Mourning from a Distance: Traumatic Post-Memory and the Ethics of Engagement

By

Dragoslav Momcilovic

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(English)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2013

Date of final oral examination: 5/13/2013

The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Michael Bernard-Donals, Professor, English and Jewish Studies
Rob Nixon, Professor, English
Susan Stanford-Friedman, Professor, English and Women's Studies
Sara Guyer, Associate Professor, English
Tomislav Longinovic, Professor, Slavic Languages and Literature

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Though I began work on this dissertation on post-memory in 2009, I have been wrangling since 1976 with key issues surrounding the idea of vicarious attachment to lost spaces. In May of that year, my family left our village in Yugoslavia, which has since been destroyed by civil war. They brought me as a baby to the United States where I would remain the rest of my life—and where I would wonder what daily life, tradition, and history in former Yugoslavia was like.

My family made it so easy for me to approach that lost space and re-familiarize myself with that part of me that always seemed necessary, even if it was continually out of reach. My mother, in particular, whose unconditional support made my graduate education possible, did everything in her power to re-create that elusive world I left behind. She encouraged me to become active in the Serbian diasporic community in Milwaukee throughout my childhood. She also became my tour guide in 2003 when we returned to our native village of Lika, Croatia, and introduced me to long-lost friends and relatives. She gave me the confidence and desire to continue reaching for a world that will always elude my memory. And for this, I will always be grateful.

I owe so much to so many other people. I am grateful to my adviser, Michael Bernard-Donals, for providing me with extremely helpful, timely, and encouraging advice about my project and other professional pursuits. After taking Rob Nixon's seminar on memory and memoir in the Fall of 2005, I knew immediately that my research would always reveal a personal dimension – and that research should be an expression of the personal in some way. My sincerest thanks also go out to the rest of my committee—Susan Stanford Friedman and Sara Guyer, from the Department of English, and Toma Longinovic, from the Department of Slavic

Languages and Literature, who kindly agreed to take me on and help guide me through various stages of this project.

This project is also a meditation on the importance of inspiration—what Michael Bernard-Donals referred to in my Composition Theory seminar as that "eureka" moment we try to harness and discuss with our students in Freshman Composition. Throughout this process, my "eureka" moments have given rise to some of the most exciting ideas that I have pursued throughout this project. My sincerest thanks also go out to Marianne Hirsch, whose book *Family Frames* introduced me to the world of post-memory, and who graciously shared her perspectives about this and related projects on two different panels at the annual American Comparative Literature conference. In addition, my brother's academic enthusiasm and overall support has been and continues to be infectious. I never knew that our conversations about the philosophy of guilt and torture would re-animate my own interest in the matter of historical devastation. I am grateful to him for keeping me committed and engaged in such a difficult project, and for showing me unconditional support.

As we say in the Balkans, *mnogo hvala*!

ABSTRACT

This dissertation takes as its main concern the ethical implications of a post-memorial engagement with trauma. Using the idea that generations of historical witnesses to World War I, the Holocaust, and Japanese interment in Canada after World War II were displaced, in time and/or place, from the events in question, I write about a group of literary texts published within the last thirty years that center-piece the experiences of those belated witnesses as they reconstruct and reconnect those original scenes of disaster.

Focusing primarily on the texts *Regeneration* by Pat Barker, *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink, and *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa, I challenge the commonly held conception that an attachment to traumatic events from remote temporal or spatial distances seems particularly irresponsible and breeds inauthentic, distorted, or dangerous portraits of historical reality. Instead, I argue that these attachments to distant trauma are morally justifiable. The ethical awakenings staged in these texts rejuvenate the work of social, public, and shared memories of events, by insisting that post-memory—like memory, proper—allows us to retain the sense of all shared memory as dynamic spaces of creativity that do not, nor should not, exclude communities or neutralize silences.

The ethical justifications for bridging the gap between remote trauma and displaced witnessing, furthermore, emerge through a gradual re-evaluation of the ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. Though his emphasis on an ethics of the Other is a compelling characterization of the relationship of survivors to their traumatic circumstances, this dissertation looks at the way these novels re-frame the Other in ways that allow the post-memorial witness of the Great War, the Holocaust, and Japanese persecution to approach and commune with the Other.

This approach is enacted in three specific ways. From Pat Barker, we learn that the Other can be vicariously approached through dialogic interactions, culminating in a heightened awareness of the Other's silence and the power of one's own language. From Bernhard Schlink, we learn that erotic entanglements with the Other allows the narrator to kindle a moral feeling about the Shoah. In so doing, he takes responsibility for participating in a culture of atrocity that pre-exists him, all for the simple and existential reason that he chose to love a perpetrator. And from Joy Kogawa, we learn that the experience of home and the sense of habitation in a landscape shared with the Other alerts the young protagonist to the complexities of responsibility in the face of many Others. As she settles into a world swirling with competing post-memories of traumatic displacement and atomic warfare, she discovers how vital it is to re-trench herself in her present world in ways that do not encroach upon or disempower the many Others with whom she must share that space.

These various enactments of proximity to the Other, furthermore, are predicated on a revised view of trauma studies, which has for the last twenty years has identified traumatic injury, on both personal and collective registers, as a defining moment in larger questions of identity politics. This dissertation seeks to make room for the consideration not of identity, proper, but of affect—of the ability of bodies to affect one another and to be affected by one another. In this way, the post-memorial witness engages with distant traumas in ways that allow us to see how emotions, moods, and attitudes—including shame, desire, pain, and suffering—are implicated in memory and identity politics.

● Chapter One ●

Approaching the Other: Post-Memorial Ethics and the Affects of Intimacy

Introductory Notes: Traumas with a View

Much of the critical attention surrounding the way cultures work through historical traumas like World War I, the Holocaust, and the atomic bombing of Japan gravitates in two directions. On the one hand, scholars have sought to address the issues of traumatization and remembrance on an individual basis, as survivors and witnesses with direct experiences of trauma search for the proper and fitting language with which to bear witness to disaster. On the other hand, theorists have also been interested in the way these testimonies have been shaped by—and constitute, in turn—a public record of events that can be accessed by a wide range of witnesses who find themselves at increasingly distant removes from the original sites of devastation.

I do not want to characterize these two orientations as competing impulses in the current state of memory studies. If anything, these two tendencies mark a particular shift in the general field of memory studies in which this project intervenes. In particular, these views signal the progression of memory studies from an enduring concern for the individual, steeped in the muck and mire of unthinkable therapy, to an increasing fascination with the more collective and thoroughly social aspects of all forms of memory, including traumatic memory. It is within this intellectual climate that we witness a dramatic proliferation in both survivor testimony, as a literary genre unto itself, and theory and criticism outlining the genre's aesthetic, political, socio-cultural, and ethical implications. The steady growth of testimony studies has also occasioned more systematic thinking and re-thinking of the challenges of writing a traumatic history of European genocide *responsibly*. For instance, literary critic Shoshana Felman locates the very

idea of traumatic memory within a clinical setting and attributing to the psychoanalyst the special influence of enabling a narrative representation of events that, in the famous words of graphic novelist Art Spiegelman, "bleed history." For Felman, the dialogue itself between doctor and patient becomes instrumental in occasioning survivor testimony and allowing the patient, alongside the witness, to look into the devastations of her own invisible psychic world.

Cathy Caruth takes an even more explicitly historical view. She argues in the introduction to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* that traumatic memory produces a "delay or incompletion in knowing, or even in seeing, an overwhelming occurrence that then remains, in its insistent return, absolutely true to the event" (15). However accurate or imprecise these insistent returns to the past via flashbacks may be, Caruth effectively makes the linkage between the elusive nature of traumatic memory and a larger view of history, one that is "constituted by the very incomprehensibility of its occurrence" (153). Embracing a comparatist's wish to see the interlocking nature of trauma once its artifacts are shared across time and space, Caruth then pronounces that the increased sensitivity with which we pay attention to the traumas of others may well provide us with "the link between cultures: not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others but rather…as our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves" (11).

While both Felman and Caruth illustrate in their own ways an enduring fascination with the social aspects of traumatic memory, their work exposes a fundamental difficulty in the current configuration of memory studies. Now that the last generation of Holocaust survivors is dying out, and narratives about mediated and non-indexical 'experiences' of trauma are gaining more visibility and intellectual credibility through the work of theorists like Marianne Hirsch and Ernst van Alphen, what shape do those narratives about elusive disaster take? For Marianne

Hirsch, as for others, a new generation of witnesses to disaster have emerged that engage various narratives of survival and suffering, heroism and complicity. These narratives are not a first-hand account of devastation, but rather, reflect a new generation's collective longing to become affectively integrated into a world that will not have them.

Members of this post-memorial generation are ultimately fulfilling the prophecy laid out by Susannah Radstone in her analysis of the history of memory studies. In her article "Reconceiving Binaries: the Limits of Memory," Radstone argues that memory itself is always mediated, if not by images or narrative tropes, then by a complex combination of psychological processes that 'shape' our experiences of the past in ways that deny us any direct access to it. She reminds us that so-called memory texts are, before anything else, textual: "literature remains literature, and a memorial statue continues to be a statue" (4). In other words, every manifestation of memory in the public sphere is already, quite intimately, bound up in social institutions of witnessing—from legal proceedings like truth commissions, to social categories like the family—and representational forms of witnessing—like genres of life writing, the hybridization of word with image, and even the rise of mass and digital media that beams these stories and images around the world in mere seconds.

Though I do not want to suggest that memory—and especially traumatic memory—is *merely* a discursive phenomenon, I find Radstone's analysis of *articulations* of memory in the public sphere to be a particularly compelling preface to a project about post-memory—for two reasons. In the first place, Radstone envisions a future for memory studies that explicitly takes up comparative questions, vis-à-vis Stephan Feuchtwang's analysis of Holocaust memory, about personal experiences of devastation in relation to officially recognized sites of memory. This turn to the comparative allows scholars to trace the tensions and fissures between what she calls

the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ spaces of memory—the private experiences of the past, summoned and pondered by the individual, and the officially recognized or contested narratives about that same past that help constitute the public sphere in the first place. Her gesture toward the comparative also opens up a view of memory from the other side of the inner/outer paradigm—namely, from the vantage point of those to whom personal and shared memories are addressed. And in the second instance, memory is inherently affective and implicates a wide range of moods and emotions that not only unfold within the ‘inside’ of memory but must also be traced and examined in their life on the ‘outside.’ This emphasis on affectivity, on capacities of feeling, and on forms of empathic identification allow us to consider more systematically how the life of memory is sustained as it passes from the individual into her social milieu.

If all memory is discursive or representational in a significant and fundamental way, what are the ‘proper’ and ‘inappropriate’ reading practices by which audiences far removed from the ground zero of devastation make sense of those narratives? How and why do they approach a horizon of suffering consistently out of their reach? In a sense, Radstone’s argument that all memory is already mediated lends itself quite easily to questions about the impact of such mediations on a new generation of witnesses who endure their own challenges while wrangling with the guilt and discomfort of being cordoned off from dead worlds.

As it stands, members of the post-memorial generation are invested in the stories not just of their predecessors and families, but also of their lovers, colleagues, compatriots, and other figures of intimacy through whom protected witnesses might access some sense of a lost world. Furthermore, their investment in elusive and painful events from history—histories, which have excluded them because they belong to the recesses of the distant past or to the hinterlands of their home—often culminates in a vibrant, powerful inducement to re-create those lost worlds.

In the process, they are compelled to think through their own capacity or incapacity to bear witness to more immediate traumas and sorrows on their own horizon. As T. G. Ashplant reminds us, members of the post-memorial generation are often motivated by the impulse to "[negotiate] events and experiences which are outside personal experiences, but which nevertheless shape the subjectivities of the 'outsiders' in profound ways" (47).

It is with these general considerations and questions in mind that I want to demonstrate two essential points about post-memorial engagement with distant trauma. First, it is my intention to delineate the phenomenon of post-memory as a primarily ethical matter. Its theoretical articulations thusfar—as primarily a *second-generational* phenomenon in which *children* 'inherit' the traumatic legacies of their parents—are too restrictive. Philosophically, they embrace a view of ethical responsibility toward the Other—and, indeed, the otherness of trauma—that is formulated across grand distances in time, space, and experience. This ethical narrative, predicated upon an Other that cannot be reduced or harnessed, neglects the affective states of intimacy, proximity, and mediated contact that allows us, as protected witnesses, to gradually *approach* the Other—despite the impossibility of possessing or accessing it. The need to address both the otherness *and* familiarity of others' traumas emerges out of an increasingly global literary climate in which writers are becoming more sensitive to and aware of wide scale cultural and social traumas outside their spatio-temporal borders. Consequently, I want to reveal that the inheritance of the traumatic memories of others can affect the way the 'protected' generations of post-memorial witnesses see themselves and their relation to distant pasts.

Second, and following from the first, I want to demonstrate that this more global view of post-memory, as it develops on several different fronts, exposes the different ways that some of the most prolific writers in the arena of world literature have both set up and offered culturally

productive responses to the problems implicit in post-memorial engagements with trauma. The writers I will look at are deeply committed to the fact that post-memory offers only partial and in many ways distorted views of the past, that it is troped in unusual ways that require a rigorous and sensitive interpretive practice, and that it grants members of the post-memorial generation a tremendous ethical responsibility in maintaining and disseminating the memory of the event in question. Yet these writers also make implicit arguments, which I intend to draw out, that the forms of cultural and historical knowledge post-memories enable, and the ethical positions they require the post-memorial witness to adopt, are part of a larger process of working through. This idea of working through is directed not only toward the distant event in question. Often times, it is also directed toward a more immediate event or condition requiring her attention and response. In this way, I intend to demonstrate that post-memory is just as much an expression of commemoration as it is of working through, an act of both witnessing and re-writing, an imaginative reconstruction of past worlds and present selves.

Moving slowly into the problems of ethical responsibility and working through that underpin a more critical understanding of post-memory, I will spend the remainder of this chapter outlining the ways Marianne Hirsch's seminal text *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory,* which maps out post-memory as a legitimate area of theoretical inquiry, invites further speculation on the ethical dimensions of mourning from a distance—in a global literary climate. The resulting re-evaluations will prompt us to reflect upon the ways contemporary world literature maintains its engagement with the Other through a more dialectical model of responsibility, one that negotiates the irreducible nature of the Other with our continuing compulsions and creative efforts to attach ourselves to long-lost worlds of disaster.

Three re-evaluations, in particular, will emerge in this introduction and will structure the rest of the dissertation. First, Hirsch and others compel us to question whether a post-memorial ethics should be restricted to a model of call-and-response engendered by an inaccessible Other, as we find in most accounts of traumatic testimony. Second, I will explore the ethical implications inherent in an act of creative re-imagination that often accompanies a post-memorial witness's encounter with the Other. And finally, I will think about the ways that the language of ethics may need to broaden, to include not only representations of and concerns about the particular call of the Other, but also how that call inspires ethical moods and feelings in the subject who is being announced as a witness to remote disaster.

The Traumas of Others

Nearly half a century has passed since questions and comments about the Holocaust began to circulate in the public sphere. Since that time, an entire host of tales and testimonies from people who were *actually there*—including not only survivors and perpetrators, but also collaborators, bystanders, and witnesses near and far—have proliferated into the public sphere. It would seem that both the culture industry and the world of letters have become more sensitive to the challenges younger generations now face, as the Holocaust and other traumas begin to recede in the distance and "memories" of those events are shaped increasingly by different modes of attachment to the past.

With questions in the forefront about the need, the desire, and indeed, the risks involved in cultivating a relationship to such elusive events similar to that which a direct memory of them might foster, Eva Hoffman begins her book *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the*

Legacy of the Holocaust with a consideration of some of the most important challenges in characterizing the issues at stake in developing second-generation memories of events:

> And so, after all, the Holocaust.
>
> Sixty years after the Holocaust took place, our reckoning with this defining event is far from over. Indeed, as this immense catastrophe recedes from us in time, our preoccupation with it seems only to increase. We are even more intent to penetrate its dark lessons, to excavate every datum concerning its origins and execution, to try to rectify, however belatedly, some of its injustices
>
> At the same time, even as our fascination intensifies, we inevitably contemplate the Shoah from an ever-growing distance—temporal, geographic, cultural—with all the risks of simplification implicit in such remoteness. It has become routine to speak of the "memory" of the Holocaust and to give this putative faculty privileged status; but most of us, of course, do not have memories of the Shoah, nor, often, sufficient means for apprehending that event. How should we, then, from our distance, apprehend it? What meanings does the Holocaust hold for us today—and how are we going to pass on those meanings to subsequent generations? (ix)

Hoffman's preamble serves as an important opening reminder for this project. It warns us that second-generation memory is, among other things, a certain type of memory practice that develops in response to the dynamic interaction between desire and loss—an increasing fascination with an event that is not only quickly disappearing but has never been her own to possess in the first place. As such, it keeps steady pace with a more general compulsion to relate oneself to an event from which one has been spared and along which an entire generation of children of survivors seeks to define itself.

Yet whatever the desire that fuels us to consider these questions, whatever urgency there may be in the matter as witnesses and participants slowly fade from the horizon, Hoffman's efforts appear to be fuelled by the same anxieties about meaning that many writers of her own generation face. As she and her counterparts contemplate their own position of remembrance, displaced from the originating trauma in both space and time, and laboring under the shock of those memories as they find different modes of representation and circulation, their accounts are

anchored by the presumption that the Shoah already holds an unspecified meaning that will somehow be compromised or "simplified" through its re-telling. Yet what the nature of that meaning is, how it is unveiled or concealed, and the circumstances surrounding its appearance or retreat are all questions that Hoffman's provocative introduction begs.

In many ways, Hoffman's insights emerge as a variation on the common theme of anxiety that plagues members of the second generation, the generation after disaster. Though her wish is to interrogate more systematically the meaning of the Shoah as an event, compulsively overlaid with stories shot through with inconsistency and pain, her apprehension about being reductive follows in a longer history of self-reproach and uncertainty that bites at the heels of many 'belated' witnesses to disaster. Among her more prominent predecessors are two French philosophers. Alain Finkielkraut writes in his 1980 book *The Imaginary Jew* that children of Holocaust survivors, tormented by a raging impulse to seat themselves somewhere in the family tree, often instrumentalize their parents' narratives of suffering in ways that cheapen and trivialize what Kali Tal refers to as the victims' particular "worlds of hurt." According to Finkielkraut, these "post-genocidal children…live in borrowed identities…[and] have taken up residence in fiction" (23). He laments the possibility that he and other 'belated' witnesses to disaster may consume the narratives of suffering of those who barely escaped the camps and the many more who did not. In later passages he draws attention to the internal conflicts that plague members of his generation, the generation after disaster, who look back at the world of the dead with a mixture of fear, regret, guilt, and even a twinge of jealousy.

Like Finkielkraut, French philosopher Nadine Fresco writes in "Remembering the Unknown" about her conversations with Jews who grew up in the aftermath of the Holocaust.

She recounts the stories of children of survivors whose silences about the Shoah were inherited from their parents and whose ability to understand the event was consequently disrupted:

> …for those parents, silence seemed proportionate to the horror that had annihilated members of their families, while they themselves had escaped. It was a horror that prevented them from talking either about the dead, or of anything but the dead—as if life itself had been confiscated by those disappearances. It was an impossible mourning, 'wounds of the memory' of parents frozen in silence, behind their dry eyes…They transmitted only the wound to their children, to whom the memory had been refused and who grew up in the compact void of the unspeakable. (417)

The sense of a "confiscated life" constitutes in some ways the very sense of urgency with which Marianne Hirsch conceptualizes a post-memorial generation keen on discovering a sense of themselves through their distant relation to trauma.

With anxieties about proper and inappropriate reactions and attitudes toward lost worlds of disaster, it is essential to untangle the relationship between ethics, historical understanding, and second-generational engagements with trauma. To this end, I want to start by working through some of the more obscure and less theoretically supported formulations central to the work of Marianne Hirsch. In her 1997 study *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, Hirsch describes inherited or second-generation memory as post-memory, a special category of memory in which events elude or precede the subject but still make themselves known and felt in her life in fundamental ways. I begin with Hirsch's work on the subject not only because it attempts to characterize some of the most important dilemmas facing audiences that now stand at remarkable distances from the events in question. More importantly, her work is predicated on a series of provocative assumptions that need to be examined more carefully in light of a changing literary landscape in which writers are beginning to question the kind of responses to distant traumas we are expected or imagined to have. As we continue thinking about the way those responses enable or deny individual and collective historical and cultural

knowledge, the manner in which those responses across distances are shaped and represented back to us, the interpretive strategies they demand, and the ethical relations to historical atrocity that these literacies and forms of knowledge imply—as we consider the way these questions overlap and sustain one another, we can start to see the potential portability of the idea of post-memory. It is not simply a way for one critic to work through the legacy of the Holocaust as it shaped and strained her own family narratives; it can also be considered more widely as a commemorative practice that structures new engagements with and inquiries into our constantly evolving relationship to cultural trauma.

Hirsch offers the first of these propositions near the opening of the book, in which she stresses the fundamentally indeterminate nature of post-memory:

> postmemory is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection…its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation…postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated. (22)

Here Hirsch assigns post-memory a liminal status, one that allows it to engage and simultaneously retreat from both memory and history. Post-memory is not memory, strictly speaking, because it lacks the indexical relationship that binds the subject to the experience. Nor does it belong to the realm of history because the subject still experiences the memory vicariously and often times through the immediacy of survivors and their testimony, both of which continue to shape her historical understanding of the event and her relation to it.

Though the indeterminate nature of post-memory is itself a suggestive and even fruitful way to begin her analysis, Hirsch locates the ethical gravity of post-memorial attachment

squarely within a more broadly conceived sense of distance, displacement, and otherness. Here, she concedes to a model of ethical responsibility first articulated by continental philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, who understands ethics as an infinitely binding and asymmetrical relationship of the subject to the Other. Though he positions the Other, as concept, as a transcendent theological entity, it also stands more colloquially as a demarcated realm beyond our immediate knowledge and awareness, a realm of inaccessibility and impossibility to which we are subsequently bound. As we can see, Hirsch relies on a generational and familial model of post-memorial inheritance, and understands post-memorial ethics in a way that is deeply indebted to a Levinasian understanding of the Other. The resulting portrait, however, offers a provocative response to only one aspect of a much more far-reaching experience of traumatic post-memory that the primary texts examined in this dissertation reveal. A broader view of post-memory is certainly due. Following suit, this project explores a group of contemporary novels that create and reflect upon the status of post-memory, particularly when it is shared across intimate spaces outside the family unit, and especially when it calls upon the belated witness to cultivate intimate attachments to worlds outside of her horizon.

Broadening Responsibilities

One of the reasons why the figure of the post-memorial witness, as exiled onlooker, continues to be burdened with the idea of a terribly unfinished business is the anguish of non-indexicality. That quality of having-been-there, that rare privilege of reporting from inside a traumatic experience that may not yet be fully available—if ever—to the witness— is a determining condition in the construction and dissemination of survivor testimonies. Post-memory, on the other hand, continually leads a creative charge in a space of absence or displacement from the

event in question. Its very possibility, its viability as a theoretical category, is animated by the re-creative possession of a non-indexical experience.

This insight compels us to recognize the fundamental qualitative difference existing between the nature of suffering that separates traumatic memory from anguished post-memory. It is useful to approach this qualitative difference through the psychoanalytic lens of Sigmund Freud. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud observes the repetition compulsions of traumatized patients who re-enact original scenes of trauma in order to retroactively impose themselves more fully, more presently, in a moment that robbed them of that mastery. He locates this idea of retroactive mastery through the particular example of the infant who re-enacts the scene of his mother's abandonment through a game of *fort/da*, or 'gone'/'there.' The young boy playing this game would toss a wooden reel out of his crib, only to coo over it as he retrieves it by an attached string. The failed experience suddenly, and sometimes violently, enjoins the subject of trauma into a cycle of repetitive action whose underlying psychological motive is to restore to the subject a sense of agency and a full possession of the event he or she now lacks. Freud's parable reminds us that the otherness of post-memorial trauma cannot be equated with the otherness of trauma recreated in survivor testimony, as Marianne Hirsch wants us to consider. It does not originate in the failed experience itself or its compulsive symptomatic recreation by the traumatized subject, sometimes years later. Instead, it emerges out of the wide range of affective disturbances caused by the post-memorial witness's displacement from the event in question. As we will see in the next section, this anguish of non-indexicality, this sense of suffering that may accompany post-memorial recreations of disaster, will allow us to consider post-memory alongside traumatic memory as a comparable but distinct type of narrative that accompanies and sometimes challenges the received public memories of historical disasters.

What I want to highlight here is that the anguish of non-indexicality prompts us to conceive more broadly of an ethical engagement with the distant trauma, one that demands not only our continual recognition of distance from the Other but also our continued and sincerely enacted approach to it. It is worth recounting what a canonical understanding of an 'ethics of the Other' looks like in Levinas's scheme. The Franco-Lithuanian philosopher argues that we, as subjects, are essentially called into existence by the Other, a transcendent entity that he tropes in multiple instances as a theological being, a realm of uncertainty, or an Other with whom we share our lives. This Other enjoins us into a relation that is fundamentally asymmetrical and infinite—a relation in which we cannot know who or what the Other is, what the Other demands of us specifically, or when our responsibility to that Other begins or ends. As he explains in *Totality and Infinity*, subjectivity is "founded in the idea of infinity" (26) and the subject, implicitly bound by her responsibility to the Other, must confront and make peace with the fact that she is called into existence, announced as a subject, by an Other that is inaccessible to her. The responsibility that accrues around this relation to the Other, then, is entrenched in the subject's ability to respond to and engage with the Other, in spite of the distance separating them. The ability to respond, furthermore, depends on a form of self-vigilance in which the subject is not perpetuating or exacerbating any forms of violence to the Other by speaking on its behalf or neutralizing its silences. To guard ourselves against possible encroachment or projection of ourselves into the domain of the Other—this is an important caveat that Levinas prioritizes *before* the other forms of violence we might perpetrate against the Other: "violence does not consist so much in injuring and annihilating persons as in interrupting their continuity, making them play roles in which they no longer recognize themselves" (26).

This view of the Other and its appropriation by Holocaust discourse provides an effective and responsible strategy for writers and witnesses of the Shoah to speak about disaster without speaking *for* the victims. However, the ethics of post-memorial attachment is not simply a question of a witness's single, though infinite, relation to an Other that represents a domain of indexical knowledge to which she will never be privy. It is accompanied by simultaneous gestures of *imaginative recreation* of and *affective identification* with elements and figures of the world now lost to her. In this manner, the affective attachment with trauma and the manner in which intimacy and proximity are secured, however ineffectively, need to be retained as a vital part of the conversation. These experiences of intimacy and proximity, furthermore, constitute a vital aspect of contemporary post-memorial literature—not only about the Shoah but also about other historical traumas, including The Great War, Japanese dislocation in Canada, and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

To broaden this view of ethics, I propose considering a fuller view of ethics of Otherness that highlights the centrality of an *approach*—our approach of the Other. In his 1981 text *Otherwise Than Being*, Levinas centerpieces the idea of proximity through his understanding of a "commitment of an approach" (5). This idea of ethics as a type of approach better accommodates the peculiarities of post-memory—particularly, the notion that post-memorial witnesses, in the absence of indexical knowledge or first-hand experience, create a vision of a lost world through their progressive approach toward an elusive reality. For this reason, I also want to retain the characterization Desmond Manderson, in writing about Levinas, offers of the approach of the Other—namely, as "something non-conceptual and non-intentional—not a choice or an idea or a rule but a sensation and an experience".[1] For Manderson, as for many

[1] Manderson explains that "the approach of another awakens us from the deep sleep of introspection: it gives us an intensity, a feeling of existence, and, by the very fact of becoming aware that we are not alone and find ourselves

others, responsibility awakens in us an awareness of ourselves as ethical subjects. That awakening, furthermore, unfolds in time, as we reach out toward specific Others who remain permanently beyond our fingertips.

In addition to the need to recast the Other as an entity whose outward traces are accessible vis-à-vis a model of approach and proximity, a legitimately ethical relation to distant traumas requires an acknowledgment of the possible encounter of the ethical subject with many other Others in the world. As Adriaan Peperzak intelligently points out, the ethical subject may long to join a lost world from which she has been exiled, but she nevertheless inhabits a world of her own. This attention to the potentially social dimensions of memory, as it is shared and revised in the public sphere, applies even more emphatically to post-memory itself:

> If the existence of one Other already condemns me to an unlimited responsibility and dedication, how, then, can I cope with the fact that I, during my lifetime, am confronted not only with one or a few men, women, and children but with innumerable others? How would I be able to be totally dedicated to all others? (30)

A legitimate concern, to be sure. In fact, the issue of many different Others that demand our attention and responsivity pervades many other critical traditions, including Kwame Anthony Appiah's account of the ethics of cosmopolitanism: "we have obligations to others that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by kith and kin, or even the more formal ties of a formal citizenship" (xv).

An ethics based strictly on an encounter with *an* Other, as Levinas propounds, obviously privileges the idea of memory as a recapitulation of past events from various points of remote observation or imagination. Yet the post-memorial subject does not simply 'recall' events from a non-indexical past. She re-imagines that past as it unfolds in simultaneous relation to more

---

implicated in this non-indifference, we are aroused to consciousness. By 'calling us in question'—by singling us out as responsible for others—we are made better aware of ourselves" (297).

immediate problems and traumas of her own world. And if we are to follow the objections and interventions of Peperzak and Appiah, post-memorial engagements with trauma require its witnesses to acknowledge and embrace their belonging to a community that exceeds their own horizon—a community that exceeds a particular family unit, classroom, or even nation—and demands their continued response and consideration.

Redefining Memory and Event

These ethical obligations create for us a space in which to consider the specific types of responsibilities that the post-memorial witness/artist faces in her engagement with distant traumas. In order to gain a clearer understanding of these responsibilities, it is crucial to think about the various conceptual frameworks to which we are beholden as we negotiate the terrain between the Other and the Same. In the interest, therefore, of shedding light on the ways post-memorial texts trope structure our engagement to events, it is important to apply pressure to the notion of post-memory on the various conceptual fields under-girding it. In so doing, we must ask to what extent our ethical engagement with distant trauma is presupposed by an understanding of traumatic post-memory as both *memory* and as *event.*

As memory: The prefix of post-memory suggests a chronological temporality of remembrance, as if recreation must necessarily occur at particular temporal or generational removes from trauma. Despite this provocation, however, the "post" in post-memory actually embodies a broad range of temporal relationships that include the experiences of simultaneity and the recollection of what I crudely call the not-so-distant past. Here, I position myself against critics like Beatriz Sarlo, who takes issue with the prefix of post-memory. Sarlo contends that all memory is inherently "post" in nature which, therefore, extinguishes the unique character of

post-memory. In fact, Sarlo contemplates the possibility that post-memory is itself a mere expression of an academic culture whose "theoretical inflation" (132) of new terms sidesteps cultural realities. She argues that all forms of memory—including the active and accidental recollections of the past and the vicarious recreations of an even more elusive past—originate, in representation, from a posterior position.

Though many critics of post-memory would clearly disagree with the latter charge of "theoretical inflation," Sarlo's claim, however, is based on an even more troubling assumption that the "post" in post-memory relies on a tightly chronological order that much contemporary post-memorial fiction continually challenges. As we will see in Pat Barker's revivification of the Great War, for instance, post-memory can often unfold alongside the cultural and political entanglements of the event itself, and within a complex network of geographic and linguistic spaces that link the ideas of rehabilitation and protest to nationally sanctioned narratives about masculinity and patriotism. In other words, Barker's novel—and the many more like it, which recreate scenes of devastation from the vantage point of protected witnesses—electrifies the very idea of post-memory, gives it a renewed presence, immediacy, timeliness, despite its misleading prefix. In this way, even post-memory participates in what Michael Rothberg describes as the inherent multi-directionality of memory more generally: "memory's anachronistic quality—its bringing together of now and then, here and there—is actually the source of its powerful creativity, its ability to build new worlds out of the materials of older ones" (5).

While Sarlo draws attention to the need to explore different temporal configurations that invoke the need to consider the "post" in post-memory more broadly, Ernst van Alphen, and many before him—including Susannah Radstone—champion a discursive notion of memory that links it in fundamental ways to the regenerative potentials of post-memory. In his essay

"Second-Generation Testimony, Transmission of Trauma, and Postmemory," van Alphen takes issue with Hirsch's assessment of post-memory as a mediated form of *memory* of an elusive event. Rather than tethering post-memory to a non-indexical event one has never experienced at all, van Alphen insists that post-memory is constituted in an actual act of memory—a memory of the moments and conditions in which the story, the relic, the haunting of the past breaches into the present and awakens the post-memorial witness to the various gaps in her own articulation as a composed subject. For van Alphen, the experience of second-generation memory is predicated on these scenes of enactment:

> [T]he indexical relationship that defines memory has never existed. Their relationship to the past events is based on fundamentally different semiotic principles…memories are missing, by definition. That does not mean that the generation of the children has no knowledge of their family's past. That knowledge is, however, the result of a process of conveying, of combining historical knowledge and the memories of others. And importantly for constructing, it is the result of a strong identification with (the past of) the parents, of projecting historical, familial knowledge of a past one is disconnected from onto one's life history. (486)

Through close readings of the Dutch novel *Nightfather* by Carl Friedman, which centerpieces the importance of transmission of memory narratives, van Alphen insists that members of the post-memorial generation actually play a vital role in the narrativization of traumatic experience of survivors through their experiences as an addressee. Because the family unit circumscribes an intimate exchange between Holocaust survivors and their children, van Alphen sees the post-memorial generation helping their devastated parents bring their painful and in some instances forgotten world of trauma into language—however incomplete that representation ultimately is.[2]

[2] Susan J. Brison echoes these sentiments in her reading of traumatic memory, which for her is structured in such a way that it can only be contained and worked through by means of a widespread acknowledgment of an other, an addressee. Which is to say, there appears to be something in the mechanisms of working through that render traumatic memory implicated in a mechanism of passing on: a "traumatic event is experienced as culturally

Upon first glance, his particular stance allows us to broaden our view of memory in general, from a recollection of past events with which post-memorial audiences attempt to connect, to an act of storytelling, a moment of creative production and re-framing of the past that allows survivors and first-hand witnesses to render the forces of failure and displacement shooting through traumatic experience more intelligible. In this way, the very thing that is being handed to these audiences across these particular gaps is not an explicit knowledge of a world they never knew, but rather, a compulsion to re-create that world in ways that allow them to work through their own painful aporias of identity.[3] Or to put it in Susannah Radstone's words, post-memories follow the example of memory itself in that they "produce new understandings of the knowledge that memory can provide…a knowledge not of the past itself, but of how memory, or 'memorial consciousness,' is constructed and of its relation to the social and to the past" (136).

Yet despite the renewed attention to discursive production van Alphen's analysis occasions, he nevertheless maintains a tight rein on the family unit as the social structure *par excellence* in the expression of post-memory. He deconstructs the myth of a model of traumatization enacted through the 'transmission' of testimony from the generation of survivors to their children. Instead, he suggests that children of Holocaust survivors, as they are depicted in particular novels about the Shoah, may well be traumatized but only by virtue of the fact that they were "raised by a Holocaust survivor" and not by a memory, "indirect or mitigated," of the event itself. (482) He also echoes the critical sentiments of French cultural theorist Pierre Nora

---

embedded (or framed), is remembered as such (in both traumatic and narrative memory), and is shaped and reshaped in memory over time according, at least in part, to how others in the survivor's culture respond" (42).

[3] It is important to add, here, that post-memory exacerbates the forces of history and lived experience that falls outside the domain of narrative intelligibility and challenges the discursive construction of memories in general. In this regard, another ethical compulsion handed down to post-memorial generations is the acute awareness of a creative impulse they are called upon to exercise, in the face of an uncertainty more palpable, even more crippling, than the nature of a traumatic experience of an event that someone actually endured.

when he challenges the idea of an assumed continuity between generations, one that supposedly structures an idealized transmission of experience from the devastated to the protected:

> one might expect the experiences and memories of Holocaust survivors and of their children to be fundamentally different, but the expression 'second generation' seems to bridge that divide and to introduce the idea of continuity between the generations (474).[4]

He concludes his analysis with the provocation that the post-genocidal generation's reaction to the traumas of the Shoah are so diffuse because of an overwhelming lack of publicly circulating points of view that give them available frames of reference and representational strategies by which to come to terms with their unique historical positioning:

> Whereas the trauma of survivors is caused by the discrepancy between the Holocaust events and the symbolic order with which these events can be experienced, the trauma of the children (if we want to use that term for their problems) originates in an even more basic phase of the process of experience. The symbolic order into which they enter in childhood is fundamentally inconsistent or diffuse. They do not have clear frames of reference at their disposal with which they can easily make sense of the world. For them it is never really clear where stories of murder and humiliation stop and reality begins. (482-3)

Though van Alphen highlights the embarrassing poverty of insight regarding the belated witness's contact with and access to the lost worlds, he presumes that these points of contact, which allow the post-memorial witness to vicariously connect to prior sites of devastation are somehow located squarely within the family unit. Like Marianne Hirsch before him, van Alphen takes for granted other possible social formations of intimacy, across whose spaces post-memories continue to be shared.

[4] Pierre Nora draws attention to the peculiar structure of generational belonging in his essay "Generation," from the first volume of *Realms of Memory*. By drawing attention to the generation's lack of a clear origin and end point, as well as its wavering commitment to include both those born into a particular time period and those maturing within it, Nora takes great pains to 'denaturalize' the category of the generation.

This dissertation will therefore go on to explore in more detail the modes of contact, the types of approach, that are enacted squarely outside the parent-child relationship. The social formations, many of which juxtapose one another in a single novel, include both a particular doctor-patient relationship and a figurative father-son relationship in Pat Barker's recreation of World War I-era England in *Regeneration*; the erotic lovers in Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader* who act simultaneously as allegorical representations of a society coming to terms with both reconciliation and criminality in post-Nazi Germany; and the mother-daughter relationship in Joy Kogawa's Canadian novel *Obasan*, which is in turn overlaid with concerns about vilification and belonging, and what constitutes a home and one's rightful or transgressive attachment to it. It is thus this lack of a more nuanced *and* comparative understanding of proximity and distance that compels us to broaden existing views of post-memory from an inter-generational family affair to a more widespread cultural affair—one that must cope not only with the passage of time but also the shifts in space.[5]

Because post-memory attempts to recreate those lost worlds from new and imaginative perspectives, we sense a strong ethical inducement to attachment. This invocation of a literary imagination is enacted for various purposes in the novels I will go on to explore, but they often share the common theme of attempted healing—specifically, mourning and working through the traumas of others, while simultaneously trying to put the pieces of their own fragmentary narratives of identity together. The idea of a palliative narrative emerges out of the writings of

[5] The complicating influences of physical, linguistic, and commemorative shifts underpinning post-memorial attachments to trauma will be discussed in more detail in the succeeding chapters. For now, it is sufficient to say that even these forms of rupture produce forms of proximity that are still comparable to the kind of proximity, based on access and personal attachments to family, that emerge in inter-generational transmissions of trauma. The forced displacement or inability to return to a home, for instance, suggests what John Durham Peters describes in his essay "Exile, Nomadism and Diaspora" as a displacement elsewhere, from a point of origin that has since disappeared (17-18). The notion of an irretrievable origin in this particular social formation, as well as the nostalgia accruing around a native language that is displaced by one's difficult entry into another idiom, and the witnessing of personal post-memories as they become part of a larger cultural tapestry, all suggest a kind of proximity that locates the post-memorious generation curiously closer to distant trauma than mere 'outsiders.'

