

Genres of Identification: Holocaust Testimony and Postcolonial Witness*

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Writing in 1950, Aimé Césaire would use the pages of his *Discourse on Colonialism* in order to make a shocking proposition. In the immediate shadow of the Nazi genocide, Césaire would forcefully assert that Europe is unforgiving of Hitler not for “the *crime* in itself, *the crime against man*, it is not *the humiliation of man as such*, it is the crime against the white man, the humiliation of the white man, and the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India and the blacks of Africa.”¹ This impassioned denunciation of European humanism serves as one point of departure for considering how the Holocaust abuts other genocidal histories, including the predatory swathes of the European colonialisms. I invoke Césaire here not merely because his gesture is hospitable to contemporary constructions of Holocaust memory that resist its identitarian appropriations at a time when Holocaust memory is itself being globalized—one of the themes that the present volume addresses. Rather the historicity of his utterance has different lessons to disclose. For Césaire, as writer and politician who helps to constitute the trajectory of *Négritude* as the intellectual concomitant of anti-colonial resistance, the mobilization of what he terms “Hitlerism” is subordinated to the urgent political priorities of decolonization. Indeed, the very appellation “Hitlerism” seems anomalous as we hear it here long after the fact of its enunciation. It suggests that the Holocaust, for Césaire, had not yet acceded to its construction in the guise with which we currently associate the term, this particular term—catachresis, strenuous synecdoche and signifier of radical evil at one and the same time. Yet there is still more that can stand revealed here. To apprehend Césaire without the sediment of retrospect, without anachrony, is to agree with Michael Rothberg’s assessment: “the emergence of the collective memory of the Nazi genocide in the 1950s and 1960s takes place in a

punctual dialogue with ongoing processes of decolonization and civil rights struggle and their modes of coming to terms with colonialism, slavery, and racism."²

Césaire is indeed pivotal to the important intellectual project that Rothberg initiates as "multidirectional memory" in the title of his 2009 volume.³ This is no coincidence. Rothberg's paradigm of multidirectional memory sees "the emergence of Holocaust memory and the unfolding of decolonization as overlapping and not separate processes," as he writes elsewhere.⁴ Multidirectional memory contests identitarian constructions of collective memory that foreclose the distance between past and present in a manner which "excludes elements of alterity and forms of commonality with others."⁵ "Ultimately," Rothberg will declare, "memory is not a zero-sum game."⁶ His volume thus offers a powerful antidote to the "ugly contest[s] of comparative victimization" that suffuse the cultural politics of our times.⁷

The present essay is in many ways predicated on Rothberg's intervention—one whose disciplinary consequences for postcolonial cultural studies and literary theory, on the one hand, and for Holocaust studies, on the other I certainly endorse.⁸ I share his suggestion that "the ordinarily unacknowledged history of cross-referencing that characterizes the period of decolonization continues to this day and constitutes a precondition of contemporary discourse," particularly insofar as Rothberg goes on to suggest that the "virulence" of competitive memory discourses has to do "partly with the rhetorical and cultural *intimacy* of seemingly opposed traditions of remembrance."⁹ My own concerns in this paper will be different, however. I will orient myself less to the history of cross-referencing whose contours and consequences Rothberg so admirably sketches, than to the strange intimacies of dis/avowal that obtain between Holocaust studies and postcolonial theory, heirs to the thickened temporality that Rothberg condenses as "Auschwitz and Algeria" in one memorable syntagm.¹⁰ Legatees of this shared moment, however, the two paradigms also crucially partake of the competition between these two configurations of memory.

The foundational text for the emergence of postcolonial theory as a disciplinary paradigm is, of course, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978).¹¹ Said's insistence on the materiality of a set of discourses held famously to constitute the world they purport merely to describe in accordance with the racialized logic of

the unremitting binary--Occident versus Orient--performs what Walter Benjamin might have recognized as the work of a historical materialism. In its disaggregation of "civilization," on the one hand, and "race," on the other, postcolonial theory has articulated some of the major ethical and epistemological, historical and historiographic implications of Benjamin's well known pronouncement: "There is no document of civilization that is not simultaneously a document of barbarism."¹² For Said, whose analysis is presaged on Foucault's notion of discourse, this is literally the case. Subsequent elaborations of postcolonial theory will insist, in a manner congruent with the later Foucault, that race is the biopolitical signifier which renders the "civilizing mission" literally murderous, thus returning discourse to a fateful intersection with the materiality of bodies over which it holds dominion.¹³

Well before its articulation by Foucault, this structural determinant of what Achille Mbembe has termed "necropolitics" would have been familiar to Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and Hannah Arendt.¹⁴ "African colonial possessions," Arendt writes in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* "became the most fertile soil for the flowering of the Nazi elite."¹⁵ The trajectory to be emphasized is causal rather than merely chronological as Arendt's anatomy of racism seeks to demonstrate. The necropolitical mobilization of race is common to the Nazi genocide and to the genocidal irruptions that periodically characterized colonialism, as certain postcolonial theorists would reiterate in fidelity, variously, to Foucault or to the intellectuals who shaped the era of decolonization.¹⁶ To arrogate the causality of genocide to racism, as the biopolitical tack requires, rather than to a more rarefied dynamic of anti-Semitism, is a gesture that itself sets this trajectory within postcolonial theory in opposition to the historiographic trajectory emerging from Jewish—and particularly hegemonic Israeli—constructions of the Holocaust. Moreover, the narrative of anti-Semitism cannot, in the latter variant, be disentangled from the authorizing tropes of Israeli nationhood. It is here, with reference to the very grounds of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian people, that postcolonialism will play its most adversarial role with respect to post-Holocaust identitarian claims of Israeli Jews and diasporic Zionists. Said's "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims" is obviously the landmark text here.¹⁷

Yet for all that the Jewish body remains, by and large, unmourned in the canonical texts of postcolonial theory, the Holocaust has, I seek to argue, made an engagement with the ascendancy of witness compelling for postcolonialism precisely because it, too, *comes after*; it, too, inhabits the traumatic belatedness of catastrophe. Precisely this shared habitation undergirds the theoretical humanities in a general sense, as Robert Eaglestone observes: "postmodernism—understood as poststructuralism, a still developing tradition of post-phenomenological philosophy—is a response to the Holocaust."¹⁸ Although I would not like to dissociate postcolonialism (in some of its variants) from post-structuralism in the genealogy that Eaglestone constructs, my own concerns here will be narrower. The fact that postcolonial studies inhabits a particular temporality of the aftermath, I suggest, opens postcolonial discourse in its nascent institutionalization during the late-1970s and 1980s to cultural tropes of witnessing that first arose in the specific context of the institutionalization of Holocaust memory, but that have been generalized beyond this context. The *performance* of witness, I will claim, is encoded in certain canonical texts of postcolonial theory as an unacknowledged substrate, present in excess of its analysis of testimonial practice oriented to the peculiar deformations occasioned by the rendering of subaltern histories in the colonial archive. My emphasis here thus falls not so much on the construction of the aftermath which Rothberg parses as the state of being *nach Auschwitz*, that is to say, *after* but also crucially *oriented towards* the Holocaust; and simultaneously but differently, the state of being *après l'Algérie*.¹⁹ Rather, I will focus on forms of witnessing that emerge as the *currency* of the aftermath where currency is understood in a dual sense: equally as that which sediments and standardizes value, and as that which limns the Holocaust between the lines of contemporary academic discourse.

