled to come to New York, separately and through unrelated channels, in a few weeks' time, the apocalyptic event prompted an unprecedented dialogue between two of the greatest living voices of the European philosophical tradition.[10]

Various other commentators have agreed that what distinguished the 9/11 tragic event was not so much the sheer number of victims—since, after all, it cannot compare with that of the twentieth century's mass genocide—but rather, as Slavoj Žižek reflected, how New York (with its emblematic Statue of Liberty) was 'elevated by the media into the sublime victim of Absolute Evil'.[11] In Derrida's view, its global impact imprinted two main headings in our mind, which Borradori summarized as follows: 'the indignation over the killings and the drumbeat of the media that obsessively declared the attacks as a "major event"'.[12] On that day, Derrida was in Shanghai, where it was night-time, and after being informed of what had happened by the owner of the café he was in with a couple of friends, he hurried back to his hotel to catch the first televised images, and soon realized that this was going to become 'in the *eyes* of the world … a "major event"', even 'if what was to follow remained, to a certain extent, invisible and unforeseeable'.[13]

Studio Daniel Libeskind was selected to develop the master plan for Ground Zero. When he was nominated among the competition's entrants in October 2002, on his first tour of the site, the architect asked to see the enormous pit (called the 'bathtub') left by the destroyed towers. As he and his wife were descending to the bottom, he could feel 'the violence and hatred that had brought down the buildings', but also 'other powerful forces present: freedom, hope, faith; the human energy that continues to grip the site'; there he understood that, if he were to build a monument,

it 'would have to speak to the tragedy of the terrorist act, not bury it' (*BG* 14). The eradication of the Twin Towers had uncovered an unfamiliar sight that one would normally not think of in connection with skyscrapers: their deep-set foundations. In Libeskind's words:

> [w]hen the buildings were there, who of us ever thought about what lay underneath? We always think of the skyscrapers of New York, but it's down below where you perceive the depth of the city. …
>
> We were at the bottom of the island of Manhattan, and we could touch its moisture and coolness, feel its vulnerability and its strength. … We felt a whole city down there. The ashes of those who died, and the hopes of those who survived. We felt we were in the presence of the sacred. (*BG* 14)

From this recollection, we retain Libeskind's emphasis on the antithetical feelings experienced inside the pit: the ashes of the past versus the hope addressed to the future. In 'Touching the Void', he admitted that his very first memories of New York as a teenage immigrant were the Statue of Liberty and the huge buildings in Manhattan, memories which stayed with him for the rest of his life. Here Libeskind reiterated feeling torn between two antithetical necessities: to 'acknowledge the terrible deaths which occurred on this site', thus leaving the location of the former World Trade Center completely empty, and to look forward 'with hope', designing additional buildings in order to make up for the loss.[14]

In a short study dealing with both the Berlin Jewish Museum and Ground Zero, Kelsey Bankert traced 'two commonalities that both Berliners and New Yorkers share': 'their national identity as either Germans or Americans and the fact that those identities were molded by traumatic historical events'.[15] Analysing what she classifies as signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in both Berliners and New Yorkers, Bankert concludes that '[d]esigns for the Jewish Museum Berlin and the rebuilding of the World Trade Center in New York City reveal how the residents of each city represent traumatic pasts in the form of iconic architecture'.[16] From this point of view, both projects can be seen as 'a way to heal trauma', and Daniel Libeskind is 'an articulate spokesman for two different traumatized communities'.[17]

Indeed, it seems that Libeskind's insistence on linking with the future pervades all his comments on both the Berlin Jewish Museum and Ground Zero. When called upon to explain to the Berlin senators that there was

no door for them into his projected building for the Jewish Museum, he justified it as follows:

> … there is no way into Jewish history and into Berlin's history by a traditional door. You have to follow a much more complex route to understand Jewish history in Berlin, and to understand the future of Berlin. You have to go back into the depth of Berlin's history, into its Baroque period, and therefore into the Baroque building first. (*BG* 98)

The exposed entrails ('depth') of Ground Zero provided him with a spatial analogue for the temporal perspective which he had implemented in his conception of the Berlin Jewish Museum. While he was planning Ground Zero, Libeskind's intention was to ensure that 'the site will remain a meaningful place, one that addresses the past but speaks to the future' (*BG* 270). In his interview with Sarah Crichton, he also emphasized that, unlike the other architects who 'referred to the towers that had existed before', his aim was 'not to re-create the past, but to reinterpret it' (*BG* 46).