James Young's account of Holocaust literature and art. He argues in *At Memory's Edge* that the latest proliferation of Holocaust stories and images, even from positions of vicarious attachment to trauma, nevertheless offer new perspectives about the Shoah while simultaneously alluding to the "ethical hazards of doing so" (6). He goes on to defend the artists whose obligation to perpetuate and reinvigorate memory should be regarded as an ethical expression:

> these artists can no more neglect the circumstances surrounding a story's telling than they can ignore the circumstances surrounding the actual events' unfolding. Neither the events nor the memory of them take place in a void. In the end, these artists ask us to consider which is the more truthful account: that narrative or art which ignores its own coming into being, or that which paints this fact, too, into its canvas of history? (4)

Young's insistence on the need for vicarious attachments to distant trauma, mediated by the artistic imagination, reminds us of the social life that all forms of memory inherently assume. Put differently, the sociality of memory justifies the need to address the specialized work of post-memory as a palliative response to distant trauma. And in the process, it reminds us of the unexpected continuities between memory and post-memory. As Michael J. Lazzara states in his article "Filming Loss,"

> works that bring into relief the difficulties of representation, especially those by artists at a generational remove from the "direct" experience of trauma, communicate an ethics based on a conviction that memories should not be closed off and that art should not proffer sewn-up interpretations of history. Instead, postmemory work should call attention to the fragmentary dynamism of memory and emphasize the constant need to reconstruct the past *ethically* (time and again) from a present moment of enunciation. (150)

His argument, which bolsters the connections between memory and post-memory, forms the ethical impetus behind this entire project. Or to put it in terms of post-memory as an event, attachments to distant trauma are part of the work of memory in the public sphere. They allow

us to revisit the narratives without locking them into place or marginalizing other voices whose testimonies have not yet been collected or adequately considered.

As event: The previous discussion about the precision behind the terminology of Hirsch's assessment raises several questions. Perhaps the most important and recurring of these questions concerns the ethical nature of post-memory. What does it mean to engage responsibly with the traumas of others? What are we to avoid, and what are we to embrace? And even if we adopt a model of Otherness that is informed by concerns about proximity, how do we stage that approach without violating the memories of those who never made it out of those worlds?

To respond to these questions requires first an acknowledgment that our conventional notions of the category of the event—the event as temporally and spatially bounded, like a point on a spectrum—are limited. They produce limited forms of knowledge and narrow views of responsibility. This particular problem is exacerbated in both traumatic experience and in post-memorial attachments to cultural trauma. In the former instance, the trauma itself is constituted along a fundamental failure or displacement from the event itself, compelling us to think in paradoxical terms about the very notion of 'having been there.' In its stead, the traumatic symptom comes to define the nature of the experience; as Cathy Caruth explains in *Unclaimed Experience*, following the tenets laid out by Freud, trauma is structured in such a way that its symptoms return to a moment of displacement with which we cannot fundamentally reckon. Such a view of traumatic experience tends to release the notion of the event from its spatio-temporal confinement, and compels us to think about the way the event is constituted not simply in a sense of 'what happened' but also in the way we continually effect our return to an event that has cast us out of it. In the second instance, the category of the event is additionally destabilized by the fundamental lack of a post-memorial witness's indexical relationship to it. In

this manner, post-memorial attachments to distant cultural trauma raise questions about what it means to mourn across distances and how the object of mourning—the event itself—is being constituted from these particular removes.

It is useful here to situate post-memory as an event geared toward a larger process of working through that Dominick LaCapra writes about in his seminal study of postwar German memory, *History and Memory after Auschwitz.* He describes the cultural work of memory in terms of the binary between mourning and melancholia originally invoked by Sigmund Freud. For LaCapra, mourning becomes part of a larger process of working through a traumatic event that withdraws from our plain view. Because mourning itself requires, among other things, an acknowledgment of the distant otherness of the lost object, it imparts a necessary critical distance that consequently allows us re-entry into an entire network of social relationships. For LaCapra, then, mourning becomes the more appealing and socially productive alternative to melancholia, which is geared toward a narcissistic identification with the lost object that imprisons traumatized individuals within their trauma.

Though post-memory's wide ranging affective and imaginative responses to distant disaster might put us on guard, it nevertheless serves a vital function in the larger cultural tapestry. Here it is useful once again to use the language of Dominick LaCapra, who argues in the same book that memory is usually primary and does not begin to take the shape of history until it passes into the terrain of secondary memory. Unlike primary memory, which suggests a direct memory of events that one experiences, secondary memory for LaCapra refers to a kind of 'critical memory work' that is shared by the witness and the historian—a memory work in which the historian evaluates the way history is experienced and understood by looking at the various details that primary memory leaves out, repeats, distorts, or amplifies. One might be tempted,

given this model of analysis, to regard post-memory as a secondary memory of events, but LaCapra suggests that even traumatic memory is a kind of secondary memory: "what occurs is not integrated into experience or directly remembered, and the event must be reconstructed from its effects and traces" (21). The cultural work of both post-memory and traumatic memory, then, converges around the idea of piecing together a story that will never be told in its entirety.

The explicit consequence to be drawn from this unexpected structural continuity between traumatic memory and post-memory is that they share a common ethical preoccupation with reconstructing an event that is no longer fully available to us, though it continues to haunt us. The implicit consequence to take note of, however, is that the particular interplay between proximity and distance that underpins traumatic memory and its post-memorial articulations takes shape on different grounds. While the former is informed by considerations of working through a particular trauma—to narrativize the experience is to start the process by which the disruptive force of the trauma might be better contained—the latter appears to be wedded to the working through of survivors' traumas and the absorption of some *sense* of that trauma in the post-memorial scenario. Yet despite the qualitative differences of displacement and suffering that separate the indexical experiences and non-indexical recreations of trauma, one thing seems undeniable: the post-memorial *event* serves a restorative function. It allows the witnesses themselves, as well as the displaced bystanders, to engage in a larger commemorative practice in which new perspectives about an unknowable event are continually welcomed, challenged, and understood in conversation with other accounts and memories of disaster.

These other accounts and perspectives collectively form a public memory of events that engage not only artistic responses to disaster but also critical interventions that reflect actively and self-consciously upon the creation of that public memory. It is here that we are reminded of

one of the most famous quotes about the ethical obligations of art in a world that has been plagued with the knowledge of Auschwitz: Adorno's famous dictum about writing poetry after Auschwitz. Famously castigating art for its incommensurability with ethics, Adorno decries the desire and practice to transform horrific suffering into a work of art that merely perpetuates the values of the society that engendered the Shoah: "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (34). Adorno's quote reminds us of the continuing search for ways to represent historical atrocity that preserve some semblance of the integrity, the authenticity, and the force of traumatic history. This search, furthermore, is weighed down with concerns about allowing that representation to transfigure a senseless event into a work of art that evokes a false or reductive understanding of the catastrophe, a work of art that essentially relies on the aesthetic conventions sanctioned by a culture that allowed that catastrophe to occur in the first place.

Considerations of this quote and the many readings it has inspired over the years gives us a better sense of the ethical responsibilities facing audiences whose distance from the event is deeply bound up in the way the event is conceptualized in the first place. Audiences in the post-memorial moment already labor under the strain of maintaining a relationship to traumatic events that become increasingly remote with the passage of time, with their physical and geographic displacements from those sites of devastation, with the loss of intimacy and immediacy that often results from the atrophy of particular languages of traumatization or the (multiple) translations of texts into uncomfortably newer cultural idioms, and with the circulation of testimony as it moves from the realm of individual to shared memory. Because the general face of the audience is also changing, and the readers' understanding is currently being shaped in response to encounters with an increasingly remote past, Adorno's dictum to be conscious of the implications of our creative engagements with atrocity and the interpretive gestures those texts invite requires us to

take a closer look at the way those engagements need to be predicated on a more refined view of the event.

To this end, I want to pause briefly here and reflect on one of the more significant critical analyses that contend with the very idea of the event through engagements with the 'meaning' of Adorno's famous dictum against poetry. Michael Rothberg offers a comprehensive view of these critical trajectories and recuperates the different (mis)-readings of Adorno in order to make a larger argument about the importance of understanding the historicity of both the quote and the event it is intended to mark. He argues in *Traumatic Realism* that critical readers of post-war German culture, like George Steiner and Eric Santner, have taken opposing views of Adorno's work and therefore contributed to a bifurcation in scholarship, "one that reads him *à la lettre* and one that takes his words as a jumping off point for even grander claims" (30). According to Rothberg, the former, acutely conscious of the language of poetry that appears after Auschwitz, sees Adorno as a writer in mourning, looking at the Holocaust and bemoaning the passing of a bourgeois European culture of distinction and accomplishment that once preceded it. The latter, on the other hand, sees the philosopher as a broader cultural critic who understands the Holocaust in terms of a clear break with the past, and whose dictum reflects more widespread cultural anxieties about potentially re-enacting this break with the past again.[6]

Rothberg concludes that the readings of Adorno's quote conflict with his understanding of the death camps—which he describes as the irrational fulfillment of an instrumentalized rationalism, and which is based more so on the notion of *continuity* with the past than the kinds of loss, nostalgia, anxiety or rupture that Steiner and Santner are invested in. However, instead of dismissing these readings as faulty and contributing to a reductive view of the dictum,

[6] For an extended discussion of these two 're-writings' of Adorno, see pages 30-33 of Michael Rothberg's book *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

Rothberg reveals that even the most blatant mischaracterizations of Adorno can create "significant variants of his Auschwitz chronotope" (30) that are just as important to our understanding of a post-Holocaust culture and literary heritage as the event itself. And as he describes Adorno's own geographic and historical situated-ness while producing that chronotope of Auschwitz—writing in the 1930s and 1940s during his exile in the United States, which allowed him to see the unusual connections between American capitalism and European fascism, and writing at a time before Auschwitz had been sacralized as places of human catastrophe or had faded significantly into the past before a proper sense of an 'after Auschwitz' could even develop—he explains that chronotopes always develop "from within other chronotopes" (37).

This last quote, in particular, suggests that Rothberg's interrogative mode relies on the assessment of interactions between discursive forms. In this manner, Rothberg demonstrates the importance of implementing a reading practice open to considerations not only of representational strategies but also the various ways those strategies have been interpreted in a particular literary, intellectual, or cultural climate anterior to the event:

> [T]he response to, and the form of, some of the texts of the late 1940s (including Adorno's) confirm that the afterlife of an event needs to be periodized as carefully as the event itself. An event alone does not always rupture history; rather, the constellation that that event forms with later events creates the conditions in which epochal discontinuity can be thought. (38)

What we have in this re-reading by Rothberg, then, is a set of critical gestures that highlight the need for a nuanced view of the event—one that allows us to examine its representations and critical assessments in terms of a mutually entwined set of considerations revolving around form, discourse, and spatio-temporal positioning. Though the dictum persists and intensifies with each new literary account of the Holocaust, Adorno's warning to future generations of writers looking back at the Shoah continues to resonate in an increasingly global literary landscape in which

texts position readers squarely in relation to accounts of atrocity from which they have been spared—or excluded.

In this way, the brief nod to Adorno through Rothberg that I have invoked resonates with a more Derridean notion of the event as transformative and giving rise to another event in its stead.[7] Though Derrida's argument opens with a meditation on the ways our characterization of the event as an intellectual and philosophical category is already framed by the kinds of questions with which we interrogate it, there is nevertheless an enduring sense in post-memorial engagements that the framing mechanism of the event consists in both the manner in which audiences recover and witness events they never experienced—and the questions raised therein—as well as the creative responses that form of witnessing enables and invites. In other words, the event is transformed from a bounded and distant site at which knowledge of a lost world *might* be uncovered, to an excessive and prolonged set of resonances between the disaster itself and the panoply of moments in which audiences encounter, interpret, and re-create it.

In the process, this expansion of the notion of the event informs our understanding of the ethical responsibilities underpinning the phenomenon of attachment to and recreation of distant traumas. First, it courts various forms of cultural and historical knowledge and understanding that issue from the traumatic catastrophe itself, thereby installing audiences into an ethical relationship with an other to which they remain subsequently beholden. And second, it exposes certain 'truths' about their own distanciation from the event, from their own participation in the diffuse afterlife of the event—truths, in other words, that rise to the surface through the speaking of it.

[7] Here, I am thinking of Derrida's presentation "A Certain Impossible Possibility of Saying the Event," which was transcribed and published. During this presentation, Derrida argues that the 'truth' of the event consists in our ability to speak of it and, in the process, transform it into something that it was not before.

Yet post-memorial attachments to distant trauma must be structured responsibly, not only with an eye toward the prolonged temporality of the event itself but also with a consideration of its potential historical, cultural, and situational particularity. In this way, we approach the question of responsibility once again, this time through the lens of philosopher Alain Badiou. In his book *Ethics*, Badiou contends that an ethics based on the valorization of the Other is far too restrictive because of its universalizing tendencies. Consequently, he shifts our attention to ethical conundrums considered from the perspective of specific events: "truth returns to the immediacy of the situation…[and] reworks that sort of portable encyclopedia from which opinions, communications and sociality draw their meaning" (70). Badiou's analysis consequently informs this project in certain ways. Though the post-memorial witness can never actually bridge the gap separating her from the world that exiled her, she is nevertheless bound by a situational knowledge of her own horizon and is compelled to take action in some form. In other words, she must deliberate, imagine, and finally, commit to a model of behavior that allows her to fulfill the need shooting through her engagement with distant traumas in the first place—whether that need is to repair or restore a narrative of identity she can claim as her own, or to inhabit more fully and more confidently the world in which she now finds herself.

These meditations on the event that post-memory identifies and resuscitates reveal the following set of compromises I hope to sustain throughout the project. First, a post-memorial ethics of attachment based on the otherness of trauma is not to be retired completely. The experience of displacement and the witnessing of genuine traumatization enjoin even the post-memorial witness, with close access to traces and artifacts of a world denied to them, to an acknowledgment of the Other. That Other, however, must be reframed within the more immediate world of others that she inhabits, and positioned in ways that allow her to approach

the Other, however asymptotically. In addition, that Other must also be matched to an event that allows the particularity of engagement to shape the memory narrative that now emerges. In this way, the future of memory work—even amongst the post-memorial generation—is secured, and the tendency toward reifying official narratives that often exclude certain voices or distort the picture is cut short. A post-memorial ethics, then, appears to put into dialogue a set of opposing terms—finished past and ongoing present, universally applicable and particularly variable, delimited spaces and open, dynamic fields of representation.

The Ethics of Imagination

With the exception of Ernst van Alphen, who looks at the performative aspects and narrative representations of post-memorial suffering, much of the critical attention in this field within memory studies emerges out of engagements with visual and pictorial representations of the Shoah. Marianne Hirsch leads this charge with a series of anecdotes and readings that frame the experience of post-memorial displacement as an act of aesthetic contemplation, one that is borne out of the immediacy of looking and the strange but forceful impact of *visual* texts like photographs. More recently, critics like Brett Ashley Kaplan follow suit with interdisciplinary considerations of post-memory as they are encoded and structured primarily, though not exclusively, in both visual texts and public spaces. But if we are to consider the more wide-scale applications of an aesthetics of post-memory as it develops on explicitly *literary* frontiers, then it is important to move beyond a photographic 'reading' practice and examine the ways post-memorial witnesses harness narrative mechanisms in order to dwell more fully on the ethical implications of mourning from a distance.

One of the ways the authors explored in this dissertation bridge the languages of visual and verbal narrative is through the cultivation of affect which is informed in fundamental ways by the visual languages of *punctum* and *studium* Roland Barthes describes in *Camera Lucida*. Barthes explains that *punctum* and *stadium* are affective responses of a person looking at and pondering a photograph. The former represents a moment of interruption in an otherwise orderly attempt to attach cultural meaning, intentionality, and even a framework of ideas to the very composition of the picture. It is, in other words, the singular detail or aspect of the photograph that trumps the collection of additional elements in the image and attracts us to it—unexpectedly, and outside an otherwise studied encounter with the image. The latter, on the other hand, functions to create meaning—but only of a certain kind. Though this gesture is sustained by a retroactive compulsion to impart a meaningful narrative onto the manner by which the image came to be, it does not lend the elements of the image itself an explicit *narrative* function.

Though the binary is locked to the visual nature of its textual objects and only permits a limited degree of agency in the moment of (interrupted) contemplation, the terms lend themselves to a kind of authoring function that often goes unnoticed in discussions of second-generation memory texts. I want to draw out these often-neglected questions of authorship and creativity here and consider the various ways they inform different modes of commemoration, reading, and witnessing that underpins post-memorial engagements with cultural trauma. In this way, I want to shift attention from an *aesthetics* to a *poetics* of post-memory,[8] one that allows us to engage more explicitly the narrative mechanisms by which protected generations re-trench themselves in worlds that expelled them. In so doing, it is important to consider the ways the

[8] The etymological root of "aesthetic" indicates that aesthetics is a field devoted to the study of things perceptible by the senses, and German Enlightenment philosophers like Immanuel Kant link it to considerations of taste and sensual perception. However, poetics suggests a more specialized consideration of literary technique and form—a field that can be brought to bear more explicitly on the representations of distant trauma and the dynamic between narrators and addressees that grounds those stories.

vicarious recreations of lost worlds and anguished souls are intimately tied to both the literary imagination, as such, and its mobilization by a particular literary form—the contemporary historical novel.[9]

Consequently, it is useful to place Barthesian notions of *punctum* and *stadium* in more direct conversation with more explicitly discursive practices that Barthes outlines in other seminal texts. I want to draw attention to two operations, in particular, that emerge in the recent turn in world literature toward post-memorial fiction. The first comes to us by way of *S/Z*, in which he outlines the authoring function that underpins a critical reading practice associated in particular with the "writerly text":

> The writerly text is a perpetual present, upon which no *consequent* language (which would inevitably make it past) can be superimposed; the writerly text is *ourselves writing*, before the infinite play of the world (the world as function) is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system (Ideology, Genus, Criticism) which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages. (5)

Barthes deploys his notion of a "writerly text" in opposition to a "readerly text," which he describes as a text that openly constructs the reader as a kind of vessel, meant to receive a meaning that has already been fixed. Retaining the notions of both a "writerly text" and a "readerly text," I want to argue, is key in considerations of post-memorial texts that engage specifically with the question of narrative—and, more specifically, with questions surrounding the way narratives about an elusive and distant past might resonate with audiences excluded from that past, the way those distances are troped in the text, and the pressures those tropes place on readers as they contemplate their own relationship to that past.

---

[9] A post-memorial narrative, such as the ones explored in this dissertation, are often self-conscious creations that reflect upon their own conditions of creation and dissemination. Ernst van Elphen argues in his essay, "Symptoms of Discursivity: Experience, Memory, and Trauma" (pp. 24-38) that memory, in general, is not a recollected event, as such. Instead, it is a narration about the narrativity of events, a discursive act fraught with ruptures and distortions that expose the tense antagonisms with history and lived experience in which it is continually locked.

I do not invoke the categories of the "readerly" and the "writerly" in order to reaffirm the periodizing reading that Barthes suggests—according to which the former characterizes a vague classicism while the latter becomes synonymous with modernist and post-modernist fiction that operates according to a logic of disruption and, therefore, creates the need for readers to actively arrange those texts into a meaningful construction. Rather, I offer these terms in an effort to establish certain interpretive poles that actually co-exist in the task of interpreting the same text. These terms, furthermore, illuminate the necessity for a critical 'literacy,' a strategy for literally reading and representing an elusive past, that allows the post-memorial audience to negotiate the twin tasks of understanding the traumatic story that has already unfolded without them, on the one hand, and recreating elements of that story to reflect their own distanciation from those events, on the other. In this sense, post-memorial fiction is equally a question of commemoration of past events and their subsequent re-creation in the world of artistic representation. These terms therefore suggest a set of interpretive operations that cannot be adequately dealt with in the arena of photographic narrative, where the (visual) story has already been told and where the act of interpretation only goes so far as to accommodate, in Barthesian terms, a response constituted between affect and contextualization.

In addition to the poles established by "writerly" and "readerly" modes of engagement, Barthes propounds a theory of drift in *The Pleasure of the Text* that illuminates a particular set of relations to a text—or to a textualized memory—for which some sense of a whole, a totalized and fully intelligible view seems curiously absent. He explains that

> [t]he pleasure of the text is not necessarily of a triumphant, heroic, muscular type. No need to throw out one's chest. My pleasure can very well take the form of a drift. *Drifting* occurs whenever *I do not respect the whole*, and whenever, by dint of seeming driven about by language's illusions, seductions, and intimidations, like a

> cork on the waves, I remain motionless, pivoting on the *intractable*
> bliss that binds me to the text (to the world.) (18)

Though Barthes focuses here on the notion of drift as a *pleasurable* attachment to a text whose sense of a whole the reader *chooses* not to consider, his comments nevertheless offer an available model of engagement with a text whose chronicle of a particular universe often withdraws from full—and sometimes, even adequate—view. In addition, his emphasis on the pleasures a text offers secures an important space for pleasure, in particular, and affect, more generall—a concern not only for meaning but also for feeling, to which I will return at the end of this chapter. In this regard, what Barthes initially conceives as a pleasurable drift across the pages of a novel whose overall construction becomes a luxury we can set aside can be recast here as a condition of interpretation in the post-memorial engagement with trauma. No longer a mere pleasure, it becomes a task, a duty that appears in many ways to be geared toward the re-creation of that world from which one has been excluded.

This recourse to Barthes produce a sense of the reader as playing a central role in the interpretive recreation of a text—one that disengages her from the more passive attachments dictated by the punctures and studied responses to a photographic image. But to pursue a poetics of post-memory, one that places it squarely in conversation with discursive practices, requires a consideration of more explicitly narrative concerns. Hirsch's own awareness of the importance of narrative is thrown into sharper relief when she positions her interest in family photographs in a larger narrative structure—a family history, to which the photographs of a family album might testify. However, her awareness of the complicating influence of narrative—as well as the limits of her approach—quickly jump to the fore as she discusses one of the most imaginative and controversial graphic *narratives* about the Shoah to emerge in the contemporary moment, Art Spiegelman's 1987 graphic novel *Maus*, a text that explicitly mingles word with image and

brings the notions of pictorial representation, framing, and looking to bear directly on the way we, as post-memorial witnesses, might use narrative mechanisms to manage the forceful, extra-linguistic impact of Holocaust imagery.

A literal cat-and-mouse tale about the traumas of living through, remembering, and talking about the Holocaust, particularly as they develop around persisting tensions between a concentration camp survivor and his son, *Maus* showcases a moment in Holocaust fiction that exposes the tasks facing the post-memorial generation as it inherits the stories of its relatives and the burden those stories carry. In the novel, Artie visits his father Vladek and collects his testimony for a book he is putting together, a book that presumably will be realized in an implied abstraction of the novel we are actually reading. Depicting Jews as cartoon mice and their Nazi tormentors as cats[10]—Spiegelman's ironic and often times contradictory response to the rhetoric Nazis used in their attempts to "naturalize" their antagonistic views of Jews as mere prey, victims awaiting their decimation—*Maus* responds defiantly to popular charges that the modes, genres and forms writers use in depicting the atrocities of the Holocaust should provide 'appropriate' showcases for their obviously sensitive subject matter.

For Hirsch, the novel is deeply invested in questions about what we do with traumatic testimony from ages past once it has been imparted to us—how we respond to distant traumas, what kind of knowledge it furnishes for us, and how deeply we are meant to insinuate ourselves,

[10] The title of the graphic novel, *Maus*, is clearly a reference to the German word "maus," which means mouse. However, it also forms the root of the German verb *mauscheln*, which means "to mumble" and which alludes to the Nazis' pejorative characterization of the Hebrew language as nothing more than incomprehensible muttering, an inhuman sound. The Jews are consequently represented as the most dehumanized figures in the story. It is worth noting here that the suggestive resonance of the title with the verb *masucheln* allows us to triangulate the field of representation in Spiegelman's meditation on Holocaust memory. While the graphic novel displays pictures alongside the narrative and locates the site of traumatic memory in a liminal textual space, somewhere *between* the words and the images—as opposed to presenting it squarely within the images themselves, which are not intrinsically narrative in their structure or composition—the title expands the plane of the narrative to accommodate questions about listening, sound, speech, and the various markers of orality, including dialect and garbling, that shape the text's recollections of persecution and perceptions of criminality.

as outsiders, into that world. But even more importantly, the novel introduces certain complications at the level of narrative structure that Hirsch cannot fully accommodate in her reading of post-memory.

The provocation of Art Spiegelman, for Hirsch, reveals itself through the figure of Artie's dead brother Richieu, who perished before the Holocaust—the dead brother whom Artie never knew but whose ghost continues to haunt both speaker and audience. His quiet but profound presence in the text creates an addressee that enables Vladek's story to take place in the first place. Indeed, the graphic novel itself emerges out of the exchange. Hirsch explains:

> Art becomes Richieu and Richieu takes on the role of listener and addressee of Vladek's testimony, a testimony addressed to the dead and the living…Richieu is both a visual presence and a listener—and, as he and Art merge to transmit the tale, he is neither. (37)

It is this facet of the tale—Artie's strange but binding affinity not only for a time period that he escaped but also for the memory of the older brother he never knew—that marks in certain ways Hirsch's problematic entry into the world of narrative. While she is right to point out the silent but inescapable importance Richieu plays in the unconscious of the narrative, she does not pursue the subject of Artie's own dual role as both the creative figure and 'narratee', to invoke the language of Gerald Prince—the fictional audience of his father's tale. Her treatment of Richieu as a synecdoche of the Holocaust and as the figuration of a particular space of witnessing that Artie must now inhabit are compelling, but she is only able to make this point by bracketing the simultaneous issue of (limited) narrative agency that Artie, as listener, inherits from his father. Hirsch's reading of the graphic novel perpetuates a sense of the post-memorial as an unusually claustrophobic space of remembrance, one that valorizes the enabling of traumatic testimony—the harrowing story of Vladek and the even more harrowing lost story of

Anja—over the equally important re-creative impulse shooting through that position or the inherently ethical position into which it places the belated witness.

It is worthwhile, therefore, to revisit the graphic novel and re-read some of the images with a keener eye for Artie's ethical quandaries as narrative agent. As the graphic novel demonstrates, Vladek walks his son through the various spectacles of disaster he managed somehow to survive. Artie's own obsessive fascination with the ghostly figure of Richieu begins to develop, but only in moments that are based on his unbridgeable distance from the reality with which Artie and Vladek now must contend. Richieu's fate has, in a manner of speaking, already been sealed. That fascination manifests itself in ways that shape and put pressure on the dynamic that grows out of Artie's frequent meetings with his father. I want to consider a pictorial panel, in particular, in which Spiegelman's retroactive awareness of Richieu's ghostly influence on his story compels him to move beyond the passivity of a readerly inheritance of his father's story and toward an awareness of his own absence from the universe his father endured.

This moment comes to us on page 84 in the first volume of the story. Vladek has just learned that the Nazis captured his friend Nahum Cohn and his son for dealing in black market goods and left the bodies of four shopkeepers, who gave away goods to people without coupons, to hang on Modrzejowska Street for an entire week—as "an example" (83). While the images leading up to this moment were constructed with an air of verisimilitude—despite the cast of characters appearing in the form of cartoon mice—this particular image arranges several disparate elements into a psycho-archaeological progression downward. Suspended at the top of the panel are images of the four bodies hanging in town, the oppressive specters of death from which escape seems unlikely and impossible. Their seemingly disembodied heads appear larger in scale than the other figures in the picture, as if to suggest that Artie's pictorial aesthetics here

re-enact a compulsion to exaggerate the identity that was stripped of Cohn and friends earlier in the text—and, in particular, in preceding images where only their feet, hanging above the street, are repeatedly shown. Beneath the looming heads is a still moment in the darkened apartment where Vladek and his family have been secreted away. Two black silhouettes, presumably Vladek and Anja, remain quietly before the window with their backs turned to us; Spiegelman refuses to give us a glimpse of the look of desperation on their faces. Vladek appears to be looking out the window while Anja, standing behind his chair, seems to be looking at Vladek in concern. And finally, Richieu sits on the floor in the lower right corner of the image, playing innocently with a doll. His is the only figure bathed in light, though nobody in the scene takes notice of him.

While the pictorial arrangement of elements reaffirms Artie's fascination with the young boy who lived and died before him, the narrative intrudes upon the scene and interrupts Artie's visual elegy to Richieu. As Vladek's 'voice-over' narration reveals, he still harbors fears about being found out and betrayed by his friends:

> I was frightened to go outside for a few days. . . I didn't want to pass where they were hanging. And maybe one of them could have talked of me to the Germans to try to save himself. (84)

Like a tuning fork, Vladek's words resonate with narrative strains that have already been laid out in previous pages. Here, Vladek's fears of being given away by friends in desperate circumstances comes at the tail end of an intense exchange about another type of 'giving away.' A few pages earlier, Vladek argues with his wife Anja, who refuses to send Richieu away with Ilzecki's son. This, of course, is a decision that will come back to haunt the agonized couple a year later, when they finally decide to give him to Tosha, who will later be compelled to kill the young boy in order to save him from immanent Nazi persecution. Vladek's preoccupations with

safety, trust, and self-preservation are thus emotionally charged and ironically link his own position to that of his lost son.

The point to be drawn from this example is that this convergence of image and narrative becomes a site at which Artie is able to convey his own narrative of guilt and grief, even in the face of an un-navigable gulf separating him from the disaster that traumatized his father and claimed his long-lost brother. Particular visual details of the image tell one story; for instance, the exaggerated heads of the shopkeepers floating above Vladek and Anja raise suspicions about the very possibility of charitable compassion in a time of war. Yet the image works in conjunction with a particular form of narrative patterning that personalizes the traumas of genocide even for a displaced witness like Artie. This jumps to the fore when Spiegelman presents Vladek's moment of anxiety—about being given away—as a moment that is simultaneously haunted by the guilt of actually giving away a child he will never see again. Spiegelman therefore mines from the unconscious register of his father's testimony the guilt of survival, which he then sublates into a form with which he can identify as a survivor of a war he never experienced—a survivor who may not have been born had Richieu survived.[11]

Spiegelman, as post-memorial witness, combines the immediacy of images with the deeper revelations unfolding through the creative rearrangements of Vladek's story. His justification for doing so is not simply to heighten the emotional intensity of an already horrific story; it is to create a space of remembrance from which he allows himself to tell this story in the

[11] I speak of Artie's own guilt here, which manifests itself as a kind of return of the repressed, and which is sparked in certain ways by Artie's own impatience over Vladek's meandering narrative. In fact, it would be fitting to say that despite Artie's re-creative attempts, the world he tries to reconstruct is still fraught with historical details and forms of blindness that even he cannot lay to rest. One of the most compelling examples of the unmanageability of Artie's re-creation comes to us in an earlier scene, when Vladek, racing furiously on an exercise bicycle, laments the fact that Izlecki's son survived the war while Richieu did not. Vladek's pang of guilt begins what would appear to be a spontaneous prolepsis in his narrative: "When we were in the ghetto, in 1943, Tosha took all the children to—" (82). Artie, however, responds in a manner that constrains any representations of Richieu in the remainder of that scene to marginal or incidental spaces: "Wait! *Please*, Dad. If you don't keep your story chronological, I'll *never* get it straight. . . Tell me more about 1941 and 1942" (ibid).

first place. This justification, furthermore, follows closely on the heels of the penultimate moment in the second volume of the graphic novel, when Vladek, speaking to Artie from his bed and mistaking him for Richieu, says "Let's stop, please, your tape recorder…I'm tired from talking, Richieu, and it's *enough* stories for now" (136). Hirsch rightly points out that this scene turns on a logic of haunted address, as Vladek parrots Spiegelman's larger concerns about establishing more intimate contact with a lost position of remembrance. However, I would venture to add that Vladek's final pronouncement, even in a moment of confusion, raises important ethical challenges to which Artie, the self-authorizing post-memorial witness, must now respond. The seemingly innocuous gesture of "[stopping]…the tape recorder" is more than just an expression of Vladek's weariness with the violence of history. It is also a plea from a survivor to a belated witness to pick up the pen and to creative reshape the world whose details have been shared with him, however incompletely and inaccurately. Even more than that, it is a provocation from a now-lost father, whose gravestone at the very end of the novel marks his death, five years before the publication of *Maus*—a provocation to his son to *continue* telling stories, his own stories, despite the weariness with which the now-lost father finishes his own tale.

Among those stories, as we see, is the unresolved guilt and anger emerging out of Anja's suicide and Vladek's difficult decision to burn the one remaining expression of her literary imagination, her diaries. Spiegelman's meditation on an elusive genocide suddenly transforms itself, through the lingering attention to Anja in the final moments of the narrative, to an intricately layered representation of unshaped experience. Making a final attempt to imaginatively restore his fractured family back to a moment in time that pre-dates him (and Richieu), Spiegelman invokes the image of a couple embracing one another against the backdrop

of a romantic spotlight reminiscent of the one illuminating them during their courtship at the beginning of the story. The narrative shapes this raw energy of nostalgia into a fitting, if imagined, conclusion to Vladek's own testimony: "[m]ore I don't need to tell you. We were both very happy, and lived happy, happy ever after" (135). Yet this imagined, melodramatic reunion of young lovers is part of a devastatingly conflicted family history in which we know that the married couple did not, in fact, live happily ever after. As the last image of the graphic novel reminds us, the date of Anja's death that is engraved on their joint headstone conjures narrative memories of her suicide, portrayed earlier and with expressionist angst in the novel's intertext, a short comic originally published in 1972 called "Prisoner on the Hell Planet: A Case History." The comic reinvents the idea of survivor guilt as a condition that precipitates his mother's psychological break; repurposed in the context of *Maus* the comic also becomes a chronicle of Spiegelman's own guilt about being spared the oppressive first-hand knowledge of suffering during and even after the war.

What is notable here is that Richieu is only one of many possible figures through whom Spiegelman, the graphic artist, attaches himself to the world of the Shoah. If Richieu embodies and makes present (once again) the atrocities of the Shoah from which Artie was spared, then Anja's post-war breakdown exposes the difficulties of living with an other's trauma *in the wake of an atrocity* that still exerts its force and violence upon its survivors. Spiegelman's inclusion of this earlier comic about his mother reiterates my previous point about traumatic post-memory as an event that attempts to work through the devastation of the originating event, despite the personal difficulties it chronicles. Moreover, it speaks to the coexistence of different types of post-memorial spaces that each demand some form of re-creative response. The former, vis-à-vis Richieu, enables his father's testimony about a world he never knew; and the latter, vis-à-vis

his mother, offers him a glimpse of the trauma of survival which makes the post-war experience just as impenetrable, yet just as strangely intimate, as the genocide itself.

My reading of these seminal moments in Spiegelman's *narrative*, alongside but also beyond the pictorial representations, reveals two necessary correctives to our understanding of post-memory. The first is that the graphic novel juxtaposes and puts into tense intimacy the dual tasks of mourning and recreation imputed to the post-memorial generation. In this way, we might begin to start thinking of traumatic post-memory not simply as a space of remembrance but more particularly as a space in which commemorative practices enable personal and collective attachments to events that exercise a profound influence on the way we understand ourselves in relation to historical events and their expansive cast of characters—including survivors, witnesses, bystanders, commentators, perpetrators, collaborators, and even other 'untouched' audiences who have been similarly excluded from the event in question. This leads into the second point, which is that the representation of Artie's mother Anja in Spiegelman's text opens us up to the possibility that the centrality implied by the term "post-memorial generation" is itself a fragile construction, subject to splitting and creating the possibility of different post-memorial generations of witnesses that mutually shape and constrain each other's tasks of mourning the lost world and re-imagining it under a new set of pressures.

In light of these two points, I want to offer a minor corrective to Michael G. Levine's guiding metaphor of hemorrhaging in his readings of *Maus* in the article "Necessary Stains." The trope of hemorrhaging Levine recognizes in the subtitle of the first volume—"My Father Bleeds History"—and the particular view of the Shoah accompanying it—as imparting an excessive and unmanageable legacy to subsequent generations—is actually counter-balanced by a view of Artie as both a site of inheritance *and* re-creation. His interventions, however

problematic or insufficient, provide a strong representational tourniquet to manage the blunt trauma of the Holocaust.

Together, these comments about the discursivity and narrativity of post-memory, and their manifestations in the graphic novel by Art Spiegelman, offer a more inclusive understanding of the ethics of literary imagination. In fact, it should be added that the encounter with the worlds of others, constituted by encounters with the literary and expressions of literary regeneration, is a constitutive part of the post-memorial experience. These encounters are, for critics like Martha Nussbaum, bound up in a wide range of ethical attitudes. She explains in *Cultivating Humanity* that the

> narrative imagination is an essential preparation for moral interaction. Habits of empathy and conjecture conduce to a certain type of citizenship and a certain form of community: one that cultivates a sympathetic responsiveness to another's needs, and understands the way circumstances shape those needs, while respecting separateness and privacy. This is so because of the way in which literary imagining both inspires intense concern with the fate of characters and defines those characters as containing a rich inner life, not all of which is open to view; in the process, the reader learns to have respect for the hidden contents of that inner world, seeing its importance in defining a creature as fully human. (90)

While Nussbaum's explication of an imaginative potential, fuelled and shaped by literary texts, is geared toward a larger argument about the need and value of the humanities in the modern world, her thoughts illuminate one of the central questions that continue to dog scholars of post-memory. Her account of literature—literature that excites within us a compassion for the Other and a respect for its boundaries—allows us to think more succinctly about the value of other people's stories—and, in many cases, other people's material or performative texts—as we build our own lives and negotiate the challenges of our globalized world. And as the post-memorial witness builds her own life and navigates a world she shares not with the Other but with many

others, her contemplation and subsequent recreation of a world lost to her is precisely the occasion upon which she can start fulfilling these humanistic wishes.

Nussbaum's conception of the narrative imagination, furthermore, intersects with the works of literature that claim history as a space in which the imaginative potential can be properly fulfilled. Though the graphic novel by Art Spiegelman is a hybrid text that relies upon both narrative and image to condense its ethical conscience to poetic formulations and haunting provocations, it nevertheless takes its place alongside the historical novels by Pat Barker, Bernhard Schlink, and Joy Kogawa. As post-modern recreations of historical events, these texts flourish in the late 20th century and refashion the historical experiences of survivors and direct witnesses from the first half of the century without allowing the literary imagination to be spoken for by historical record or collective memory. In fact, the genre of historical fiction, particularly as it evolves in the contemporary moment, becomes increasingly bound up the same questions that animate historiographic projects that aim to uncover the narrative mechanisms by which we render isolated facts or certain forms of knowledge intelligible and part of an ongoing story.