I will begin to substantiate these claims by revisiting Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* in order to exhume the forms of identification available to him during the period immediately after the Nazi genocide. I will trace the manner in which he routes his denunciation of colonialism through a rhetoric that memorializes its victims. I will then contrast Césaire's grammar of memorialization with the gestures, the genres, of identification mobilized by the contemporary postcolonial philosopher, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, contextualizing her interventions with respect to the consolidation of the Jewish survivor as

construct. I will explore the disjunctive dissemination of this construct in its unlikely postcolonial haunt, but will also treat Spivak's aporetic reprise of testimony in light of the debate on the ethics of witness that Holocaust studies inaugurates.

cities that evaporate at the edge of the sword

Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*, first published in 1950 and republished in *Présence Africaine* in 1955 is, as we have already noted, significant for its claim that the Nazi genocide is essentially bound up with the history of colonialism. The violence that Europe wreaks revisits those who disavow it, he emphasizes. Before the Europeans were "victims" of the "supreme barbarism" of Nazism, Césaire insists, "they were its accomplices."²⁰ Let us return to the claim with which I opened this essay:

[I]t would be worthwhile to study clinically, in detail the steps taken by Hitler and Hitlerism and to reveal to the very distinguished, very humanistic, very Christian bourgeois of the twentieth century that without his being aware of it, he has a Hitler inside him, that Hitler *inhabits* him, that Hitler is his *demon*, that if he rails against him, he is being inconsistent and that, at bottom, what he cannot forgive Hitler for is not *crime* in itself, *the crime against man*, it is not *the humiliation of man as such*, it is the crime against the white man, the humiliation of the white man, and the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India and the blacks of Africa.²¹

Césaire's evocation of Hitler as a monstrous synecdoche, indeed as a synecdoche for the monstrous, puts on display for us one register in which it was possible, five years after the end of World War II, to apprehend the murderous excesses of the Nazi regime, in advance of such catachreses as "Holocaust" or *Shoah*. It is telling for what it cannot yet say, at least not in the terms with which we are familiar. The most significant omission is, of course, that of the Jew. Note that Césaire figures the Nazi genocide as a "crime against the white man." The elision of the Jews as a direct referent here constitutes a disavowal which crucially misrecognizes the distance between the denigration, literally, of the Jew in Nazi ideology,

and the category of whiteness—in the brutalizing Aryan construction of the latter.²² This misrecognition is partly a consequence of the structural underpinnings of Césaire’s philosophy of history. The *Discourse* radicalizes the matter of European complicity by virtue of its thesis of the *choc en retour* or the “reverse shock” that figures Nazism as the return of a specifically colonial form of the repressed.²³ The Jews are assimilated to a crisis *within Europe* consequent on the corrosion that colonial violence inevitably trails. “[N]o one colonizes with impunity,” Césaire asserts.²⁴ As symptoms of this crisis, the Jews are not yet positioned in relations of alterity with respect to European whiteness.

It is only subsequently, as Césaire’s recalibrates his position with reference to the events of decolonization on the one hand, and Stalinism, on the other, that the Jews will accede to a particular history, theorized within the general context of racism. Rothberg notes significant shifts in Césaire’s position between the first publication of the *Discourse* in 1950, and the *Lettre à Maurice Thorez* published in 1956—a text that announces his break with the French Communist Party. Césaire’s repudiation of Communism as a man of color, Rothberg argues, uses anti-Semitism to name “the problem of particularities that the party cannot subsume.”²⁵ Rothberg finds further evidence of the altered vector of Césaire’s position on anti-Semitism in the ironic reference to the work of French ethnographer Roger Caillois whose racism Césaire denounces in the revised 1955 edition of the *Discourse* in the following satirical manner: “M. Caillois gives immediate proof [of the superiority of the West] by concluding that no one should be exterminated. With him the Negroes are sure that they will not be lynched; the Jews, that they will not feed new bonfires.”²⁶

It is worth noting, however, that the trope *itself* does not yet commit Césaire to the historicizing thrust of the 1956 text. The emplacement of blacks and Jews in relations of equivalence is not always sufficient repudiation of anti-Semitism, as an investigation of the history of this particular topos shows. Similar parallelisms are, in fact, relatively common in the discourse of African-American civil rights activists in the United States during the 1930s. Harold Brackman speaks of W.E.B. du Bois’s “residual insensitivity to Jewish sensibilities” in an editorial that du Bois published in *The Crisis* in September 1933.²⁷ “Nothing has filled us with such unholy glee as Hitler and the Nordics,” writes Du Bois. “When the

only 'inferior' peoples were 'niggers,' it was hard to get the attention of the *New York Times* for little matters of race, lynchings and mobs. But now that the damned include the owner of the *Times*, moral indignation is perking up."²⁸ "A cruel irony of the 1930s," Brackman notes, "was how often African-American anger at white people's stubborn blindness to the analogy between anti-Semitic barbarism abroad and racism at home came to be directed against anti-Hitler protests for allegedly distracting attention from antiblack racism or even against Jews for somehow deserving anti-Jewish animus" (59-60, see also pp. 60-61).²⁹ Reduced to a counter in a black economy of identification, the invocation of the figure of the Jew actually occludes rather than promotes an analysis of the historical contours of anti-Semitism or of its murderous implementation by the Nazi regime.