In Bankert's view, Libeskind's role was as a healer to both the traumatized Berlin and New York communities. Illustrating her point with the fact that, in the two-year span during which 'the final exhibit contents were debated', the empty Berlin museum structure welcomed almost half a million guests, she concluded that people 'came, essentially, to witness the void'.[18] Caroline Wiedmer's history of the Jewish Museum, which Bankert relies on, attests that Germans visited the site to 'mourn the fragmented shell around the voids, their own fractured and wounded contemporary German society'.[19] For Bankert, this meant that '[i]t was in the walls of this structure that the shattered community could mourn and begin to reconcile loss with their own identity as German citizens'.[20] Similarly, according to Michael Sorkin, the task of Ground Zero was 'not simply to commemorate but to sort out the meaning of our loss, to define the values that inform the practices of our mourning'.[21]

Therefore Libeskind repeats not only the Berlin Jewish Museum's structure in Ground Zero but also his entire 'ambidextrous' approach that focuses at once on the past and the future of the site, by 'radically reconfiguring common geometric shapes'.[22] These common elements are the bridge and the void, the bridge being between the memory of tragedy (which is in the footprints of the destroyed buildings) and the future of

New Yorkers. The memory of the tragedy, in the form of the collapsed towers' footprints, is itself a 'memory void' of sorts that conjures up an analogy with the Memory Void in the Berlin Jewish Museum. Conversely, Bankert sees the towers' extant footprints, whose purpose was to 'maintain the memory of destruction, the collapse' of the Twin Towers,[23] as being similar to the Berlin Jewish Museum's Holocaust Tower. But as we have established in Chapter 3 from James Young's explanations, the Holocaust Tower mirrors the structure of the Memory Void.

The trace left by the former high rises was an excavated pit with its famous retaining wall or, technically, 'slurry wall', which served both as dam and foundations for the Twin Towers. When Libeskind first saw it, there were 'stalagmites of ice bursting from fissures cracking under the pressure of the indomitable Hudson River, seeping through from the other side' (*BG* 15). The wall could not be taken down because the city risked being flooded by the river. Libeskind could see the signs of its permanent consolidation: 'patchwork overlapping patchwork, because over the years the wall has often had to be reinforced so that it wouldn't collapse. It was haptic, tactile, pulsing, a multilayered text written in every conceivable language' (*BG* 15).

Many scholars—among them Charles Baxter, Christoph Lindner and Michael J. Lewis— have pointed out that the community and the nation had to be put 'in memory of' the enduring symbolic significance of the Twin Towers to make up for their physical obliteration from the cityscape. Since the towers were no longer a physical presence, mnemonic shards of their former self (such as the former wall) were salvaged by Libeskind. The question that arose for the architect was how to frame memory in a digital age of volatile information which was also an 'age of forgetting'.[24] Thus, Libeskind's excavated pit became a void reminiscent of the World Trade Center's barbaric destruction, acting as a buffer against the kind of fast-paced amnesia that had threatened to engulf memories of the Berlin Wall (see Chapter 2).

Like Bankert, Michael J. Lewis considered that the pit on the Ground Zero site shared some thematic affinity with the voids in the Jewish Museum in its thematic voids. It is as if Libeskind wanted to make sure that 'out of sight' would not become also, literally, 'out of mind', for both those (New York and Berlin Jewish) communities whose heritage and landmarks had been destroyed. In Lewis's view, Ground Zero is a continuation of the structure of the Jewish Museum as well as an adaptation of its spaces' symbolic numerology:

a trio of easily digested symbols made the hermetic geometry palatable: a void in a submerged plaza, an excessively elevated garden … and a commemorative object (here a Wedge of Light rather than a Stair of Continuity). Once again, symbolism came to the very brink of pathos; having renounced the tyranny of Euclidean geometry; Libeskind decked his design in patriotic American numerology.[25]

If the past is embodied in the former pit, the future is represented by 8 million square feet of office in four bulky buildings and the world's tallest structure, a 1776-feet-high edifice named the Freedom Tower which 'recaptures the skyline', to resort to a loaded phrase often recycled by the New York press. As Christoph Lindner remarks, Libeskind's acknowledgement in his architect's statement of the building's competitive vertical function—he emphasized that 'the tower rises triumphantly above its predecessors, including the Twin Towers that it replaces'—proves what the architect's design attempts to register: 'the tenuous yet deeply embedded ideological connection in the American public mind between democracy and the vertical form of the skyscraper. This was a connection that the urban planner Thomas Adams had already identified back in 1931 when he wrote that, for many people, 'New York is America, and its skyscraper a symbol of the spirit of America'.[26] Santiago Calatrava, the architect of the World Trade Center PATH station, intuitively understood Libeskind's choreography of space[27] and 'the symbolic and urban meaning' of what Libeskind had called in his plan 'the Wedge of Light' (*BG* 258).