Yet the prevalence of historical fiction at the end of the 20th century takes on concerns of its own. Recognizing the limitations and distortions that 19th century models of historical fiction have popularized, theorist Hayden White writes in *Figural Realism* that

> the Holocaust…is [not] any more unrepresentable than any other event in human history. It is only that its representation, whether in history or in fiction, requires the kind of style, the modernist style, that was developed in order to represent the kind of experiences which social modernism made possible. (42)

White's concern here is that both history and fiction, in their continued effort to reflect some lived sense of historical reality, must resist the cultural inertia that would reduce and simplify the past to a series of clichéd expressions and dead metaphors. His comments here are worth

considering in the context of post-memorial recreations of disaster, which expose us to new and innovative ways of thinking about the past—particularly in the context of a newly emerging generation of witnesses with intimate but distant relations to disaster. What we will see in the post-memories by Barker, Schlink, and Kogawa, as a result, are examples of a rapidly evolving historical novel that, in the words of José de Piérola, "[sustains] and [creates] a constant tension between history and fact…a potential truth which in turn produces in the reader a historiographical consciousness, the awareness that the historical record is amendable, partial and ultimately written in the present" (157).

Concluding Notes: Ethical Feeling

I have attempted in the preceding sections to outline the various entanglements that prevent us from developing a clearly delineated view of post-memorial ethics, one that is inclusive of the irreversible distances and rhetorics of intimacy that inevitably emerge in post-memorial recreations of and engagements with disaster. To this end, I have suggested that we reframe Marianne Hirsch's account of an ethics of post-memorial attachment that hinges solely on an awareness of and respect for the Other, and adopt a view in which the Other is placed in conversation with a logic of approach. In this way, we must insist upon an ethics of Otherness that calls into account the various forms of intimacy and proximity that are engendered in the response to Otherness that lies at the heart of post-memorial ethical experience. I have also suggested paying attention to the critical poetics of post-memorial literature that use specific rhetorical figures and affective pathways of identification to achieve, in narrative, those various forms of intimacy and proximity with lost worlds of devastation.

Consequently, it is essential to consider an ethical framework for post-memory that accommodates to a much greater degree the prominence of ethical feeling, or affect. Affect, in general, is a multi-valent term that cannot be adequately generalized into a mere definition. However, I am relying on cues from particular theorists of affect theory to direct my inquiry into the post-memorial sphere of ethics. The first comes from Teresa Brennan, who opens her book *The Transmission of Affect* with a provocative anecdote about the general atmosphere of events that allows subjects to literally *feel* affected. In her reference to anxiety, she says: "If I feel anxiety when I enter the room, then that will influence what I perceive or receive by way of an 'impression'" (6). She goes on to define what she means by the titular term itself:

> I am using the term "transmission of affect" to capture a process that is social in origin but biological and physical in effect. The origin of transmitted affects is social in that these affects do not only arise within a particular person but also come from without. They come via an interaction with other people and an environment. But they have a physiological impact. By the transmission of affect, I mean simply that the emotions or affects of one person, and the enhancing or depressing energies these affects entail, can enter into another. (3)

This situational and inter-subjective view of an embodied subject, affected by a transferrable mood or passion, seems particularly apt for the post-memorial witness. The witness's task, after all, is to forge an ethical connection to remote disaster using only the traces and vestiges of an originating trauma from which she has been spared, or perhaps the testimony of those in her inner circle who are cursed with a first-hand knowledge she will never have. In those moments of exchange, it seems that the ethical awakening that brings the remote witness into an imagined scene of disaster can have palpable consequences on the way that witness addresses a particular lack or displacement in her own experience of identity—including the familiar refrains repeated

by Hirsch herself, as a member of the post-genocidal generation, who *felt* saved yet excluded, safe yet terribly guilty for escaping disaster.

The second cue comes from Sara Ahmed, who argues in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* that experiences of pain which theorists of trauma often use in their search for and valorization of identity—as the privileged site of lack or the target of some kind of restorative intervention—are constrictive and ultimately unfair. She argues that

> the transformation of the wound into an identity is problematic. One of the reasons that it is problematic is precisely because of its fetishism: the transformation of the wound into an identity cuts the wound off from a history of 'getting hurt' or injured. It turns the wound into something that simply 'is' rather than something that has happened in time and space. The fetishisation of the wound as a sign of identity is crucial to 'testimonial culture'… in which narratives of pain and injury have proliferated …Furthermore, narratives of collective suffering increasingly have a global dimension…some forms of suffering more than others will be repeated, as they can more easily be appropriated as 'our loss.'" (32)

Critiquing this 'testimonial culture' for its elevation of the wound, she makes room for the role of embodied pain and duress that emerges as a result of witnessing those who endure it directly: "the impossibility of feeling the pain of others does not mean that the pain is simply theirs, or that their pain has nothing to do with me. I want to suggest here…that an ethics of responding to pain involves bring open to being affected by that which one cannot know or feel" (30).

In a sense, Ahmed is making a similar claim that Luigi Pirandello wanted us to embrace a century earlier, when his play *Six Characters in Search of an Author* displayed a family steeped in a traumatic experience they had no choice but to compulsively re-live. The characters were caught in a similar space outside history, a space of compulsive and traumatic repetition of events and a fetishization of injury that led them to be judged, at each performance, based on a

single moment in their lives.[12] The real potential for ethical offense, in Ahmed's view, emerges when these experiences of pain are reduced to a common language of commodification and consumption. She goes on in the book to discuss the dangers of normalizing different gradations and experiences of suffering. These normalized experiences are then transformed into "entitlement…[that] then [becomes] equally available to all others," (32) resulting in a political climate in which "more privileged subjects will have a greater recourse to narratives of injury" (33) in the public domain.

It is perhaps for these reasons why Marianne Hirsch insists upon a continued and honest effort on behalf of the post-memorial generation to respect the suffering of the primary witnesses to disaster while simultaneously recognizing her own suffering—which, granted, resonates on a different register but nevertheless makes its appearances on the map. There may be some initial credence to these concerns. In the first instance, the gravity of initial traumatization must be retained and respected, without any attempt on the part of the belated witness to lay claim to that failed experience. As Emmanuel Levinas reminds us in his essay "Useless Suffering," political traumas endured by first-hand survivors targeted the Jews as a minority population that needed to be extinguished, as part of a perverted logic according to which the persecution of the few would serve the good and even the betterment of the many. His characterization of Jewish suffering, consequently, relies on the notion of a lived experience of suffering that can be equated with an extreme form of passivity. His characterization of suffering marks a resounding distinction between the types of anguish experienced by the protected and the devastated: "suffering, in its hurt and its in-spite-of-consciousness, is passivity…a submission; and even a submission to the submitting, since the 'content' of which the aching consciousness is conscious is precisely this

[12] The Mother of the play articulates the central frustration of this aesthetic construction in which she is trapped: "My anguish is not over…I am alive and present all the time and in every moment of my anguish which renews itself, alive and always present" (51).

very adversity of suffering, its hurt." He goes on to say that suffering is not merely a revocation or delimiting of one's freedom, but rather, an "evil which rends the humanity of the suffering person…[and] overwhelms his humanity…violently and cruelly, more irremissibly than the negation which dominates or paralyzes the act in non-freedom" (157). There is thus a marked distinction between the quality and degree of suffering endured by survivors and other victims of the camps, for instance, and those whose own anguish about relating to the Shoah from positions of temporal and geographic safety stems from inherited "wounds of silence," to quote Nadine Fresco. For Levinas, the experience of suffering is comparable to and even worse than passivity in the pedestrian sense because of its fundamentally irrecuperable and overwhelming character.

While ethical concerns like this must be held in view, I want to suggest that even Levinas, in his sacralization of first-hand suffering, presents a potentially useful language of affect in which to represent the anguish—and, indeed, the suffering—of post-genocidal generations, without conflating them with the suffering of those whose pain we will never know. Put simply, the emphasis, not on a traumatized Other but on an Other—and a witness to that Other—who both suffer, can be very powerful. This view offers a potential continuity between indexical and non-indexical relations to disaster, without mitigating or instrumentalizing the agony of the survivors to the concerns of the protected generation. In effect, it suggests that suffering, too, can be seen as an affect with tremendous potential to awaken ethical attitudes and behaviors, even for protected witnesses and post-genocidal generations. As Jules Simon argues in his critique of Levinas, we from a distance must cultivate ways of discerning the suffering of the other and approaching it properly:

> Levinas's ethically informed phenomenology provides us with a resource for a restrained but expressive way of accounting for the empirical fact that an other suffers and that in our communications we can perceive traces of the palpability of that suffering.

> Accustoming ourselves to detecting these traces is not an easy or formulaic process, however, and is counter to the learned responses normally associated with our most familiar ethical orientations…The Levinasian demand is a demand for personal, intimate, and responsible involvement in the life of another. If I merely indicate or point out as an impartial, third-person observer "that one [sic] suffering over there," I succumb to the temptation to replicate the indifferent impersonality of traditionally reified forms of language, relying on the familiar patterns of stereotyping, objectifying, and thus being tempted to utilize the suffering one for my own personal agenda. (134)

Critiques like Simon's lay the groundwork for a critical intervention more suitable to the post-memorial condition—one in which we theorize an alternative model of ethical engagement wedded to the notion of an *approachable* Other, and perhaps many approachable Others. The idea of an approachable Other, however remote or ultimately irreducible, structures the motives and implications that bring the post-memorial witness in close contact with the vestiges of distant traumas. This approach, furthermore, is enacted on a philosophical ground of suffering, shared—however asymmetrically—by both the survivors of and witnesses to trauma.

Consequently, the remainder of this dissertation will outline the various ways these intimate affects will structure the post-memorial engagement with distant traumas, in order to articulate a clear moral position for the generation 'after' disaster. The second chapter will explore a particular form of intimacy heralded by the imaginative, generational, and dialogic encounters of belated witnesses with the Other that structure Pat Barker's World War I-themed novel *Regeneration*, the first novel in her famous Great War trilogy. The intimacy of response and the delicate binary between speech and listening are at stake in the ethical trajectory of the novel's main character, Barker's own fictionalization of historical figure Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, a Freudian psychiatrist who wrestles with his own relationship to both a war from which he is shielded and a culture of masculinity from which he hides. A man who suffers from nervous

stammering himself, Rivers squelches his own suffering—and the moral qualms inciting that anxiety—through his conversations and therapeutic programs with soldiers who have been traumatized in the trenches and now suffer from various degrees of mutism. These efforts represent his attempt to engage with the Otherness of the trenches from which he, as a member of the war machine and a leading figure of the generation responsible for international chaos, is conveniently protected. This reading of the novel presupposes an ability not of the Other to speak, but of Rivers himself to listen to the silences accruing around the Other. By focusing more on his feelings of insulation, which are shaped by irresponsible articulations of a feeling of generational protection, his encounters with the Otherness of trauma compel him into a heightened state of affectivity and attention. They awaken in him the need to look at the war through the eyes of those who suffer its consequences.

The third chapter outlines the various forms of erotic intimacy that emerge when a young law student falls in love with a former Nazi camp guard. Bernhard Schlink's novel *The Reader* dramatizes the *erotic* intimacy that emerges in a post-memorial witness's task to assign and personally bear responsibility for a scene of devastation in which he had no direct hand in shaping. The eroticization of the Other through a series of seductive encounters with a perpetrator from the camps allows the belated witness to re-animate his desire and sensitivity in a world in which shock and awe potentially rob him of his ability to engage fully in that reconstructed world. As I will argue, the novel reveals that even love is a condition to which we choose to expose ourselves, and erotic love, in particular, becomes a metaphor of post-memorial engagements with a past that is not fully accessible to us.

The fourth and final chapter of the dissertation looks at specific types of intimacy that emerge through the rhetoric of *habitation* with the Other in Joy Kogawa's novel *Obasan*, about

Japanese dislocation in Canada following World War II. When a Canadian post-memorial witness engages with an immediate trauma that infiltrates her own landscape and disrupts her sense of belonging to and identity within a national community, she discovers a responsibility to the memory of her missing mother, who perished in the distant traumas of atomic bombing in Japan. By demarcating a space and a landscape she calls home, and finding a place in which to live, however uncomfortably, with the Otherness of her own immediate trauma and the distant trauma that claimed her mother, the witness in Kogawa's novel shows us what it means to co-exist in a relation of irreducible otherness.

● Chapter 2 ●

Conversing with the Other:
Post-Memorial Dialogism and the Voices of a (Lost) Generation

Introductory Notes: Avant Moi, Le Déluge

I argue in the introductory chapter that an ethics of post-memory requires, first and foremost, a consideration of the unique responsibility issuing from a position of remote witnessing. This position is defined by both a necessary distance from an event and a vital (if imagined) proximity to it, enacted through various modes of dialogic, affective, and habitational approach. Often, this responsibility compels the post-memorial witness to cultivate a personal relation to trauma in an effort toward self-understanding. And in so doing, the witness puts herself at risk, possibly indulging in a series of counter-productive or misguided attitudes and agendas against which Marianne Hirsch warns us. These mis-maneuvers include appropriating the voice of lost witnesses, lending intelligibility and representability to a horrific experience that cannot be contained by those forms, and possibly equating the anguish of the protected generation with the often enduring suffering of the devastated populations.

Contemporary writers working in the shadow of the Holocaust and other historical trauma therefore enact specific approaches to the Other within familial contexts. In *Maus*, for instance, Artie the son collects and occasions his father's traumatic testimony about a world of devastation the child never knew first-hand. This alternative view of responsibility, however, enjoins post-memory to a model of the family unit as the primary social structure that shapes memory into a publicly accessible and mediated form. This emphasis on family dynamics often obscures coinciding anxieties about displacement emerging out of other social formulations of the post-memorial experience. The most significant example of these overlooked formulations is

one that I have been using throughout the project thusfar—the post-memorial *generation*, or the generation that awakens to cultural consciousness 'after' disaster. While the family narratives that emerge in the work of Marianne Hirsch, Ernst van Alphen, and others are directed inward, in order to reshape and possibly restore a painfully incomplete familial narrative, these restorative attempts are often undergirded in subtle but powerful ways by the enunciation of a generational identity—and, coincident with it, a generational memory shared by people linked horizontally by a similar set of cultural reference points and historical events. This enunciation, furthermore, can disrupt the post-memorial witness's ability and occasion to attach herself to elusive trauma with morally responsible motives and ends in mind.

However, I do not want to insist that generational belonging in its abstract form is simply a generic obstacle that prevents post-memorial witnesses from cultivating imaginative and morally responsible attachments to trauma. What I will demonstrate instead is that the individual who witnesses herself as part of a generational cohort must *announce* herself authentically and inhabit that space of identity *responsibly*. This means, in the first instance, that she must preserve her own voice, even from remote locations in time and space. In this way, she will bear out the implications of Saul Friedlander's claim that speaking out, invoking personal histories amid a growing public record of experiences, is part of a collective process of working through. He explains that

> the reintroduction of individual memory into the overall representation of the epoch also implies the use of direct or indirect expressions of contemporary individual experience. *Working through means confronting the individual voice* in a field dominated by political decisions and administrative decrees. (262)

And in the second instance, she must make sure that her voice never speaks 'for' an Other who no longer has the privilege or opportunity to speak. This ethical snag means many things to

many theorists, but here I invoke the resounding words of Geoffrey Galt Harpham, who encourages us to be mindful of the potential chasm that bifurcates all ethical priorities:

> the two questions that dominate ethical inquiry—How ought one to live? and What ought I to do?—suggest incommensurable points of view…obedience to one kind of imperative alone would be—unethical. To consider only the point of view of "one," for example, would be to make oneself inhuman, a brain in a vat; while the absolute refusal to consider that point of view, to think only through the "I," would suggest a personality almost inconceivably self-absorbed… (395)

This "incommensurability" compels us to think about ethics inter-subjectively as an ongoing negotiation between the demands of the "I" and the demands of the Other.

In addition, this sensitivity to both the witnesses on the sidelines and the ghosts hovering above forms the ethical consciousness of Pat Barker's World War I-themed novel *Regeneration* (1991). More than the other two novels of her World War I trilogy, *Regeneration* positions the violence of a linguistically remote trauma—the devastation of the Great War, as well as the carefully policed narratives of patriotism, political conformity, and hetero-normative masculinity—squarely within the generational cohort, and not the family unit.[13] Harpham's caveat now haunts us even more. It makes us acknowledge the potential violence of misguided forms of generational belonging, particularly as it ravages the primary figure of post-memorial protection—Dr. Rivers, the resident psychiatrist of Craiglockhart War Hospital in Scotland. Rivers must conform to state-sanctioned protocol and devise compatible treatment regimes so that the continuous barrage of shell-shocked soldiers coming in from the trenches can return more easily to fight the morally questionable Great War. In the process, he must bear witness to

[13] I describe World War I as a "linguistically remote" trauma, for Rivers because I want to echo Elaine Scarry's statement in *The Body in Pain* that depictions of violence rely on a set of linguistic representations that are "increasingly severed from material substance" (135). As a displaced witness to disaster, Rivers must engage with the traumas of the trenches only by virtue of the shell-shocked soldiers returning from the front. Though he is instrumental in helping them retrieve their ability to speak, he is subjected to tangible political pressures compelling him to remain silent and complicit in the perpetuation of war. The Great War, then, becomes an enforced trauma which he is not allowed to condemn.

the institutional slaughter of a younger generation sacrificing itself on the front that he refuses to imagine, and from which he wants to retreat.[14]

To this end, I will spend the remainder of this chapter looking closely at Barker's novel, which bears out the implications—traumatic as well as palliative—of a generation's own experience of moral quandary and muted protest, particularly as they are depicted during the last year of World War I. First, I will identify the various ethical snags that emerge in Rivers's problematic feelings of generational belonging—feelings that rely on an initial valorization of distance *over* proximity, a distance that ultimately protects men of Rivers's generation and consequently asks men of his patients' generation to make the ultimate sacrifice. In this way, he sets himself apart from men like Siegfried Sassoon, Rivers's famous patient and World War I poet, who belongs to the generation that makes the biggest and morally questionable sacrifice for the war. I will then demonstrate the importance of dialogue and 'talk therapy,' key components in Rivers's ideologically questionable treatment regime, in combating the moral violence of the good doctor's conception of generational identity. Furthermore, this emphasis on dialogism—which is indebted to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and Cathy Caruth—allows us to see how the post-memorial witness need not belong to a generation 'after' disaster in order to attach himself to it. I will end this chapter with a consideration of the symbolic importance of Rivers's only patient not adapted from historical record—a genuine *character* named Billy Prior, through

[14] Though Pat Barker dramatizes Rivers's work as a psychiatrist at Craiglockhart, he is historically renowned for his contributions to anthropology. According to a eulogy published by J. T. Myres upon Rivers' death in 1922, Rivers was an innovator in the field of methodology: "As early as the Torres Strait Expedition, Rivers had given proof of his scrupulous ingenuity in research by his use of what is generally known as the 'genealogical method' for the analysis of social institutions, and the precise description of unfamiliar systems of relationships" (15). The importance of this method is underlined by historians like Ian Langham, who notes that Rivers's "genealogical method" was a widely acknowledged and accepted form of ethnographic study before Bronislaw Malinowski ushered in a paradigm shift with his views about participant observation and field research. See the "Introduction" of *The Building of British Social Anthropology: W. H. R. Rivers and His Cambridge Disciples in the Development of Kinship Studies, 1989-1931*.

whom the good doctor begins to see how important it is to engage, imaginatively and affectively, with the war that conveniently spares him.

Generational Insincerity

The category of the generation offers itself up as a readily available and casually unquestioned theoretical space in which to reshape or rehabilitate fragmentary or incomplete narratives of identity. Because of its pervasive presence in Pat Barker's re-imagined landscape of World War I, the very idea of the generation is linked in the novel to a wide range of irresponsible attitudes and problematic silences about the ironically named Great War. These attitudes and silences, furthermore, are espoused and strained by the novel's primary figure of post-memorial witnessing—Dr. William H. R. Rivers, the neurologist whom Barker revivified from the pages of history and transplanted into her post-memorial recreation of an era quickly receding into the annals of history.

French theorist Pierre Nora draws attention to the peculiar structure of generational belonging in his essay "Generation," from the first volume of *Realms of Memory*. He conjectures that members of a particular generation experience a certain degree of horizontal kinship that emerges as a result of a perceived "sense of lack, something in the nature of a mourning. Generational memory is stocked with remembrances not so much of what its members have experienced as of what they have not experienced" (525). Nora characterizes a generational identity based on the shared 'experience' of dislocation and absence, as well as a will to fashion oneself in the shadow of an experience that must be reconstituted by an imagined sense of lived history.

This is an important reminder of the importance of imaginative work undertaken by a self-identified post-memorial generation. Nora's analysis underscores the need to imaginatively entrench oneself in a cohort whose temporal lines of demarcation are laid down arbitrarily. By drawing attention to the generation's lack of a clear origin and end point, as well as its wavering commitment to include both those born into a particular time period and those maturing within it, Nora takes great pains to 'denaturalize' the category of the generation. He also proclaims in the same essay that the generation is inherently political and articulates itself as such, particularly in the context of French academic and youth cultures of the late 1960s. He is careful to point out that generational identity is a "*violent* affirmation of horizontal identity that suddenly dominates and transcends all forms of vertical solidarity" (503-504, emphasis added)—including the bonds of nation, class, and family lineage, all of which tend to be handed down from the "haves" to the "have-nots" and are often reproduced across time. The violence to which he refers in this definition is reminiscent of Levinas's plea that we do not speak for the Other or reduce it to our prevailing schemes and frames of reference, lest we rob it of its irreducible singularity and alterity. The ethical implications of Nora's deconstruction of the generation seem powerful. To abide by a 'natural' version of the generation—one whose arbitrarily placed borders and unexpectedly violent claims of belonging and solidarity remain unrecognized—is to perpetuate various forms of intellectual, philosophical, and even physical violence to the Other.

With these dangers in full view, it is essential to consider the way Dr. Rivers, as a figure of the post-memorial witness, claims a sense of generational belonging for himself that secures his distance from events over and above his unacknowledged proximity to them. The good doctor begins the novel as a member of a protected generation, but this protection is self-serving

and becomes part of the problem with which he must contend throughout the novel.[15] Because Rivers cannot see the war's overall historical contours or burst free from administrative constraints that force him to rush the soldiers through a proper therapy program, he finds himself displaced from the war. So, too, is he distanced from the patients whose psychic and physical damage he must restore so that they can return to the trenches as incomplete soldiers fighting German military aggression. However, his position as an instrument of the state compels him to approach the ravages of war through his patients' various forms of traumatization, including shell shock, mutism, hallucination, nightmare, and psychosomatic pain. And these encounters are mediated by a clinical dialogism, an historically unprecedented view of therapy that, for better or worse, encourages soldiers to find frames of representation for their devastating experiences in battle.

The constellation of ethical concerns that Barker subsequently sweeps into our view expands across Rivers's horizon and beckons his attention. Should he simply serve the state, even though most of its outspoken critics charge the government with a distinct failure to imagine the horrors into which they continue sending their young men? Can he possibly shift public perception of his patients as ailing men in need of sustained treatment, instead of fodder for, waste from, or detriment to the cause? Ought he participate in a reactionary ideology that casts all outspoken critics of war as either mentally unfit or cowardly?

Yet even more compelling than the questions themselves is the centrality of generational experience that situates Rivers in such a vexed position in the first place. Barker casts Rivers as

[15] Though more than 3 million men volunteered to join the British Armed Forces, the mounting drain on human manpower forced British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith to adopt an official conscription policy in January 1916, first calling for single men, and later married men, to join the war effort. (See pp. 60-61 of Sharon Monteith's *Pat Barker*, Northcote House Publishers, Ltd: Devon, United Kingdom, 2002). Rivers emerges as a liminal figure in this regard. He is an older, single gentleman who has been lifted out of his own profession in order to join the war cause as an army psychiatrist, but his work and reputation allow him to serve in relative safety compared to his younger counterparts.

an authoritative figure in a morality play that consumes its younger generations as a matter of survival on the international stage. She dramatizes Rivers's difficult and not altogether successful approach toward the Other through a series of transformative contemplations in which he recognizes his political apathy and slowly kindles a moral feeling painfully lacking in his post more generally. He does so, furthermore, by awakening in himself a more powerful sensitivity to a series of silences shooting through the novel. These silences include the traumatic silences pervading the testimony of his shell-shocked soldiers; the post-memorial silences collecting around his own muted objections to war and the hyper-oppressive culture of masculinity that morphs into terrifying dream images he must then decipher; and the historical silences that condition the public memory of the Great War as an heroic effort, unencumbered by the troubling legacies of conscientious objection and unconcerned with the violence of authorial representation that he and other official writers of history are accused of perpetuating.

These silences oppress Rivers throughout the novel, but the true extent of their damage rises to the surface during those key moments in the text in which the good doctor assumes a generational identity for himself that is ultimately self-serving and, by all casual accounts, insincere. Through his agonies, Barker conveys the importance of re-defining the generation, liberating it from its close ties to a fixed sociological cohort in the population, and moving it toward the notion of an actively creative process that ultimately allows Rivers to begin the long and beleaguered process of accounting for his own authorial role in the perpetuation and exacerbation of violence that already pervades the international landscape. These generational anxieties, furthermore, throw into stark relief the necessary forms of social engagement that would allow Dr. Rivers to start feeling, quite literally and even more personally, responsible for both the war itself and the inadequate treatment patients under his care at Craiglockhart.

Rivers's fumbling trajectory toward sincerity is sparked ironically by a charge made to him by famous World War I poet-turned-soldier, Siegfried Sassoon. Reproduced in the novel as a genuine historical artifact, Sassoon's historic protest gives an account of the Great War that Rivers can only imagine as a detached and protected reader. Moments before the young soldier's arrival at Craiglockhart, Rivers reads the following:

> I am making this statement as an act of wilful defiance of military authority, because I believe the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it.
>
> I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that this war, upon which I entered as a war of defence and liberation, has now become a war of aggression and conquest…I have seen and endured the suffering of the troops, and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust.
>
> On behalf of those who are suffering now I make this protest against the deception which is being practised on them; also I believe that I may help to destroy the callous complacence with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share, and which they have not sufficient imagination to realize. (3)

The good doctor's inaction and complicity here are heightened by the irony of this opening scene, in which an accusatory textual declaration invites Rivers to imagine the very failure he himself enacts. As he pores over the declaration one moment, and discusses Sassoon's treatment with a colleague the next moment, he cannot achieve the level of self-recognition that the document, quietly but emphatically, asks of him—and, more pointedly, of his generation. Instead, he deflects the document's charges by dwelling on the tacit agreement that would allow Sassoon's objection to be treated as a clinical disorder and not as an act of treason or politically insidious speech. In the process, he refers to the young soldier as a "*de*generate" (4, emphasis

added), a pejorative that raises a more wide scale anxiety about young men who shirk their duty and threaten to tear asunder—literally de-generate—the British social and cultural fabric.[16]

Consequently, Rivers emerges from the outset as the potentially problematic counter-example to Sassoon, whose own engagement with the war explodes in moments of willed "self-dramatization" (250) that are circumscribed by a more socially-oriented generational consciousness.[17] Despite the young soldier's shifting attitudes during the war campaign—from ardent support to outspoken protest, and ultimately, to resigned service—his obligations are ones that he feels for himself and encourages others to adopt. This stands in direct contrast to the way Rivers articulates his own sense of generational belonging. The good doctor's identity emerges according to a form of generational belonging that is far more prescriptive than it is elective, that is projected outward (to younger British soldiers) more intensely than it is internalized, and that relies on the momentum of administrative policy more so than it does on impassioned pleas to counter such normative practices.

This generational consciousness, I want to argue, is an arresting example of the moral problem that underlies Rivers's official collaboration. Charged in the abstact as he is by Sassoon's published condemnation of war, Rivers clings to a protective generational hierarchy in which he savors the privilege of protection and defers the responsibility of sacrifice to the many younger soldiers—more than 700,000 of whom perished and more than 1.5 million of whom

---

[16] This pejorative collects an additional valence when Rivers associates the term with men whose inability to maintain tight control of their emotions causes them to break down (Barker 115). In both of these instances—the conscientious objector, on the one hand, and the emotionally fragile soldier, on the other—the cultural perceptions of stigma and pathology are framed according to the violation of a generational duty. To betray that duty is to literally isolate oneself from his or her generation, and to isolate oneself from that generation is to inhabit that generation irresponsibly.

[17] In the declaration, Sassoon fashions a rhetorical continuity between his previous military service—which he describes as campaigns of "defence and liberation"—and his current protest—which he announces as "an act of wilful defiance of military authority" (3). The point to observe here is not specifically which generation he pledges his allegiance to, but rather, the fact that he fashions a sense of belonging through appeals to both feeling and duty, something he internalizes for himself and encourages others to follow.

returned from the war front mutilated or traumatized by trench warfare.[18] This generational insincerity culminates in a moment of private reflection days later, when Rivers pages through a copy of the aptly titled *Man* and, in a moment of distraction, wishes that he could return to his research in Cambridge and simply "*let* the next generation cope with the unresolved problem of German militarism" (45, emphasis added). Though the wish seems harmless in and of itself, expressed in the privacy of his own chambers after a trying day of rounds, it nevertheless draws attention to his problematic idealization of his own generation. His membership in a privileged cohort allows him to indulge the self-serving desire to shrink from his own moral accountability in the war, fuelled and fed by the lives of the younger generations now under his immediate charge. In this way, he allows himself to cling to what Ferdinand de Saussure might have described as a *synchronous* representation of his own place in the social fabric. That is to say, he secures his position of safety by laying down arbitrary temporal earmarks that have since hardened into seemingly uncontested borders. In so doing, he tries to 'fix' the expected moral duty of *his* generation into place, and in a way that precludes his generation from falling next in line when need for service or sacrifice begins to mount—and when the ranks of younger soldiers begin to thin.

What these moments of self-imposed silence reveal is a structure of apathetic feeling that pervades the administrative classes of a Britain at war. Here, I invoke two terms that may offer important philosophical insights. The first is the feeling of insincerity to which Rivers resigns himself in his official capacity to serve the state. Philosophers like Bernard Williams contend that moral compunctions to do well, to do right by oneself or others, are often accompanied by the need to speak and think sincerely: "sincerity at the most basic level is simply openness, a lack of inhibition. Insincerity requires me to adjust the content of what I say" (75). For Bernard

[18] These figures are published in *The Longman Companion to the First World War* (248).

Williams, the capacity of one to speak against or around her beliefs represents a defining moment of insincerity that, for characters like Rivers, typifies his response to the war. He is an officer of the state, and as such, he is meant to play a particular role in the perpetuation of war.

The second is what Raymond Williams would have identified as a general "structure of feeling" that illuminates the anxieties about submission and complicity expected by men like Rivers who devote their professional service to the cause. We might recall here that in *Marxism and Literature* Williams characterizes a "structure of feeling" as a set of "meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt," and later, as "a social experience which is still *in process*, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which in analysis…has its emergent, connecting, and dominant characteristics" (132). We might say that Barker's depiction of an anguished and irresponsible post-memorial witness, embodied in the novel by the figure of a self-isolating Rivers, evokes a structure of feeling that speaks ironically to a repressive culture of complicity. Because a "structure of feeling" in Williams's analysis is discerned only retroactively as an "emergent" and potentially "isolated" sentiment not shared by a culture at large, this feeling of oppression sits heavily on Rivers and manifests through its silence the anxieties of cooperation contained therein.

It is not until the good doctor takes an initial leave of absence from Craiglockhart that he begins to admit, even if only to himself, the troubling sacrifice he has been asking of his young soldiers as an administrator. During a trip home to the family farm, Rivers contemplates the damage he has been causing as a result of the insincerities and distances perpetuated by the very idea of a 'protected' generation. His contemplation occurs, once again, over a particular text that jars comparisons with his own life. The first moment emerges in the middle of a sermon when he finds himself staring intently at a plate-glass window depicting the iconic scene from the *Book*

of Genesis, during which God commands Abraham to sacrifice his only living son Isaac as a demonstration of his faith and fidelity to God.

A century earlier, this scene had been famously lauded by Søren Kierkegaard in *Fear and Trembling* as a demonstration of absolute faith, and of Abraham himself as a "knight of faith" who willingly exceeds the laws of morality and reinvigorates the piety of his day with a passionate fear and palpable trembling.[19] Rivers, however, in the quietude of his own fear, has a dramatically different take on that episode. He frames the guilt of his own inaction and bureaucratic complicity as a violation of that sacred bargain and a breaking of the circuit of inheritance that would preserve both a free English state and a free citizenry that would live long enough to one day receive it:

> *The* bargain, Rivers thought, looking at Abraham and Isaac. The one on which all patriarchal societies are founded. If you, who are young and strong, will obey me, who am old and weak, even to the extent of being prepared to sacrifice your life, then in the course of time you will peacefully inherit, and be able to exact the same obedience from your sons. Only we're breaking the bargain, Rivers thought. All over northern France, at this very moment, in trenches and dugouts and flooded shell-holes, the inheritors were dying, not one by one, while old men, and women of all ages, gathered together and sang hymns. (149)

Not surprisingly, Rivers's typological comparison between the mythic reality of the Old Testament and the political future of an England beset by war allows him to begin contemplating the violence of his service. Condemned to follow state policies and timelines, even at the

[19] Kierkegaard lauds Abraham "[f]or God's sake, and (in complete identity with this) for his own sake. He did it for God's sake because God required this proof of his faith; for his own sake he did it in order that he might furnish the proof…the story of Abraham contains therefore a teleological suspension of the ethical. As the individual he became higher than the universal: this is the paradox which does not permit of mediation. It is just as inexplicable how he got into it as it is inexplicable how he remained in it…a man can become a tragic hero by his own powers—but not a knight of faith…to him who follows the narrow way of faith no one can give counsel, him no one can understand. Faith is a miracle, and yet no man is excluded from it…faith is a passion" (16-17). This laudatory view of Abraham, furthermore, emerges out of Kierkegaard's understanding of the poverty of religious worship that he observed in his day: "The present age is fundamentally one of prudence and reflection, without passion, momentarily bursting into enthusiasm, and shrewdly relapsing into repose" (3).

expense of valuable human manpower, Rivers acknowledges the strange congruity between his own situation and that of Abraham. In the process, he exposes the bad faith underpinning his own generation's need to exact unquestioning and ultimately silencing compliance from younger British citizens.[20] In this manner, the binding of Isaac marks an important potential shift in self-understanding for Rivers. This potential awakening, however, is not a religious one but a philosophical one that relates to the way he sees himself and his generational duty. He begins to castigate himself for perpetuating the violence of a synchronous generational identity, one that had allowed him to rationalize his own wish for isolation and distance himself from the battlefields, which presumably fall under the charge of the younger men.[21]

In this moment, he begins fumbling toward a more *diachronous* generational identity, one that acknowledges both the fluidity of temporal boundaries that would otherwise separate one cohort from another, and the opening of ethical hinterlands he previously attributed to the younger generations of soldiers. And insofar as his interpretation of Abraham and Isaac is an expression of his own guilt and helplessness, Rivers intuits the need to inhabit a generational identity that creates less hierarchically arranged spaces of witnessing—especially those that clearly soften the blow for him or exacerbate the soldiers' suffering.

The typology inspired by the binding of Isaac leads into a second moment of doubt in which Rivers continues to question the nature of his generational authority—this time, more

---

[20] Here, I am indebted to the work of existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, who argues in *Being and Nothingness* that bad faith "attempts…to constitute myself as being what I am not. It apprehends me positively as courageous when I am not so. And that is possible…only if I am what I am not" (Solomon 238). In other words, and within the context of Barker's generational politics, Rivers represents a man who conforms to the expectations and privileges collecting around his own generational identity; this conformity allows him to deny his own capacity to become more invested in the culture of protest for which his patient, Siegfried Sassoon, is vilified.

[21] The importance of this scene is underscored by its recurrence in the third book of Barker's trilogy, *The Ghost Road.* In a crucial flashback scene, Rivers recalls an anthropological expedition to Melanesia, during which he observed the violent custom of illegitimate boys who were sacrificed by their adoptive fathers with a violent swing of the club to the head. Interestingly, Rivers tries to comfort himself with the fiction that European culture would never descend into such barbarity, given the miraculous resolution of the famous story of the binding of Isaac. See page 104.

squarely within (displaced) family contexts that he must subsequently re-imagine. Days later during the same visit, as he inspects the physical space of his family study, he must navigate the jarring strains of memory unleashed by the various objects in the room. This space is populated with familiar reminders of his childhood home of Knowles Bank, rearranged and recontextualized into a new setting no longer familiar to him. Among those objects is another Biblical representation, this time taken from the New Testament—a painting with which he has been familiar since childhood, depicting the Apostles at Pentecost immediately after receiving the gift of tongues (153).

The content of the painting is worth noting here, as it prepares us for the importance of language, dialogue, and voice that later beckons Rivers into a more properly ethical relation to the disasters of World War I. This artistic rendering of a miraculous scene of divinely inspired speech and understanding from the *Book of Acts* dramatizes the potential of a foreign idiom to proliferate amongst the apostles. Unlike the comparable scene of linguistic confusion in *Genesis* 11, in which God "[confounded] the language of all the earth" and scattered the descendants of the Great Flood across the earth—and away from the incomplete city of Babel—this scene depicts a restoration of humanity, by virtue of divine gift, to what Walter Benjamin describes as "pure language."[22] In so doing, He fills the mouths of the apostles with the voice of the Other while simultaneously translating an incomprehensible language into the recognizable idioms of the gathered audience. And though the reference itself marks the baptism of the apostles into the

[22] Benjamin writes in "The Task of the Translator" that "[i]t is the task of the translator to release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in a re-creation of his work" (80). This emphasis on imprisoned language parallels Rivers's own agreement to stay silent regarding the moral offenses of war and his own complicity in perpetuating a culture of extreme and violent sacrifice. His contemplation of the painting, consequently, functions analogously to an act of translation in which an idealized language of understanding—one that is not encumbered by political allegiances—emerges, finally.

spiritual reality of the Holy Spirit, the painting itself, as a memento from Rivers's childhood, calls him forward to weigh the gravity of his silence.

For the moment, however, he resists commentary. Instead, he lingers over his own disengagement, brought about by a generational gap structured by a lost paternal relationship:

> And yet, Rivers thought…the relationship between father and son is never simple, and never over. Death certainly doesn't end it. In the past year he'd thought more about his father than he'd done since he was a child. Only recently it had occurred to him that if some twelve-year-old boy had crept up to his window at Craiglockhart, as he'd done to his father's window at Knowles Bank, he'd have seen a man sitting at a desk with his back to the window, listening to some patient…Only that boy would not have been his son.
>
> The unfinished letter to Siegfried lay on the desk. (155-6)

The image here of the interrupted patrilineal family line underscores the repressive nature of a patriarchal generational logic based on obedience and inheritance, in whose hollow mantras the war is currently being waged—and not just waged, but also *prolonged*.

Rivers figures this revelation with the appearance of an un-named, purely imaginary boy of twelve who plays an important dual role. On the one hand, the boy is a figuration of the son he never had; he therefore becomes a synecdoche of a future England to which the childless doctor cannot lay biological, natural, or familial claim. Professionally esteemed, and yet without a son and heir of his own, Rivers conjures the figure of the boy in order to find a palpable representation on which to project his anxieties about his possible future placelessness.[23] Yet on the other hand, the boy also appears to bring Rivers back to a pre-lapsarian moment in his own childhood, spying on a father who may have had his back turned away from him.