Césaire manifests a similar tendency at times, using the trope of the Jew to stage an equivalence that is also equivocation. His *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* [*Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*] first published in 1939, and twice revised in 1947 and 1956, mobilizes the Jew thus:

To go away

As there are hyena-men and panther-men,

I would be a jew-man

A Kaffir-man

A Hindu-man-from-Calcutta

A Harlem-man-who-doesn't-vote

the famine-man, the insult-man, the torture-man you can grab

anytime, beat up, kill—no joke, kill—without having to account

to anyone, without having to make excuses to anyone

a jew-man

a pogrom-man (1983: 43).³⁰

The "jew-man" figured as "pogrom-man" fails to coincide with the Jew as the historical victim not of pogrom--but of genocide or incipient genocide. For Césaire has different priorities. The relations of

equivalence to which Jewish victimhood is subordinated in the *Notebook* are cognate with Césaire's analysis in his *Discourse on Colonialism*, namely that racialized violence, across its individual manifestations, denudes the public sphere of accountability—denudes it, in fact, of all politics except for the necropolitics of domination. The victims of Nazi racism and colonial racism whom Césaire enumerates are each subordinated to the master narrative, *the master's narrative*, of impunity: "without having to account/to anyone, without having to make excuses to anyone," as the *Notebook* asserts.³¹ The figure of the Jew is not (yet) invested with a form of victimhood that is irreducibly tied to the Holocaust, nor is the latter understood to be unique in itself.

The *Discourse on Colonialism* will insist on staging a different primal scene of suffering, instead. Césaire continues to route his theme—"that no one colonizes with impunity"—through a litany of colonial massacres. "[B]y no means," he assures us, "because I take a morbid delight in them, but because I think that these heads of men, these collections of ears, these burned houses, these Gothic invasions, this steaming blood, these cities that evaporate at the edge of the sword, are not to be so easily disposed of. They prove that colonization, I repeat, dehumanizes even the most civilized man; that colonial activity, colonial enterprise, colonial conquest, which is based on contempt for the native and justified by that contempt, inevitably tends to change him who undertakes it [...]"³² The cumulative elaboration of atrocity allows Césaire to stage a form of hyperbolic mourning whose excess serves as the displaced mimesis of the excessive violence of colonialism. "[S]hould I have cast back into the shadows of oblivion," he asks in response to the criticism of an imagined interlocutor, "the memorable feat of arms of General Gérard and kept silent about the capture of Ambike, a city which, to tell the truth, had never dreamed of defending itself: 'The native riflemen had orders to kill only the men, but no one restrained them; intoxicated by the smell of blood, they spared not one woman, not one child At the end of the afternoon, the heat caused a light mist to arise: it was the blood of the five thousand victims, the ghost of the city, evaporating in the setting sun.'"³³ Césaire's strenuous efforts to memorialize those he mourns seem labored in retrospect, precisely to the extent that the "traumatic sublime" in Dominick La Capra's sense is depersonalized.³⁴ There is as yet no cathexis in place that might take the exemplarity of

the Jewish survivor as *the model of its desire*. Not even the trope of “the Jew” is capable of instigating such an itinerary, as its irruptions demonstrate. Hyperbole turns Césaire’s mourning work back on itself, rendering it intransitive or “melancholic” in the familiar Freudian inflection.³⁵ Melancholic hyperbole does the work of a depersonalized identification with the dead at a time when the inception of a crisis that we might stenographically evoke through the toponyms Madagascar, Indochina, Algeria speaks to the ongoing need to commemorate those killed resisting French imperialism.³⁶ Yet for all that it is depersonalized, Césaire’s melancholic rhetoric gestures towards the enfolding of the victims of colonial aggression within the orbit of that political relation which Judith Butler would come to designate as a “grievable life.”³⁷

the cry of the survivor

Césaire’s purchase over the affect of atrocity founders, I have been suggesting, precisely because identification—as a mark of the genre Eli Wiesel catachrestically terms “testimony” has not yet been routinized through the category of the Jewish survivor.³⁸ My recourse to the terms “testimony” and “identification” is indebted to the particular inflection that the literary theorist Robert Eaglestone gives them in his 2004 study *The Holocaust and the Postmodern* which tracks central debates concerning the Holocaust in the field of literature, historiography and philosophy.³⁹ Affect is crucial to the manner in which Eaglestone recuperates Wiesel’s own particular “hyperbole.”⁴⁰ Eaglestone ties his claims to the manner in which Holocaust testimony, as a genre reworked in a specifically post-1945 modality, is read. Its affect, he argues, is of a particular kind. While narrative texts and other forms of representation produce affect through generating identification, “the grasping, or comprehending, of another’s experience as one’s own by ‘putting one’s self in their place’” says Eaglestone, or through “taking the other as oneself,” it is precisely here that the specificity of Holocaust narrative arises.⁴¹ For Holocaust testimony disallows the very purchase that identification offers, given the ethical consequences of the “incomprehension” that attaches to the genocide on the part of those who experienced it.⁴² It disallows

identification, moreover, because it ruptures the very codes of referentiality itself.⁴³ It is in its disruption of identification, then, that Holocaust testimony becomes something new; becomes the site of an “aporia” in Jacques Derrida’s sense.⁴⁴ Instead of the seizure of the other, Eaglestone offers his readers the caesura of a certain version of *literariness*, deeply indebted to Viktor Shklovsky’s notion of estrangement, in order to render a certain construction of testimony compatible with the ethics of Holocaust memory.⁴⁵

Identification is, however, not only an ineluctable component of narrative as Eaglestone repeatedly asserts.⁴⁶ Affect, more broadly speaking, must also be given a constitutive role in structuring social relations. Sarah Ahmed has recently taught us that affect is performative. Emotions “do things,” in Ahmed’s account: “they align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments.”⁴⁷ Ahmed argues that the circulation of emotions between “bodies and signs” plays a role in the demarcation of individual as well as of collective identity.⁴⁸ For Eaglestone also, identification is part of the armature of identity construction, although he does not fully articulate the trajectory that makes identification “central not only in aesthetics but also politics.”⁴⁹ But to tie identification to processes of identity construction and, I would add, to processes of interpellation is to recognize that topoi of identification circulate widely in culture, in a variety of media, including texts—and circulate to different effect. It is not merely that “Holocaust fiction is, in Edward’s Said’s terms, ‘wordly’” as Eaglestone writes.⁵⁰ Identifications *themselves* possess a form of wordliness. Acts of identification with Holocaust testimony proceed, proceed perforce, proceed despite interdiction --as Eaglestone rightly concedes—because they *are* worldly.⁵¹ Identification must, in other words, itself be historicized. It must be historicized, moreover, against the background of the ascendancy of the construct of the Jewish survivor since the forms of *assimilative* identification or surrogacy against which Eaglestone and others caution us, all the way back to Primo Levi, derive their present cultural purchase as well as the affective contracts they set in motion, I suggest, from the adjacent category of the survivor-as-witness.