The complex of offices projected by Libeskind were supposed to be oriented in such a way as to throw daylight twice a day, 'like a pointer on a sundial, to mark the time when each of the towers were hit, at 8.46am and 10.28am'.[28] His project, however, was not heeded by David Childs. Still, '[e]very year on September 11, at 10:28 a.m., the time the second tower fell in 2001, the roof of Calatrava's station would open in such a way that the light would filter down into the station, onto the platforms and the tracks below' (*BG* 258–259). Thus, people would truly 'see light' with each anniversary, the gift of a date and a symbolic renewal which once more testify to Libeskind's memorial ethics-as-optics.

Breaking Ground ends on Libeskind's positive note that his buildings will eventually be built, voicing his conviction that 'If designed well and right, these seemingly hard and inert structures have the power to illuminate, and even to heal' (*BG* 288). A wedge of light to remember and heal the past, and a ray of hope to build the future.

Notes

1. E. M. Cioran, *On the Heights of Despair,* trans. and intro. Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1992), 102.
2. Christoph Lindner, 'Willa Cather, Daniel Libeskind, and the Creative Destruction of Manhattan', *The Journal of American Culture* 28.1 (March 2005), 117.
3. Marita Sturken, 'The Aesthetics of Absence: Rebuilding Ground Zero', *American Ethnologist* 31.3 (2004), 312. The article was greatly expanded into Chapters 4 and 5 of *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2007), 165–285.
4. Sturken, 'The Aesthetics of Absence', 313.
5. Sturken, 'The Aesthetics of Absence', 313.
6. Karl Goodkin, 'The Dawn of a New Mourning', *Science and Spirit* (September–October 2006), 31.
7. Goodkin, 'The Dawn of a New Mourning', 31.
8. Terri Tomsky, 'From Sarajevo to 9/11: Travelling Memory and the Trauma Economy', *parallax* 17.4 (2011), 57.
9. Jürgen Habermas, in *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Habermas and Derrida*, ed. Giovanna Borradori (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 28.
10. *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*, ed. Borradori, x, xi.
11. Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real! Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates* (London: Verso, 2002), 137.
12. Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*, 149.
13. Derrida in Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*, 109.
14. Daniel Libeskind, 'Touching the Void', *Science and Spirit* (September–October 2006), 36.
15. Kelsey Bankert, *The Architecture of Trauma: Daniel Libeskind in New York City and Berlin*, Kindle Edition (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 4.
16. Bankert, *The Architecture of Trauma*, 8.
17. Bankert, *The Architecture of Trauma*, 8, 9.
18. Bankert, *The Architecture of Trauma*, 45.
19. Caroline Wiedmer quoted in Bankert, *The Architecture of Trauma*, 45–46. Caroline Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory:*

Representations of the Holocaust in Contemporary Germany and France (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 139.

20. Bankert, *The Architecture of Trauma*, 46.
21. Michael Sorkin, *Indefensible Space: The Architecture of the National Insecurity State* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 215–216.
22. Bankert, *The Architecture of Trauma*, 46.
23. Bankert, *The Architecture of Trauma*, 46.
24. Charles Baxter, 'Shame and Forgetting in the Information Age', in *The Business of Memory: The Art of Remembering in an Age of Forgetting*, ed. Charles Baxter (St. Paul, MN: Graywolf, 1999), 141–157.
25. Michael J. Lewis, 'Into the Void with Daniel Libeskind', *Commentary* 115.5 (May 2003), 44.
26. Lindner, 'Willa Cather, Daniel Libeskind, and the Creative Destruction of Manhattan', 120.
27. Libeskind remembers their discussion in which Calatrava looked at Libeskind's master plan and exclaimed: 'Ah, I see, it's like music … You have choreographed the space'. (See *BG* 258.)
28. Dawson, 'Daniel Libeskind, Master of Memorials'.

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