What appears at first glance as an ordinary reverie about an imaginary twelve-year-old boy that may or may not represent him at an early stage in life, now opens for Rivers a symbolic

[23] Barker's second novel in the trilogy, *The Eye in the Door* (1993), suggests that Rivers's presumed homosexuality makes him fall out of step in yet another fundamental way with convention portraits of British masculinity.

space of post-memorial witnessing. Within this space, he is able to see with increased clarity both his shameful detachment from and vicarious re-entrenchment within a world of devastation, a world he has had a significant hand in shaping. I use the word "shameful" here because it resonates with Sara Ahmed's characterization of it as an ethically charged affect that can lead to recognitions of wrong-doing and feelings of self-recrimination: "[s]hame can be described as an intense and painful sensation that is bound up with how the self feels about itself, a self-feeling that is felt by and on the body" (103). As a reluctant collaborator in a country seized by war, he is asked to de-sensitize himself to the accusatory, penetrating gaze of a child he imaginatively produces here—much like the ghostly figure of young Isaac who, falling victim to Abraham's wrath in Wilfred Owen's revision of the binding of Isaac, condemns the murderous old man with one final, silent gaze.[24] Yet as an uncomfortable and disempowered observer of war and its manifold devastations he is unable to successfully treat, Rivers projects an image from his own imagination onto a setting in which he finally sees himself—with his back turned from a projection of his own moral conscience.

By the end of his rumination, Rivers has rationalized to himself that any professional authority he wields at Craiglockhart, any testimony he collects from his shell-shocked patients, is certain to be challenged by the possibility of reciprocal response, that his own turmoil can surface just as easily and level the proverbial playing field between doctor and patient, administrator and servant. Though the painting of the gift of tongues evokes a promise that remains unfulfilled by the end of the scene—the gift of communication, of contact with another through the divine mastery of the other's language, which culminates at the end of the reverie in

[24] Here, I am referring to Owen's famous poem "Parable of the Old Man and the Young," whose final rhymed couplet effectively reverses the story of Abraham and Isaac in a way that evokes a structure of un-feeling and a language of carnage brought out by images of military defense and ruthless bloodlust: "Abram bound the youth with belts and straps/and builded parapets and trenches there…the old man…slew his son/and half the seed of Europe, one by one."

a letter to Sassoon that Rivers has been unable to complete this whole time—the appearance of the twelve-year-old boy in Rivers's conscience-stricken imagination occasions something just as valuable. He begins to make good on the charges of failed imagination and moral laxity that had been leveled against him in the opening pages of the novel. He begins to actively seek out spaces of witnessing that encourage a more relativistic position to war and its discontents.

The birth of an ethical twinge conveyed in this scene is reminiscent of Giorgio Agamben's discussion of the figure of the abject *Muselmann* in *Remnants of Auschwitz.* Agamben, of course, moves beyond the question of mere apathy or guilt, and identifies the *Muselmann* as an extreme *limit* case of suffering in which humanity is reduced to its non-human other—a figure that is "defined by a loss of all will and consciousness" (45). He goes on to say that "in Auschwitz ethics begins precisely at the point where the *Muselmann*, the 'complete witness,' makes it forever impossible to distinguish between man and non-man" (47).

Yet this figure, in whose "disfigured face" (52) camp prisoners recognize themselves—this figure whose very disfiguration prompts those prisoners to avert their gaze—bears an uncanny similarity to the imaginary boy of Rivers's reverie. In his spectral image the good doctor finally confronts his own gnawing fear—the image of his own averted gaze. In this moment of moral awakening, during which Rivers harnesses the power of his imagination and confronts his own aversion, head on, he ironically fulfills the sentiment with which J. L. Myres ends his eulogy of the historic Dr. Rivers, quoted earlier: *si monumentum quaeris, prospice*—if you seek a monument, look ahead. For Rivers, who is looking for a structure in which to finally announce his generational insincerity, he manipulates his imagination in order to do just that.

As a result, the stultifying generational identity to which Rivers clings slowly takes on a diachronous fluidity—one that compels him to recognize, if not act upon, the fact that the

sacrifice of the 'other' generation is a sacrifice that affects him, too—profoundly and immediately. This need for proximity and a resuscitation of self in the face of the other become even more explicit after Rivers meets Sassoon for an informal luncheon at the Conservative Club. The following meditation reveals that he can no longer retain the momentum of blind duty that had carried him thusfar:

> At one point Siegfried had said, 'I'm beginning to feel used up.' You could understand it. He'd suffered repeated bereavements in the last two years, as first one contemporary then another died. In some ways the experience of these young men paralleled the experience of the very old. They looked back on intense memories and felt lonely because there was nobody left alive who'd been there. That habit of Siegfried's of looking back, the inability to envisage any kind of future, seemed to be getting worse. (118)

Though Sassoon had characterized his own suffering as a feeling of being 'used up,' Rivers projects his own experience of aging—and the "bereavement" that may follow—onto his young patient, and appropriates in turn the feeling of being sacrificed that the older guard had reserved for its younger servicemen. In this way, Rivers likewise begins to show difficulties "[*envisaging*] any kind of future." Not only is he increasingly unable to exercise his imagination in the direction of officially sanctioned goals, but he is also starting to recognize that the death of an entire generation of young soldiers fighting a perpetual war is making it next to impossible to pin a face, any face, onto the future. Furthermore, his constant retreats into a generational insincerity provokes in Rivers a series of disturbing nightmares in which the face of the Other—that privileged site upon which our responsibility to others is awakened and given an undeniable gravity—is progressively de-faced; so much so, in fact, that he can no longer "envisage" the future.

The ethical import of this scene collects primarily around the doctor's proximity to the young soldier and the many like him that enter the confines of Craiglockhart. Because Rivers

inches toward a diachronous generational identity, one that requires him to actively cultivate the reference points that bond him to those he must treat, he becomes part of an ethical portrait that departs from the strict Levinasian model of a face-to-face encounter with an irreducible Other. Though he does not experience the traumas of the trenches that snag his patients into sometimes unending cycles of psycho-somatic disturbance, he nevertheless confronts the possibility that his actions and expertise are being instrumentalized in ways that perpetuate his patients' suffering and effectively limit his ability to treat them. In this way, he enters into a circuit of moral reckoning that accommodates notions of responsibility based increasingly on proximity, self-awareness, and, in the tradition of his own talk therapy, frequent and open dialogic encounters with the Other.

This tension—between a responsibility based on an infinite call by the Other, and a responsibility forged out of what Alain Badiou would call a logic of the Same[25]—also manifests itself as a conflicting narrative about temporality more generally. Rivers finds himself hard pressed to maneuver through the professional impasse that pits his administrative duty to keep the war machine running against a relatively more humane compunction to help shell-shocked soldiers work through their trauma. Nor was he able to fulfill his own duty in the process as a proper witness to Sassoon's testimony and protest. Part of this difficulty stems from Rivers's temporal positioning—as a member of a professional cohort that rises to cultural influence and shapes policies designed to keep younger generations from enjoying the safety they have claimed for themselves. In addition to the ethical snag underpinning this outward projection of ethical

[25] Badiou writes, contra Levinas, that ethics must transcend questions of the Other because this is a condition we all share, living in a world of others and being so complex as to be an Other even to ourselves. He writes: "Contemporary ethics kicks up a big fuss about 'cultural' differences. Its conception of the 'other' is informed mainly by this kind of differences. Its great ideal is the peaceful coexistence of cultural, religious, and national 'communities', the refusal of 'exclusion.' But what we must recognize is that these differences hold no interest for thought, that they amount to nothing more than the infinite and self-evident multiplicity of humankind, as obvious in the difference between me and my cousin from Lyon as it is between the Shi'ite 'community' of Iraq and the fat cowboys of Texas" (26).

duty, Rivers's function as a witness to the war and its violence is compromised by the fact that the war continues to rage on without an end in sight. This conundrum is reminiscent of Dori Laub's assessment of testimony in "Event Without a Witness" as inherently retroactive. Laub suggests that time must pass, that a general sense of the event's contours must be discernible—and that, consequently, the trauma must stand at a particular temporal remove—in order for primary witnesses to even begin to narrativize their experiences of disaster, however imperfectly. More importantly, that temporal remove is necessary for secondary witnesses—including psychiatrists—who must have some knowledge of an event and its consequences, its afterlife, in order to gauge a primary witness's distortions. In this way, Rivers is unable to use the resources of historical knowledge in order to be the attentive *clinical* figure he needs to be for Sassoon.[26] This, of course, is not to charge Rivers with professional irresponsibility simply because he is counseling people injured in a war that has not yet ended. What this suggests instead is that Rivers must find a way of cultivating his ability to listen to patient testimony, without re-shaping it in ways that suit state goals. Put differently, and reiterating the sentiments of the previous chapter, Rivers must find a way of approaching the Other from whom he has averted his gaze. How to react to such an impasse—and how to speak out about it—becomes the next hurdle he must navigate.

Speaking with the Other

Rivers's failure to provide authentic audience to Sassoon's testimony implicates him in an engagement with otherness that manifests itself not in the production of language, as Levinas would suggest, but rather, in its active suppression. True especially for Rivers, this suppression

[26] It is for this reason why this chapter focuses only on the first novel in Barker's *Regeneration Trilogy.* The second novel in the trilogy, *The Eye in the Door* from 1993, dwells primarily on the years immediately following World War I.

precipitates a crisis in his effort to become a more ethically minded scientist and witness to disaster. As the novel draws to its conclusion, and Rivers approaches what appears at first glance to work as a moment of ethical recognition, we find that the good doctor's dilemmas do not parse neatly into conflicting allegiances to state policy and clinical practice. In fact, after Rivers begins to see the seemingly positive effects of his 'talk therapy' program, it becomes increasingly clear that he accepts responsibility for only a small portion of the decimation he inadvertently causes. Having made significant strides in the treatment of many of his patients, he decides to leave Scottish war hospital Craiglockhart, where under the aegis of his famous 'talk-therapy' program he encouraged shell-shocked soldiers to discuss their experiences on the war front openly and provide a discursive base of representation for trauma that eludes their understanding or possession. He takes a position at the National Hospital for the Paralyzed and Epileptic in London, where famous Canadian neurologist Lewis Yealland had been treating shell-shocked soldiers with a controversial electro-shock therapy program. Upon his arrival, Rivers watches his colleague administer electric shocks to a young soldier, Callan, in an effort to 'cure' him of his muteness. The horrific scene inspires in Rivers the following nightmare that orients him into a position of critical self-examination:

> He thought he might manage to sleep if the Zeppelins and the guns allowed it, and indeed he did fall asleep almost as soon as he turned off the light.
>
> He was walking down the corridor at Queen Square, an immensely long corridor which elongated as he walked along it, like a strip of elastic at full stretch. The swing doors at the far end opened and shut, flap-flapping an unnaturally long time, like the wings of an ominous bird. Clinging to the rail, the deformed man watched him approach. The eyes swiveled to follow him. The mouth opened and out of it came the words: *I am making this protest on behalf of my fellow-soldiers because I believe the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it.*

> …Abruptly the dream changed. He was in the electrical room, a pharyngeal electrode in his hand, a man's open mouth in front of him. He saw the moist, pink interior, the delicately quivering uvula, the yellowish, grainy surface of the tongue, and the tonsils, like great swollen, blue-purple eggs. He slipped the tongue depressor in, and tried to apply the electrode, but the electrode, for some reason, wouldn't fit. He tried to force it. The man struggled and bucked beneath him, and, looking down, he saw that the object he was holding was a horse's bit. He'd already done a lot of damage. The corners of the man's mouth were raw, flecked with blood and foam, but still he went on, trying to force the bit into the mouth, until a cry from the patient woke him. He sat up, heart pounding, and realized he had himself cried out. (235-236).

In the self-analysis that follows, Rivers discovers the incriminating conflicts underlying his nightmare and sparking his feelings of guilt over Sassoon, who had decided after months of therapy with the good doctor to leave the confines of Craiglockhart despite his continued lack of support for the war effort. Though Rivers's reading of his nightmare is elaborate, the trajectory of his hermeneutic is noteworthy. He moves from a commentary about the emotional conflict underlying the possibility of protest—particularly in the prevailing political climate, in which people's cooperation and service were expected and instrumentalized—to a more precise concern for one soldier's protest and the role he played in silencing it.

That soldier, of course, is Sassoon, and his dream indicates, among other things, the way that the young soldier's speech has been controlled in such a way that the official governing body of Britain, which Rivers had long served, effectively silences the voice of those who must sacrifice themselves to protect it. This becomes evident through his analysis of the prominent dream imagery, including

> …*A horse's bit.* Not an electrode, not a teaspoon. An instrument of control. Obviously he and Yealland were both in the business of controlling people. Each of them fitted young men back into the role of warrior, a role they had—however unconsciously—rejected. He'd found himself wondering once or twice recently

> what possible meaning the restoration of mental health could have in relation to his work. Normally a cure implies that the patient will no longer engage in behaviour that is clearly self-destructive. But in present circumstances, recovery meant the resumption of activities that were not merely self-destructive but positively suicidal. But then in a war nobody is a free agent. He and Yealland were both *locked in*, every bit as much as their patients were…
>
> …Silencing, then. The task of silencing somebody, with himself in Yealland's place and an unidentified patient in the chair. It was possible to escape, still, to pretend the dream accusation was general. Just as Yealland silenced the unconscious protest of *his* patients by removing the paralysis, the deafness, the blindness, the muteness that stood between them and the war, so, in an infinitely more gentle way, *he* silenced *his* patients; for the stammering, the nightmares, the tremors, the memory lapses, of officers were just as much unwitting protest as the grosser maladies of men.
>
> But he didn't believe the general accusation. He didn't believe this was what the dream was saying. Dreams were detailed, concrete, specific: the voice of the protopathic heard at last, as one by one the higher centres of the brain closed down. And he knew who the patient in the chair was. Not Callan, not Prior. Only one man was being silenced in the way the dream indicated. He told himself that the accusation was unjust. It was Sassoon's decision to abandon the protest, not his. But that didn't work. He knew the extent of his own influence. (238-239)

Based on the dream text and his interpretation thereof, it is clear that Rivers is badgered by the suspicion that his 'talk-therapy' program at Craiglockhart, in some ways a success, is a softer but equally incriminating version of Yealland's more aggressive electro-shock regime. Though the violence in this example has been rendered intensely physical and suggestively homoerotic, it reminds Rivers of the dangerous ends to which his own research and treatment methods are being put, as soldiers suffering from substantial psychological turmoil are counseled only to be sent back into war.

This scene also reminds us of the potential ethical violations to which Mikhail Bakhtin alludes in *Speech Genres*. Here, he illuminates the inter-subjective nature of all discourse:

> the unique speech experience of each individual is shaped and developed in continuous and constant interaction with others' individual utterances. This experience can be characterized to some degree as the process of assimilation—more or less creative—of others' words (and not the words of a language). Our speech, that is, all our utterances (including our creative works), is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of "our-own-ness" (89)

The inherently inter-subjective nature of language reveals that even post-memorial testimony about distant traumas are borne out of a *shared*, social view of language, utterance, text. The other with which we converse is implicit within our own statements, and must be managed in a way that allows to speak about, to speak *with*, the Other. This must be orchestrated in ways that preserve the Other's autonomy—in ways that prevent us from speaking on behalf of the Other, or to do it any violence like that which plagues Rivers in his dream about the horse's bit.

On its surface, the epiphany Rivers experiences in mining his dream for latent meaning leads to the discovery of a responsibility that at first glance emerges out of the face-to-face encounter with the Other that Emmanuel Levinas describes in *Totality and Infinity.* It is useful to remember that Levinas describes ethics as the first philosophy, one that is grounded in an asymmetrical encounter with the Other. This Other allows the self to come into being as an ethical subject, infinitely responsible to others. The source and vitality of ourselves, as ethical subjects, thus emerges outside of us, and exists within realms to which we have no direct access.

The site upon which this ethical relation comes into being is for Levinas located in the human face. Levinas describes the call of the Other in terms of the face, which "resists possession, resists my powers…[and] speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation" (197-198). However, what we see in the dream image, borne out of anxieties about his 'talk therapy' program, is that the face of the Other in his dream is deformed, dehumanized and stripped of its

marks of particularity, leaving behind a condensed image, a deconstructed collection of faculties associated with the human face but stripped of its humanity altogether.

This de-facing of the face of the Other in a moment of ethical reckoning brings up two important points. First, and perhaps less importantly, the de-facing of the Other continues the trajectory on which Rivers already finds himself. He must now face himself, authentically and honestly, and acknowledge that his collaboration in the war effort produces a culture of enforced silence and conformity that both he and his patients must suffer—suffering not in an abject passivity, in the Levinasian sense, but in an analogous state of disempowerment and immobility that produces the mutism of officers and the stammer in his own psychic being. The good doctor narrates the memory of his nightmare in a stream of synecdoches that gesture toward Sassoon's proactive stance on the war—and, by extension, to the young soldier's ability and willingness to act in general, successfully or not. Rivers remembers first a pair of eyes looking back at him suspiciously, and then a mouth that castigates him with words lifted directly from the young soldier's published declaration of protest, which appears in full on the first page of the novel.

Given Rivers's pledge to serve the war effort by observing soldiers' symptoms and guiding their conflicts into the domain of language, of careful scrutiny and intelligible representation, the good doctor is seized by the anxiety that his observational power has been appropriated by his own patient, who now appears to wield it more harrowingly than he ever did. Rivers the observer is now the observed; and having turned a deaf ear to Sassoon's protest, he is now made to realize that he has not fulfilled the duties set out before him. The object of Sassoon's gaze, Rivers conjures a dream image that instructs him to turn his scrutiny onto himself and look at the ways he has become complicit in the suffering of his patients.

The second and more important point to be drawn from this moment of ethical awakening comes out of the fact that the face of the Other, as a privileged domain upon which feelings of responsibility are first kindled, loses its primacy in the novel. What emerges instead is a turning inward that Rivers has been hesitant to enact; and following from that, an acknowledgment of his own bad faith in the administrative and clinical support of the war. This turning inward is accompanied by an illumination of the importance of inter-subjective, dialogic engagements—not only with patients, but also with the Other from which Rivers continually averts his gaze.

This primacy of language underpins most of Rivers's conflicts throughout the story. The good doctor has had to silence his professional qualms about pathologizing the young soldier's protest in order to maintain the pretext that Sassoon is *merely* shell-shocked. And in so doing, he tacitly offers his cooperation in a large-scale mechanism that re-contextualizes protest as a symptom of trauma, one whose transformative force and value are subsequently contained by official protocols of treatment—including Rivers's own 'talk-therapy' program at Craiglockhart and Yealland's more aggressive electro-shock 'curative' in London.

Textual echoes of this process of hollowing out abound, but I want to draw attention to two important moments, in particular, in which dialogic encounters with the Other—the capacity to entertain the Other, in speech and in listening—become the doctor's main medium of exchange with the distant traumas of war. The first returns us to Rivers's nightmare involving the deformed man whose distortion of the original language of protest reveals the extent to which Rivers himself has likewise been silenced. The dream of the guilty man focuses almost entirely on a figuration of Rivers's own culpability, as he works for a war machine that effectively swallows Sassoon's words of protest, quoted almost literally in the dream. The minor linguistic transformations between Sassoon's original language of protest and the deformed man's

declaration are worth noting. The first paragraph of Sassoon's famous protest is reformulated in such a way that his "statement…as an act of wilful defiance of military authority" (3) is re-cast here as a "protest." This protest, furthermore, is authored by a deformed man who, in the dream, is momentarily condensed into a mouth that makes this pronouncement on behalf of those soldiers who no longer have a voice of their own. These details shift the locus of protest from a written statement that Rivers reads in the papers at the beginning of the novel to a speech act that beckons him literally into earshot of the Other. In effect, Rivers dreams an ethical primal scene in which the voice of the Other literally calls out to him, adapting Sassoon's language of conscientious objection and placing it within the immediacy of spoken word.

Furthermore, as Rivers recovers the details of his dream, he fails to consider and deal with his own professional and cultural strangleholds that prevent him from assuming a deliberate position like Sassoon and speaking out against the war's perpetuation. Though Sassoon crafts a pro-active stance and shares it in print—an act that immediately places him in suspicion of being emotionally unstable—Rivers is unable professionally to accept the will behind his reasoned argument. He is bound—first by duty, and later by compassion—to maintain that Sassoon's conscientious objection is actually a symptom of his war trauma, over which he has no control.

Rivers is also bound by professional training to teach Sassoon and other traumatized soldiers not simply to provide a discursive base in which to recount their tales of suffering and devastation, but to teach them the proper, state-sanctioned language by which they can effectively contain their traumatization, speak on behalf of their own health, retain their allegiance to the cause, and go back to the trenches. This matter challenges Levinas's edict not to speak on behalf of the Other. The good doctor's decision to gear his therapy toward appropriate channels of communication is rife with historical dangers of engineering speech and

making the Other fit into our motives and schemes. However, underlying this is a stronger compulsion to make Rivers speak out on behalf of those he is treating, on behalf of those who cannot or will not speak out against a treatment regime designed to make them parrot the official party line.

Rivers throws this silence into even sharper relief pages later, after his final meeting with Sassoon, when he concludes that

> Siegfried's 'solution'…to tell himself that he was going back only to look after some men…would not survive the realities of France. However devoted to his men's welfare a platoon commander might be, in the end he is there to kill, and to train other people to kill…
>
> It was a dilemma with one very obvious way out. Rivers knew, though he had never voiced his knowledge, that Sassoon was going back with the intention of being killed. Partly, no doubt, this was youthful self-dramatization. *I'll show them. They'll be sorry.* But underneath that, Rivers felt there was a genuine and very deep desire for death.
>
> And if death were to be denied? Then he might well break down. A real breakdown, this time.
>
> Rivers saw that he had reached Sassoon's file. He read through the admission report and the notes that followed it. There was nothing more he wanted to say that he could say. He drew the final page towards him and wrote: *Nov. 26, 1917. Discharged to duty.* (249-250).

By this point, Rivers notices that Sassoon has retracted inward to a place of silence. Though he is still vehemently opposed to the war, he has refrained from speaking out against it—a move that for the state signals recovery and acceptance of the task at hand. In agreeing to go back to the front in France, the young soldier has now, in Rivers's eyes, resigned himself to self-annihilation—all while Rivers continues to refrain from "[voicing] his knowledge."

What these moments in the text indicate is that Rivers is set up to act ethically based on a recognition of intimate knowledge with those he treats and those who suffer in his name. This recognition, as I have tried to explain, is based not on the primal scene of facial contact with the

Other, but rather, with the ability to engage discursively with the Other—to listen to the Other without speaking on its behalf. As an army doctor who is not impervious to the suffering of young soldiers, Rivers's years of service have culminated in a perpetual stutter that, according to the good doctor, stems from an officer's *fear* of being responsible for the lives of others. As Sara Ahmed reminds us, "fear involves an *anticipation* of hurt or injury…[it] projects us from the present into a future…[and] presses us into that future as an intense bodily experience in the present." (65) Consequently, these initial gestures of his dream work allow him to consider the extent to which he, too, has been victimized by a war with no uncertain future, a war supported by an impersonal bureaucratic machine—a war that perpetuates many different forms of violence, direct as well as collateral.

What these moments also reveal is that Sassoon's poorly kept secret of homosexuality contributes to a culture of silence that restrains both himself and the good doctor who keeps his own homosexuality under even tighter wraps. State-sanctioned allegiance and willful sacrifice already provides a powerful and compelling narrative about acceptable and honorable forms of masculinity during a time of war[27]; Sassoon's secret—and, by extension, Rivers's own ambiguous sexuality, which he never articulates, virtually doubles the lived experience of a restrictive hetero-normative code of masculinity. This code is already the standard against which Rivers's 'talk therapy' regime becomes morally questionable but ultimately tolerated: it is designed to encourage soldiers to betray the cultural convention of a man who suffers in silence, and to speak openly about the feelings of immobility and fear that clearly seize the soldier in the trenches. In this way, Yealland's more extreme method of treatment conforms to an unspoken consensus about how best to retain the masculine integrity of traumatized patients:

[27] Susan Kent argues that volunteerism is an important historical performance of masculinity in England during the Great War: "through war, the 'effeminate' could be weeded out, the manly preserved" (237).

> Contact with patients was restricted to a brisk, cheerful, authoritative greeting. No questions were asked about their psychological state. Many of them, Rivers thought, showed signs of depression, but in every case the removal of the physical symptom was described as a cure. (224)

This method of treatment—as well as Yealland's insistence that he is looking for a final, transformative cure, a moment of rescue for soldiers trapped in an unending cycle of neurosis and unprovoked emotional outburst—contrasts markedly with Rivers's own sessions with Sassoon, which are predicated upon conversation, however guarded those talks may be. In fact, in what appears to be one of the few moments of candid self-awareness, Rivers paints a picture of social propriety that oppresses Sassoon and constrains his own behavior as well. He explains that in times of war,

> '…you've got this *enormous* emphasis on love between men – comradeship – and everybody approves. But at the same time, there's always this little niggle of anxiety. Is it the *right* kind of love? Well, one of the ways you make sure it's the right kind is to make it crystal clear what the penalties for the other kind are.' (204)

While homosexuality, like conscientious objection, is treated as a pathology to be isolated and extinguished, Sassoon's seemingly open position reveals that hetero-normativity is heavily policed and enforced, particularly during a time of war.[28] Sassoon's is what Sara Ahmed would call a "queer life…[which maintains] a discomfort with the scripts of heteronormative existence" (151).[29]

Yet even in this moment of candid exchange with the young soldier, Rivers applauds Sassoon's decision to go back to the front because it provides the perfect alibi to throw the

[28] This resonates with the historical account of a carefully policed masculinity, enforced since the late 19th century. Historian Frank Mort argues in *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England since 1830* that administrators tried to "[improve the] moral climate of the country" through legislative acts like the Criminal Law Amendment Bill in 1885, which identified male homosexuality as a moral offense, punishable by law (129).

[29] This sentiment is compounded by the notion, offered by Joanna Bourke, that any position of conscientious objection, which culminated in the public denunciation of violence, was stigmatized and branded as effeminate behavior. See her article "Effeminacy, Ethnicity and the End of Trauma."

authorities off his scent:

> ‘One of the reasons I’m so glad you’ve decided to go back. It’s not just police activity. It’s the whole atmosphere at the moment. There’s an MP called Pemberton Billing…
>
> ‘Well, he’s going around London claiming to know of the existence of a German *Black Book* containing the names of 47,000 eminent people whose *private lives* make their loyalty to their country suspect…
>
> ‘…you’re a friend of Robert Ross, and you’ve publicly advocated a negotiated peace. That’s enough! You’re *vulnerable*, Siegfried. There’s no point pretending you’re not.’ (ibid)

The references in Rivers’s speech to two historic figures deserve mention here. First, Noel Pemberton Billing, a popular member of Parliament, famously wrote in the journal *Imperialist*—which he founded—that Nazi Germans were blackmailing some 47,000 illustrious British men into homosexual acts meant to degrade national morale and compromise the implicit link forged in the public imagination between the British nation and masculine aggression. And second, Rivers mentions Oscar Wilde’s famous executor and lifelong friend, Robert Ross, who mentored several notable, openly homosexual artists and authors, including Sassoon himself.

The point to be taken from Rivers’s tirade against Sassoon’s willingness to live his life authentically, without being ruled by fear, is that rather than openly engaging in conversation with Sassoon, responding to his testimony, he simply parrots the voice of the concerned father speaking to his precocious son. This becomes particularly evident after Sassoon admits he “*can’t* conform in one area of life”—namely, his sexuality—and consequently refuses to “conform in the others”—namely, his allegiance to the war effort (205). Rivers responds by telling him “It’s time you grew up. Started living in the real world” (ibid).

Overlaid with this exchange is that of an authoritative administrator, endowed with the power of a policing gaze—and moved by an affect—presumably an empathy—to warn Sassoon against the dangers of non-conformity. Though his warning appears at first glance to be an

expression of concern, this concern is circumscribed by a double blindness. Rivers appears to be short-sighted in this instance because he is trying to contain the 'threat' of Sassoon's objection to war—which, like his homosexuality, are in turn perceived as threats to the moral fabric of England. Simultaneously, Rivers refuses to acknowledge the violence of submission and conformity that he, too, may have had to endure—not only as a reluctant critic of a war he serves and helps to perpetuate, but also as an ambiguously identified sympathizer whose 'detection' is all the more vulnerable in a climate of heightened vigilance.[30]

What this series of exchanges reveals is a curious linkage between protest and homosexuality, perceived by the state and internalized by Rivers as a form of pathology that threatens to undermine national solidarity and fortitude.[31] It is also one of the most gripping reasons why Rivers himself is never able to announce himself publicly in the same way that Sassoon does, even at the beginning. If anything, Rivers's treatment of Sassoon effectively silences him and coerces him into a form of participation that will haunt him throughout the remainder of the novel.

What these encounters also reveal is the inherently political nature of affects that are tied to their expression in language or their sequestering from public scrutiny. Here, the dominant affective response to the war that Rivers serves, even from the sheltered distance of his official post, is threat. Threat is wielded here as a felt perception of the Other, which is then reified by attitudes, behaviors, and policies. The state intrudes upon men outside the hetero-normative, patriotic models of masculinity—men like Sassoon, who publish conscientious objections to war

[30] Pat Barker tells Donna Perry in an interview that "I think, you see, that Rivers is homosexual, too. I think that he is in love with Sassoon. One of the things that can't be said in fact is the depth of the feeling he obviously has for Sassoon. Whether he even says it to himself I don't know" (56).

[31] Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway* offers a similar glimpse of the war through the shell-shocked ravings of Septimus Warren Smith and his affection for his friend Evans. He lauds himself for having "[drawn] the attention, indeed the affection of Evans" (86) in a time when feelings of camaraderie between men had to conform to what Barker describes as the "right kind of love." He later congratulates himself for not openly grieving Evans's death.

and who are at risk of violating codes and statues outlawing his lifestyle. And Rivers, who represents the war machine and gives it a human face, is subsequently implicated in a project that demands compliance and cooperation from the citizens of England—much like Moloch, craving the blood of children for endless sacrifice. Brian Massumi takes up the emotional reality of the affect in his article "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact": "threat is a *felt quality*, independent of any particular instance of itself…when the threat self-causes, its abstract quality is affectively presented, in startle, shock, and fear" (61-62). This appeal to threat helps construct a coercive reality that then demands responses of submission—not only from Sassoon, but from Rivers himself, who internalizes the threat and fear of masculine failure and molds his reactions to that fear as an embodied form of submission, compliance, and quietude. Even more ghastly, perhaps, is the final conversation he has with Sassoon, during which he urges him to recognize the world around him—unencumbered by sentimental discolorations or irrational desires. The violent runoff that spills before his feet in the form of affected patients like Sassoon—who objects to the war but who also nurses serious psychic wounds himself—are enough to break him out of his generational insincerity; unfortunately, that is not enough for him to harness the power of language and act upon these ethical stirrings. Consequently, the question that Barker leaves us with is: can Rivers summon his ethical feeling into language?

Concluding Notes: Holding Discourse with the Air

Barker recasts the danger of post-memorial over-identification as a prohibition so powerful that Rivers is willing to languish in personal absence, to expel himself from the memory of those devastated by war. This speaks to an anxiety of comparison that prevents displaced witnesses from offering themselves, authentically and presently, to a relation to an other that surpasses

their own suffering so dramatically. In this way, the narrative of Barker's novel exposes the divide between mutually incompatible experiences, on and off the field, and the concern that testimony of direct suffering will engulf that of indexical experiences of suffering.

Furthermore, Barker's anxiety of comparison exacerbates the division between direct and vicarious experiences of trauma by enacting it over the alternating appearances of the soldier's protest as performance and text. For Sassoon, the protest is a proactive discursive *act.* Not only does he read the protest before the House of Commons on July 30, 1917—one day before *The London Times* prints it and the Battle of Passchendaele against the Germans begins in Belgium, a terribly costly battle for the British. He is also left to deal with the consequences of his protest at Craiglockhart, where he would have to defend his position against Rivers and convince him that his protest was not the stirrings of a man suffering from terrible hallucinations. In speaking out on behalf of "those who are suffering," Sassoon unwittingly practices, in spoken language as well as the poetry he drafts and rewrites, the "youthful self-dramatization" that his doctor observes at the very end of the story.

But for Rivers, whose decision to remain silent speaks in many ways to the need for a more properly ethical engagement with prevailing devastation, the protest is a more stabilized *text* to be pored over and mastered retroactively, a document of war experience that positions him in vicarious distance to trauma. It is his state-sanctioned duty to sanitize the protest, to exert more directed control over its playful proliferation of meanings. Though he incurs the terrible cost of sending a soldier on what he believes to be a suicide mission, Rivers is an important part of an official state apparatus that wants to integrate the young soldier's war experience more seamlessly into a cultural narrative valorizing British nationhood and masculinity—particularly as these values push up against antitheses lurking beyond and within its cultural borders, namely,

the presence in history of German fascism and the hushed presence in the novel of male homosexuality. In this way, Rivers's final act of the novel, an act of inscription, is a testament to the painfully limited sphere in which he, too, can be proactive. Putting pen to page, he literally overwrites the patient file with the date "*Nov. 26, 1917*" and the phrase "*discharged to duty*" (250). Unable to speak out against the war cogently as Sassoon has done, and unable to stop the young man from returning to the trenches after the protest had been virtually snuffed out of him, Rivers inscribes the margins of his former patient's file with his own sense of lived historicity—the date of his pronouncement, the linguistic materialization of a painful intuition that Sassoon had left to chase after his own death. Furthermore, the act parrots the signing of the armistice agreement occurring almost one full calendar year later, on November 11, 1918. The annotation of discharge is both prophetic and ironic in this regard—the doctor's bleak re-writing of an historical victory not yet in sight, and simultaneously, his only written testimony about the presumed loss of (a) life on which that victory will depend. Though Rivers has been complacent about what he can effectively do or say about his responsibilities for Sassoon, he ends the novel with a small but perhaps significant act of inscription that acknowledges, however quietly, the price that Rivers and Britain as a whole must pay for his—and their—continued silence.

Yet instead of concluding that this retreat to silence is a moral failure on Rivers's part, I want to suggest that the acknowledgment of silence and the turn to a rhetoric of affect become the dominant mode by which the good doctor courts a productive relationship with the Other. Feeling and affect create some of the most beleaguered questions in any study of literature, and especially in literatures of trauma, but they direct our attention to key aspects in the development of a post-memorial ethics. How, for instance, does the feeling one mounts toward an other's trauma relate to the vicarious reconstitution of that elusive or lost traumatic event? Are there

appropriate and inappropriate feelings one can mount toward a trauma that does not 'belong' to the post-memorial witness? In what ways is he able to bypass the danger of over-identification, and in what ways is he susceptible? And finally, how might he imagine and ultimately communicate his own feelings of pain, anguish, or harm in relation to the trauma he has never experienced directly?

Barker responds to these burgeoning questions through an account of Rivers's moral feeling and the role it plays in the development of an ethical responsibility to an other—and his subsequent self-effacement. For Rivers, the responsibility he has been unable to fully honor is presented in the text as a feeling—a *feeling*, specifically, of guilt dogs him on the occasion of Sassoon's imminent return to the trenches where he was wounded in the first place. After months spent entertaining feelings of isolation and disconnection, this affection of guilt is a powerful inducement to self-examination. However, Rivers relies too heavily on a specific feeling that his nightmare about the deformed man exposes and distorts in the process. So strong is this guilt that it makes him resistant to the idea that his own traumatization is comparable to that of his patients, and inspires him to swaddle himself once more within the protective complacency that had been shielding him throughout much of the novel. In this way, the modality of the relation between the self and other is influenced to a significant degree by the prevalence of non-feeling and his own receptivity to feeling.

The novel dramatizes this increasing tension between hypersensitivity and disconnection in an earlier dream sequence about one of his friends and colleagues, English neuroscientist Henry Head, who had famously turned himself into the subject of his own experiment and whom Rivers had assisted in tracking the regeneration of feeling and response in his arm after severing his own radial nerve. In his dream work, Rivers represents the experiment itself as a devastating

scientific intervention that disrupts sensory connections between self and environment, one that throws off the delicate balance between the body's biological adaptation to 'protopathic' and 'epicritic' stimulation. Head's sutured nerve responds in the dream to external stimuli in more polarized states of physical affectivity characteristic of a protopathic sensibility:

> Protopathic sensibility seemed to have an 'all or nothing' quality. The threshold of sensation was high, but, once crossed, the sensations were both abnormally widely diffused and—to use Head's own word—'extreme.' At times a pinprick would cause severe and prolonged pain. (46)

Put another way, the passage from an 'epicritic' sensibility to a 'protopathic' one involves, among other things, the transformation of an experience of direct and simple stimulation—a drop of rain on one's fingertip, for instance—to its overlayering with what British neurologist D. Stanley-Jones refers to as a "feeling-tone," an emotionally motivated judgment of pleasantness or unpleasantness.[32] The embrace of a 'protopathic' sensibility described in Rivers's dream indicates the need, constantly set aside, to engage more openly and actively with the emotional matter that now makes itself known as disturbance and distortion.

Such violent scrutiny, coupled with Head's own willingness to transform himself into the object of his own inquiry, creates a situation that clearly haunts Rivers as both administrator and witness. Not only does the human subject detach himself from his surroundings, but the regenerative response to stimulation he tracks becomes disproportionately unhinged from its sources, as physical manipulation of the senses produces increasingly stifled or hypersensitive responses. In a narrative register, the dream is meaningful for Rivers because it throws into sharp relief the damage sustained by patients in his own therapy program at Craiglockhart and

[32] D. Stanley Jones writes in "Protopathy, Paraesthesia and Sensory Suppression Zones" that subjective sensation must reckon with these two terms, the epicritic and the protopathic. The former is a "sensation whose perception is accurate and is undisturbed by emotion," while the latter produces a feeling-tone "over and above the actual sensation" (ibid). For more, see *Progress in Brain Research*, Vol. 23 (200-218).

anticipates the more violent forms of rehabilitation he would later witness in Dr. Yealland's laboratory. It also signals a return of repressed homoerotic impulses that Rivers has tried very hard to internalize – impulses that he wants Sassoon to internalize and render invisible as well.

But more importantly, it highlights the very process that Rivers must undergo in order to come to a more balanced state of feeling and affectivity—namely, turning his own experimental protocol onto himself, tracking the damage incurred and controlled therein, and making himself a more fully present figure in his responsibility to the other. In this manner, the dream prepares us for the possibility that Rivers's nightmare about the deformed man at the end of the novel—as a harbinger of the "voice of the protopathic"—produces feelings of responsibility for Sassoon that are just as unbalanced and problematic as the sensations produced in this earlier dream about Henry Head.

Taken together, these two dilemmas of post-memorial engagement—the negation of the self grounded in an anxiety of comparison, and an inconsistent attachment to trauma that oscillates between over-identification and apathy—culminate in an ultimately failed sense of generational duty. Though many opportunities present themselves to Rivers throughout the novel that call upon a re-imagination of his generational identity from a fixed to a more fluid location in history, he ends the novel with a reaffirmation of those generational borders and an even stronger insistence on the power of the other—represented in this case not only by Sassoon but also by the generation for which he becomes the metonym:

> A society that devours its own young deserves no automatic or unquestioning allegiance. Perhaps the rebellion of the old might count for rather more than the rebellion of the young. Certainly poor Siegfried's rebellion hadn't counted for much, though he reminded himself that he couldn't *know* that. It had been a completely honest action and such actions are seeds carried on the wind. Nobody can tell where, or in what circumstances, they will bear fruit. (249)

Though the acknowledgment is perhaps the most outspoken moment of protest he has allowed himself to think, in the realm of political action it counts for very little—as he continues to remain in the complacency of his administrative post. Part of the problem presented here is in his resuscitation not of specific generational boundaries but of a more general grouping between the young and the old—and the admonishment of the old for shirking their responsibility for not acting more, for not acting at all when it counted.