The claim that the emergence of the survivor—as cultural construct rather than as human subject—postdates the liberation of the Nazi camps is not, of course, a new one. In an exemplary work of

historicization, the cultural sociologist Jeffrey Alexander shows that identification with Jewish survivors of the Nazi genocide did not take place in the immediate post-war period when the "Holocaust" was still subsumed under another category--that of "atrocities": "For an audience to be traumatized by an experience which they themselves do not directly share, symbolic extension and psychological identification are required. This did not occur." Instead, Alexander observes, the survivors "[...] could just as well have been from Mars, or from Hell. The identities and characters of these Jewish survivors rarely were personalized through interviews or individualized through biographical sketches [...]"⁵² Over time, Alexander argues, the genocide of the Jews of Europe was re-coded as tragedy—the term, for him, takes on a dramaturgical, indeed Aristotelian, cast. "In the new tragic understanding of the Jewish mass murder," writes Alexander, "suffering, not progress, became the telos toward which the narrative was aimed."⁵³ Suffering, as telos, requires a personalization of the genocide. It must be located within the circumference of a biography. Alexander treats the English translation and stage-dramatizations and film of Anne Frank's *Diary* in the U.S., dating to 1952, 1955, and 1959 respectively, as the "prototype of [the] personalizing genre" but sees the reception of such narratives as eventually contributing to the erasure of the specificity of the genocide of the Jews given that the Holocaust undergoes a process of "symbolic extension" which eventually allows it to stand as the preeminent signifier of radical or "engorged evil."⁵⁴

Equally pivotal in the personalization of suffering is the Eichmann trial (1961), although we should immediately observe that what will be at stake is a delineation of the specificity of *Jewish* suffering in a highly determinate political context. In Anette Wieviorka's influential analysis, the trial authorizes the admission of the Holocaust into the public sphere under the sign of the sovereignty of the Jewish State. Crucially, for Wieviorka, the trial confers on the survivors "the social identity of survivors because society now recognized them as such. [...] At the heart of this newly recognized identity of survivor was a new function, to be the bearer of history. With the Eichmann trial, the witness becomes an embodiment of memory (*un homme-mémoire*), attesting to the past and to the continuing presence of the past. Concurrently, the genocide comes to be defined as a succession of individual experiences with which the public is supposed to identify."⁵⁵

Proceeding from such claims, we might state that the body of the survivor, imagined in its sedimentation as the amanuensis of the genocidal violence it endured, secures the supposedly unmediated referentiality of history precisely because it was the locus of reduction to the “bare life” of the camps in Giorgio Agamben’s schema⁵⁶—or to *zoë* in Arendt’s (1958).⁵⁷ Indeed, the authenticity of the survivor drives the pedagogical intent of the Eichmann trial.⁵⁸ But the testimonial exchange which restores the survivor to *bios*, precisely by conferring upon her the capacity to narrate, whether it occurs in a legal, therapeutic, or documentary context, is never reducible to the referentiality of what is narrated alone. The survivor does not speak until *spoken for*, by the various agendas which would do her justice—therapeutic, nationalist, or universalizing. When the survivor’s speech is valorized for its authenticity, and when, in turn, that authenticity is seen as generating powerful emotion on the part of the survivor’s addressee—a power that Geoffrey Hartman ascribes to it when he holds the “immediacy of [...] first-person accounts” to “[burn] through the ‘cold-storage’ of history,” for instance, we begin to perceive a certain excess that attaches to testimony under this construction.⁵⁹ The survivor’s address must become compelling for its addressee as the corollary of the survivor’s *individuation*, her irreducible biography. The survivor is, in other words, *constructed in a transitive modality*. Identification on the part of the addressee now becomes the *affective supplement to facticity* which must be present in order to safeguard the performative dimensions of the testimonial exchange—that is to say, the conditions of its ethical and emotional intelligibility.

Given the ascendancy of this transitive and performative configuration of the survivor for what Wieviorka has termed “the era of the witness,”⁶⁰ it becomes possible for the media scholar John Durham Peters to adduce “the cry of the survivor” in constructing a typology of witness that encompasses, *tout court*, a tellingly reconfigured intersection of law, theology and--atrocious: “The third, most recent, source [for the notion of witness] dates from the Second World War: the witness as a survivor of hell, prototypically but not exclusively the Holocaust or *Shoah*. [...] The procedures of the courtroom, the pain of the martyr and the cry of the survivor cast light on basic questions such as what it means to watch, to

narrate or to be present at an event."⁶¹ The survivor is well on the way to becoming part of our cultural armature: an authorizing trope for increasingly codified forms of identification.

haunted by slight ghosts

Initially, at least, postcolonial theory seems indifferent to the forms of cathexis authorized by the survivor. As a political, historiographic and literary theoretical intervention, postcolonial theory disrupts Europe's production of the racialized Other as a foil for its self-consolidating subjecthood and sovereignty, both.⁶² To the extent that its program necessarily crosses the archive, indeed the literal archives, of colonialism, postcolonial theory must elaborate a methodology for transcribing the traces of the figure whom we know as the "subaltern" in a manner which counters an effacement always already predicated upon the disciplinary construction of History in the West. For elaborations of this problematic, see Dipesh Chakrabarty 1994; Spivak 1985).⁶³ For Spivak, the exemplarity of the *subaltern*—and *not*, it is almost superfluous to add, the *survivor*—grounds a form of historiographic critique proper to postcolonialism and adequate to its political and ethical aspirations. Let us now intersect Spivak as she crosses the historiographic revisions of Hayden White and, more particularly, Dominick LaCapra in their respective attempts to perform history after the so-called linguistic turn.