Though he admits that action coming from him would bear stronger political implications than the actions of Sassoon, Rivers is still unable to locate himself or project a sense of an "I," even in the privacy of his own thoughts. His presence melds into the general grouping of the "old" who sit idly by and ignore the opportunity to make a potentially more viable protest against the war. This attitude represents, among other things, Pierre Nora's deconstruction of the generational identity strained to problematic ends—as individual identity is almost completely supplanted in this parting excerpt, at least rhetorically, by a collective temporal identity based on questionable commitments to action.

What these two anxieties of post-memorial engagement reveal, in the final analysis, is the need to start thinking about alternative models of ethical responsibility, models that address the anxieties of comparison, the general unwillingness to maintain a dialogic encounter with the Other, and the inability to tame the oscillation between affective extremities. The diagnosis seems clear, but how does Barker's novel approach a solution?

Regeneration clearly showcases the difficulties displaced witnesses like Rivers might encounter while living through disaster, and illustrates the distinctly modern risks of an ethics of responsibility that are wedded to a commitment to an overpowering Other. Rivers, the man of science, finds himself treating soldiers with innovative therapies and contemporary

understandings of the human psyche, as part of a larger and ultimately collective effort toward self-preservation during a time of intense and prolonged duress. And Barker casts Rivers as the modern articulation of an archetypal Cassandra, dreaming not of a horrifying future but of a painful past that continues to seize his patients and, to varying degrees, himself. His dreams, however, are not prophetic; they are "protopathic," laden with emotional disturbance and distorting his ability to come to a proper and responsible moral judgment. In divining them he solidifies an ethical stance toward his patients that requires a simultaneous and problematic denial of self.

If the novel makes any corrective gestures for the pose Rivers strikes, it is in the model of ethical responsibility that he tropes in his dream work. When Rivers engages in a critical hermeneutic that allows him to reclaim some sense of agency for himself, as the potential author of meaning, we seize upon a recurring trope that he unwittingly links to his nightmares—the protopathic sensibility, which becomes an important diegetic component of the dream about Henry Head and an important analytical component in his dream work about the deformed man. For these reasons, Barker expresses a certain hesitance in the primacy of the human face, and the particularity it poses for Rivers. As Rivers retraces his dream, he is unable or unwilling to treat the face of the other as an integrated human face. Recalling only the mysterious figure's eyes and mouth, Rivers helps deform the deformed man appearing before him in his nightmare. All that remains of him are those sites of activity that Rivers has been commissioned to perform himself—to observe and to speak. And because he names Sassoon as the man behind the deformed face, the mere facts of looking and speaking reveal the ways Rivers has been faltering a member of the administration and a witness to disaster.

At the same time, Rivers describes that dream, and dreams in general, as bearing the "voice of the protopathic," which indicates a similar set of exaggerations and distortions at work as the dream text produces invisible conflicts, only some of which he acknowledges. However, significance lies not only with the protopathic quality of the dreams that inspire various (but ultimately inadequate) forms of self-knowledge. It also emerges in the troping of that protopathic quality as a voice—though he never explains the precise nature of the voice.[33] Enacting the very transformation he asks of his soldiers, who are engaged in the difficult pursuit of framing their conflicts in intelligible language, Rivers gives the conflict underlying his nightmare a presence in language. In this way, he unwittingly stumbles upon a model of ethics that displaces the primacy of the human face and its accompanying obsessions with particularity, and accommodates instead a cryptic but unrelenting fascination with the human voice—that fact of spoken language that straddles the bodily and the immaterial, the meaningful and the noisy, and perhaps most important, the particular and the impersonal.

The trope of the voice harkens back to a canonical set of critical interventions about two episodes that famously mark human trauma with a voice, and specifically, a call. First described by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and revisited by Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, the 'primal scene' of the voice of trauma appears in a key moment in Torquato Tasso's 1581 Italian folk epic *Jerusalem Liberated (Gerusalemma Liberata).* The tragic hero Tancred is implicated in a series of injurious misdeeds that illuminate the strange compulsion repetition often observed in cases of traumatization. In Tasso's epic, Tancred kills his beloved Clorinda unknowingly while she dons a disguise, and later slashes a

[33] In his article "'Voice' and 'Address' in Literary Theory," William J. Kennedy articulates two common appropriations in the Western tradition of "voice": "Its primary reference to vocal sound as the vehicle to human utterance dates to at least the fourteenth century. Modern rhetoricians, however, use the term in a highly metonymic sense that attributes the quality or tone of a speaking voice to the character or *ethos* of its individual speaker" (216).

sword into the bark of a tree bearing her soul, making her cry out once more before killing her again. Freud describes this example in order to illustrate the importance of trauma not simply as bodily injury but also as an injury to the mind.

However, it is Cathy Caruth's critical intervention that shifts focus from the nature of injury itself to the status of the voice in this example. Caruth describes Clorinda's voice as the "enigma of the otherness of the human voice that cries from the wound, a voice that witnesses a truth that Tancred himself cannot fully know" (3). By focusing on an "otherness" tied to the human voice, Caruth offers a viable parable of the task of the psychiatrist, who similarly plumbs the depths of a human otherness that makes itself known in only the most cryptic of traces. According to this paradigm, the psychiatrist must remain open and attentive to the "sound" of the unconscious as it alerts her to conflicts that ripple beneath the surface of waking life.

Caruth's troping of the call—not by an exposure to the face of the other, but rather, through the call of the other with a distinct voice—is significant for Rivers, not only as a professional doctor in the Royal Army, but more importantly, as a self-reflective witness to disaster who privileges his responsibility to his wayward patient over his responsibility to himself. Because the voice of Clorinda reminds Tancred, belatedly, of the deed he has once again committed, and does not allow him to escape the reality of the deed, his compulsion to remember is intimately bound up in a view of trauma that Caruth speculates is not "the encounter with dead" but rather "the ongoing experience of having survived it" (7).

This example carried over from literature is particularly fitting for Rivers in another way. It illuminates the fallacy that he encounters throughout the text about trauma being precipitated by exposure to a cataclysmic event. In discussing with Billy Prior, another of his patients, the nature of trauma during wartime, he makes the following observation:

> You're thinking of breakdown as a reaction to a single traumatic event, but it's not like that. It's more a matter of…*erosion.* Weeks and months of stress in a situation where you can't get away from it. (105)

Just as Tancred stumbles upon the repetitive nature of wounding and, for both Freud and Caruth, illuminates the human mystery of repeated exposure to a traumatic event, Rivers disengages the idea of trauma from the shock and violence of a clearly defined cataclysmic event within the war. Instead, he roots it in a conception of the *progressive* decay of the human mind and body, continually held in strain and peril. In a similar vein, Rivers's own lifelong stammer had been aggravated by his work in the Royal Army—so much so, in fact, that Prior needles him about the possibility that he, too, bears a psychological burden that he refuses to scrutinize or face honestly. Trauma for Rivers is uneven and unpredictable, and over time strengthens its hold on the shell-shocked soldiers; in a word, protopathic. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the time it takes for trauma to develop makes the idea of a cure—like the three-hour session Yealland implements toward the end of the novel—all the more impractical. Yet the same might be said of the work Rivers has been doing at Craiglockhart, where he works not only within similar temporal straight-jackets but essentially hijacks the end goal of psychological health in order to serve in what Giorgio Agamben might describe as a state of emergency.

Though Rivers tells Billy Prior that trauma often unfolds over time, and not simply as a knee-jerk response to an overwhelming event, it is Rivers who seems to benefit most dramatically from this lesson. After Prior is confined to home service due to his asthma—a decision that he perceives as a slight to both his masculinity and his potential socio-economic mobility—he implies that he will once again be sequestered from the "nasty rough boys" (210) from whom his mother protected him. He also wonders what he can be, now that the possibility of being a "perfectly satisfactory officer" has eluded him (209). Before they part for the last

time, Prior makes a joke about Rivers acting in the same way his mother did, trying to protect him from the horrors of the trenches:

> 'If *you* were a patient here, don't you think you'd feel ashamed?'
>
> 'Probably. Because I've been brought up the same way as everybody else. But I hope I'd have the *sense*, or – whatever it is – the *intelligence* to see how unjustified it was.'
>
> '…My mother was always pulling the other way. Trying to keep me in. I shouldn't criticize the poor woman, I think she probably saved my life, but she did *use* it…And then suddenly here *you* are…Probably why I never wanted you to be *Daddy*. I'd got you lined up for a worse fate.' (209-210)

Two points need to be stressed here. First, through his exchange—his engagement with a post-memorial Other, one that exists outside the set of historical references of Barker's novel—Rivers is often called upon to imagine what the experience of being a patient of his own treatment would be like, and whether he would feel the same range of emotions Prior tells him about. This is significant because, like the dreamscapes, the imaginative landscape of history that Barker figures around Prior permits a space in which Rivers can openly pose and respond to questions that make him feel more directly the implications of his actions. Rivers even goes so far as to court Prior's curiosity by explaining that he is no different from his patients, that he was raised in the same atmosphere and that he would be subject to the same sense of shame Prior now feels, having been formally dismissed from active duty abroad. This explanation stands him in marked contrast to the psychiatrist he becomes for Sassoon and the historical reality he represents more immediately in the novel—the psychiatrist who perhaps senses a proximity to his patient's quelled protest and quiet homosexuality, the psychiatrist who tries to guard himself against that distance throughout the duration of the novel. Here, he is willing to entertain the reversals that Prior effects in the doctor-patient relationship. He responds to his patient's questions and makes

a more pointed effort to respond to Prior's condition with compassion and an eye toward establishing various points of dialogic intimacy.

And second, Rivers's apparent receptivity to Prior's needling comments and slight reversals of the hierarchy between observer and observed contribute to what I want to call an ethics of listening that emerge out of a dialogic engagement with the Other. Though Sassoon is an historical Other who reveals in Rivers an identity and complicity he wants to keep quiet, Prior is an historical Other of a different order—one who opens spaces of imaginative and vicarious engagement with the traumas of World War I, and who allows Rivers to become receptive to the critiques he continually pushes aside. This ethics of listening can also be traced back to Caruth's discussion of the voice of the Other that issues from the wound—although, here I would add that the voice of the Other demands a form of listening, of receptivity, that then enables response, speech, and dialogic engagement with the Other. Prior's seemingly innocent comment that Rivers resembles his own mother, a nurturing figure who tried to protect him from the horrors of war, verbalizes the fears he himself has when he contemplates the potentially transgressive aspects of his 'talk therapy' regime. Rather than rejecting the comparison outright, Rivers, conjuring an image of a nanny goat in his mind, smiles at the thought that his patient once attacked him like the animal to which he now compares him. The mutual recognition, by virtue of the deployment of this single image of the nanny goat, suggests a retention, a sensitivity that Rivers was able to exercise and use to his advantage – despite the concerns his 'talk therapy' may have raised for the more resolute warriors of Britannia.

In this way, Caruth's observations become applicable not only to Rivers and the content of *Regeneration* overall, but to Barker's larger project of regenerating generations of soldiers lost in what England remembers as the Great War. Barker plays with the term generation in ways

that call attention to its simultaneous standing as an observed fact and an act of recovery. She accomplishes this by distributing the onus of remembrance and representation between three characters: Dr. Rivers and Siegfried Sassoon—whom she lifts from the pages of British history—and the only fictional character to haunt the hallowed spaces of Craiglockhart, Billy Prior. Though the tense exchanges between Rivers and Sassoon are doomed to perpetuate cultural and institutional forms of violence rooted in the suppression of voice, voice returns in imaginative and sublated form through Rivers's session with Prior, the only imagined character in this historical work. Together, Rivers and Prior are part of a larger effort on Barker's part to revivify cultural interest in a technologically antique past, and to do so specifically by charting the various conflicts that emerge in their competing perceptions of the Great War and the honorable way to behave within it.

Barker's decision to construct a self-conscious moment of historical witnessing through the specific pairing of Rivers and Prior, as figurations of historical memory and literary imagination, are not without its ethical consequences. As a post-memorial witness who must rely on his capacity to imagine worlds outside his contact, who must use that power of imagination to feel more responsible for the damage he treats so ineffectively, Rivers opens himself up to the disruptive speech—symbolic though it may be—of Prior, and of a prior temporality no longer accessible to the historian. As a result, we can look at *Regeneration* itself as a novel that seeks to provide a post-memorial perspective of the ironically named Great War—particularly with an eye, and ear, toward the violence and victimization that unfolds off the fields, and in spaces heretofore ignored by public accounts. The violence of the hospitals, the oppressive scripts of heteronormative masculinity, the strength of the class system that provides only temporary and ultimately false hope for a working-class soldier like Prior to consort with

people above his social rank—these are also some of the lives Barker wants to regenerate, through appeals to an imagination that ideally seizes our capacity to feel and to speak, even if Rivers cannot rise completely to those challenges himself. Yet even if he still persists by the novel's end to linger in the professional stranglehold of his position, he nevertheless shows signs of recognizing the word of the Other, through Prior, and acknowledging the importance of that word through what Mikhail Bakhtin would define as an 'answerability': "it is of course necessary to take the performed act *not* as a fact contemplated from outside or thought of theoretically, but to take it from within, in its answerability" (28).

What emerges in the final analysis is a work of historical fiction that self-consciously reflects upon its own conditions of production—and does so through appeals to the imagination. Through the encounter between Rivers and Prior, we sense the importance of a work of history that, rather than condemning or expunging the personal, imaginative, or non-indexical testimonies of belated witnesses, actively encourages their dialogic interaction and mutual attention. The novel enacts the prophetic words of Hayden White, who identifies the literary conventions and structures already in place in works of contemporary historiography: "events are *made* into a story…by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies…in short, all of the techniques would normally expect to find in the employment of a novel or a play" (84). As a result, the many different experimentations Barker enacts, discussed cogently by John Brannigan[34], are not as important as the very idea of experimentation itself—an experimental view of history that uses post-memorial attachment in order to rejuvenate the conception of memory itself, as an ongoing set of utterances about a past

[34] Brannigan describes Pat Barker's *Regeneration* trilogy as "an experimental work of historical fiction" that "[tells] the story of the war from less familiar perspectives: the home front, the psychoanalyst charged with getting traumatized soldiers back to military duty, the secret war against dissenters and rebels, the social and sexual politics of the war, and the meanings of the relationship between civilization and war" (96).

that nobody officially owns. If Hamlet's mother, Queen Gertrude, once recoiled in horror at the sight of her son, allegedly mad for speaking to his father's ghost, and subsequently "[holding] discourse" with "incorporal air," Barker would respond with a resounding affirmation that the post-memorial witness must perpetuate the work of memory by engaging in precisely this task.

● Chapter 3 ●

Eroticizing the Other: Sexual Gesture and the Post-Memorial Caress

Introduction: The Erotics of Post-Memory

The previous chapter illustrates the importance of particular affects involved in the ethical awakening of Dr. Rivers, who must come to terms with the insidious damage his treatment of shell-shocked soldiers during World War I actually perpetrates—and with the suffering he and his patients must endure as a result of this misappropriated work. The cultivation of these moral feelings is linked to his ability to witness the devastations of war, outside the trenches where life is precarious and violent death is almost certain. The ensuing moral awakening is not only tied to questions about speaking responsibly on behalf of his wounded men but also listening carefully to the kinds of damage they sustain as a result of the war and the many oppressive narratives of masculinity that prop it up during this state of exception. As a result, Barker illuminates both the perils and the ethical inducements for a seemingly untouched witness like Rivers to acknowledge the continuities between a world of disaster, just beyond his reach, and a world of complicity, in which his hands are deeply immersed.

Though these continuities emerge as functions of speaking and listening in *Regeneration*, they take on explicitly erotic tinges in Bernhard Schlink's post-Holocaust novel *The Reader* (1995). *The Reader* is structured according to an historical trajectory that sees the Holocaust moving from an uncomfortable collective silence in the 1950s to anxious public exposure in the decades that follow. Schlink tropes the Shoah as a marker of our historically contingent knowledge of the Holocaust and the inconsistencies and anxieties it breeds as it emerges slowly within public discourse. Moreover, Schlink focalizes this shift from silence to exposure around

the eroticized figure of Hanna Schmitz, a former SS camp guard who stands on trial in 1965 for her negligence in the matter of a group of female prisoners who burned to death while trapped inside a church.

Hanna's presence in the novel is marked on many levels as an enticement to remember that had been cloaked in silence initially and, in the ensuing decades, distorted, exaggerated, and sentimentalized by relentless depictions in the mass media. Inviting intense personal as well as public speculation, Hanna Schmitz catalyzes a powerful degree of moral interest for an entire generation of survivors and witnesses who now grapple with questions about how the violence of the Holocaust should be redressed and remembered. Hanna is the elusive love object of the novel's protagonist and narrator, attorney Michael Berg, who recounts their uneven relationship, which begins in 1958 when he, a fifteen-year-old student, spends his afternoons making love with her and reading to her passages from Romantic German literature. Upon Hanna's indictment several years later, he resumes distant contact with her and even carries out her last wishes in 1983 when, after finally being granted parole, she takes her own life.[35] Even after her death, Hanna continues to be viewed by many survivors as a violent perpetrator whose mysterious decision not to defend herself from the charges initially brought against her culminates in the discovery of the novel's best kept secret—her illiteracy.

Expectedly, Hanna's secret illiteracy and overt sexualization engender a wide range of responses from critics who cannot collectively decide if the novel deserves to be lauded for its melodramatic passion or dismissed for its graphic and potentially irresponsible portrayal of a duped Nazi guard. Two critical reactions, in particular, are worth noting here. First, Cynthia

[35] These dates are approximations, based on the court testimony Berg reports—through free indirect speech: "Yes, she wished to stand. Yes, she was born on October 21, 1922, near Hermannstadt and was now forty-three years old" (95). Given that she is twenty years his senior, Berg is born in 1941 or 1942, and is therefore located firmly within the generation that emerges 'after' the disaster of the Shoah.

Ozick begins her review of the novel with the claim that we cannot "disdain a story that subverts document and archive"—that we should, in fact, applaud fictional imagination for "[fleeing] libraries and [loving] lies."[36] However, Ozick questions the atypical portrayal of Nazi perpetration through the figure of the illiterate camp guard, and reminds us that the work of the Final Solution was engineered by a "normally educated population in a nation famed for *Kultur*," a nation that by all accounts should have been able to discern the signs of coming atrocity. In this way, her review offers a mild but ultimately cautionary view of the literary imagination, particularly when it flies in the face of historical record. In so doing, Ozick worries that "the bridging [between history and the imagination] is the very point." The second reaction, written in response to Ozick and other critics who contributed to a special issue of *Law and Literature*, comes from Richard H. Weisberg. He warns us in "A Sympathy That Does Not Condone" that Hanna's eroticization opens a wealth of identificatory pathways and sparks an array of humanizing impulses that ultimately violate what he describes as the "gap between Hanna and the rest of us that no artist—however seductive—should induce us to breach."[37]

These critical perspectives typify much of the outcry against the novel for its insistence that a violent figure like Hanna might also be regarded as an object of love, or that a woman could be manipulated by a fascist system due to her inability to read. However, these reviews are predicated on a moralizing function of the critic, whose task is to determine if the novel adheres to the strict moral standards we want to impose onto the text.

Though critical appraisals of the novel like these often warn us against the potential mis-uses of the literary imagination, I want to insist, first by virtue of Schlink's own words about the novel, and then by the particulars of the novel itself, that the controversial subject matter presents

[36] "The Rights of History and the Rights of Imagination," pp. 116-118.
[37] "A Sympathy That Does Not Condone: Notes in Summation on Schlink's *The Reader*." *Law and Literature* 16:2 (Summer 2004), p. 230.

a necessary ethical picture of Holocaust remembrance in the last decade of the 20th century. It is useful to recall here a series of interviews Schlink granted a few years after the publication of the novel, during which he spoke of the moral centrality of this strange love story. Challenging the contention laid out by Cynthia Ozick that the novel portrays a radically exceptional view of Nazi Germany, which *was* largely literate, Schlink explains in *The Telegraph* that Hanna is a symbolic expression of those Germans who had "forgotten their moral alphabet" (64). And when speaking to *The Guardian*, he explained that the most pronounced criticism of *The Reader* came not from the generation that survived the Holocaust, but rather, from the generation *after* disaster, those like Berg who emerge in the post-memorial moment and inherit the burden to reckon with disaster. His observations may not mitigate the charges leveled against him for eroticizing the figure of the camp guard, but they remind us of the importance of examining the desires and anxieties attendant upon our own relentless charge of fascination as we continue thinking about what the Holocaust means.

In particular, the novel offers startling insights about the way we are called to engage with the Holocaust, across growing distances. These insights do not offer the comfortable, respectful, canonical, or even thoroughly accurate portraits of an historical trauma that critics like Ozick and Weisberg demand. Instead, they chart the emotional and affective responses to a trauma whose forceful impact only continues to gain momentum as time moves forward. By centerpiecing the graphic and morally questionable intimacy between a camp guard and a young student who must help write the history of the Holocaust as testimonies of collaboration and violence emerge, *The Reader* entices us into thinking about the value of erotic gestures and sentiments in allowing us to attach ourselves to the traumas of others whose suffering Marianne Hirsch and other critics warn us against appropriating.

Consequently, I want to spend the remainder of the chapter detailing the ways Schlink's novel, rather than trying to neutralize the distance and unfamiliarity of the Holocaust for the young protagonist, allows him to vicariously identify with key players in the historical trauma and judge the moral fallout not only of criminals and collaborators but also those who witness and appraise the spectacle from the sidelines—including himself. The novel creates what I want to call an erotics of attachment, a thoroughly ethical manner of engagement with the trauma of others that challenges the very structure of Levinasian responsibility. Schlink positions his post-memorial witness in a constantly shifting and erotically charged relation to the lost world of the Holocaust through sustained intimate entanglements with a former camp guard who fled from it. As I will demonstrate, Schlink's narrator and protagonist charts his progressive moral attachment to trauma, not by neutralizing the silence his belated historical position foists upon him, but by making that silence meaningful and affectively powerful to him, in an erotic language of embodied and meaningful gestures. Berg dwells, in particular, on two erotic machinations—the lingering and fetishistic attention to Hanna's averted and expressive face, and the erotic caress—as fundamental gestures that allow him to engage affectively with elusive trauma despite the respectful silence it demands of second-generation witnesses. I want to argue that their erotic communions enables the displaced witness to secure available points of contact with the elusive world of the camps, and the erotic charge that emerges over contemplations of Hanna's face and caress incite in Berg the need to acknowledge the responsibility he bears, as a member of the generation after disaster, in a shared history of devastation.

De-Facing Responsibilities

The erotic entanglements between young Berg and his Nazi lover allow him to question what his

role, as a member of the generation following disaster, should be. Though he was not involved in the atrocities of his parents' generation, he inherits the still murky 'memory' of collective suffering and guilt that he must now face. Caught between competing impulses to judge the event from an objective distance and to insinuate himself into it, he wants to pursue two conflicting goals throughout the novel: to understand and to condemn, which he later admits is impossible to do (157) and which becomes apparent after he rides the full trajectory of his encounters with Hanna.

In order to pursue his inherited "responsibility to enlighten and accuse" (93), even in the face of a glaring lack of indexical experience that constrains him, Berg quickly discovers that his ethical dilemma is dogged by a relenting drive to mitigate the shame and guilt he and members of his generation felt for not having dealt openly and effectively with the fallout of genocide:

> …collective guilt…for my generation of students it was a lived reality…The fact that Jewish gravestones were being defaced with swastikas, that so many old Nazis had made careers in the courts, the administration, and the universities, that the Federal Republic did not recognize the State of Israel for many years, that emigration and resistance were handed down as traditions less often than a life of conformity—all this filled us with shame, even when we could point at the guilty parties. Pointing at the guilty parties did not free us from shame, but at least it overcame the suffering we went through on account of it. it converted the passive suffering of shame into energy, activity, aggression. And coming to grips with our parents' guilt took a great deal of energy. (169-170)

This aporia of active response in a condition of passivity strikes at the heart of what Marianne Hirsch suggests in *Family Frames*. Insofar as the second generation can be tasked with any proactive response to the Shoah, Hirsch argues that they must "give narrative shape to the surviving fragments of an irretrievable past" (248). Schlink's novel dramatizes the process by which that narrative shape emerges, but he exposes that process for the layered complexities it

holds. Not only must his post-memorial witness respond to the silence of those old enough to experience or evade the horrors of the camps; he must also reckon simultaneously with the silence of those like himself, who have no alternative but to imagine what those horrors would have been like. In tracing the ethical burden of the second generation as a series of ossified silences layered over one another, Schlink's novel points us in the direction of an ethics of post-memorial engagement that maintains these silences in indefinite suspension, without negating or neutralizing them, and without normalizing the impact of the Holocaust or robbing it of its traumatic power. Consequently, Berg becomes Schlink's mouthpiece for second-generational anguish about speaking too little, and simultaneously too much, about an event that can only be imaginatively reconstituted.

Schlink negotiates this labyrinth of necessary silences by framing Berg's post-memorial responsibility—to "enlighten and accuse"—as an obligation that is shaped and alternately constrained by his desire. This desire certainly takes a general form, which reveals itself when Berg describes his task as a law student following Hanna's trial and pursuing questions about the limits of retroactive justice: "At first, I pretended to myself that I only wanted to participate in the scholarly debate, or its political and moral fervor. But I wanted more; I wanted to share in the general passion" (93). However, that "general passion" is shot through with a personal desire for the woman he once loved and with whom he shared intimate encounters—a desire that at this point cannot be easily untangled from the more general desire that motivates his academic and legal interests.

This becomes apparent from the outset in a scene of unanticipated seduction, when he flees nervously from Hanna's apartment after catching a glimpse of her roll her stocking up her leg. Contemplating the possibility of returning to her and, against his better judgment, satisfying

his curiosity, Berg acknowledges the way his own desire for Hanna at that moment draws him closer to an ethical framework in which good judgment is increasingly un-tethered from good deed:

> …thinking and doing have either come together or failed to come together—I think, I reach a conclusion, I turn the conclusion into a decision, and then I discover that acting on the decision is something else entirely, and that doing so may proceed from the decision, but then again it may not… behavior does not merely enact whatever has already been thought through and decided. (20)

Eager to do more than to simply "fall silent in revulsion, shame, and guilt" (104), Berg ascribes a fundamental importance to his own desire in an otherwise mechanistic understanding of ethics. In this proposition, Schlink reminds us that thinking does not guarantee responsive behavior—and thinking about the right thing, in particular, does not necessarily inspire one to behave accordingly. It becomes "an entry in a strange moral accounting" (19). This moral accounting is intimately bound up in an erotics of attachment that induces a certain affect, makes him *want* to pursue justice, however belatedly, through his pursuit of a woman who now stands on trial for her own questionable moral judgment. As he explores and tropes the various forms of erotic intimacy that emerge in his relationship with Frau Schmitz, and specifically with the way he eroticizes her body and face, he comes to acknowledge an intimate attachment to the Holocaust constituted in prolonged and unpredictable engagements with the otherness that Hanna brings into his horizon, however cryptically. Schlink also makes us acutely aware of the anxieties and pleasures of those engagements that his aging narrator tries in alternating strokes to enhance and contain.

The resulting narrative chronicles a post-memorial witness's attempt to reconstitute not only the world he never knew but his own subject position in the present, which has been de-stabilized and refracted within the simultaneous demands to remain engaged with both the absent

world of the past and the present world of today. In this section, I will delineate the two governing and coinciding frames in which Berg understands—and simultaneously grapples with—ethical responsibilities as a member of the post-memorial generation, namely, the witness's relationship to the embodied otherness of his beloved, and the temporal space in which they collude. I will also locate the manner in which these frames allow us to trace the ethical opportunities and anxieties attendant upon second-generation intimacy with trauma, troped here in a variety of poses—including being possessed, caressed, read to, and ultimately, held open.

In one of the earliest scenes of erotic intimacy in the novel, Berg recounts the extent to which his desire for the other, embodied by Hanna, occasions a larger process of working through the trauma of displacement from the Holocaust:

> …she had withdrawn into her own body, and left it to itself and its own quiet rhythms, unbothered by any input from her mind, oblivious to the outside world. It was the same obliviousness that weighed in her glance and her movements when she was pulling on her stockings. But then she was not awkward, she was slow-flowing, graceful, seductive—a seductiveness that had nothing to do with breasts and hips and legs, but was an invitation to forget the world in the recesses of the body. (16)

A cursory reading of this passage reveals that Berg's erotic attraction for Hanna becomes the inducement to a certain kind of ethical thinking, not unlike that which Emmanuel Levinas describes in "The Phenomenology of Eros." Levinas, if we recall, defines the erotic relationship from the perspective of the male lover who unsuccessfully pursues not the female lover, or even her mere body, but the mysterious feminine quality that she represents—much like Berg's fascination with the inaccessible "quiet rhythms" animating Hanna's more immediate physical presence.

Here, we must pause and address the potentially restrictive gender binaries that Levinas's erotic sketch reaffirms. In her essay "The Fecundity of the Caress," Luce Irigaray argues that

Levinas instrumentalizes the feminine and reduces the female lover to a supportive character in the development and transcendence of the male ethical subject. Taken to its logical conclusion, the critique compels us to admit that the male lover robs the female beloved of any sense of subjectivity, complexity or agency; she is the beloved but she is discouraged herself from loving. The only antidote that Irigaray sees to Levinas's problematic assessment of gender relationships is in the union of two equal and independent lovers who, rather than pursuing a retreating femininity, mutually acknowledge and enjoy each other's love and pleasure. At first glance, we might view Berg's narrative recovery of Hanna's mystery with a similar eye toward gender disparities. His attempt to piece together the various fragments of an "irretrievable past" can be seen as an operation that is, in fact, marked as explicitly gendered, aligned with the exertion of his own agency, and implicated in a power hierarchy that reduces his love object to the status of a body to be possessed.

However, it is clear that the complexity and agency that the female beloved lacks in Levinas's scheme does not accurately characterize the role Hanna plays in the novel. As a figuration of the mysterious feminine other, Hanna is anything but disempowered. In fact, she is marked in the text as a metonymic link to the world of the camps—a world with which Berg, propelled by desire and a vested interest in Hanna, can only discern vicariously and judge belatedly. This conflation emerges most explicitly through the erotic encounters Berg and Hanna share. They are choreographed in such a way that Hanna often assumes control of the love-making act. Furthermore, her agency is directed not toward the pursuit of an elusive quality, but in the exercise of commanding and sometimes violent gestures of repression. And the object of that repression is Berg himself. Hanna undermines the position Berg needs to occupy—the

responsible and responsive witness—in order to properly account for the events of their shared past and accurately read the signs of an atrocity the world is only starting to discover.

Two particular scenes in the novel bear out these implications. In an early rendezvous together, Hanna positions her hand squarely over Berg's lips and prevents him from crying out in pleasure during coitus. Not only does she silence and contain his will to pursue the mysterious "rhythms" of her physical being. With her hand over his mouth, she is still able to maintain the last semblance of control over the secret of her mystery, and by extension, her past. And in a later scene, during which Berg leaves an innocent note for Hanna explaining his brief absence from their hotel room the morning after a romantic tryst, Hanna, seized by panic and fear of abandonment, strikes her young lover upon his return. Bashing his face with a belt—and, once again, taking aim for his mouth—Hanna betrays her own mystery in a scene that Richard H. Weisberg has described as an uncanny prefiguration of her abusive complicity in the camps. I would venture to add that this moment of abuse leaves an indelible mark on Berg in another important way. It provides the narrative occasion for him to imaginatively retreat into an impossible domain of unknowing. This moment is presented in the text as an eroticized moment of emotional rending between the lovers that he immediately wants to neutralize through another romantic encounter—even as the taste of his own blood still lingers on his lips.

What these moments suggest is not a faithful attachment to a strictly gendered erotic union, in which a male 'self' asserts his will in pursuit of a mysterious feminine 'other' he can never achieve. In fact, the question of gender is brusquely overtaken in the text by the violent dynamic between mastery and submission that emerges as a result of Berg's own frenetic engagement with two historical realities. On the one hand, he actively participates in a world *after* disaster, one that he helps build by reconstructing scenarios, sharing facts, and attributing

fault. He participates in the creation of a public record of shared memory that will help the Holocaust move out of the realms of silence and denial. On the other hand, he actively solicits and engages a world shaped before disaster, one in which he savors once more the few moments of innocence and awakening that now seem suspended in time.

In both of these scenes of erotic pursuit, and in the second scene especially, Berg casts himself at once as the young lover, about to enter into a world of carnal knowledge, and simultaneously, as an historical witness who, looking back years later on the affair, nostalgically recreates a more innocent world that has not yet burdened him with the knowledge of the death camps or Hanna's participation in them. This nostalgia, as Svetlana Boym reminds us in "Nostalgia and its Discontents," is not a "longing for place, but…a yearning for a different time…a rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress."[38] He eroticizes these memories of transition from innocence to knowledge—carnal as well as traumatic knowledge—and invests them with an overabundance of feeling and excitement in order to give shape, tangibility, and texture to a world with which he otherwise has no palpable contact. Of course, that endowment of shape is an imperfect enterprise, to say the least. After all, he kisses her with a bloodied mouth that moments earlier she had gashed open—a wound that serves as a harsh physical reminder that he has been actively, and violently, expelled from a world of horrors he cannot possibly know first-hand. Nevertheless, his erotic engagement with Hanna—who brings a masked version of the horrors of the Shoah into his immediate horizon—forms an important point of attachment in an otherwise elusive world that is destined to remain outside his grasp and that condemns him to speak from a place of consigned silence.

[38] This essay appears in *The Hedgehog Review: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture*'s special edition, "The Uses of the Past," 9:2 (Summer 2007), pp. 7-18.

This place of silence, I want to stress, is not a place that has been rendered silent through a deprivation or failure of language. This place of silence forms a constitutive basis upon which Berg is able to approach and establish an intimate connection with the horrors of the Shoah and the moral failures of its most faithful lackeys. Berg establishes this sense of intimacy, not through language, but primarily through erotic gesture, which continues to incite him through dramatic appeals to sensuous interest and desire.

Not surprisingly, Hanna's body—and, more importantly, her face—are instrumental in sustaining his prolonged, eroticized contact with the distant world she represents. Again, it is useful to recall Levinas here. Levinas describes the awakening to ethical responsibility as a moment that occurs over the direct contemplation of the human face of the other. Schlink departs from this scenario by awakening in young Berg feelings of responsibility for crimes he never committed through skillfully orchestrated scenes in which Hanna denies him any direct glimpse of her face. She becomes an agent of ethical awakening for the generation after disaster by turning away from him, averting her gaze, and in the process, inviting his continued and prolonged interest in and engagement with a world not of his direct doing. In this way, her face, in its variety of graceful and taunting poses, becomes one of the most prominent "recesses" that he tries, often unsuccessfully, to explore.

In a series of moments in which she turns away from Berg, Hanna unwittingly inspires her young lover's zealous gaze and piques his interest about the nebulous mystery looming behind her. Immediately, his eyes pore over every other detail that has been left in the wake of her simple act of aversion. We gain a clear understanding of the prolific power of the apostrophe even in the early stages of their relationship when Berg, desperate to probe her secret life and see Hanna outside the confines of their secret rendez-vous, follows her to the tram car where she

works as an attendant. He immediately takes note of the almost cruel manner in which she faces him and turns away:

> I was imprisoned in the slow-moving car. At first I sat, then I went and stood on the front platform and tried to impale Hanna with my stare; I wanted her to feel my eyes in her back. After some time she turned around and glanced at me. Then she went on talking to the driver…I felt rejected, exiled from the real world in which people lived and worked and loved. It was as if I were condemned to ride forever in an empty car to nowhere. (45)

This description is provocative in the sense that it establishes Hanna's ability to call Berg to a certain kind of moral accounting for a world of devastation from which he has been expelled. The language of gesture is essential here in transforming Berg's silence and powerlessness into a powerfully imaginative identification with the distant world of the camps. The play of her face and the ensuing feeling of dismissal and imprisonment in a tram car for which she now collects tickets are eerie reminders of the trains transporting Jews to the camps where Hanna once worked. The indifference with which she glances back at Berg, before turning away and not registering a reaction to his presence, works counter-intuitively in this scene to fashion an unexpected but gripping point of identification between the young tram rider, displaced from atrocity by a single generational remove, and the young Jews who rode similar trams to their doom.

The orchestra of the averting face continues during the second stage of their relationship, after Hanna reappears in Berg's life and reveals herself to be a former camp guard brought to trial for her negligent care of a group of female prisoners who died in a fire under her watch. Berg finds himself sitting in the audience and watching Hanna stand trial years after she broke off their relationship and left town. As he lays eyes on her once again, he fawns over the back of

her head and surrounding anatomy, all in an effort to connect with a woman who—once again—is not showing her face to him:

> So I watched her from behind. I saw her head, her neck, her shoulders. When she was being discussed, she held her head very erect. When she felt she was being unjustly treated, slandered, or attacked and she was struggling to respond, she rolled her shoulders forward and her neck swelled, showing the play of muscles. The objections were regularly overruled, and her shoulders regularly sank. She never shrugged, and she never shook her head…Nor did she allow herself to hold her head at an angle, or to let it fall, or to lean her chin on her hand. She sat as if frozen…
>
> …Sometimes strands of hair slipped out of the tight knot, began to curl, lay on the back of her neck, and moved gently against it in the draft. Sometimes Hanna wore a dress with a neckline low enough to reveal the birthmark high on her left shoulder. Then I remembered how I had blown the hair away from that neck and how I had kissed that birthmark and that neck. But the memory was like a retrieved file. I felt nothing. (100)

This moment captures, among other things, a need to reawaken in himself the erotic desire he once felt for this woman who now stands before him in a familiar averted pose. At the very moment Hanna's complicity becomes fodder for public spectacle and judgment, Berg, now a law student grappling with the responsible way of dealing with the crimes of the previous generation, laments the fact that his work has cost him a fundamental capacity to feel. In giving victims and perpetrators a place to speak and be judged, he exposes himself to an array of testimonies detailing the most barbaric behavior. In the process, Berg admits that, over time, the narrative accounts of gruesome torture and self-serving complicity, of following orders and ignoring signs, have de-sensitized him and members of his generational cohort to the world of the camps. This is an arresting snag for the member of the post-memorial community who must traverse distances and resist various forms of belated experience in order to attach themselves, responsibly, to the trauma of others. In addition, as a member of the future legal apparatus of

postwar Germany, burdened with the collective task of moving a country out of an unsavory history and redressing the wrongs of its fathers and mothers, Berg is increasing alienated from an affective identification with the world of the camps. Consequently, Hanna's sudden reappearance in his life is presented here as the potential corrective to that problem. Though he admits in the aforementioned passage to feeling nothing upon seeing the back of Hanna's head, he nevertheless allows his eyes to dance along her frame and indulge in a hopeful revivification of their former love affair, one that would remind him why he fell in love with a woman who, years later in a culture of vigilant reckoning, is now so universally maligned. That revivification, furthermore, culminates in an erotically charged impression, forged from a distance, of a woman who stands before him, intensely responsive to the various ebbs and flows of her surrounding environment—a sensitivity he cannot yet reclaim for himself.