Where LaCapra, a key thinker in Holocaust studies, draws upon Freudian psychoanalysis to propose a "transferential" relation between "practices in the past and historical accounts of them," Spivak is concerned to point to a certain slippage within the model of transference that LaCapra deploys.⁶⁴ This slippage, Spivak claims, is redolent of LaCapra's "desire"—the desire of the academic intellectual for power; for the consolatory "fiction" (LaCapra's term) of a "*self-consolidating* other."⁶⁵ Spivak repudiates the category of the "cure" (in scare-quotes in the original) which she takes to be manifested here by LaCapra's transferential model. Her disagreement with LaCapra culminates with her marking the site of his desire.⁶⁶ But now, Spivak abruptly introduces a trajectory of desire—or better still of identification---all

her own, as she reverts to a historical figure, the Rani of Sirmur, the subject of an earlier study and one of the two women upon whom the chapter pivots.⁶⁷ “I should have liked to establish a transference relationship with the Rani of Sirmur,”⁶⁸ Spivak suddenly interjects without prior warning—referring to this woman’s brief striation of the archive as “a king’s wife and a weaker vessel, on the chessboard of the Great Game”—or so Spivak somewhat caustically observes elsewhere.⁶⁹ “I should have liked to establish a transference relationship with the Rani of Sirmur,” let us reiterate in Spivak’s name, and allow her to continue: “I pray instead to be haunted by her slight ghost, bypassing the arrogance of the cure.”⁷⁰

It is crucial to my intent to underscore the type of affective performance that Spivak’s rhetoric sets in motion. It is a trope of identification which emerges into visibility here, no less. However, it is also very much to my point that we register its simultaneous disavowal of an assimilative rapport with—or an *incorporation*, one might say, of—the victim. Instead Spivak will pursue a properly *uncanny* identification in the Freudian sense,⁷¹ as she elaborates the progress of a pilgrimage of sorts that brings her to the Rani’s former palace where the woman, this *particular* woman (Gulani or perhaps Gulari, the record vacillates in naming her) will continue to elude Spivak as the subject/object of knowledge.⁷² “As I approached her house after a long series of detective maneuvers, I was miming the route of an unknowing, a progressive *différance*, an ‘experience’ of how I could not know her.”⁷³ Despite this pilgrimage, Spivak is strict in keeping her distance from the illusion of continuity between the archive—equally textual and material in this case—and its contemporary interlocutors. To do otherwise would be to reduplicate the orientation for which she criticizes LaCapra.⁷⁴ So the archive becomes the site of an *interdiction*, we might say, where the tenuous possibility of exchange cannot precipitate a therapeutic resolution of historical trauma, along the model of Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub.⁷⁵ Instead, Spivak will claim that: “the epistemic story of imperialism is the story of a series of interruptions, a repeated tearing of time that cannot be sutured.”⁷⁶

Spivak’s substitution of “Haunting for transference, the unconsciousness as interruption,” *pace* LaCapra, proceeds in accordance with the strict protocols of her hallmark intervention in “Can the

Subaltern Speak."⁷⁷ It remains central to my pedagogical intent to insist that *this* text be read as demarcating the lines of an epistemological fracture, a properly Derridean aporia condensed in and as the body of the *sati*, rather than as an entry in the identity politics of subalternity--whether we construe the subaltern woman as silent, silenced or eloquent. Spivak is herself quite explicit about this. Noting that the archival records stage only the trace of the *sati*'s prior interpellation by British imperial discourse, on the one hand, and refusing to defer to Hindu religious authority, on the other hand, she cautions us that: "One never encounters the testimony of the women's voice-consciousness. [...] Faced with the dialectically interlocking sentences that are constructible as 'White men are saving brown women from brown men' and 'The women wanted to die,' the postcolonial woman intellectual asks the question of a simple semiosis—What does this mean?—and begins to plot a history."⁷⁸

My insistence on the aporetic status of the *sati* intersects Spivak's idiosyncratic coda to her discussion of the colonial archive in "Can the Subaltern Speak" where she devotes the last part of the article to the enigma of the death of a young woman, Bhubaneswari Bhaduri whose suicide in 1926 constitutes an oblique form of writing-as-resistance, or speech-across-death in Spivak's interpretation. Spivak suggests that we consider the suicide as "an unemphatic, ad hoc, subaltern rewriting of the social text of *sati*-suicide" but also insists on our apprehension of Bhaduri's silencing in a familial context to which Spivak is privy.⁷⁹ The relay which has Bhaduri approximate the enigmatic figure of the Rani or the "sati" uses the domestic context to trope on the properly deconstructive problematic that Spivak brings to bear on the status of the colonial archive. Spivak makes this point quite clear in a retrospective commentary on the readings and misreadings that have become attached to her use of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri's death:

The woman to whom Bhubaneswari wrote the letter that was forgotten was my mother's mother. The woman who told me the story was my mother. The woman who refused to understand what she has said was my first cousin [. . .] She was quite like me in education, and yet it made no difference. She could not hear this woman who had tried with her suicide using

menstruation, that dirty secret, to erase the axioms that endorsed sati. Sati in the piece was *not* given as a generalizable example of the subaltern not speaking, or rather not being able to speak—trying to, but not succeeding in being heard.⁸⁰

For all its efficacy in supplying us with the consolation of story at precisely the point in the deployment of Spivak's argument that seems to deny us precisely this gratification. For the narrative of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri courts its own status as Derridean supplement: seemingly extraneous yet integral to Spivak's intent.⁸¹ But its supplementarity is mitigated, in a sense, if we choose to reframe the recourse to Bhaduri across her various appearances in "Can the Subaltern Speak" and *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. The reinscription of a family context allows us to renegotiate the dimensions of *witness* that operate here. Spivak reworks the colonial subject's relation to the past as the structural appropriation of social history by transforming it into the occasion for a much more *private act of mourning*.⁸² Not historiography, then; not a delineation of the all-too-familiar incisions of the epistemic violence of colonialism; or not only these things. Spivak's relation to Bhaduri offers us, in fact, an exemplary instance of postmemory.

Marianne Hirsch developed the notion of postmemory with specific relation to first- and second-generation Holocaust survivors, although she does indicate its more general applications.⁸³ For Hirsch, postmemory is a facet of "intergenerational identification" frequently but not exclusively derived from familial contexts. It is a "belated" form of memory "mediated not through recollection but through representation, projection, and creation—often based on silence rather than speech, on the invisible rather than the visible."⁸⁴ The pertinence of postmemory for Spivak is crucial to my argument. What intervenes between the curiously impersonal and hyperbolic mourning work that Césaire offers us and the minutely calibrated familial reprise of sati-suicide in Spivak is, I would suggest, *the consolidation of the genre of testimony after the advent of the individuated survivor-witness*.

Now to read Spivak through her desiring retrieval of a series of dead women is to reposition her intervention as a form of mournful performance. It is also to open postcolonial theory up to a defamiliarization attendant on agreeing to see it as animated, at least in part, by cultural tropes of

witness that are deeply tied to the ascendancy of Holocaust memory. Both postcolonial theory and Holocaust studies have something to gain from closer investigation of this intersection. Postcolonial ethics needs to engage more fully with its indebtedness to Holocaust memory, not only out of considerations of historical accountability⁸⁵—but also because it has yet to come fully to terms with its own testimonial agendas. At the same time, Spivak's rehearsal of *aporetic* witness in the face of an archive that refuses to be rendered transparent will become increasingly salient, I suggest, over and above the formidable *ethicity* that it performs for us as we outlive the presence of the Holocaust survivors among us.⁸⁶

Haunting disrupts. By analogy with Spivak's consistent refusal of the theorist's appropriation of alterity in the production of a "self-consolidating other,"⁸⁷ we might see her various invocations of dead women as foregrounding an unsettling ethics, an ethics of disappropriation which takes the self as its haunt.⁸⁸ Far from being allowed to assume the status of a surrogate victim in the pursuit of entitlement, the self is *undone* in this model, once, twice, many times over. By grief, certainly.⁸⁹ But also by language. The irredeemable loss of Spivak's objects of identification—these dead women—is an integral part of this story: "Indeed, it is only in their death that they enter a narrative *for us*, they become figurable."⁹⁰ The self who desires here can desire *only after narration*; only as its consequence. The identifications which Spivak stages are nothing if not mediated. They are entertained, moreover, in order to underscore questions attendant on precisely literary and archival mediation.

As the agent of a certain form of testimonial intervention, Spivak is answerable also to the materiality of the body, in the sense that no corpse is reducible to another. Thus Bhubaneswari Bhaduri does not *stand in for* the women whose names are "grotesquely mistranscribed" in the police record of the East India Company, as if in some instrumental calculus of substitution.⁹¹ What is at stake is not metaphorical substitution but metonymic relay in relation to a determinate source (or sources) of patriarchal and colonial violence. Exhumed as a function of narration, the women whom Spivak invokes become *envoys of the disjunctive transmission of affect*. We are fully in the realm of an engagement with the past which repudiates the spurious intimacy of proxy witness or "assimilation." What the narration

cannot, however, afford to do away with in contexts such as these is its debt to embodiment—to the *life and death* of these women—that persists over and above their mobilization for theory. Signification is answerable to corporeality, once more. I take this to be one of the fundamental ethical precepts of witnessing.

The relationality of witness that Spivak enacts here gestures towards a form of politics that can be retrieved from traumatic identifications, over and above the recognizably high modernist injunctions to ethics that emerge from, for instance, Eaglestone's circumscription of testimony-as-disidentification. I take the notion of relationality from the work of Judith Butler in *Precarious Life* (2004), cognizant like Butler, of the fact that relationality returns us to the political. Relationality returns us, moreover, to the political as a site of vulnerability where the duty to mourn, or the possibility of mourning, is incipient. Butler reminds us that: "[Each] of us is constituted politically in part by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies—as a site of desire and physical vulnerability, as a site of a publicity at once assertive and exposed. Loss and vulnerability seem to follow from our being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure."⁹² That vulnerability unto death has historically overdetermined the social constitution of the body interpellated as Jewish under Nazism, or as black under colonialism, is an important component of what Holocaust studies and postcolonial theory have to teach us, across disciplinary divides. But indiscriminate identification with such vulnerability, in the first-person singular, occludes precisely the singularity of the changing historical contingencies to which Holocaust studies and postcolonial theory, at their best, have respectively devoted themselves. To rehearse the understanding that *I am vulnerable because you have been vulnerable* may devolve into the banal justification of anticipatory or retaliatory violence—the "never again" rhetoric of Israeli state violence, bolstered by its invocation of the "six million," for instance. This is not the identification with which I seek to conclude. Rather I propose that we track our identifications as slender portents of our *capacity for relationality* upon which empathy is presaged. *Always here, wherever I am and wherever I look, closest to home.*⁹³ The genres of traumatic identification are not yet manifestos of the various political projects that our

collective renegotiations of the condition of *exposure* to vulnerability would entail. They do, however, constitute one form of prelude to *living on* in the aftermath.

* *In memoriam, Oren Gani (17 October 1950 – 4 November 2010).*

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¹ Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, translated by Joan Pinkam (New York, 1950), 14, emphasis in original.

² Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA, 2009), 22.

³ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*.

⁴ Michael Rothberg, "Between Auschwitz and Algeria: Multidirectional Memory and the Counterpublic

Witness," *Critical Inquiry* 33 (2006): 160.

⁵ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 5.

⁶ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 11.

⁷ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 7.

⁸ For further explorations of these implications, see Michael Rothberg, "W.E.B. Du Bois in Warsaw: Holocaust Memory and the Color Line, 1949-1952," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14, no. 1 (2001): 186-187; Michael Rothberg, "The Work of Testimony in the Age of Decolonization: *Chronicle of a Summer*, Cinema Verité, and the Emergence of the Holocaust Survivor," *PMLA* 119, no. 5 (2004): 1232-234; Rothberg, "Between Auschwitz and Algeria," 159-162; as well as Max Silverman, "Interconnected Histories: Holocaust and Empire in the Cultural Imaginary," *French Studies* LXII, no. 4 (2008): 418.

⁹ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 7.

¹⁰ Rothberg, "Between Auschwitz and Algeria," 158.

¹¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

¹² Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, translated by Harry Zohn with an introduction by Hannah Arendt (New York: 1969), 256.

¹³ For the notion of biopolitics, see Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1, translated by Robert Hurley (New York, 1978), 135-145, 149; Michel Foucault, "The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century," in *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York, 1980), 166-182; and Michel Foucault *Society Must Be Defended*, translated by David Macey (London, 2003), 239-263 for an investigation of the relation between biopower and race.

¹⁴ Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," translated by Libby Meintjies, *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11-40.

¹⁵ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland and New York, 1968), 206.

¹⁶ See Achille Mbembe, "Aesthetics of Superfluity," *Public Culture* 16, no. 3: 373-405 and Paul Gilroy *Between Camps: Race, Identity and Nationalism at the End of the Colour Line* (London, 2000); Paul Gilroy "Race and the Right to Be Human," in *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture*, (London, 2004), 31-63.

¹⁷ Edward Said, "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims," *Social Text* 1 (1979): 7-58. For an important exception to this polarization, see Homi Bhabha's beautiful reprise of Walter Benjamin in Bhabha's "Unpacking my Library Again," *The Journal of the Mid-West Modern Language Association*, 28 no. 1 (1995): 5-18. Here Bhabha explores both Jewish and postcolonial concerns in a careful reading of the figures of the Jewish maidservants in Kasuo Ishiguro's novel, *The Remains of the Day*.