When Hanna finally turns around and makes momentary eye contact with him—the first and only time she does so during the trial—the gesture catches Berg by surprise and reawakens in him the long-dormant memory of his love for a woman who had once been mysterious but whose mystery was now unfolding for the whole of the German state to see, and to judge:

> Hanna turned around and looked at me. Her eyes found me at once, and I realized that she had known the whole time I was there. She just looked at me. Her face didn't ask for anything, beg for anything, assure me of anything or promise anything. It simply presented itself. I saw how tense and exhausted she was. She had circles under her eyes, and on each cheek a line that ran from top to bottom that I'd never seen before, that weren't yet deep, but already marked her like scars. When I turned red under her gaze, she turned away and back to the judge's bench. (116-117)

The string of provocative poses Hanna strikes during these moments of official reckoning are not simply the machinations of a human face demanding Berg's affective engagement with the world of the camps. Two details become important here. First, the "scars" that Berg notices on her

face mark her as a woman whose past has been a tremendous burden to her and to those who suffered under her care. And second, the unexpected ease with which she immediately finds and then breaks Berg's gaze in the courtroom lead us to view her as a woman who has become quite good at what she does—using people for her own pleasurable gain, and discarding them when she has been sated. It is perhaps not surprising to regard her in such a way, considering the fact that she ends their relationship years earlier, and effectively controls its meaning, with the same abrupt unpredictability that she wields in this scene when she authors and simultaneously delimits an uncontestable moment of mutual recognition.

These details become particularly significant in light of the witness testimony that immediately precedes her dramatic look back at Berg. Moments earlier, a witness testifies that Hanna had engaged in questionable activities during her stint as a camp guard. She plucked young and physically fragile female prisoners from the line-up, gave them a bit of shelter and comfort during their numbered days at the camps, and asked them to read to her—an erotic ritual that carried with it the tacit charge of either manipulation or outright misconduct.

The meeting of Hanna and Berg's gaze in court, however isolated it may have been, marks a moment of discovery for the young law student, who recalls also having read to her after their afternoon trysts, and who later imagines himself to be like the frail young prisoners she may have used in the camps. Once again, the cryptic but erotically charged pantomime of Hanna's averted gaze awakens Berg to a potential point of identification with the world of the Shoah. In fact, we might even go so far as to say that the erotic choreography of Berg's relationship with Hanna—replete with scenes of reading like the young female prisoners were asked to do as a way of 'earning' their final moments of comfort—changes the way he literally sees her. Berg no longer looks at her merely through his own gaze, as an object of a long-past love affair. In

addition, he sees her through the eyes of the condemning public, who have already charged and condemned her for a history of violence and manipulation. Moreover, sees himself through their eyes, as a potential victim-by-proxy, not terribly unlike the young female prisoners she once manipulated through appeals to comfort and intimacy.

As the novel progresses, Berg begins to imagine more fully the uncanny parallels between himself and the young prisoners who came and went before him:

> My thoughts wandered off and were lost in images…I saw her being read to. She listened carefully, asked no questions, and made no comments. When the hour was over, she told the reader she would be going on the transport to Auschwitz the next morning. The reader, a frail creature with a stubble of black hair and nearsighted eyes, began to cry. Hanna hit the wall with her hand and two women, also prisoners in striped clothing, came in and pulled the reader away. I saw Hanna walking the paths in the camp, going into the prisoners' barracks and overseeing construction work. She did it all with the same hard face, cold eyes, and pursed mouth, and the prisoners ducked, bent over their work, pressed themselves against the wall, into the wall…Hanna stood among them and screamed orders, her screaming face a mask of ugliness, and help things along with her whip…Alongside these images I saw the others. Hanna pulling on her stockings in the kitchen…Hanna loving me with the cold eyes and pursed mouth, silently listening to me reading, and at the end banging the wall with her hand, talking to me with her face turning into a mask. (145-147)

This particular development is significant because it reaffirms the burgeoning linkage between Hanna's alleged manipulation and abuse of young girls at the camps, on the one hand, and her aggressive courtship of Berg, on the other. At the same time, this imaginative scenario reflects back on Berg, who pictures the scene in ways that allow him to experience pleasure, after all—and, more specifically, masochistic pleasure attendant upon Hanna's exertion of sadistic cruelty.

Interestingly, it is at this point that Berg himself initiates, at least on a rhetorical level, the very apostrophe he eroticizes in Hanna's face throughout the trial. Suddenly feeling a

tremendous sympathy for Hanna, whose defense begins to buckle and whose own understanding of the charges leveled against her eludes her, Berg 'turns away' from his narrative recollection. Speaking in indirect discourse, he addresses Hanna, directly but silently, wishing that she would provide a rational explanation for her complicity and negligence. This rhetorical apostrophe, during which hopes Hanna was driven by compassion, reveals the extent to which his own compassion and feeling suddenly return to him:

> Ask her if she chose the weak and delicate girls, because they could never have stood up to the work on the building site anyway, because they would have been sent on the next transport to Auschwitz in any case, and because she wanted to make that final month bearable. Say it, Hanna. Say you wanted to make their last month bearable. That that was the reason for choosing the delicate and the weak. That there was no other reason, and could not be.
>
> But the lawyer did not ask Hanna, and she did not speak of her own accord. (117)

Though this rhetorical apostrophe bears witness to Hanna's crumbling defense and subsequent sentence, the appeal to compassion becomes the affective rejoinder to his earlier comment about not feeling anything when he first saw her. In alternating strokes, Hanna reveals and denies her face. She engages in an ongoing gestural dance that constitutes an important part of the non-verbal language Berg uses to attach himself to the unseen camps of the Holocaust. His experiences, furthermore, allow him to recharge his emotional and sensual attachment to a woman whom he once loved, but it also awakens him to a more concise formulation of guilt and culpability that Hanna must bear herein. Her seduction of Berg, if we can call it that, seems to have been part of a long-familiar repertoire of erotic maneuvers that claimed his innocence and drove him directly into the arms of a scene he must now re-imagine and engage.

In addition to her looks away, Schlink offers us a view of Hanna's 'facial depth'—a way of speaking about and remembering her face that conjures multiple, cryptic, and sometimes

conflicting narratives about her identity and involvement in the camps. This 'facial depth' also guides young Berg through the beleaguered and temporally drawn out process of ethical discovery. By using the term 'facial depth,' I want to challenge the commonplaces in Levinas regarding the human face as a site of expressive meaning, and the genesis of ethical awareness as a precise moment of response to a particular call. Schlink's portrayal of Hanna's face is overlaid with references to its unusual depth. That is to say, her face is bound up in the memories and predilections of the narrator who sees in her visage a layering of multiple meanings, narrative accounts of who she is at different stages in the novel. And in so doing, Schlink's representation of the face, as a site of layering and depth, inevitably enjoins Berg into an ethical relationship to the other that expands and changes with time. The 'call' of the other is thus replaced with a face that lingers on Berg's imagination and shapes and constrains the different stages of responsibility he is willing to accept.

Here, it is instructive to return to the beginning of the narrative. Berg searches for a human face to put to the woman he once loved, yet he finds this task difficult to perform:

> her face as it was then has been overlaid in my memory by the faces she had later. If I see her in my mind's eye as she was then, she doesn't have a face at all, and I have to reconstruct it…I know that I found it beautiful. But I cannot recapture its beauty. (12)

The face of Hanna, through whom he connects himself, however tenuously, to the world of the Holocaust, becomes a palimpsest that has been continuously overlaid with meaning and image. Though Berg's meditation here occasions the memory of his relationship with a mysterious woman and her unthinkable complicity in the camps, this seemingly benign attention to her face as a screen on which he projects different faces at different times spurs him to see her not only through his own gaze – as a former lover who abandoned him – but also through the eyes of the public – as a woman now standing trial for perpetrating crimes against humanity.

Interestingly, one of the faces he sees in Hanna's refracted image is himself. For much of the novel, he romanticizes his affair with a former camp guard without holding himself *fully* accountable for the potential obscenity of this union or uncanny resemblance he discovers between himself and the weakened prisoners Hanna once took under her special care. This obscenity emerges out of the fact that he chooses to love a Nazi. Singling himself out from the rest of his generational cohort later in the novel, Berg describes the need to address the existential implications of pursuing a relationship with a woman who is on trial for crimes against humanity:

> I had no one to point at. Certainly not my parents, because I had nothing to accuse them of…what other people in my social environment had done, and their guilt, were in any case a lot less bad than what Hanna had done. I had to point at Hanna. But the finger I pointed at her turned back to me. I had loved her. Not only had I loved her, I had chosen her…love of our parents is the only love for which we are not responsible. (170)

This sentiment shapes the way he understands the obligations of both the second generation proper—who must contend with the prospect of loving family members that are more directly implicated in the violence of the Third Reich—and his own aberrant burden to reckon with a relationship for which he now holds himself accountable.

Berg looks to other faces to gauge that which he cannot clearly discern in the visage of his former object of desire. Consequently, the face of the judge, who presides over Hanna's trial, comes to play an equally significant role in the moral reckoning of a nation's shameful (and fairly recent) past. As the trial proceeds, Berg notes that the judge "had adopted an expression of irritation as his defining feature…[because] it was his mask" (111). This "masked" face emerges on Berg's memorial sightline at a crucial moment in the trial when Hanna describes, so matter-of-factly and unlike other collaborators standing trial, the familiar routine of accepting newly-

arrived prisoners and sending others back to certain death. After the judge asks her if her decision to have prisoners killed were motivated by the trite concern of wanting "to make room" for new arrivals, Hanna turns to the judge and asks him, with sincere curiosity but grossly out of turn, what he would have done if he were in the same situation. The mask that the judge wears, however, cannot hide what Berg sees in this tense impromptu encounter: "he could take a little time to find an answer. But not too long; the longer he took, the greater the tension and expectation, and the better his answer had to be" (ibid).

There is an important transformation of ethical commitment looming beneath Berg's contemplation of the judge's mask. The judge plays a more established version of Berg, participating in the public channels that bring the Holocaust out of its historical silence and into the domain of legal reckoning. As a young law student and interested spectator at the time, Berg frames the trial itself by questions he and the rest of his seminar classmates actively pursue—including the extent to which perpetrators' actions could be measured and punished retroactively, and whether new laws needed to be devised in order to properly address increasingly larger scales of criminality associated with the world of the camps. The judge in Berg's recollection becomes a retrojection into the past, from the scene of his present narration, of his own professional persona. This retrojection of himself into the past, furthermore, speaks to a larger anxiety about speaking out in response to atrocities committed by members of his parents' generation – and, more importantly, speaking out in an environment in which audiences are fixated, like he was in the courtroom, on the answer.

Not surprisingly, the judge offers an ineffectual response to Hanna's question, eliciting Berg's strong reprobation:

> "There are matters one simply cannot get drawn into, that one must distance oneself from, if the price is not life and limb."

> Perhaps this would have been all right if he had said the same thing, but referred directly to Hanna or himself. Talking about what 'one' must and must not do and what it costs did not do justice to the seriousness of Hanna's question. She had wanted to know what she should have done in her particular situation, not that there are things that are not done. The judge's answer came across as hapless and pathetic. Everyone felt it. They reacted with sighs of disappointment and stared in amazement at Hanna, who had more or less won the exchange. (ibid)

The narrator clearly castigates the judge for offering a response that not only sidesteps Hanna's query but appears to re-enact the distanciation she herself committed in order to do the job for which she now stands trial. By depersonalizing the situation with empty rhetoric about what 'one' must do, and drawing a line between himself and the crime for which Hanna is now being tried, the judge, as an agent of legal and moral reckoning, unwittingly promotes an insidious un-attachment to events that facilitated such events in the first place. In this way, the judge refuels Berg's own desire to literally become the new face, and part of the future generation, of German post-war justice. And taking issue with the judge's use of the placeholder, the term 'one' marks the crucial difference between the older generation's view of responsibility—to prosecute through attention to the letter of a law that responds, quite inadequately, to the changing scale of criminality and unpredictable largesse of culpability in the postwar moment—and Berg's own view of responsibility—to hold individuals accountable for actions despite being motivated by things and scenes that appear in conventional wisdom to reside outside one's control.

The Ethical Caress

It is clear that Berg's erotic fixation on Hanna's face, in its full symphony of poses and mysteries, provides him with the necessary affective and self-reflective conduit to an ethical realization of involvement in trauma that precedes him by a generation. With an erotically

charged gaze that caresses every inch of her physical being, that takes note of every stimulation and response that spreads across her face and the face of others, Berg moves the Holocaust that much closer to himself.

Yet this change is effected not through an active exertion of his own. In fact, one of the true wonders of Schlink's novel is in the way his protagonist is able to effect change through his commitment to remaining immobilized in the face of a mysterious woman and the world of devastation she has seen. We see this not only in the courtroom scenes itself, during which Berg remains a passive spectator of the historic trial and the quiet scene of Hanna's body. We also see the 'work' of his passivity originating in the erotic encounters themselves.

With this passivity in full view, it is important to revisit the question of mastery and submission that punctuates their afternoons, seemingly romantic trysts that speak in their own ways of the horrors of the camps. If we consider Hanna's body in relation to the elusive and more terrifying otherness of the Holocaust, Berg cannot sufficiently engage or approach that world as an equal and independent 'participant' in the event. In this fact, we retain the sense of an asymmetry in Levinas's original formulation—that asymmetrical relation between the infinite Other and the finite ethical subject. As coeval others, Hanna and the world of the camps taunt Berg with a universe of mysteries he will never be able to know for himself.

This disparity is reflected and eroticized in a number of ways in the novel, but the rhetoric of immobilization and infantilization emerge as two seemingly prominent characterizations of Berg's relationship with Hanna. First, his sense of being locked into place informs Berg's status as an almost passive beneficiary of the world he inherits and evaluates—reads—but will never experience directly. Indeed, an erotics of passivity jumps to the fore when,

ironically resurrecting the ghost of Primo Levi's authorial persona in *The Drowned and the Saved*, he describes one particular scene of love-making:

> When we made love, I sensed that she wanted to push me to the point of feeling things I had never felt before, to the point where I could no longer stand it. She also gave herself in a way she had never done before. She didn't abandon all reserve, she never did that. But it was as if she wanted us to drown together. (79)

Such a description of one of their encounters is not merely a dead metaphor about a moment of *jouissance* with his now-dead lover. More importantly, it suggests that Berg sees himself as the disempowered lover and takes pleasure in being guided by Hanna's aggressive hand. Like the victim about to drown, the lover about to fully experience the reality of drowning, he is a witness to an impossible scene. He must rely on the ability of that elusive world to engage him, cryptically and sometimes violently, sporadically and without consistency, through intimate contact with collateral traces and across un-navigable distances in time and space. When we consider the implications of this erotic passivity for Schlink's larger project about post-memorial ethics, Berg becomes the figuration of a certain kind of modesty and restraint—a figure who not only acknowledges his displacement from the scenes of devastation, but a figure who allows himself to survey that horizon as he is being swept away by that current.

The rhetoric of infantilization emerges out of the rhetoric of immobilization, as Hanna often wields the upper hand in their encounters and reduces Berg to a proxy childlike figure in his own narration. For instance, she offers to bathe Berg before making love him, and then dismisses him after she has had her way: "'Let me bathe you, kid'…'Now go to your friends'" (79-80). His infantilization reminds readers of the sexual misconduct shooting through Hanna's sexual life—not only in the camps, where she would manipulate young female prisoners into presumably sexual relationships, but also after the war, when she took pity on a sickly fifteen-

year-old student suffering from tuberculosis and fell into a sexual relationship with him. However, in spite of the questions surrounding consent, the adult Berg looks back with pride at his relationship with a woman "ten years younger than [his] mother but could have been [his] mother" (40). This pride, I want to suggest, is a moral expression of his re-investment in the traumas and mistakes of his parents' generation. It is an expression of surrender – to bear the burden of and ultimately redress the previous generation's carnage, as if it were his own.

At first glance, the appeals to immobility and infantilization that fuel much of the erotic tension in his relationship with Hanna lead Berg to a more direct engagement with a trauma from which he has been exiled. However, what these appeals have in common is that they are both sustained, often symbolically, by one last important gesture, the erotic caress. In *Time and the Other* Levinas locates the caress in a larger circuit of deferral in which the male subject attempts to grasp and experience the elusive feminine otherness which is already doomed to failure. In this way, the caress is linked to both a subject position that is yet to be actualized and a future event that will never come (90).

In some ways, Schlink casts Hanna as the author of one of many different but significant types of caress throughout the novel. The most memorable, of course, is her domineering caress. Berg finds himself imagining what her body would be like, and coming into contact with her body, but the narrative emphasis on touch and tactile contact between two people is deployed through domineering gestures like Hanna's hand, which she holds over the boy's mouth so he will not scream out during climax. However, Hanna also offers him maternal caresses throughout their early courtship, particularly as she bathes him during their ritual cleansings.

In both forms of erotic caress, we are reminded of the conundrum into which Berg, as post-memorial witness, is subsequently cast. The simple gesture of the caress puts into an

ongoing tension two overlapping forms of his love for Hanna, both of which inform the relationship he cultivates with the world withdrawing behind her. His attachment to her, like his existential theory of love, is both willfully chosen and willfully played out in a state of asymmetrical submission. And even though Hanna is the agent of the caress, Berg is the one who ultimately pursues if not the actual gesture of caress then certainly the logic that animates it. He pursues her elusive mystery by allowing himself to be sensitized, to take an affective interest in the world preceding him. In this way, Berg is able to move into a space between the active and the passive, to put his erotic passivity to work in ways that allow him to engage vicariously with post-memorial traumas and to accept, receive, a sense of responsibility for the devastation that now haunts an entire nation.

It is at this time that Berg, recently separated from his wife and finding himself thinking constantly of Hanna, decides to revisit the erotic rituals of reading he once shared with her. Over the span of several months, Berg records himself reading aloud the classic authors—Homer, Schnitzler, Chekhov—just as he once did during their romantic trysts—just as her prisoners once did at the camps. He refrains from passing her personal messages of any kind, and simply reads from his selection of classics. It is also during this time that Berg develops his craft of writing, which then spurs him to write this current story. In essence, Berg resuscitates an erotic ritual for the sake of finding an authorial voice. That voice, he later admits, will help him tell the story of Berg and Hanna, which elicits two contradictory goals: to hold on to the truth of their romance amid a sea of proliferating narratives about the Holocaust, and to finally free himself of the emotional burden that story causes. Though he also admits that these goals are unachievable, he nevertheless permits himself to pursue them sincerely. Like the caress itself, which is predicated

on the pursuit of a mystery that can never be grasped, Berg's attentive solicitation of that elusive mystery allows him to realize his creative potential.

His lingering interest in former intimate practices has an unexpected effect: as he records himself reading aloud, Hanna, he later discovers just after her death, had taught herself to read with his help. After years of exchanging cassette recordings in such a manner, Hanna slowly teaches herself to read and immerses herself in the narratives and testimonies of others who worked at and suffered in the camps. After Hanna commits suicide the day before she was due to be released, Berg discovers the fruits of his labors. The warden shows him her room and the vast library of Holocaust writings it now housed:

> I went over to the bookshelf. Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel, Tadeusz Borowski, Jean Améry—the literature of the victims, next to the autobiography of Rudolf Hess, Hannah Arendt's report on Eichmann in Jerusalem, and scholarly literature in the camps.
>
> "Did Hanna read these?"
>
> "Well, at least she ordered them with care. Several years ago I had to get her a general concentration camp bibliography, and then one or two years ago she asked me to suggest some books on women in the camps, both prisoners and guards." (205)

The library is noteworthy here, not only because contains volumes from both victims and perpetrators, including perpetrators who were tried in the famous Nuremberg trials in Germany. More importantly, it signifies Hanna's attempt to redress the vulnerability and susceptibility to manipulation that led to her incarceration in the first place.

This discovery of literacy transforms Hanna in Berg's memory as a woman who was in the midst of her own ethical transformation. The acquisition of reading knowledge serves as a conduit through which Hanna is finally able to access, however vicariously, the voices of those victims her actions claimed, so many years. In so doing, she finally realizes the gravity of her actions in the camps. As she confessed to Berg on the eve of her suicide:

> "I always had the feeling that no one understood me anyway, that no one knew who I was and what made me do this or that. And you know, when no one understands you, then no one can call you to account. Not even the court could call me to account. But the dead can. They understand…Here in prison they were with me a lot. They came every night, whether I wanted them or not. Before the trial I could still chase them away when they wanted to come." (198-9)

This is a moment of dramatic discovery for Hanna, who finally sees that her former efforts to 'care' for sickly young prisoners were part of a larger cycle of impersonal violence she was perpetrating against them. Yet for Berg, it represents one of the final and most powerful moments of shunning he experiences at her hands. By confessing to him that she only answers to those who lost their lives as a result of her actions, that she can only be truly understood by them and by nobody else, Hanna refuses to acknowledge the relationship she once had with Berg—a denial that throws his own feelings about love and responsibility into chaotic uncertainty.

Yet even this denial shakes him into a clearer understanding of what his role ought to be, particularly after she dies and he is left to carry out her last wishes. Among other things, Hanna wanted to donate money to the former concentration camp survivor who escaped the church fire that claimed the lives of prisoners under her care. Putting aside his own personal and narcissistic desire to be acknowledged as a lover and meaningful influence in her life, Berg undertakes the task with great solemnity and discovers, in the process, that he cannot honor her memory the way he wanted to. As his conversation with the camp survivor reveals, accepting the money Hanna sent would be tantamount to granting her absolution—and forgiveness of a personal nature cannot wipe clean the slate that bears the offenses of so many others she killed.

Instead, Berg donates the money to a Jewish literacy charity. This gesture is of particular importance because it reframes her crimes in a more sympathetic light. Bewildered as he was at

the discovery that Hanna was incarcerated after she signed a confession she could not read, Berg opens himself up to a more complicated view of his former beloved. She was not the perpetrator of war crimes anymore; she was an illiterate woman whose inability to read made her a prime candidate for political manipulation, blind allegiance, and convenient scapegoating. His decision to put her money into a charity that combats illiteracy which, according to the novel's imaginative vision of Nazi Germany, is a symbolic expression of the failure and unwillingness of citizens to face the immanent dangers of totalitarianism. The fact that it is a Jewish organization, moreover, is especially significant – as it relocates the vulnerability of illiteracy from the figure of the perpetrator to the figure of the victim.

In this way, Berg's desire for Hanna in no way compromises the duty he bears not just to her but to the *actual* victims of her 'care'. In the process, he becomes beholden to their memory, just as Hanna had been before her death. It is perhaps not surprising to see that the novel ends with Berg driving to the cemetery months later with a form letter in his hand acknowledging a donation made in Hanna's name. Though he never explains his intention, the mention of the letter in his pocket suggests that he is about to leave it on her gravestone—much like the Jewish tradition of leaving rocks on the gravestone in order to honor the memory of the dead. Though his effort is palpable and sincere, Berg lives in a world in which that kind of honor cannot be bestowed upon her. The only thing he can do is allude to the practice—and that is precisely what he does, particularly in the last lines of the novel, which detail an emergent action but curtail its completion:

> I donated Hanna's money in her name to the Jewish League Against Illiteracy. I received a short, computer-generated letter in which the Jewish League thanked Ms. Schmitz for her donation. With the letter in my pocket, I drove to the cemetery, to Hanna's grave. It was the first and only time I stood there. (218)

Clearly, the implication here is that Berg discovers a way of honoring the personal and the political without doing violence to either. Caught as he always was between the urge to be proactive and the impossibility of righting past wrongs, Berg manages to negotiate

Concluding Notes: Caressing History

The erotic contemplations of Hanna's face and caress open Berg onto an important ethical landscape in which he must "enlighten and accuse," understand and condemn the various perpetrators, collaborators, and apathetic by-standers who contributed to the culture of violence that postwar Germany must now contend with. And even though he himself bears no direct responsibility for the crimes committed or the lives devastated, he becomes part of a generation whose suffering is intimately linked to the shame of complicity. This complicity manifests itself in an existential decision to stay the course after falling in love with a Nazi, a woman who never reciprocated or acknowledged those feelings. The post-memorial witness of this erotic melodrama paints a devastating picture of his former beloved and, in the process, undermines the relative innocence of his own life before the Shoah and during its subsequent rise to public visibility.

The post-memory of war and genocide that Schlink offers to his readers, furthermore, suffers a similar fate. We catch glimmers of Schlink's authorial agenda by looking at the partitioning of the book into three segments – a sexual relationship with Hanna during his late teens, her reappearance in court roughly ten years later, and his courting of the imprisoned Hanna through recorded oral readings. Following a structure based loosely on the *Bildungsroman* tradition of 19th-century European literatures of education and development, *The Reader* traces the maturation of a young law student from sexual and historical naïveté to an

informed and morally troubled historical witness reckoning with the failure of an entire generation – two generations, if he includes his own.

Punctuating this progressive structure of development, however, is a most suggestive temporal ellipsis between the first two parts of the novel—the ellipsis that marks Hanna's abrupt ten-year absence from Berg's life. Historically, this temporal elision is significant in that it leaves outside its domain of representation the widely publicized arrest in 1960 and subsequent trial one year later in Jerusalem of notorious Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann—whose court proceedings from abroad Hanna presumably read during her incarceration, along with the memoir of Rudolf Hess, the famous war criminal who was tried in the Nuremberg trials within Germany. Yet in spite of this omission, the novel clearly picks up on absent historical reverberations through the depiction of a woman whose own involvement in the Nazi torture machine re-imagines the larger process by which historical brutality moves from the domain of silence to the realm of the spoken. The elliptical structure, furthermore, gestures toward the need to preserve certain moments of amnesia in order to lay to rest memories of trauma that continue to plague the next generation of survivors.

Schlink draws attention to this gradual turn toward fascination, and to some degree effects it himself, through the ghost of another famous Hannah—Hannah Arendt—and of the famous Eichmann who was brought to trial in 1961 and hanged one year later in Ramala. Documenting the trial in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* in 1963, Hanna Arendt draws attention to the "indictment [as] the framework for [the] trial," (121) highlighting the ethos of retribution surrounding the trial and exploring the public fascination attendant upon the various legal precedents set and disrupted in bringing him to justice in Israel instead of Germany. With interventions like that of Hannah Arendt, the famous case is consequently positioned in cultural

memory as an opportunity not to *try* war criminals but to make them accountable for crimes for which they were already understood to be guilty, crimes that demand and yet simultaneously defy adequate explanation.

In this way, Berg's memory work positions his beloved Hanna in the novel as the romanticized figure of the penitent perpetrator – a figure that Eichmann in Arendt's view never became. Furthermore, the secret that keeps Hanna from defending herself in court becomes the narrative occasion for a penitence that culminates in her decision, upon her release from prison eighteen years later, to kill herself instead of reclaiming a position in the social fabric. Yet Schlink's potentially conservative effort to re-imagine the history of reckoning as a wish that has gone unfulfilled finds resistance from the *silent* presence that Eichmann's shadow casts on the novel's narrative structure. Not only does it provide the historical referent that goes unrepresented between the first and second parts of the novel—set in 1958 and 1965, respectively. Just as importantly, the omission is implicated in a memory regime that cannot, and perhaps should not, redress the uncomfortable gaps plaguing the very forms of cultural remembrance that members of increasingly displaced generations of witnesses can practice.[39]

Once again, we return to the logic of the erotic caress. As Schlink contends with historical elisions that clearly structure his 'atypical' tale of illiteracy, manipulation, and violence, he unwittingly positions the gesture of the erotic caress squarely in the center of his own post-memorial recreation of the Shoah. By centerpiecing the erotic entanglements of a young witness and his symbolic tug-of-war with a mysterious other that will always disempower

[39] Here, I am inverting the idea of a continuous "search for meaningful existence within society" that Marianne Hirsch outlines in her essay "From *Great Expectations* to *Lost Illusions*: The Novel of Formation as Genre" (*Genre* XII, 3 [1979], 293-311). Instead of a *consistent* arc that tracks a protagonist's journey toward a more socially coherent self, as Hirsch argues, I want to suggest that Schlink's novel is structured according to a chronologically elliptical and thematically discontinuous series of moments and impressions. These moments highlight not a steady journey toward knowledge and maturity, but rather, the uneven recognition of Berg's own personal emptiness of memory surrounding the Holocaust and his subsequent preoccupation with the cultural impulse to commemorate and right its unspoken history.

and silence him, Schlink establishes the gesture of the caress as a thoroughly ethical model of attachment to distant traumas. The idea of possession that the caress implies in its sexual machinations resonates with Berg's own inability to fully, or even adequately, possess either the love of his life or the haunting world of devastation from whence she came. In his caress of history, Schlink entices us into affectively charged engagements with the past that cannot possibly be mastered, rendered fully intelligible, or outline a clear moral framework. Yet it is only within that realm of impossible pursuit that we, as displaced witnesses to disaster, can make proper and productive use of our silences.

● Chapter 4 ●

Living with the Other: Habitation and the Grounds of Post-Memory

Introduction: The Home and the World

Pat Barker's *Regeneration* and Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader* suggest an ethics of post-memorial attachment to atrocity that exceeds and often resists the conventional motives of mere remembrance or self-understanding. Their novels position the post-memorial witness in close proximity to elusive disasters like World War I and the Shoah in order to illuminate a wider range of alternatives to the dominant and often violent modes of commemoration and identity formation that those disasters foreground in the first place. Barker's novel crystallizes this ethical relation to disaster by framing the exchange between self and other as a question of voice. The voices of suffering and sacrifice that drift across the trenches and penetrate the cloistered atmosphere of Craiglockhart summon Rivers to speak out against the rigidity and violence of a hetero-normative, hyper-masculinist culture of aggression that victimizes not only his recovering patients but also himself. Schlink's novel reiterates the ethical need for a dialogic intimacy with disaster, but transposes that intimacy within the realms of erotic experience and existential affect. In this way, the confrontation of self and other that occurs on the planes of language and voice is now embodied in a series of encounters between a young student and a mysterious older woman who took part in the atrocities his culture and generation must now confront. Schlink's belated witness, naïve as he had been at the time to the magnitude and gravity of the crimes his lover participated in, claims an affective responsibility for the love he happens to feel for the former camp guard.

Together, these novels highlight the need to start thinking critically about the rhetoric of

intimacy, immediacy, and engagement that a post-memorial ethics of trauma demands in the contemporary landscape of world literature. In fact, these particular texts—which trope the call of the other as a voice to be heard, however quietly, and a body to be possessed, however, incompletely—lay the groundwork for an analysis of the very ground upon which these dialogic exchanges between the belated witness and the otherness of disaster must necessarily be sustained. By "ground," two entities emerge for consideration: first, the representations and abstractions of the landscape itself, including horizons, unshaped or overworked grounds, the beauties of nature, and the various forms of communal belonging and remembrance they inspire; and second, the philosophical ground upon which the post-memorial witness establishes an intimate and thoroughly ethical exchange with the distant histories of other people's suffering.

This turn to the landscape is inspired by a series of impulses in 20th-century criticism and ethical philosophy that centerpiece the landscape and its various socio-cultural and philosophical abstractions in larger debates about memory, collective identity, and social responsibility. Here, I want to note two critical trends that justify this move from the preceding sites and discourses of ethical attachment—those associated with the immediacy of voice and intimacy of erotic caress—and toward the physical, psychological, and indeed philosophical grounds on which these sites and discourses are sustained in contemporary post-memorial fiction. The first trend comes vis-à-vis a critical evaluation of landscape, proper, and the various ways both natural formations and landscapes altered by humanity necessarily occasion certain forms of intimacy and engagement, even across great distances in time and space. Brett Ashley Kaplan frames many of these debates for us in her 2011 book *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory*, in which she argues for the centrality in Holocaust postmemory of both "reclaimed" and "memorialized" landscapes—landscapes that have been changed, sometimes irreversibly, by natural processes,

and landscapes that bear the marks of human intervention and violence for the sake of preserving public memories for posterity. In so doing, she unveils the "elusive connections between the spaces of memory and the spaces of landscapes" (7).

Kaplan's analysis is predicated upon a familiar and sensible broadening of the very idea of landscape. However, Kaplan's analysis does not adequately account for the potentially myriad ways that landscape can be implicated in a larger process by which the post-memorial witness can make distant traumas more immediate and more immediately personal. Albert Cortina makes gestures toward a landscape ethics by broadening our understanding of landscape in general to include "the physical reality born of the *dialogue* between human activity and our surroundings, as perceived by the community" (emphasis added). Cortina perpetuates this appeal to a more dynamic view of landscape by claiming it should be regarded as "a moment in a process rather than a static reality."[40] These comments are important for us to linger over as we move to a consideration of post-memorial fiction that takes the landscape and its various philosophical and cultural abstractions as one of the most important sites upon which the otherness of disaster is brought into a particular witness's imaginative horizon. In so doing, the landscape is divested of its potentially mimetic function. It is no longer a mere repository of human activity, as the agents of violence dig their heels into the dirt or litter the topsoil with bullet shells and ashes. Nor is it any longer merely the object of commemoration or sacralization, as the guardians of human memory now struggle to preserve those boot prints, rake up the bullet shells, and build plaques upon the lost ashes in order to honor the memory of those who could not escape persecution or death. Instead, the landscape, following Cortina's assertion, becomes part of a larger tapestry of ever-changing organic life, subject to the age-old scientific

[40] Albert Cortina, "Landscape Ethics: A Moral Commitment to Responsible Regional Management," in *Ramon Llull Journal of Applied Ethics* 1:2, pp. 163-178. Cortina derives this definition from Article 1 of the European Landscape Convention (170).

adage that the traces of violence and traumatization—which, like matter itself, can be neither created nor destroyed—still exist in some form, immediate yet unrecognizable, in the very ground beneath our feet.

But what does that ground hide, and what does it allow us to excavate from its depths? How do we, as belated and geographically dispersed witnesses, forge attachments to the traumatic events those remnants signify? And most importantly, to whom does that ground actually belong? These questions are taken up more systematically by the second impulse in theory and philosophy I want to draw attention to—the impulse to discuss the ethical import of landscape with respect to two particular figurations, the home and the world. The ethos of home and world jumps to the fore as a result of the critical reception of a famous 1933 radio address by Martin Heidegger, "Creative Landscape: Why Do We Stay in the Province," in which he defends his position to refuse a professorship at the University of Berlin and justifies a life nurtured by the provinces. Rhapsodizing the sense of rootedness he derives from living and writing in his own chalet in the small village of Todtnau, located in the Black Forest region of southern Germany, Heidegger declares quite proudly that "the inner relationship of my own work to the Black Forest and its people comes from a centuries-long and irreplaceable rootedness in the Alemannian-Swabian soil."[41] His address transforms the idea of the landscape into a primary figuration of home, the indigenous communities thriving upon it, and even his own philosophical outlook which becomes an organic expression of it. That sense of embeddedness in the world—eulogized in a peculiarly modern landscape in which technology uproots us from any

[41] "Creative Landscape" appears in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, eds. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994, pp. 426-428). Heidegger goes on to valorize the chalet and surrounding locale for its solitude, claiming that "solitude has the peculiar and original power not of isolating us but of projecting our whole existence out into the vast nearness of the presence (*Wesen*) of all things" (427).

autochthonous view of ourselves and our environs—is one of the ways Heidegger tries to ground his analysis of Being, proper.

However, the ethos that emerges around Heidegger's sense of rootedness makes us question—following the example of Emmanuel Levinas, who is sharply critical of Heideggerean ontologies of place—the purity of such attachments to locales and homes, in the first instance, and the extent to which those attachments can be forged with equal sincerity anywhere else in the world, in the second instance. Without rehearsing the entirety of Levinas's objections to Heidegger's place-centric philosophy, allow me to consider only his amendment to the idea of home in *Totality and Infinity*, published in 1961. Levinas brings the world literally into the home when he describes the place of dwelling as a site of communion in which we welcome and receive the Other, and in which the local consequently comes into intimate contact with the global:

> To exist henceforth means to dwell. To dwell is not the simple fact of the anonymous reality of a being cast into existence as a stone one casts behind oneself; it is a recollection, a coming to oneself, a retreat home with oneself as in a land of refuge, which answers to a hospitality, an expectancy, a human welcome…The home…is set back from the anonymity of the earth, the air, the light, the forest, the road, the sea, the river…[But] the dwelling remains in its own way open upon the elements from which it separates. The ambiguity of distance…is lifted by the window that makes possible a look that dominates, a look of him who escapes looks, the look that contemplates…With the dwelling the latent birth of the world is produced. (156-157)

This account of landscape, constituted by both domestic objects—like windows—and surrounding environs—including natural and man-made formations like the sea and the road, respectively—depicts Levinas in the throes of breaking free from the strictures of Heideggerian existentialism. He leaves behind the image of the thrown stone—and, with it, the Heideggerian principle of "thrown-ness," that sense that our being is the direct result of having been cast arbitrarily into a particular location in the world. Instead, Levinas ascribes to the place of

dwelling a constitutive function in which we provide refuge for the Other—an operation that is inevitably designed to exceed our ability to welcome or be welcomed, and which consequently welcomes us to a sense of the infinite—as we see in the quote above, in which the window authorizes us through the gaze that beckons us. In so doing, we finally arrive at a sense of ourselves.

The debate between Heidegger and Levinas about home and world, mark an important next step—following an account of voice and affect—in our consideration of an ethics of post-memory in the domain of contemporary world literature. This is particularly true for the primary literature featured in this chapter, about a pairing of Anglo-Japanese novels that contemplate the peculiarly spatialized nature of post-memorial remembrance and vicarious reconstructions of past events. The preceding commentaries about the home and the world reiterate Levinas's overall view of ethics as a first philosophy—one that engenders the subject through the acknowledged relation of self to Other—and lead us to yet another formulation of ethics that is located this time within the homestead, within the domain of hospitality itself. Jacques Derrida substantiates this comparison in *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* (1999) when he deconstructs the French term *l'hôte*, which means both host and guest. Breaking down the binary between the 'indigenous' host and the guest-as-outsider, Derrida's interpretation of Levinas's rhapsody of the homestead compels us to speak of ethics as a kind of impossible hospitality itself, one that gives rise to the subject only in the act of being welcomed by the Other. Consequently, this transformation of ethics is conducive to a more nuanced understanding of the post-memorial task, particularly in relation to the contested spaces and lost and abandoned homesteads that spatter the pages of Anglo-Japanese fictions about the interpenetrating devastations of history, landscape, and memory.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I now turn to a contemporary Anglo-Japanese novel of post-memorial engagement. Joy Kogawa's 1981 Canadian novel *Obasan* features a Japanese-Canadian schoolteacher who, mourning the recent death of her paternal uncle, walks the reader through a series of memories from her childhood about racial profiling, Japanese dispossession, and news of the atomic bombing in Japan. This chapter traces the various forms of historical engagement through considerations of both ancient landscapes of devastation and modern landscapes of refuge and distortion. I will also examine the ways these spaces bring remote traumas in Japanese history into uncomfortable but necessary proximity with Kogawa's British Columbia in the early 1970s. The chapter will conclude with comments about the grounds of comparison upon which Kogawa juxtaposes a remote Japanese ethos with a foreign, Western suburbia.