¹⁸ Robert Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, (Oxford, 2004), 2.

¹⁹ For a highly nuanced teasing out of the notion of "nach Auschwitz," see Michael Rothberg on Theodor Adorno, *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*, (Minneapolis, 2000), 280.

²⁰ Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 14.

²¹ Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 14. Emphasis in original.

²² Rothberg makes a related point regarding Fanon's use of Césaire: "the white man terrorized by Nazism is not precisely the same white man as the one responsible for colonialism" *Multidirectional Memory*, 93.

²³ Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 14. For a persuasive reading of this motif, see also Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 23, and 80-100. A form of dialectical interchange between Arendt and Césaire is central to the first section of Rothberg's book. Rothberg has Césaire estrange the occluded Eurocentrism of Arendt's critique of European humanism, at the same time as he foregrounds the fractured temporality that invests Césaire's and Arendt's respective arguments concerning the etiology the Nazi genocide in colonialism with their properly traumatic freight. Paul Gilroy takes up this conjunction between Arendt and Césaire somewhat differently in the context of an examination of the category of race, *Between Camps*, 54-68.

²⁴ Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 17.

²⁵ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 99.

²⁶ Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 55, see also Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 100.

²⁷ Harold Brackman "A Calamity Almost Beyond Comprehension': Nazi Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust in the Thought of W.E. B. Du Bois" *American Jewish History* 88 no. 1 (2000): 53-93.

²⁸ Cited in Brackman, "A Calamity Almost Beyond Comprehension,'" 59.

²⁹ Brackman, "A Calamity Almost Beyond Comprehension,'" 59-60, see also pages 60-61. After 1933, Brackman notes here, Du Bois would never again "invidiously [comment] at the expense of Hitler's Jewish victims in order to criticize American racism" ("A Calamity Almost Beyond Comprehension,'" 60). Brackman traces the evolution of Du Bois's thought concerning anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, while Rothberg treats Du Bois's post-war responses to the Warsaw ghetto: Michal Rothberg, "W.E.B. Du Bois in Warsaw," reprinted in Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 111-134.

³⁰ Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, in *Aimé Césaire: The Collected Poetry*, translated by Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith (Berkeley, 1983), 32-85. The translation is taken from the 1956 version of the *Cahier*, as Mara De Genarro notes in her "Fighting 'Humanism' on its own Terms," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 14 no. (2003), 71. Césaire's oeuvre has been the topic of a themed volume of *Research in African Literatures* 14 no. 1 (2010) edited by H. Adlai Murdoch.

³¹ Césaire *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, 43.

³² Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 17, 19-20.

³³ Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 19, ellipsis in original.

³⁴ Dominick LaCapra, *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory* (Ithaca, 2004), 123.

³⁵ Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 14 (London, 2001): 239-58.

³⁶ Rothberg notes the link between the memory of the Nazi genocide and forms of testimony that shaped anti-colonial witness in the Algerian War in the work of figures such as historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Fanon's

associate, André Mandouze, such that a discursive context emerged where “the association of torture, truth, testimony, and resistance underwrote a link between the Algerian War and Nazi atrocities” *Multidirectional Memory*, 194, 195.

³⁷ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London and New York, 2004); Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London, 2009).

³⁸ The Holocaust, announces Wiesel, invents “a new literature, that of testimony.” See Elie Wiesel *Dimensions of the Holocaust* (Evanston, Ill., 1990), 7.

³⁹ Robert Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern* (Oxford, 2004).

⁴⁰ The term “hyperbole” is Eaglestone’s, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 16.

⁴¹ Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 16 and 29.

⁴² Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 19.

⁴³ Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 17. Eaglestone seems to vacillate between the suggestion that the Holocaust fractures epistemological purchase for the victim herself in giving rise to various forms of “incomprehension,” (16-19) and the suggestion that identification falters in the synapse between victim/survivor and reader. Elsewhere in the volume, he writes: “Many forms of prose writing encourage identification and while testimony cannot but do this, it at the same time aims to prohibit identification, on epistemological grounds (a reader really cannot become, or become identified, with the narrator of a testimony: any such identification is an illusion) and on ethical grounds (a reader should not become identified with a narrator of a testimony, as it reduces and ‘normalizes’ or consumes the otherness of the narrator’s experience and the illusion that such an identification creates is possibly pernicious)” (42-43). Note that testimony is being used here with specific reference to Holocaust memoir, and that Eaglestone derives his authority from Primo Levi’s interdiction of identification through “assimilation” as well as similar statements in the writings of Charlotte Delbo and Jorge Semprun (Levi’s word, see Primo Levi *The Drowned and the Saved*, 128 and Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 17 and 22. In a related manner, Eaglestone cites Dominick LaCapra’s admonitions against “the constitution of the self as surrogate victim” (LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* [London 2001], 219; see Eaglestone *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 36) and Michael André Bernstein’s trenchant critique of “witness by adoption” (Bernstein “Unspeakable No More: Nazi Genocide and its Self-Appointed ‘Witnesses by Adoption,’” *Times Literary Supplement* 3 March 2000, 7-8 and Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 35-36).

⁴⁴ Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 23. See Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, translated by Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, 1993).

⁴⁵ For estrangement, see Viktor Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Oxford, 2000), 15-21.

⁴⁶ See Eaglestone: “[I]dentification happens, despite a wish for them [sic] not to happen, because of basic assumptions about narratives and reading, because we expect identification to happen when we read prose narratives,” *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 23. See also the following assertion in the same volume: “Despite the impossibility of understanding, and the admonitions made against identifying with the victims, Holocaust

testimonies are read and the readers do identify with narrators and other characters, precisely because that is what they expect to do in reading” 37.

⁴⁷ Sarah Ahmed, “Affective Economies,” *Social Text* 22 no. 2 (2004), 119.

⁴⁸ Ahmed, “Affective Economies,” 117.

⁴⁹ Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 5.

⁵⁰ Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 107. For worldliness, see Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1994).

⁵¹ See Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 23. For my own part, I am pointedly aware of the extent to which identification *takes place* in the context of the Israeli occupation of Palestine as the crucial political imperative of post-1967 Zionist nationalism. Make no mistake, however. The imperative to identify with the victims of atrocity is a privileged component of the constitution of a wide variety of moral communities at the present time. The nation state, this particular nation state—Israel—figures as one among a host of others.

⁵² Jeffrey Alexander, “On the Social Construction of Moral Universals: The ‘Holocaust’ from War Crime to Trauma Drama,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 5 no. 1 (2002), 8.

⁵³ Alexander, “On the Social Construction of Moral Universals,” 30.

⁵⁴ See Alexander, “On the Social Construction of Moral Universals,” 35, 29, 44.

⁵⁵ Anette Wieviorka “The Witness in History,” translated by Jared Stark, *Poetics Today* 27 no. 2 (2006), 391. But see Michael Rothberg for a dissenting reading which contests the exclusivity of the Eichmann trial, repositioning the emergence of the survivor in relation to the Algerian War, Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 175-198.

⁵⁶ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, translated by D. Heller-Roazen (New York, 1998).

⁵⁷ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, 1958). I develop a different version of this argument in dialogue with the claims of Tom Cohen, J. Hillis Miller and Barbara Cohen in my analysis of the embodiment of the witness who testifies before the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. See Louise Bethlehem *Skin Tight: Apartheid Literary Culture and its Aftermath* (Leiden and Pretoria, 2006), 84 as well as Tom Cohen, J. Hillis Miller and Barbara Cohen, “A ‘Materiality without Matter’?” in *Material Events: Paul de Man and the Afterlife of Theory*, ed. Tom Cohen, Barbara Cohen, J. Hillis Miller and Andrzej Warminski (Minneapolis and London, 2001) viii. For a discussion of the “apparently phonocentric deployment of a self-present body” in video testimony and *cinéma vérité*, see Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* 189.

⁵⁸ See Anette Wieviorka “The Witness in History,” 389-391.

⁵⁹ Geoffrey Hartman, “Learning from Survivors: The Yale Testimony Project,” in *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Bloomington, 1996), 138.

⁶⁰ Anette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, translated by Jared Stark (Ithaca, NY, 2006).

⁶¹ John Durham Peters, "Witnessing." *Media, Culture & Society* 23 (2001): 708-709.

⁶² See, for instance, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, 1999), 199-200, 205.

⁶³ Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana, 1988), 271-313 is the classic source here. For further elaborations of these concerns, see Dipesh Chakrabarty on the discipline of history, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who speaks for Indian pasts?" in *The New Historicism Reader*, ed. H. Aram Veesser, (New York and London, 1994) 342-69. See also Spivak: "The task of recovering a (sexually) subaltern subject is lost in an institutional textuality at the archaic origin" *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 300.

⁶⁴ Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca, 1983), 72-73.

⁶⁵ Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 206 -207. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁶ Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 207.

⁶⁷ "This chapter," Spivak writes, "is two stories about the informant in history" *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 198. It reworks two previous contributions, "The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives" *History and Theory* 24 no. 3 (1985), 247-72 and the generative "Can the Subaltern Speak" to which I have already referred. The latter essay has recently been revisited by a number of eminent scholars, including Spivak herself, in Rosalind C. Morris's recent edited volume *Can the Subaltern Speak: Reflections on the History of an Idea* (New York, 2010). We will come to the second informant, Bhubaneswari Bhaduri slightly later in this discussion.

⁶⁸ Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 207.

⁶⁹ Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 231.

⁷⁰ Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 207.

⁷¹ Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, (London, 2001), Vol. 17: 217-52.

⁷² Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 231.

⁷³ Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 241.

⁷⁴ Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 208.

⁷⁵ Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (London, 1992).

⁷⁶ Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 208.

⁷⁷ Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 209. See also Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak."

⁷⁸ Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," 297.

⁷⁹ Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," 308. See also Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak "In Response: Looking Back, Looking Forward" in *Can the Subaltern Speak: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, ed. Rosalind C. Morris (New York, 2010), 227-36.

⁸⁰ Spivak, "In Response: Looking Back, Looking Forward," 228.

⁸¹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, 1976).

⁸² Compare David Lloyd "In the case of colonialism, the relation to the past is strictly not a relation to one's own past but to a social history and its material and institutional effects" "Colonial Trauma/Postcolonial Recovery?" *Interventions* 2 no. 2 (2000), 216.

⁸³ See Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA, 1997) and Marianne Hirsch, "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14 no. 1 (2001).

⁸⁴ Hirsch, "Surviving Images," 9.

⁸⁵ See Michael Rothberg, "W.E.B. Du Bois in Warsaw," 186.

⁸⁶ I use Paul de Man's term "ethicity" to throw into relief the passage through discursivity of Spivak's resolute engagement with ethics. For de Man, "Ethics (or one should say, ethicity) is a discursive mode among others" *Allegories of Reading: Figural language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven and London, 1979), 206. Spivak's searingly lucid "Ethics and Politics in Tagore, Coetzee, and Certain Scenes of Teaching," *diacritics* 32 no. 3-4 (2002) depicts more concrete interpersonal engagements, in situations of pedagogy in rural India for instance.

⁸⁷ Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 207.

⁸⁸ For the notion of disappropriation, see Thomas Keenan *Fables of Responsibility: Aberrations and Predicaments in Ethics and Politics* (Stanford, CA, 1997) and Mark Sanders' review of Keenan, "Reading Lessons." *Diacritics* 29 no. 3 (1999).

⁸⁹ In her *Precarious Lives*, Judith Butler gives this account of disappropriation by grief: "Freud reminded us that when we lose someone, we do not always know what it is *in* that person that has been lost. So when one loses, one is faced with something enigmatic: something is hiding in the loss, something is lost within the recesses of loss" (21-22). Mourning, she argues, makes the self inscrutable. "On one level, I think I have lost 'you' only to discover that 'I' have gone missing as well. At another level, perhaps what I have lost 'in' you, that for which I have no ready vocabulary, is a relationality that is composed neither exclusively of myself nor you, but is to be conceived as *the tie* by which those terms are differentiated and related" (22). This article was concluded in deference to just such an experience of disappropriation, one associated with the death of the man to whose memory I have dedicated it, Oren Gani.

⁹⁰ Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 245.

⁹¹ Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 287.

⁹² Butler, *Precarious Life*, 20.

⁹³ It is no coincidence that I take this phrase from Derrida's dedication of *Specters of Marx* to the assassinated leader of the South African Communist Party, Chris Hani. "*One name for another, a part for the whole: the historic violence of Apartheid can always be treated as a metonymy. In its past as well as in its present. By diverse paths ... one can always decipher through its singularity so many other kinds of violence going on in the world. At once part, cause, effect, example, what is happening there translates what takes place here, always here, wherever one is and wherever one looks, closest to home*" Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, translated by Peggy Kamuf (New York and London 1994), xvi, italics in original. That this citation inscribes my own particular trajectory of desire, as a displaced South African long resident in Israel should be taken as given.