Landscapes of Dispossession and Multi-Directional Memory

Joy Kogawa's debut novel *Obasan* brings the distant and non-indexical memories of nuclear warfare in Japan and European settlement of Canada in close proximity to a more immediate history of persecution that she experienced—including the loss of her uncle and the experience of Japanese dispossession in Canada during and following World War II. The affective proximity between these geographically, temporally, and socially dispersed sites of traumatization make demands on the post-memorial witness whose identity depends on her relation to the landscape itself and the many forms of familial, cultural, and national belonging that are abstracted from it.

To be sure, Kogawa's Canada is at once—and to reiterate the terms of Brett Ashley Kaplan's analysis—a space "reclaimed" by nature and natural processes and a space that has

been reorganized and re-sculpted by both human intervention and representational practice. This range of both natural and human activity creates an intensely layered ground embedded with many different and often conflicting narratives of suffering, displacement, and exclusion. These narratives bring the post-memorial witness into uncomfortable proximity with four interlinking life disruptions. Two of those disruptions occur well within her horizon of experience—the death of the main character's paternal uncle and the cultural rift his death exacerbates, and the foggy childhood memories of her own forced internment in relocation camps during World War II. These disruptions, however, touch upon and reveal intimate linkages with two different and more dispersed strands of violence—the disappearance of her mother in Nagasaki during the dropping of the atom bomb, and the unresolved silences surrounding the displacement of First Nations populations from their original settlements. As she cycles through various engagements with different sources and registers of otherness, and attempts to work through the devastations of both her own life and the larger world she inhabits, Kogawa demonstrates the need—especially for post-memorial witnesses—to acknowledge and openly court those linkages and to use that immanent operation of 'worlding' as a way of working through a minefield of difficult and often disempowering pasts.

My analysis of *Obasan* thus begins with an account of different kinds of physical spaces that abound in the text and conjure up these various "others" of disaster that the post-memorial witness must confront and engage. My analysis also treats the ethical import of landscapes in general and the specific way they shape our composition and subsequent dwelling of home, nation, and world. In so doing, this operation reveals an interlocking labyrinth of traumatic narratives that Michael Rothberg and others have described as the multi-directionality of

memory—a multi-directionality that not only puts different histories into close proximity with one another but actively courts a more comparative idea of the world itself.[42]

No-Places, Like Home

As a novel rife with naturally occurring landscapes, at turns meaningful and haunting, *Obasan* conjures both a home and a world—a home that is often unstable and irretrievable, and a world that always looms even when we do not want it to—under the watchful eye of Naomi Nakane. A young schoolteacher, born in Canada to a Japanese family, Naomi re-traces a long-forgotten family history of dispossession eastward, as her family is expelled from a beautiful residential district in Vancouver to a series of relocation camps that push them deeper and deeper into the nation's interior. Her story unfolds over the pages of a meticulously documented history of racial profiling and persecution that her Aunt Emily put together for posterity—and to keep the fires of activism going. Yet the story itself also sweeps into being a triangulated space of liminality, bounded by a landscape that displaced its original inhabitants to make room for her, a country that then refused to claim her as one of its own, and a mysterious country across the ocean that claimed her own mother during the nuclear holocaust. In so doing, Kogawa's schoolteacher functions as a post-memorial witness to different forms of disaster, both near and far. She must actively restructure the landscapes of her memory around meaningful—and sometimes haphazardly composed—dwellings and lost homes, enclosures of the most tightly guarded secrets and anxieties that animate her recovery of the past. In addition, these images of

[42] In *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), Michael Rothberg explains that multi-directional memory can be characterized, among other ways, as an interaction between "the agents and sites of memory…within specific historical and political contexts of struggle and contestation" (3). I would add that natural landscapes are among the most important sites of memory *and* social agency that permit us to look at the dynamic interactions between the various processes by which pasts are continually being made present.

home and homestead are suffused with naturally occurring elements that, quite literally, bring invited as well as uninvited memories into clear view.

At its outset, the novel dramatizes Naomi's attempts to face and comfortably inhabit painful memories of distant trauma by grounding her testimony of dislocation with the poetic image not of a home per se but of a *final* dwelling place. When she discovers the news that her Uncle Isamu—the husband of the novel's titular character, Obasan, and a member of the Issei generation[43]—has passed away, Naomi begins the process of mourning that Freud recounts in his essay "Mourning and Melancholia," that obsessive recollection of the lost object that ultimately brings the individual to an acceptance of that loss. Yet that obsessive recollection emerges in this opening scene as a creative transformation of a home that she thinks is suitable for the memory of her uncle, who now inhabits a space of inaccessible and unresponsive silence:

> What, I wonder, was Uncle thinking those last few hours? Had the world turned upside down? Perhaps everything was reversing rapidly and he was tunneling backward top to bottom, his feet in an upstairs attic of humus and memory, his hands groping down through the cracks and walls to the damp cellar, to the water, down to the underground sea. Or back to his fishing boats in B.C. and the skiffs moored along the shore. In the end did he manage to swim full circle back to that other shore and his mother's arms, her round moon face glowing down at her firstborn? (16-17)

The representation of home that emerges here is a function of both the concrete and immaterial dimensions of memory, in general, and of the specific memories of evacuation she will go on to share. In many ways, this dwelling resonates with the image of the dwelling that Levinas puts forward in *Totality and Infinity*—the composed home whose window opens onto an image of infinity, troped in his example by the look of the other. The memory presented here, which

[43] The word "Issei," based on the root word "ichi," meaning the number one in Japanese, refers in Japanese to the first-generation national who moved from Japan and settled in Canada. Kogawa traces this history in brief in the novel: "The first of my grandparents to come to Canada, [Grandpa Nakane] arrived in 1893, wearing a Western suit, a round black hat, and platformed geta on his feet…His cousin's widowed wife and her son, Isamu, joined him." (21) Naomi, by contrast, is a member of the Sansei generation – with the word "san" meaning three.

cushions Isamu momentarily, plays with that sense of an encounter with infinity, but that encounter is oriented downward and suggests a progressive search for the truth of the past through the very foundation on which that house is situated, through the collected sediments of time. These layers are constituted by particular phases of his life—including, most emphatically, his shipping business, which the Canadian government dismantled and outlawed as a matter of cold policy. Yet this image also invokes a mythological space in which he pushes off from the 'ground' of memory and stretches his arms downward, all in an attempt to reconnect with the mythical mother he left behind upon immigrating to Canada—years before Naomi was even born. In this way, the ground of memory—troped metonymically by the palpable image of humus which, upon reaching the compost stage, finally achieves stability in the mortal world and becomes resistant to further degradation—shares a continuous space with a mythological reality that transcends the idea of mortality altogether. It also establishes Naomi's fanatasy as an important part of her own task as a post-memorial witness who must vicariously reconstruct landscapes that pre-existed her.

These gestures toward mythological reality complicate the more familiar, heterotopic space of the cemetery that Michel Foucault offers in his speech "Of Other Spaces." Foucault argues that the cemetery is a fitting example of a layered heterotopia grounded in reality, rather than a utopic "no place," because it remains "connected to all sites of the city" and reflects the larger societal shift from an 18th-century community structured around the church to a 19th-century community that has gone suburban and generates both a cult of the family and a cult of the dead in the absence of a more proper religion.[44] However, the final dwelling place Naomi composes for Isamu appears to retain some aspects of a utopic "no place." This is not simply

[44] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," p. 232. The speech appears in full in *The Visual Culture Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Nicholas Mizroeff (London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 229-236).

because it is a poetic abstraction of his final moments of life. More importantly, it is because this imagined space, motivated in many ways by palpable concerns in Isamu's historic life, mythologizes Isamu's relation to a lost Japanese space of identity that haunts even Naomi.

As a post-memorial witness to many different types of disaster, all of which have impressed themselves onto an array of mental and material landscapes that now stand before her, Naomi must wrestle with the limits of being a Sansei. She is positioned at three generational removes from her ancestral home in Japan—even though her countrymen assume she is a foreigner and a threat, and her mother returned frequently to Japan and evidently died there. As these issues come to light in the novel, Isamu's inverted figure reads more as an expression of Naomi's own anxiety about distance than it does a fitting tribute to her deceased uncle. Now that she is left with one surviving relative—Isamu's wife Ayako, her obasan—who still bears an indexical relation to Japan, the access she had once maintained to a space of identity that has always eluded her slips that much farther away from her grasp. In fact, Naomi's fear of losing those last few opportunities to fully inhabit that space of identity jumps anxiously to the surface a few days after Isamu's death, when Obasan cannot find something in an old pile of boxes: "'Lost,' she says, occasionally. The word for 'lost' also means 'dead'" (28). Though Naomi never tells us the precise Japanese word she hears Obasan mutter, many of the familiar terms denoting both loss and death—including "ushinawareta," in the former instance, and "shinda," in the latter—are embedded with the root word "shi," which not only means death but also refers to the unlucky number four, the next generational remove from Japan after her own. Thus, Naomi's image of an inverted Uncle Isamu, an Issei who returns to the now-mythic space he once left behind, is the only palliative that will allay her own anxiety about bringing an originating space of identity literally to its death in a matter of years. In addition, it ironically

prefigures the indecent history of forced dispossession Naomi endured as a child; she will go on to share this story after gathering together with mourning relatives who are inevitably thinking about the past.[45]

This potential loss of a space of Japanese identity is exacerbated by her pursuit of the mystery of her mother, who disappeared from her life during a trip back to Japan just before the bombing of Nagasaki. Though Naomi is aware of the suspicion that her mother was among the more than 60,000 people killed in Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, her family's general silence surrounding the issue ossified over time into a panicked inactivity that she was compelled to obey. Nevertheless, the mystery of her mother's disappearance figures prominently in the imaginative musings of her own life in Vancouver and Slocan in British Columbia, and even in Granton in southern Alberta, and shapes the way she struggles with questions about how to plant roots and develop a stable relationship to landscapes that she can authentically call a home. A series of memories about particular homesteads and natural elements gradually unfold that allow Naomi to imaginatively transform her world into a landscape in which her mother's influence—even as absence—becomes palpable, constitutive, and even 'natural.'

The first significant memory of her mother's haunting absence, and the accompanying anxieties about remote spaces of belonging, comes early in the novel, after she recalls a domestic scene in her bedroom in Vancouver:

> My bedroom with its long white-lace-curtained window looks out over the neighbor's yard. A peach tree is directly outside the window. Above my bed with the powdery blue patchwork quilt is a picture of a little girl with a book in her lap, looking up into a tree where a bird sits. One of the child's hands is half raised as she watches and listens, attending the bird. The picture is entirely in muted shades of green. (64)

[45] Ironically, her fear of losing something valuable, like intimate contact with a Japanese 'space' of identity, becomes the cross she must bear later in the novel, as her country of her birth, reeling from the shock of Pearl Harbor, robs and persecutes her, and rationalizes its actions by attributing to her nothing *but* a Japanese identity.

This primal scene of harmony between interior and exterior spaces clearly reflects Naomi as an adult narrator today who, like the girl in the picture looking off into the distance, pores over a book of collected correspondences created by her Aunt Emily and contemplates something just outside of her immediate horizon of experience.

This reflected scene of reading and contemplation pushes the impact of her mother's absence into the question of an unsettled cultural identity. Figured here in the images of a peach tree that sprawls just outside her window, and of a tree in the painting that gives shelter to birds, her mother is aligned with both the natural elements surrounding her house, and of the infinite and the alien that peers continually into the homestead. This image cultivates a debate in the next chapter about striking out into the world and how one secures entrenchment in particular landscapes. This debate about behavior and belonging, furthermore, swirls around the legend of Momotaro, which Naomi's mother used to tell her every night at bedtime. The story itself—about a boy who emerges from a giant peach and sets off into the world—is one of the few traces of her mother's guidance in shaping her young daughter's moral vision. The titular character of the legend, furthermore, imparts an important moral lesson to Naomi about following the Momotaro archetype and making her way alone in the world, responsibly and with a careful ear toward the silences of others:

> What matters in the end, what matters above all, more than their loneliness or fears, is that Momotaro behave with honor. At all times what matters is to act with a fine intent. To do otherwise is shameful and brings dishonor to all.
>
> To travel with confidence down this route the most reliable map I am given is the example of my mother's and Grandma's alert and accurate knowing. When I am hungry, and before I can ask, there is food. If I am weary, every place is a bed. No food that is distasteful must be eaten and there is neither praise nor blame for the body's natural functions…If Grandma shifts uncomfortably, I bring her a cushion.
>
> "Yoku ki ga tsuku ne," Grandma responds. It is a statement in appreciation of the sensitivity and appropriate gestures. (68)

What is interesting to note about the instructiveness of this bedtime story and the preceding peach imagery is the reaction that it generates from her Aunt Emily, an activist who insists on erasing the story's attachments to an authentic Japanese space of identity and using it to justify her and her family's rightful place in Canada. Speaking to Naomi as an adult who has just relived these moments from her past that whisper longingly of another cultural domain of origins, Aunt Emily challenges the idea set forth by the memory of Naomi's mother:

> "You never spoke. You never smiled. You were so 'majime.' What a serious baby—fed on milk and Momotaro."
>
> "Milk and Momotaro?" I asked. "Culture clash?"
>
> "Not at all," she said. "Momotaro is a Canadian story. We're Canadian, aren't we? Everything a Canadian does is Canadian." (ibid)

Though Emily is committed to a political platform in which othered communities in Canada must be reinscribed into the national fabric and restored to their former dignity, she wants to re-signify this particular legend as an expression of a Canadian national identity, one that essentially erases the Japanese cultural markers attaching to that text and its uses in the Nakane household. In this way, the two sisters—Naomi's mother and Aunt Emily—exacerbate the already enormous expanse of the Pacific Ocean, moving the domains of Japanese and Canadian cultural identity in opposite directions and abstracting them into an even more remote space of identity, on the one hand, and an even less ethnically and racially diverse space of identity, on the other.

The chasm that starts to open up between the memories of particular members of the Nakane family is so wide, in fact, that Naomi retreats to a language of nature in order to possibly bridge the gap between those spaces. In a prolonged poetic language about trees and limbs, literal as well as metaphorical—which begins in the previous example of the peach tree—Naomi constructs a compelling way of bringing her mother 'back home' to Canada so she can begin the

process of mourning her. These moments begin when Naomi finds a photograph of her as a young girl clutching her mother's leg:

> I am about two or three years of age and clinging to my mother's leg with one arm. My mother's face is childlike and wistful. Her head leans shyly to the side and her hair is tucked under her wide-brimmed hat.
>
> "Yasashi desho," Obasan says. She has often spoken of my mother's "yasashi kokoro," her tender, kind, and thoughtful heart. She places the picture in my hand. "Here is the best letter. This is the best time. These are the best memories."
>
> When would this be? I turn the photo around to see if there is any identification on the back, but there is none.
>
> In the picture I am clinging to my mother's leg on a street corner in Vancouver. A small boy is standing hugging a lamp-post and is staring at us. His thumb is in his mouth. I am mortified by the attention. I turn my face away from everyone. My mother places her cool hand on my cheek, its scent light and flowery. She whispers that the boy will laugh at me if I hide. Laugh? There is no worse horror. Laughter is a cold spray that chills the back of my neck, that makes the tears rush to my eyes. My mother's whisper flushes me out of my hiding place behind the softness of her silk dress. Only the sidewalk is safe to look at. It does not have eyes. (56-57)

The problem that is diagnosed in this scene revolves around the problematic gesture of looking away. In this photo, Naomi sees herself averting her own gaze and displacing that look onto the relative safety of an anonymous surrounding landscape—a problem that prevents her from looking critically at the way historical blindness can ossify and ground further instances of myopia. This particular depiction of the mother-daughter relationship structures Naomi's ethical engagement with remote nuclear fallout and the abandonment to which that disaster is symbolically linked. Yet Naomi develops an ethical relation to disaster by re-imagining the trauma of World War II in Japan as a way of re-creating a terrain of her own traumatization. In this way, Naomi's need to cling to her mother's legs in this photograph—and, indeed, her fascination with her mother's limbs throughout the text—is an expression of her need to hold on to her memory, confront the issue of abandonment, and start the process of mourning that will ultimately allow her to let go of her.

The imagery of legs persists throughout the text, linking this photograph to key moments that structure her mother's progressive disappearance from young Naomi's life. This includes the day her family bid farewell to Mother and Grandma, in her Aunt Emily's diary entry dated September 1941, as she boarded the ship that would take her to Japan:

> Father is holding my hand and asking foolishly if I can see my mother. There is nothing to be seen but legs and legs. All I know is that Mother and Grandma are at the other end of a long paper streamer I clutch in my fist. Father picks me up in his arms and points but I can see nothing except thousands of colorful paper streamers stretched between the people below and the railing of the ship…
>
> "Obaa-chan [the old grandmother] only needs to see their faces," Aya Obasan says, "then they will come back." She tells me that though Mother was born in Canada she was raised in Japan by her grandmother. "Obaa-chan is very ill," Aya Obasan says. My great-grandmother has need of my mother. Does my mother have need of me? In what marketplace of the universe are the bargains made that have traded my need for my great-grandmother's? (79)

The reversal of comfort that occurs in this scene speaks to both the chaos of a young girl trying to piece together a larger and more complicated history that she can only see—literally at knee-level—and to a much larger sense of legs being re-signified as agents not of attachment to particular landscapes but of abandonment of homelands. The familiar legs that she clung to in the photograph are here defamiliarized and unsteadied by both the distress of abandonment and the transformation of a landscape that has been creatively re-signified as a site where immeasurable and incomparable human need are quantified and exchanged. In addition, the sense of a larger world that extends beyond the peripheries of her own horizon are here transformed—from the comforting call of nature that had once aligned her mother's memory to a peach tree outside her bedroom window, to the much more unsettling sprawl of an urban port on the water, crowded with people who are moving to and fro, coming into the country and leaving the country, without any apparent indication of laying down roots.

This unsettling of attachments to particular places reaches a crisis point later in the novel when Naomi, now displaced with her brother and Obasan onto a beet farm in Granton, relives the day the infamous bomb, Fat Man, was dropped over Nagasaki—which she marks historically as simply "early autumn in 1945" (198). Despite the challenges of distance, time, and naïve historical perception that cloud her knowledge of events at the time, and the unwillingness to confront the memory in the present moment, Naomi retreats back into an almost mythic but ominous arboreal language that summons her into a frightening recognition of her mother's suffering, occurring an unimaginable ocean away:

> I waken suddenly, before the regular summons of the rooster, to the soft steady steam of rain and fog and a grayness thicker than sleep. Something has touched me but I do not know what it is. Something not human, not animal, that masquerades the way a tree in the night takes on the contours of hair and fingers and arms…
>
> She is here. She is not here. She is reaching out to me with a touch deceptive as down, with hands and fingers that wave like grass around my feet, and her hair falls and falls and falls from her head like streamers of paper rain. She is a maypole woman to whose apron-string streamers I cling and around whose skirts I dance. She is a ship leaving the harbor, tied to me by colored paper streamers that break and fall into a swirling wake. The wake is a thin black pencil line that deepens and widens and fills with a grayness that reaches out with tentacles to embrace me. I leap and wake. (199)

This day of historical reckoning is marked by a series of unexpectedly ironic responses from her and members of her own family—including her brother's celebratory proclamation aligning himself with victors who have persecuted and dispossessed him, and his mother with an enemy that "we" have just defeated. However, the shadow her mother casts over the scene is a fitting expression of the uneasiness with which Naomi suspects something has happened to her mother on that fateful day. She imagines her in symbolic language that links her to various periods of her childhood. She is troped here first as a tree who inspires hallucinatory visions of something other than human—a symbolic moral vision that awakens Naomi into a premonition of the

sudden convergence of political and familial history. This nascent awareness of disaster, exploding far afield of her own knowledge and experience, reminds her of the need to acknowledge and respect the silence her mother leaves behind—without trying to neutralize or counter it, or develop a melancholic attachment to her lingering absence.

Naomi's need to literally ground her mother in natural and arboreal language, in order to work through the pain of absence she has left behind, is most poignantly captured in this first of a series of references to the image of the maypole. In a continental European mythos, this essential feature of May Day festivals signifies the passing of the seasons and the revitalization of the landscape. In this scene, however, the maypole also fulfills its mythical function of marking a time when the boundaries between the living and the dead break down and spirits begin to move between worlds and re-settle. The maypole's mythical convergence of material and immaterial realms—attesting to a pagan Christianity instead of an Eastern Buddhist philosophy—allows Naomi to finally begin confronting the memory of her lost mother, and to bring the traumas of an impersonal world history into the more intimate orbit of a young girl needing to process her mother's abandonment and her own identity issues.

As one of the last image pairings in the novel, the maypole and the tree allow Naomi to articulate in a concrete representational language the ethical challenges she faces as a member of a generation that has been protected from atomic devastation, on the one hand, and subjected first-hand, on the other hand, to an entire history of dispossession – the subject of the next part of the analysis. When Naomi and her family finally receive an intercepted letter Grandma Kato had written to her husband detailing life during and after the dropping of the bomb, Naomi finally punctures the family silence surrounding her mother's whereabouts and fate. As it turns out, Naomi's Grandmother had given a graphic account of a disfigured naked woman who was

chopping wood from a tree in order to make a Buddhist funeral pyre for a random baby that she had encountered during the explosion. This disfigured woman, of course, turned out to be Naomi's mother, who had been so terribly injured that she lost her face in the ordeal and hid herself behind a mask of bandages for the rest of her short time in Japan. Later, Aunt Emily discovered by word of a Japanese missionary that Mother's name had been found on a memorial plaque of those who perished in the disaster. Naomi recounts the news, once again, by invoking images of trees and maypoles that imaginatively integrate the two polar domains of identity into an imagined ground of both pain and healing: "a Canadian maple tree grows there where your name stands. The tree utters its scarlet voice in the air. Prayers bleeding. Its rustling leaves are fingers scratching an empty sky" (290). This image allows Naomi to position her mother between two different signifiers of cultural and national identity—the Canadian homeland she left behind, signified by the tree, and the site of the Buddhist plaque itself, her ancestral and re-adopted home in Japan: "By the time this country opened its pale arms to you, it was too late. First, you could not, then you chose not to come home." (ibid) This speech to her mother, furthermore, is part of an extended apostrophe addressed to her absent mother. Though the apostrophe itself, as a rhetorical figure of speech, is predicated upon an act of turning away—an ethical problem for Naomi ever since seeing a photograph of herself averting her gaze from difficulty—it nevertheless allows her to address her mother, even as a vacated figure, whose silence she can treat as a palpable reality and not as a threat to be extinguished or filled. It also moves Naomi closer to an examination of her own spaces of belonging, and suggests that a creative transformation of the very landscapes of her memory is part of a larger process not only of working through disaster but of using the process of working through as a way of inhabiting a landscape scarred with painful memories, near and far.

These issues, however, are hardly as harmonious as the preceding image of nature and a final resting place might appear at first glance. As the apostrophe continues, Naomi uses a language of aggression to process the pain of silence that had been conferred on her all these years:

> Martyr Mother, you pilot your powerful voicelessness over the ocean and across the mountain, straight as a missile to our hut on the edge of a sugar-beet field. You wish to protect us with lies, but the camouflage does not hide your cries. Beneath the hiding I am there with you. Silent Mother, lost in the abandoning, you do not share the horror. At first, stumbling and unaware of pain, you open your eyes in the red mist and, sheltering a dead child, you flee through the flames. Young Mother at Nagasaki, am I not also there? (290)

The language of this apostrophe is provocative in that it re-imagines an intimacy where a bond between mother and child seems to have been broken—an intimacy in which Naomi herself now identifies with the random baby that had apparently died during the disaster. In addition to this impossible space of witnessing she wants to inhabit, Naomi describes her mother's influence, traveling across the ocean, as if she were the very agent of destruction that ultimately disfigured her, and that she herself was the target on whom her mother dropped that figurative bomb. This rhetorical move anticipates other forms of deconstruction she will go on to engage when, telling the history of her own dispossession in Canada, she cannot align her victimization with any type of social righteousness, nor can she adequately make a case for rightful or natural forms of habitation.

These premonitions jump to the fore as the novel closes, once again with arboreal imagery and a powerful ethos of confrontation and rooting. As Naomi mulls over the silent history that has been constructed for her—her family, never knowing what became of Mother, nevertheless react to an instinctive awareness that they must keep the ordeal a secret from Naomi and Stephen—she revisits the infamous photograph of her and her mother:

> You stand on a street corner in Vancouver in a straight silky dress and a light black coat. On your head is a wide-brimmed had with a feather and your black shoes have one strap and a buckle at the side. I stand leaning into you, my dress bulging over my round baby belly. My fat arm clings to your leg. Your skirt hides half my face. Your leg is a tree trunk and I am branch, vine, butterfly. I am joined to your limbs by right of birth, child of your flesh, leaf of your bough.
>
> The tree is a dead tree in the middle of the prairies. I sit on its roots still as a stone. In my dreams, a small child sits with a wound on her knee. The wound on her knee is on the back of her skull, large and moist. A double wound. The child is forever unable to speak. The child forever fears to tell. I apply a thick bandage but nothing can soak up the seepage. I beg that the woundedness may be healed and that the limbs may learn to dance. But you stay in black-and-white-photograph, smiling your yasashi smile." (291)

This image seems like a fitting resolution to the first historical strand of the novel. Naomi speaks here of a double wound—the traumas of losing a mother and of not being able to speak about that loss. She does not commit the cardinal sin Marianne Hirsch warns us about, appropriating the pain of others as one's own; rather, Naomi unveils an alignment between world historical traumas and the painful histories of silence and abandonment that demands attention in order for the work of mourning can properly occur. It is for this reason why Naomi recalls the photograph in which she is literally leaning onto her mother and hugging her like the trunk of a tree: she needs to re-imagine her in an abstracted space of traumatization in order for Naomi to locate herself as an adult witness to disaster. It is also for this reason why the face literally disappears—and, in the case of her mother, melts away—and reveals the legs that still tie us to our sites of traumatization and allow us to live in those landscapes despite the pain we have experienced.

Three lessons emerge in this initial walk through devastated landscapes and the ethical gravity they still exert on those, living and dead, who come from that domain. First, Naomi acts as a post-memorial witness whose ethical relationship to disaster is defined not strictly—or even exclusively—by the face of the Other, but rather, by how that Other is familiarized and

positioned in a landscape she already inhabits. This is a meaningful and necessary critique of Levinasian ethics, which never fully illuminates the challenge of living with the devastations of trauma in a place that one still calls home. Second, Naomi's own struggle to pierce through a silence without neutralizing its power as a legitimate form of expression demands a heightened view of the inter-linkages that bring wide historical traumas into the more modest orbits of our personal experience. In this way, she reformulates the idea of working through to include a more sincere consideration of the very landscapes that house radically different forms and sites of traumatization. And third, Naomi comes to a representational language that allows her to contemplate the relationship between landscape and identity, both in terms of the natural domain, the warmth of the home, and the mythic domain of originating family lines. This rhetoric, which privileges the tree as a primary figure of ethical attachment to landscapes, structures Naomi's particular dilemmas about standing on her own two feet in an unfamiliar world of mystery and pain; accessing domains that seem out of reach; re-defining domains to be more than mere sites of traumatization; and deriving a renewed sense of self through her attachments to particular places.

Digging in the Dirt

As the first strand of the novel suggests, Naomi brings the world of international trauma to bear on her own issues of abandonment through a direct confrontation with the memory of her mother and the silence that claims her. A more direct engagement with the wider history of devastation in Japan—as well as the history of immigration that creates a mixed community in Canada—gives her the strength and the ground to start dealing with the pain of her own mother's abandonment. However, I do not want to suggest that Naomi is merely appropriating historical

forms and concepts to inform her own life as a member of a protected generation. The novel also exposes us to the reverse operation, namely, the ways our immediate horizon of personal experience and history can be grounded by more widespread forms of historical devastation for which we must also take some responsibility. What this means for Naomi, and what she proceeds to do while she is summoning the courage and resources to confront the memory of her lost mother, is to examine more critically the idea of a 'natural' attachment to landscapes that Mother and Uncle Isamu both evoke for her. In addition, it also compels her to walk more carefully through an indecent history of dispossession that would, upon first glance, set up categories of victimization and perpetration that do not necessarily reflect the historical reality of other citizens. Consequently, the remainder of the analysis will focus on the particular landscapes Naomi attaches herself to in the course of her expulsion eastward. Part of her ethical engagement with both the expulsion itself, which she lived through at a very young age, and other forms of expulsion she can only vicariously reconstruct, will require a more careful examination of both the reasons for and manners by which people will make claims to particular sites of habitation and memory, and of the implications of living in a contested landscape where those claims are wielded by multiple parties.

The indecent history of dispossession unfolds at the bidding of her Aunt Emily, sister of her lost mother and an outspoken activist and academic in her own right. Aunt Emily is an oppositional force of moral rectitude who brings attention to the history of dispossession to Naomi and the reader by her sprawling archive of personal and official correspondences—including her own unanswered letters to her sister detailing daily and monthly grievances against the administration, and newspaper clippings and government memos describing and sometimes

giving voice to racist concerns of a "Japanese menace."[46] Unlike Obasan, who as a member of the Issei generation embraces silence as "the language of her grief" (17), her Aunt Emily believes in holding the Canadian government accountable for its reprehensible behavior toward Japanese and demanding both compensation and an apology – a position she seems to derive directly from Kogawa herself.[47] In this way, the shifting representational terrain of ethics in the novel, from the face to the legs, encapsulates Emily's wish for a de-faced national identity—one in which citizens are stripped of their ethnic differences and afforded their rights and securities based on their habitation of and blood ties to the land.

Aunt Emily eventually induces Naomi to tell her story of forced relocation, and insists upon an urgency of memory that is clearly tied to an ethics of identity. And once again, the image of a pre-lapsarian home—this time, the childhood home that she was forced to vacate—grounds her account of the past:

> The house in which we live is in Marpole, a comfortable residential district of Vancouver. It is more splendid than any house I have lived in since. It does not bear remembering. None of this bears remembering.
>
> "You have to remember," Aunt Emily said. "You are your history. If you cut any of it off you're an amputee. Don't deny the past. Remember everything. If you're bitter, be bitter. Cry it out! Scream! Denial is gangrene. Look at you, Nomi, shuffling back and forth between Cecil and Granton, unable either to go or to stay in the world with even a semblance of grace or ease."
>
> All right, Aunt Emily, all right! The house then—the house, if I must remember it today, was large and beautiful… (60)

---

[46] For an historical account of the long and unsavory history of Japanese dispossession in Canada, see Ann Gomer Sunahara's *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, 1981). The book outlines, among other things, the "beginning of a process that saw Canada's Japanese minority uprooted from their homes, confined in detention camps, stripped of their property, and forcibly dispersed across Canada or shipped back to a starving Japan" (1).

[47] Though the novel was published in 1981, it was not until September 22, 1988, when Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney issued before the Canadian House of Commons an official apology for stripping Japanese Canadians of their possessions during World War II and sending them to Japan, and announced a $300 million package compensating victims for lost and confiscated property and funding the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. (Source: http://archives.cbc.ca/war_conflict/second_world_war/topics/568-2924/). One might glean from this that the novel's publication serves an explicitly political function, renewing attention and interest in a previously unresolved traumatic history.

Emily's insistence that Naomi remember the violations perpetrated upon the Japanese-Canadians by their own government – violations that did not affect her as dramatically or as immediately, because she was not a member of the Issei generation[48]—gives Naomi's overall project of narrative recovery a tinge of moral urgency. To not only repeat but also embrace the idea Emily offers here—that memory becomes a palpable relation to the past, dissociations from which produce violence akin to that of amputation or disease—snaps her out of a potentially lethargic attachment to sites of memory like her childhood home, which she initially thinks does not "bear remembering".[49]

These recollections and transformations of home open up a space of imagined and strained identities that Naomi must negotiate in her bid to settle with the past. On the one hand, Naomi's loss of her uncle generates a certain anxiety about claiming an increasingly remote Japanese identity, one that is ideally structured by attachments to an indigenous, though largely mythologized landscape. On the other hand, her activist Aunt insists on the active re-instantiation of a Canadian national identity—one sculpted out of action, public discourse, and the imputation to remember. As Emily once told her, "everything a Canadian does is Canadian" (68).

---

[48] According to the novel, the racist measures enacted by the Canadian government targeted members of the Issei generation. Naomi and her brother Stephen were evacuated from their home in Vancouver and moved, first to a deserted mining town in Slocan, British Columbia where they attended a school for Japanese students only; and then to work in even more cramped conditions on a foreign family beet farm in Granton, Alberta, where they attended an integrated school and were forced to adopt Westernized names. They were targeted because they were under the care of their paternal aunt Ayako – Obasan, a member of the Issei generation. Aunt Emily, on the other hand, was an adult citizen born in Canada, and was authorized to relocate from Vancouver to Toronto, where conditions were considerably better than those her relatives endured.

[49] This phrase is ironic for two reasons. First, the delicacy of the childhood home which she was initially reluctant to include in her story gives the very idea of home a tinge of the alien about it, as if to suggest she is uncomfortable grounding her life story in the place where her life actually begins. And second, this childhood home is a famous literary recreation of the home Kogawa grew up in, on West 64th Avenue in Marpole, which almost did not survive. Kogawa herself worked tirelessly to save it from demolition. After a series of fund raising efforts and media campaigns to have it declared a historical literary landmark, the Land Conservancy of British Columbia purchased the home in 2006. It is currently managed by the Joy Kogawa Historic House Society, which also uses that site to host an annual in-residence program for Canadian writers. www.kogawahouse.com (accessed June 20, 2012).

However, Naomi attempt to face distant traumas and re-trench herself in a revitalized world of self-knowledge is not simply a matter of choosing between two equally remote spaces of identity. In fact, even before Naomi relives that disgraceful moment in Canadian history, she literally treads ground that is both emotionally and historically charged with scars that run even deeper than her own. This embedded history of violence, which reveals itself in Naomi's testimony only sporadically, yet in powerful glimmers, also constitutes a narrative of dispossession. However, this narrative focuses instead on the displaced First Nations populations, who still remain in the margins of the novel and problematize the binary between rightful occupancy and wrongful displacement, on which Emily builds her moral platform of 'Canadian-ness.' Unfolding simultaneously alongside Naomi's own account of forced dislocation, this history reminds us not only of the crippling effect of silence on progress and restitution, but also of the need to broaden one's view of rights and transgressions to include those whose transgressions issue directly from the claiming or exercising of another's rights.

Nowhere is this entanglement more strongly felt than in the opening pages of the novel, when Naomi reflects upon and creatively transforms the meaning of a landscape that reminds her of her Uncle Isamu—a prairie just outside of Granton, Alberta, which opens onto a coulee. This moment, which begins as an unassuming effort to savor the memory of Isamu before Naomi or the reader receives word of his passing, offers up traces of emotional and historical wreckage related to Japanese internment and simultaneously silenced by it. The scene begins with an account of the coulee itself and slowly morphs into a description of Isamu himself, on whose material form an indigenous landscape becomes increasingly inscribed:

> The hill surface, as if responding to a command from Uncle's outstretched hand, undulates suddenly in a breeze, with ripple after ripple of grass shadows, rhythmical as ocean waves. We wade through the dry surf, the flecks of grass hitting us like spray. Uncle walks jerkily as a baby on the unsure ground, his feet

> widespread, his arms suddenly out like a tightrope walker's when he loses his balance…
>
> Everything in front of us is virgin land. From the beginning of time, the grass along this stretch of prairie has not been cut. About a mile east is a spot which was once an Indian buffalo jump, a high steep cliff where the buffalo were stampeded and fell to their deaths. All the bones are still there, some sticking right out of the side of a fresh landslide.
>
> Uncle could be Chief Sitting Bull squatting here. He has the same prairie-baked skin, the deep brown furrows like dry riverbeds creasing his cheeks. All he needs is a feather head-dress, and he would be perfect for a picture postcard—"Indian Chief from Canadian Prairie"—souvenir of Alberta, made in Japan. (2-3)

This scene mythologizes Isamu's life, before it was marred and overturned by institutionalized racism, in the same way the previous image of the inverted home mythologizes a rapidly disappearing space of origin. Here, the uneven ground and the figure of Isamu, stumbling like a baby learning to walk, speak once again to an idealized, almost pre-lapsarian moment in Naomi's family history when they were untouched by the devastations of history. And here, once again, the landscape quietly calls attention to this idealization. The windswept grasses of the coulee move under the memory of lapping waves, invisible yet wholly present in the scene; and individual blades of grass burst in ghostly flecks of ocean spray. These seemingly excessive details evoke once again the historically 'untouched' memories of Isamu's once-thriving fishing venture on Lulu Island, before the Canadian government stripped him of his property and revoked his license.

Yet at the same time, it would appear that these memories are constrained by Naomi's own inability to see the irony of her story's originating impulse. The prairie that savors the relatively pure memory of Uncle Isamu and his life, before devastation, is located just outside Granton, where her family's forced removal came to an unsatisfying conclusion—unsatisfying because they were not allowed to return to Vancouver, nor did they for years receive compensation or apology. Consequently, this particular landscape is framed as both a lost and

seemingly *impossible* physical embodiment of a 'pre-history' of violence the Nakane family once enjoyed. The primal scene of belonging – to some abstraction of an organic Canadian space—is thus troped here as a fundamental misrecognition of belonging. It also hollows out Aunt Emily's moral platform for a resuscitation of a more ethnically diversified understanding of a 'Canadian' space of identity.

One might interpret Naomi's inability to recognize the falsity of this scene as an expression of a desire to turn back time, or of a persistent state of suffering that prevents her from mounting the appropriate creative will to do so in her story. Others may see this creative transformation of landscape as a testament to her endurance and a sign of an active process of working through. I do not want to reject either of these interpretive possibilities, as they exert fundamental influences in the shape of her testimony. After all, Naomi inherits and must contend with an entire legacy of silence that not only takes root in Obasan but prevents her from finding out what happened to her mother after she left for Japan. In addition, Naomi's gestures toward establishing an autochthonous relation to the landscape, cultivating originating attachments to places as she happens upon them, however arbitrarily or not, emerge from motives that have less to do with essentializing her identity and more to do with surviving the strains and uncertainties of forced relocation. In so doing, she embodies Walter Benjamin's valorization of any pursuit of the past that requires a courageous foraging through the unknown secrets of the landscapes of memory.[50]

[50] In "A Berlin Chronicle," (pp. 3-60) Walter Benjamin exploits the metaphor of landscape in order to pay homage to both the systematic attempts to recover memory and the unexpected challenges we meet along the way: "He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging. This confers the tone and bearing of genuine reminiscences. He must not be afraid to return again and again to the same matter; to scatter it as one scatters earth, to turn it over as one turns over soil. For the matter itself is only a deposit, a stratum, which yields only to the most meticulous examination what constitutes the real treasure hidden within the earth: the images, severed from all earlier associations, that stand—like precious fragments or torsos in a collector's gallery—in the prosaic rooms of our later understanding. True, for successful excavation a plan is needed. Yet no less indispensable is the cautious probing of the spade in the dark loam, and it is to cheat oneself of the richest prize to

However, these interpretive possibilities do not account for the embedded nature of historical violence that comes directly into play in this scene of commemoration. Even before Naomi begins to share her memories of forced dislocation, her narrative is already unsettled by the idea of a natural, *a priori* sense of belonging, of being wedded to the land. This reveals itself, among other ways, in the fact that she projects the landscape—and the histories of violence it embeds deep within its depths—directly onto Isamu's face. In her historical vision, Naomi's attempt to attach her family directly to the landscape constitutes two distinct but related acts of historical erasure. First, Naomi presents a picture of Isamu as somehow 'passing' for a member of a First Nations tribe. Though her rhetoric seems to be motivated by a belated wish to restore her family to the cultural tapestry from which the government tried to expel them, the projection of the indigenous world literally onto the face of her uncle is also an act of submersion of his Japanese heritage, which in the ensuing pages becomes a marker of political and ethnic alterity. And second, the particular comparison to Sitting Bull reads as a token representation of First Nations communities in Canada, even though Sitting Bull himself—Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake—is a famous Lakota Sioux tribal chief who hailed from South Dakota. Although the image of Sitting Bull prefigures Japanese internment in Canada in certain ways—not the least of which is the fact that the tribal chief was also subject to violence by neighbors, as he was ultimately killed by Indian agency police who came from the reservations—the retreat to imagery taken from Native *American* history reaffirms the marginalization of First Nations communities even in a Canadian text that draws attention to embedded histories of devastation. In fact, the only

---

preserve as a record merely the inventory of one's discoveries, and not this dark joy of the place of the finding itself. Fruitless searching is as much a part of this as succeeding, and consequently remembrance must not proceed in the manner of a narrative or still less that of a report, but must, in the strictest epic and rhapsodic manner, assay its spade in ever-new places, and in the old ones delve to even-deeper layers" (26). In *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, 1978).

significant historical reference to actual First Nations populations in a novel renowned for its engagement with untold histories occurs in a brief but utopic reference to cultural and economic symbiosis between "the native Songhies of Esquimalt and many Japanese fishermen [who] came to [Grandpa Nakane's] boatbuilding shop on Saltspring Island, to barter and to buy" (21). This reference is part of an idyllic portrait of harmony that may have reflected a particular moment in time but averts its gaze from the long history of displacement and encroachment that leads up to it.

Isamu's face in this scene and the landscape that materializes his memory carry a significant ethical gravity, though this ethical recognition is not one borne out of a Levinasian encounter with an Other. The face of her uncle, who represents both a Japanese identity that she cannot easily access, and an autochthonous Canadian identity that effectively displaces the First Nations communities from view, becomes a site upon which the Other layers itself with additional others. In representing a responsibility for the past in this particular way, before Naomi even launches into her account of interment, Naomi positions her testimony in ways that obligate her to the engagement with more than one trauma at the same time – the trauma of losing access to a defining space of identity, and the trauma of turning a blind eye to the displacement of First Nations communities that her family's arrival in Canada has, in part, occasioned. The face of the Other in this scene is thus relativized, and compels Naomi not only to recognize the embedded nature of otherness but to construct an historical narrative that does not perpetuate a reductive view of guilt, displacement, and victimhood.

The question that emerges here is to whom and what is Naomi *primarily* responsible? Naomi unwittingly dramatizes the long-standing rift between ethics and politics in Levinasian

thought, diagnosed so eloquently by David Campbell, who attempts to restore these two domains through an appeal to the state. As Campbell explains,

> Levinas clearly recognizes that the world does not simply comprise one-to-one relationships…But can Levinas's articulation of ethics as first philosophy, and of responsibility as the primary structure of subjectivity, be expanded from the one-to-one to the one-and-the-many? And if so, how is this expansion achieved?[51]

Campbell goes on to say that the presence of a "third party," which he terms the state, interferes in the primary relation of self and Other because "it presses the numerical claim that the world comprises many others."[52] This third party, for Campbell, must not put the subject of the state into a position of calculating which Other demands *more* or *less* of our responsibility or fidelity. Nor should the interruption of the state inhibit our responsibility to the other. Instead, Campbell calls for a heightened vigilance about the impact of this third party on the freedom of all others: "Levinas's faith in the state as the sovereign domain in which freedom can be exercised has the capacity to overlook the restrictions on the freedom of others the state's security requires."[53]

In this way, it would appear that Kogawa's novel exposes the problems inherent in a political system in which even a naïve post-memorial witness must face the decision of choosing between different others—and respecting the one while doing damage to the other. This delicate interplay, whose impossible resolution both Levinas and Derrida remind us, manifests itself throughout the text as a heightened sensitivity to language. Ironically, it is Aunt Emily who teaches her this lesson—though it mostly through her own personal failure that this attention to language becomes instructive. Examples of her inability to see the way the government "launders" language pervade the novel, but her myopia comes squarely into view when, in one of

---

[51] This reference appears on page 36 of Campbell's article, "The Deterritorialization of Responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and Ethics after the End of Philosophy," which appears in *Moral Spaces: Rethinking Ethics and World Politics*, eds. David Campbell and Michael J. Shapiro (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, pp. 29-56).
[52] Ibid., 37.
[53] Ibid., 38-39.

her letters to her sister, Naomi's mother, she tries to establish herself and her community as being

> the most hurt. At one time, remember how I almost worshipped the Mounties? Remember the Curwood tales of the Northwest, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and how I'd go around saying their motto—*Maintiens le droit*—Maintain the right?
>
> The other day there were a lot of people lined up on Heather Street to register at RCMP headquarters and so frightened by what was going on and afraid of the uniforms. You could feel their terror. I was going around telling them not to worry—the RCMP were our protectors and upholders of the law, etc. And there was this one officer tramping up and down that perfectly quiet line of people, holding his riding crop like a switch in his hand, smacking the palm of his other hand regularly—whack whack—as if he would just have loved to hit someone with it if they even so much as spoke or moved out of line. The glory of the Redcoats. (118-119)

Of course, Emily's trust in official forms of authority that "maintain the right" of those under its protection is a blind and misleading trust, at best. As she writes to her sister overseas about the political state of exception her native Canada has become in her absence, Emily presents a compelling portrait of victimization that is brought about, in part, by the slipperiness of the RCMP's famous motto. When bandied about in a time of heightened paranoia about Japanese-Canadians whose rights were under question, the word "droit" reverts to its politically exceptional connotation: to "maintain the law."[54] It is instances like these when the state, as a "third party" in the ethical relation to the other, can potentially disrupt and violate that responsibility. As a state of exception, wartime Canada vilifies and "others" particular segments of its own population, disempowers them and repatriates them back to Japan, in order to protect a violently sanitized abstraction of itself. In so doing, it shifts the primary responsibility for the other onto the shoulders of those who maintain both right and law simultaneously.

---

[54] Here I am using a variation of the theme of 'exception' that Giorgio Agamben develops in his book *State of Exception.* He writes that in times of declared crisis, the law can be transcended and "entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system" can be declared enemies of the state (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 2).

This political landscape imputes to historical witnesses like Naomi an almost impossible task. On the one hand, the government's history of laundering a political discourse about rights inscribes her in a larger history of dispossession, and positions her in ways that allow her to make historically and politically over-determined comparisons between her own plight and that of First Nations communities. At the same time, as a member of the Canadian national community who has survived such institutional racism and persecution, and who has subsequently built a platform on which to draw national and international attention to such things, she still bears a responsibility, along with other Canadians, to those same communities; and her failures to do so are the failures of Canada altogether. In this way, the perils of comparison emerge; making those linkages perpetuates a larger structure of philosophical marginalization of the subject, and yet to refuse those linkages is to stall the process by which the silences surrounding testimonies of dispossession begin to crack. Consequently, Naomi's own trauma as a young girl in an evacuated Japanese family, and the deeper ground of disaster that robs First Nations communities of a place in the national fabric, must be managed carefully. This entails, among other things, a heightened awareness of the way this relationship between distant and immediate trauma is figured in her story. I want to argue here that Naomi's ethical awareness of her own disaster is not based on a need to compare her story to the story of other people's suffering – or to attribute causality between the two histories. Rather, it is based on an increasing recognition of the fact that one history is literally entangled in another, that the history of the other is, in fact, a history she must claim and inhabit—responsibly—as her own.

She does this by arresting her story in key moments in order to expose the alignments of suffering between her own dislocation and that of the communities preceding hers. These scenes, furthermore, are structured around variations of the homestead that provoke conflicting

accounts of ownership, different models of habitation, and multiple ways of bringing these things into discourse. These multiple demands converge in the site of her new dwelling in Slocan, a ghost town that used to house a thriving mining industry and welcomed speculators from across the country. Kogawa reconstructs the dilapidated structure that temporarily housed the displaced family from two different perspectives—as a makeshift home Naomi first sees as a young child and a site of historical erasure Naomi visits years later as an adult.

When she, her brother and Obasan arrive in Slocan, Naomi normalizes the house as a place of residence by focusing on the stories that mark and construct it. As she settles into the new dilapidated house in the woods, she initially recounts the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, which turns on a conflict of occupancy and raises the question of rightful habitation in a wider historical sense: "we are that bear family in this strange house in the middle of the woods. I am Baby Bear, whose chair Goldilocks sleeps in. Or perhaps this is not true and I am really Goldilocks after all" (149). The playful identification with different characters in the fairy tale is obviously triggered by a nascent awareness of two simultaneous forms of interloping in which she is indirectly implicated—one in which the government usurps her family's property and lives, and one in which she is part of a larger social fabric that intrudes upon native communities. What begins as a child's wish to indulge in play and experiment with different sites of identification—the bear in the forest, the little girl lost in a foreign environment—becomes a retroactive unsettling of an official, singular narrative that locates her as the dispossessed and the government as the agent of that dispossession.

The indigenous history of Slocan and its surrounding beach, where Naomi and her friend Kenji play as children, become the focus of a story that Rough Lock Bill, a nearby neighbor, tells them. After writing his name into the wet sand for them, and then sculpting the wet ground and

twigs into a three-dimensional map of the terrain and settled communities of southern British Columbia, he gives the kids an illustrated account of the life on the land during the tribe wars:

> "Long time ago these people were dying…Don't know what it was. Smallpox maybe. Tribe wars. Starvation. Maybe it was a hex, who knows? But there's always a few left when something like that happens. And this brave, he set out to find a place. A good place with lots of good food—deer, fish, berries. Know where that was?...
>
> "…Right here." He waves his arm, indicating the lake and the beach. "So he goes all the way back to where his people are, back past these mountains, and he says to them, 'If you go slow, you can go.' So off we go, these few here, some so weak they have to be carried. Took all of them together—how long? Months? A year? 'If you go slow,' he says, 'you can go. Slow can go. Slow can go.' Like a train chugging across the mountains."
>
> Kenji is helping him march the stick people around and around the mountains till they come to the edge of the sand-hole lake. "We call it Slocan now. Real name is Slow-can-go. When my Granddad came, there was a whole tribe here." He points to a stick at his cabin. "Right there was the chief's tepee. But last I saw—one old guy up past the mine—be dead now probably." (172)

This account of the history and ultimate naming of Slocan is not simply a declaration of the vitality of a city that has since been turned over to other dispossessed populations. More importantly, it is an ironic prefiguration of the name as a site upon which landscapes are transformed culturally and political power is exercised. Though the space is now settled by placeless populations who similarly pay tribute to a model of endurance implied by the First Nations' motto of "slow-can-go," the re-naming of the city to Slocan is a testament to the power of language as agent and scene of a certain kind of colonial violence. This violence even compels Naomi – who never answers in the novel to her Japanese name Megumi—to take a Westernized name once she attends an integrated school.

The disruptive uses of language persists throughout that scene as Naomi continues speaking to Rough Lock Bill about the mythological King bird, which is apparently so powerful it can slice the tongue out if someone spreads lies. Here, Rough Lock bill equates the bird with

both a pure language people can no longer speak and a valorized form of silence that people – including Naomi—often mistake for weakness or disempowerment:

> "We saw the King bird," Kenji says.
>
> "Say, you don't say," Rough Lock says, scratching his head. He shades his eyes with his hands and looks up at the mountains. "See how quiet it is? A whole mountain full of birds and not a peep out of 'em. Used to be a time there'd be music in the morning—enough to drive you deaf ['deef,' he says] just sitting here."
>
> Rough Lock Bill shakes his head slowly, pushing his lips down at the corners. "Birds could all talk once. Bird language. Now all they can say is their own names. That's all. Can't say any more than their names. Just like some people. Specially in the city, eh? Me, me, me." He jabs his chest with his thumb and grunts. "But smart people don't talk too much. Redskins know that. The King bird warned them a long time ago." (173-174)

Rough Lock Bill's speech here inverts the familiar models of distanciation and disempowerment Naomi shares throughout her narration, particularly when her eyes fix upon First Nations students sitting in the back of her classroom who remain troublingly silent. Rough Lock speaks of indigenous cultures as already othered, and invests silence with a key political function—to persist in that silence so that people become aware of it. At the same time, he invokes a native mythology of the King bird, who resembles a moment before history when understanding was not subject to the splintering of language or manipulations of self-interest. In this way, the silence of the King bird, and perhaps by extension of the First Nations communities, still participate in a form of subjectivity that an audience must engage more proactively and respectfully—if not by deciphering the meaning of that silence, then at least by respecting that silence as an innately occurring entity itself, and not as a symptomatic expression of weakness or marginalization imposed onto it.

This native mythology resembles Benjamin's inclusive notion of a pure language that emerges through the act of translation and illuminates the common foundations upon which different languages currently rest: "languages are not strangers to one another, but are, *a priori*

and apart from all historical relationships, interrelated in what they want to express."[55] The King bird myth retains a moral of inclusiveness that now falls on deaf ears; the only remnant of that moral has morphed into a childhood superstition about the repercussions of speaking falsely.

However, this myth suggests the importance of developing ways of listening to silences that hearken Naomi back to the scene from her childhood when she contemplates a painting in her bedroom of a young girl looking out the window at a bird singing. This scene from her past—where she felt at east and in perfect harmony with her surroundings—constructs a quiet poetry that signals the presence and simultaneous silence of her mother, warbling on the branch of a tree in a language that produces disturbances in the air without actually being able to penetrate a world of signification Naomi understands. In this way, the two embedded histories of the novel—the displaced First Nations peoples and the enigma of her mother's fate in Japan—converge in a powerful moment of silence that Naomi must read as such—without transforming that silence into symptoms of disempowerment.

Years later, after Naomi and her family settle permanently in Granton—where they were later displaced—she visits Slocan to look for traces of her former dispossession there. This scene is poignant for many reasons, but perhaps the most compelling reason for its urgency in the narrative is that it likens her fear of silence and historical erasure to that of the First Nations communities that already face this dilemma. Though it is one thing to listen to historical silences without neutralizing their power, it is quite another to face a similar sense of erasure oneself and understand from an interior position of habitation what the fullness of that silence feels like. This is what strikes Naomi when she and Emily visit Slocan years later:

> I drove through what was left of some of the ghost towns, filled and emptied once by prospectors, filled and emptied a second time by the Japanese Canadians. The

[55] "The Task of the Translator," p. 72. In *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968, pp. 69-82).

> first ghosts were still there, the miners, people of the woods, their white bones deep beneath the pine-needle floor, their flesh turned to earth, turned to air. Their buildings—hotels, abandoned mines, log cabins—still stood marking their stay. But what of the second wave? What remains of our time there?...
>
> All our huts had been removed long before and the forest had returned to take over the clearings. What remained the same was the smell of pine and cedar. The mountains too were unchanged except for the evidence of new roads and a larger logging industry. While we stood there in Slocan, we could hear the wavering hoot of a train whistle as we used to years before. The Slocan that we knew in the forties was no longer there, except for the small white community which had existed before we arrived and which watched us come with a mixture of curiosity and fear. (138-139)

This passage is remarkable in that it conjures both an impossibility and a necessity of alignment of two different histories of dispossession and erasure. On the one hand, Naomi is struck by the way the same city can bear witness to multiple scenes of disappearance simultaneously. She notes the miners and prospectors, whose bodies literally become an archive of an ancient history that predates her own habitation of that space. On the other hand, Naomi confesses to a certain degree of anxiety about her own legacy of dispossession not being accurately reflected in the landscape. In much the same way that she experiences an anxiety about losing her remote access to a Japanese space of identity through the death of Uncle Isamu, she leaves off her history of dispossession to visit the site of dislocation that no longer recognizes her – putting her in an analogous position to that of Rough Lock Bill, whose community likewise suffers under that perpetual strain.

Quite troublingly, this scene is devoid of references to the First Nations communities that had previously inhabited this space. Naomi's focus is primarily on the community of miners, prospectors, and other inhabitants of a predominantly white society that witnessed her arrival in Slocan all those years ago. On the one hand, the lack of resolution or commentary about the history preceding her own is a fitting representation of the ongoing question of First Nations communities. Their preceding ties to the land trouble any sense of a rightful claim to landscape

that underlies Naomi's own recovery of historical dispossession. However, Kogawa perpetuates and exacerbates the silence surrounding the issue because historical memory is, for her, composed of a palpable, strangely material landscape of narratives and traumas. Inevitably, exposing and dealing with one grievance suppresses those manifold grievances hidden underneath it.

Conclusions: Worlding the Home

In spite of these difficulties, we can still acknowledge in Naomi and Kogawa's conundrum a productive transformation of both the field of public memory and the idea of working through. In the first instance, Naomi breaks a life-long habit of averting her gaze from problems like that of the First Nations community. In this way, her narrative serves Kogawa's political agenda of drawing attention to enduring and unresolved problems for which the Canadian government is responsible – and to which they later admit their responsibility.

This development of what Walter Benjamin will describe as the "afterlife" of a text suggests the need to re-consider the field of public memory. It is, for all intensive purposes, a palpable entity, and not simply a discursive field of representation and contestation, as Marita Sturken might suggest in the introduction of *Tangled Memories*. Though the discursive elements are quite powerful, and reveal frequent and often unresolved sites of contestation in the content and manner by which we commemorate and signify certain events, that dynamism is counter-acted in and by the novel's preoccupations with a lived sense of history and with a formidable experience of being tied to places that both define us and almost destroy us.

In fact, the novel closes with a brief but powerful meditation on the nature of memory itself, as it moves from a model of mere discursive formation to a model of habitation and to an experience of being grounded on something:

> Grief wails like a scarecrow in the wild night, beckoning the wind to clothe his gaunt shell. With his outstretched arms he is gathering eyes for his disguise. I had not known that Grief had such gentle eyes—eyes reflecting my uncle's eyes, my mother's eyes, all the familiar lost eyes of Love that are not his and that he dons as a mask and a mockery.
>
> This body of grief is not fit for human habitation. Let there be flesh…
>
> Father, Mother, my relatives, my ancestors, we have come to the forest tonight, to the place where the colors all meet—red and yellow and blue. We have turned and returned to your arms as you turn to earth and form the forest floor. Tonight we picked berries with the help of your sighted hands. Tonight we read the forest braille. See how our stained fingers have read the seasons, and how our serving hands serve you still. (295)

Rather than offering us a composed and perhaps over-simplified response to the overwhelming silences of embedded histories like First Nations dispossession, Naomi's account of Japanese internment is recouped in the final moments of the novel as a vision of a revitalized, inclusive, familial community. Though the mythologized harmony that occurs in this forest scene is just as fabricated and gleaming as the originating spaces and dwellings she shares upon the death of Uncle Isamu, these moments of mythopoiesis serve very practical historical needs. For instance, her paratactic enunciation of the beautiful shades of red and yellow and blue in the forest mythscape is not simply a rudimentary exercise in utopic happily-ever-afters. It posits an idealized conclusion to a graphic history of bloodletting, which in varying strokes has both victimized and morally defiled people of all races in Canada. It is for that reason that everyone's fingers in that image are stained.

The turn to habitation and attachment to landscape also allows Kogawa to re-define the idea of working through. It is no longer *merely* a progressive process of letting go, of acknowledging and accepting the otherness of a lost object. Instead, Kogawa's post-memorial

witness envisions grief as intensely palpable, something that must ironically be displaced and given habitation elsewhere. This is a very powerful—and, once again, materially grounded—view of grief, one that, like all matter and energy, persists in our world, shapes or obstructs our view of it, and simply requires our management of and habitation amongst it.

Yet I do not want to marginalize the discursive and representational power of these memories, either. In fact, Kogawa leaves us in this final mythic contemplation of both historical problem and representational hope with a reference to the need to develop a sensitivity to our surroundings—one that she characterizes in the aforementioned passage as a "forest braille" that Naomi must learn. This "braille" —a specialized language that allows silences and obstructions to be rendered accessible, if not directly translated—is significant for two reasons. First, it is predicated on the assumption that the reader—not just Naomi, but any displaced witness—approaches a text, and specifically the otherness of a text, with a blindness to remote, lived historical experiences, and an insularity of other, first-hand lived experiences. In this way, the "forest braille" becomes a peculiarly apt metaphor for the encounter of the post-memorial witness who is about to establish proximity and contact with a world that both excludes her and demands her participation.

And second, this braille puts the reader directly, and physically, into contact with the world of that text—and, in the case of Naomi, with the world itself. This sensitivity to and active contact with her surroundings generates an ethical feeling of being in touch with not just a particular locality or home, but with the interconnectedness of that home to a larger world that sometimes lays quietly beneath it. The heightened sensitivity to these forms of quietude and layering are part of a much larger tendency in contemporary criticism to theorize the state of world literature. However, Kogawa departs from traditionally accepted narratives of the

'worlding' of literature—including, most emphatically, that of David Damrosch, who offers three provocative characterizations of world literature. While for Damrosch world literature is marked by the "elliptical refraction of national literatures," a "writing that gains in translation," and a "form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our own place and time,"[56] Kogawa shifts attention away from the movement of texts from guest to host culture and toward the way the foreign can co-habitate with the familiar in those settings. Her view of the landscape, furthermore, is constructed by an elaborately inter-linked network of narratives and artifacts that cannot be adequately untangled and that require our fuller engagement with other horizons, even as we contemplate the events of our own immediate horizon.

Consequently, Kogawa's *Obasan* is not simply a work of world literature but a work that worlds literature through its very engagement with and troping of landscape and ground, home and world. This engagement is, by its very nature, an ethical one and a post-memorial one. In the former instance, it demands our continued attention and responsibility to different forms of otherness simultaneously. And in the latter instance, it invites us to contemplate distant worlds – and our manner of reading them, even in a "forest braille," as if they are immediately beneath our feet.

[56] *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 281.

● Chapter Five ●

Conclusions

A Memory with a View

This project seeks to provide an answer to a pertinent question posed by Zygmunt Bauman. He asks in *Postmodern Ethics* if we can ever approach a "morality of spatial and temporal distance" (222). The answer, of course, is yes, but this ethics must be traced within a careful meditation on post-memory, or a narrative about an event that is passed on to generations and audiences without a direct, indexical memory of that event. Though memory, proper, is more than a story about the past, or even the present, its passage into post-memory compels us to consider the ethical relationship we must cultivate—sometimes pro-actively—to the story that reaches us across gaps in time, space, and understanding.

This ethical relationship to the Otherness of disaster—of other people's disasters—is dependent not *merely* on a call from and responsibility to an Other. More importantly, I have tried to stress, contra Marianne Hirsch and others, that the gestures toward proximity and the rhetoric of intimacy are an important and fundamental part of the vicarious work that compels the post-memorial generation to actively pursue the lost worlds of devastation and affectively identify with those witnesses who are no longer able to speak for themselves. Expectedly, the fundamental concern with this analysis is that the post-memorial witness does not fall into any of the traps or perpetuate any forms of violence that are comparable to the physical violence suffered by indexical witnesses. What the novels by Pat Barker, Bernhard Schlink, and Joy Kogawa reveal is a awareness of distance and a respect for silence that emerges *through* the very idea of engagement with these lost worlds.

Pat Barker's post-memory of World War I is instructive for many reasons. First, it shows us that the Other to which we are subsequently bound in an ethical relationship is not simply a unidirectional attachment. The Other can often wear a human face and possess the ability to speak to us. What this novel illustrates is that we must be open to the language of the Other and to find a suitable language with which to respond to that call—either to that Other, or to others for whom we are also responsible. Dr. Rivers is a suitable example of the post-memorial witness, in this regard. His failures with Siegfried Sassoon, who goes off to war at the end of *Regeneration* without any confidence in himself or his shared position of protest, are recuperated by the novel's overall imaginative engagement with history. In this way, Pat Barker steps in where Rivers fails—by envisioning for us a way of encountering distant pasts, a way that allows us to explore how quickly, how unfairly cultures of war can constrain speech, vilify speakers, and compound their various forms of non-conformity to suit, however unfairly, the ideological agendas of institutional powers. It also reaffirms the maxim Agamben shares in *States of Exception* that a country under duress or in times of crisis will often sacrifice due order and the rule of law in order to preserve and protect its inhabitants. The novel illustrates how a country immersed in war, with no immediate end in sight, can crystallize tensions about masculinity and comradeship that are already seething below the surface.

Bernhard Schlink's novel *The Reader* is also instructive because it posits another form of intimacy and approach that Levinas fails to consider adequately. He eroticizes the Other and uses a language of sexual gesture that reminds us, as post-memorial witnesses, of our impassive but not disempowered positions in relation to the Shoah. Though the novel flirts overty with conventions of melodrama, the romance between young Berg and the former camp guard reinstills in Berg's post-memorial witness a receptivity to feeling and an awareness of personal

agency in the larger tapestry of historical devastation. The examples Berg provides us illustrate not only that a denial of the human face and a valorization of human caress can give the post-memorial witness access to traces of a lost world. It also suggests that the recuperation of historical knowledge from spatio-temporal distances is structured like the erotic caress itself—which is predicated on a sustained effort to possess that which it cannot control, contain, or master. An apt metaphor for engagements with distant traumas is suddenly borne out of the sexual choreography of a love affair that excites and constrains the young male lover.

This example is followed by Joy Kogawa's novel *Obasan*, a study in habitation with the Otherness of different forms of trauma. Kogawa's historical witness is implicated in a series of overlapping traumas that place her in different relations simultaneously to disaster. Her narrator, Naomi Nakane, is an orphaned little girl whose mother disappears and perishes in the atomic bombings of Japan—an historical journey she can only construct by retracing her own dispossession from home and homeland during Canada's infamous relocation of Japanese citizens immediately following World War II. The interconnected nature of traumas reveals itself in other ways, as the ideological grounds of her belonging in a national community—a community that dispossessed and exiled her—is bent on her own participation, however inadvertently, in a larger historical dispossession of First Nations populations who exist only on the fringes of representation in the novel's recreation of postwar Canada. The novel stresses both the intimacy of co-existing alongside various others in a space that is both shared and contested, claimed and re-defined over time. In so doing, it questions the justifications we often present in our professed attachment to places near and far.

What these three novels suggest, in total, is an ethics of attachment to the Otherness of lost worlds of devastation that have a place in the debate. Although these writers are careful in

their own ways not to neutralize the alterity and unfamiliarity of these lost worlds, they nevertheless present compelling portraits of belated witnessing that necessitate the work of imagination that allows the post-memorial generation to reconstitute a shattered landscape, to find new life among the ruins. This imaginative function takes many forms throughout these novels—including the art of conversation between historical doctor and imagined patient, the erotic interplay between displaced witness and culpable perpetrator, and the compulsive redecoration of home as a site of belonging, expulsion, and de-territorialization.

In addition, the ethical compunctions to remember and to preserve silences are here augmented by the responsibility to tell stories that establish intimacy with the Other while preserving its irreducible alterity. In this way, the dissertation strives to find a balancing point between the logic of the Other that Levinas identifies in the primal scene of ethical awakening, on the one hand, and the logic of the Same that Alain Badiou outlines in his book *Ethics.* Badiou takes issue with Levinas's conception of the Other by insisting that human difference and diversity is what we share in common with everyone else – that each self in the universe, by virtue of its own positioning as a self in a universe of others, shares that same fundamental quality of exposure to others. In this way, he wants to develop an ethics born out of a recognition of the Same, the idea that connections are just as powerful motivations to ethical action as differences are—if not more so.

On the one hand, this dissertation seeks to draw out the particular affects of conversation, erotic interplay, and habitation that make the Other approachable. Opening oneself to the powers of speech and listening, surrendering oneself to the pleasures and pains of erotic love, opening one's home to the idea of shared, contested, and stolen homesteads—these affective responses to the distant traumas of others are important ways for members of the post-memorial generation to

establish that sense of proximity to an event from which they have been irreversibly excluded. Yet on the other hand, this proximity and appeal to intimacy are not entirely reducible to the idea of the Same. Instead, they point us in that direction and urge us to continue pursuing that notion, even if the elusive event will never be properly possessed, fully understood, or aptly felt. It is the pursuit that matters and that must continue.

This appeal to the intimacies of disaster are an important way for characters like the ones described in this dissertation to fulfill their various roles in different historical moments. Barker's Dr. Rivers is still immersed in the traumas of World War I and his silence surrounding the implications of his 'talk therapy' invite us to see how cultural and institutional silences can perpetuate silences and also awaken in us the need to be more receptive to those to whom we are doing harm. Schlink's Berg, on the other hand, emerges swiftly out of the generation 'after' the Shoah and participates in a discursive trajectory that moves the event from an initial moment of historical invisibility to a current state of public oversaturation. In this way, his testimony about the love of his life—the woman who denies him and only feels responsible for the lives she has taken during her stint as a camp guard—speaks to the dangers of both historical invisibility and the loss of affect in a world swimming with recreations of one of the grimmest moments of human history. And Joy Kogawa immerses herself in both of these time frames by exploring the interconnected nature between her narrator's own indirect, ongoing participation in the dispossession of First Nations communities, her recent emergence out of a history of Japanese dispossession, and her more distant engagement with the atrocities of atomic warfare.

WORKS CITED

Adorno, Theodor. "An Essay on Cultural Criticism and Society." Prisms. Trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1967.

Agamben, Giorgio. Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. New York: Zone Books, 1999.

_____. State of Exception. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Ahmed, Sara. The Cultural Politics of Emotion. New York: Routledge, 2004.

van Alphen, Ernst. "Second-Generation Testimony, Transmission of Trauma, and Postmemory." Poetics Today 27:2 (Summer 2006): 473-488.

_____. "Symptoms of Discursivity: Experience, Memory, and Trauma." Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present, eds. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999. 24-38.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.

Arendt, Hannah. Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil. New York: Penguin Group, 1994.

Ashplant, T. G., Graham Dawson and Michael Roper. "The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures and Dynamics." The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration, eds. T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper. London: Routledge, 2000. 3-86.

Badiou, Alain. Ethics. Trans. Peter Hallward. London: Verso, 2001.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. Speech Genres and Other Late Essays. Trans. Vern W. McGee. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1986.

_____. Toward a Philosophy of the Act, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov. Trans. Vadim Liapunov. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.

Banner, Teresa. The Transmission of Affect. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

Barker, Pat. The Eye in the Door. New York: Penguin Group, 1993.

_____. The Ghost Road. New York: Penguin Group, 1995.

_____. Regeneration. New York: Penguin Group, 1991.

Barthes, Roland. Camera Lucida. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981.

_____. The Pleasure of the Text. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill andWang, 1975.

_____. S/Z. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.

Bauman, Zygmunt. Modernity and the Holocaust. New York: Polity Press, 1989.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." Illuminations: Essays and Reflections, ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn.New York: Schocken Books, 1968. 69-82.

_____. "Berlin Chronicle." Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings, ed. Peter Demetz. New York: Schocken Books, 1978. 3-60.

Bourke, Joanna. "Effeminacy, Ethnicity and the End of Trauma: The Sufferings of 'Shell-Shocked' Men in Great Britain and Ireland, 1914-1939." Journal of Contemporary History 35:1 (2000): 57-69.

Brannigan, John. Pat Barker. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005.

Brison, Susan J. "Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self." Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present, eds. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999. 39-54.

Boym, Svetlana. "Nostalgia and its Discontents." The Hedgehog Review: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture 9:2 (Summer 2007): 7-18.

Campbell, David. "The Deterritorialization of Responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and Ethics after the End of Philosophy." Moral Spaces: Rethinking Ethics and World Politics, eds. David Campbell and Michael J. Shapiro. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. 29-56.

Caruth, Cathy. "Introduction." Trauma: Explorations in Memory. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. 3-12.

_____. Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Cortina, Albert. "Landscape Ethics: A Moral Commitment to Responsible Regional Management." Ramon Llull Journal of Applied Ethics 1:2 (2011): 163-178.

Damrosch, David. What Is World Literature? Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Derrida, Jacques. "A Certain Impossible Possibility of Saying the Event." Critical Inquiry 33 (Winter 2007): 441-461.

_____. Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas. Trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Felman, Shoshana and Dori Laub. Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Finkielkraut, Alain. The Imaginary Jew. Trans. Kevin O'Neill and David Suchoff. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." The Visual Culture Reader, 2nd ed, ed. Nicholas Mizroeff. London: Routledge, 1998. 229-236.

Fresco, Nadine. "Remembering the Unknown." Trans. Alan Sheridan. International Review of Psychoanalysis 11 (1984): 417.

Freud, Sigmund. Beyond the Pleasure Principle. Trans. James Strachey. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961.

Friedlander, Saul. "Trauma, Memory, and Transference." Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory, ed. Geoffrey Hartman. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994. 252-263.

Galt Harpham, Geoffrey. "Ethics." Critical Terms for Literary Study, eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. 387-405.

Hart, Josephine. "The Reader, the Writer." Telegraph Magazine 19 September 1999. 60-64.

Heidegger, Martin. "Creative Landscape: Why Do We Stay in the Province." The Weimar Republic Sourcebook, eds. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994. 426-428.

Hirsch, Marianne. Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997.

_____. "From *Great Expectations* to *Lost Illusions*: The Novel of Formation as Genre." Genre XII:3 (1979): 293-311.

_____. "Projected Memory: Holocaust Photographs in Personal and Public Fantasy." Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present, eds. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999. 3-23.

Hoffman, Ava. After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust. New York: PublicAffairs, 2004.

Irigaray, Luce. "The Fecundity of the Caress." Face to Face with Levinas, ed. Richard A. Cohen. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986. 231-256.

Jones, D. Stanley. "Protopathy, Paraesthesia and Sensory Suppression Zones." Progress in Brain Research 23(1966): 200-218.

Kaplan, Brett Ashley. Landscapes of Postmemory. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Kennedy, William J. "'Voice' and 'Address' in Literary Theory." Oral Tradition 2:1 (1987): 214-230.

Kent, Susan. Aftershocks: Politics and Trauma in Britain, 1918-1931. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Kierkegaard, Søren. "The Present Age." Trans. Clancy Martin. Existentialism, ed. Robert C. Solomon. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. 3-6.

_____. "Is There Such a Thing as a Teleological Suspension of the Ethical?" Trans. Walter Lowrie. Existentialism, ed. Robert C. Solomon. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. 15-17.

Kogawa, Joy. Obasan. New York: Random House, 1994.

LaCapra, Dominick. History and Memory after Auschwitz. Ithica, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Langham, Ian. The Building of British Social Anthropology: W. H. R. Rivers and His Cambridge Disciples in the Development of Kinship Studies, 1898-1931. London: Reidel, 1981.

Levinas, Emmanuel. Otherwise than Being. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998.

_____. Time and the Other. Trans. Richard A. Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1990.

_____. Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969.

_____. "Useless Suffering." Trans. Richard A. Cohen. The Provocation of Levinas, eds.

Robert Bernasconi and David Wood. London: Routledge, 1988. 156-167.

Levine, Michael G. "Necessary Stains: Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and the Bleeding of History." Considering Maus: Approaches to Spiegelman's "A Survivor's Tale" of the Holocaust, ed. Deborah R. Geis. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2003. 63-104.

Liss, Andrea. Trespassing through Shadows: Memory, Photography & The Holocaust. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

Manderson, Desmond. "The Ethics of Proximity." Griffith Law Review 14:2 (2005): 295-329.

Massumi, Brian. "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact: the Political Ontology of Threat." The Affect Theory Reader, eds. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. 52-70.

Moretti, Franco. "Conjectures in World Literature." New Left Review 1 (Jan-Feb 2000): 54-68.

Mort, Frank. Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England since 1830. London: Routledge, 1987.

Myres, J. L. "W. H. Rivers." The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland 53 (Jan-June 1923): 14-17.

Nicolson, Colin. Longman Companion to the First World War: Europe 1914-1918. London: Pearson, 2001.

Nora, Pierre. "Generation." Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, Volume 1 – Conflicts and Divisions, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. 499-612.

Nussbaum, Martha. Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Owen, Wilfred. The Poems of Wilfred Owen, ed. Jon Stallworthy. New York: Norton, 1986.

Ozick, Cynthia. "The Rights of History and the Rights of Imagination." Quarrel and Quandary: Essays. New York: Knopf, 2000. 103-119.

Peperzak, Adriaan. To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1993.

Perry, Donna. Backtalk: Women Writers Speak Out, Interview with Donna Perry. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1993.

Peters, John Durham. "Exile, Nomadism and Diaspora." Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Space, ed. Hamid Naficy. New York and London: Routledge, 1999. 17-41.

de Piérola, José. "At the Edge of History: Notes for a Theory for the Historical Novel in Latin America." Romance Studies 26:2 (April 2008): 151-162.

Pirandello, Luigi. Six Characters in Search of an Author and Other Plays. Trans. Mark Musa. London: Penguin Group, 1995.

Radstone, Susannah. "Reconceiving Binaries: The Limits of Memory." History Workshop Journal No. 59 (Spring 2005): 134-150.

Rothberg, Michael. Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

_____. Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Rye, Gill. "The (Im)Possible Ethics of Reading: Identity, Difference, Violence and Responsibility (Paule Constant's *White Spirit*)." French Studies 54:3 (2000): 32-337.

Sarlo, Beatriz. Tiempo pasado: Cultura de la memoria y giro subjective, una discusión. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. "Patterns of Bad Faith." Trans. Hazel E. Barnes. Existentialism, ed. Robert C. Solomon. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. 224-238.

de Saussure, Ferdinand. Course in General Linguistics, eds. Perry Meisel and Haun Saussy. Trans. Wade Baskin. Peru, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1986.

Scarry, Elaine. The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Schlink, Bernhard. The Reader. Trans. Carol Brown Janeway. New York: Vintage Books, 1998.

Simon, Jules. "Making Ethical Sense of *Useless Suffering* with Levinas." The Double Binds of Ethics after the Holocaust: Salvaging the Fragments, eds. Jennifer Geddes, John Roth, and Jules Simon. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 133-145.

Spiegelman, Art. Maus: A Survivor's Tale, Volume I: My Father Bleeds History. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.

Spiegelman, Art. Maus: A Survivor's Tale, Volume II: And Here My Troubles Began. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.

Sturken, Marita. Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1997.

Sunahara, Ann Gomer. The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, 1981.

Weisberg, Richard H. "A Sympathy That Does Not Condone: Notes in Summation on Schlink's *The Reader*." Law and Literature 16:2 (Summer 2004): 229-235.

White, Hayden. Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

_____. "The Historical Text as Literary Artefact." Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Williams, Bernard. Truth and Truthfulness. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Williams, Raymond. Marxism and Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Woolf, Virginia. Mrs. Dalloway. London: Hogarth Press, 1925.

Young, James E. At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000.